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**THE NOTION OF POWER AS IT IS REFLECTED IN THE
EDIBLE WOMAN AND KARMILA:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY**

by

Herawaty Abbas

**Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts
In the Joint Women's Studies Programme**

at

**Mount Saint Vincent University
Dalhousie University
Saint Mary's University
Halifax, Nova Scotia**

September 2001

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JOINT M.A. IN WOMEN'S STUDIES

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DATE: September 2001

AUTHOR: Herawaty Abbas

TITLE: The Notion of Power as It is Reflected in The Edible Woman and Karmila: A Comparative Study

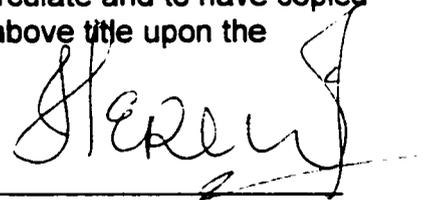
DEPARTMENT OR SCHOOL: Women's Studies

DEGREE: Master of Arts

CONVOCATION: Fall

YEAR: 2001

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For My beloved parents

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ABSTRACT

The Notion of Power as It is Reflected in The Edible Woman and Karmila: A Comparative Study

by

Herawaty Abbas
September 2001

This study explores how the notion of power in feminist concepts is reflected through the female protagonists of two novels, The Edible Woman and Karmila. The former is a Canadian novel written by Margaret Atwood, and the latter is an Indonesian novel written by Marga T. There are some reasons why the two novels are chosen to be the object of analysis. First, they both are written by women novelists. Second, their central theme is o women's issues. Third, they both belong to the period of contemporary novel. Based on the analysis, it is found that the major protagonists of the two novels are similar in the effort to free themselves from other people's control, especially from male domination. However, viewed from a cultural point of view, the way each novel asserts their power is different. This is because the two novels come from different cultural background. Or in other words, in terms of asserting power, something perhaps is 'small' if it is viewed from one culture, but it is 'big' if it is viewed from another culture. This work is done not to generalize how Canadian and Indonesian women assert their power, but to show how literary works can teach women to empower themselves and to take advantage from each other's culture. Literary works are read not only as entertainment, but also as a source of education. It is expected that the work can be a stepping stone for the writer and her colleagues, as well as for students of English department of to conduct other comparative analysis of Canadian and Indonesian literature in the future.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to thank Marjorie I. Stone, Jane Parpart, and Renee Hulan, for their understanding and patience, and for their insights and perspectives on the area I deal with in this work, during this important time in my life. I also offer my sincere gratitude to my family in Indonesia for their love, support, and pray. I dedicate this work for them.

Chapter One

Introduction

1. 1. Background

In Indonesian universities there are few people who have learned about Canadian literature. Those who learn about it do so abroad. The main reason is that in Indonesian universities, such as Hasanuddin University where I work, there is no department which specifically has Canadian literature on its curriculum. Furthermore, there are not any lecturers available to teach it.

In recent years there is a tendency for university students in Indonesia to be interested in studying about Canadian literature. This tendency is increasing every year since the students can see and read so much information on Canadian literature through the media, especially the internet. In Hasanuddin University, this can be seen from the number of students who want to use Canadian literary works including novels as the object of their thesis research. I am optimistic that this number will increase in accordance with the policy of the university to allow each faculty or department the flexibility to enrich its local curriculum with new materials for teaching courses such as Canadian literature. In the English department of the Faculty of Letters at Hasanuddin University, a number of students have come to me asking for the opportunity to write or to analyze Canadian literary works both intrinsically and extrinsically as their object of research. Unfortunately, until now my department has not had any available lecturer to teach Canadian literature or to help students in dealing with it. Therefore coming here and learning more about Canadian literature is a good and helpful opportunity for me to broaden my knowledge in a new subject of

literature. Furthermore, as a member of Women's Studies Center in the university, I am motivated to conduct feminist research, especially in dealing with literary studies. Since the Women's Studies Center of Hasanuddin University was opened in the late eighties, there have been very few lecturers who do feminist research on literary works. As my educational background is literature, therefore, after finishing my study at Interuniversity Women Studies Graduate Program in Canada, I am eager to conduct more feminist research on literary works, especially the works written by women writers. My goal in doing this is not only to enrich the amount of feminist research on literary works, but also to encourage and motivate other literary lecturers to do the same. The more people who do feminist research on literary works, the more people can hear and penetrate what women actually feel about gender-related issues. Or, in other words, by doing feminist research on literary works, people can hear indirectly women's voice on anything that can make them feel subordinated to men or oppressed. Hence, possible solutions can be investigated in order to help them empower themselves. Although this kind of research is only done through contextual data, it cannot be denied that what is written in the story perhaps is the reflection of what is happening in reality in the society. Thus, at least the life illustrated, for example in women's novels, represents the life of women in reality. This certainly will help especially feminist researchers to struggle to find ways in helping women to be treated equal to men.

In Indonesia, women's issues are becoming a crucial topic to discuss since one of the government programs stated in the National Development Guidelines is to empower Indonesian women in all sectors of life. As a result,

everywhere in Indonesia, we see women starting to appear on the surface, to competitively take the opportunity to be involved in the development process. An opportunity to obtain higher education is one example of the realization of the government's program in letting women empower themselves. Besides, working outside the home to support family income rather than being a housewife is increasing. These all are obvious example of how women wish to empower themselves in positioning themselves to be equal to men. By all means, the image that says the place of women is in the kitchen hopefully can be gradually removed.

Unfortunately, apart from the government program to empower Indonesian women, there are still many obstacles that women face in achieving equality. It is because male domination in Indonesia has been socially constructed as very strong. One of the reasons for this is the impact of three-hundred-and-fifty-years of Dutch colonialization of Indonesia, as well as the impact of the long history of the king's might in the past. Consequently, Indonesian women still have to struggle to place themselves in the same position with men. To achieve this is not easy. They have to keep struggling to empower themselves.

Various efforts have been made to bring this program into realization. But the most important thing women should realize is that to achieve this equality, the willingness should come from themselves. Although there are many problems they have to face, they should not give up. They should keep fighting.

One way to learn or to be motivated to empower Indonesian women is by reading literary works, including novels. There are numbers of Indonesian

novels that raise women's issues as their theme. By reading these novels, Indonesian women can see how the female protagonists of the novels encounter all the problems they have, especially the ones that deal with male domination. This kind of novel is written by women writers to show that women also have power that they can visibly assert, especially when they are controlled by other people. It is expected that these particular novels will encourage Indonesian women to empower themselves especially in voicing their feeling and wishes to be free from any oppression.

In Indonesia the appearance of women novelists in 1970s has a close relationship with the development of economic and social life. In the development of Indonesian literature, the 1970s was the period in which a number of Indonesian women became novelists. Unlike the novelists in the earlier period, most of these novelists made the life of women their theme. They try to portray the real life of Indonesian women through fiction. Thus, what is illustrated in the novels is a reflection of the society.

The period of the 1970s was the first period in which Indonesian women visibly attempted to emancipate themselves and to participate in all sectors of life. Many women who used to keep silent and calm in reaction to male domination came to the surface and struggled to make themselves equal to men. This motivated the novelists in that period to write novels portraying the life of women who were trying to free themselves from the burden of people around them, especially men. In other words, the female protagonists in these novels are portrayed as struggling to empower themselves by not fully relying on male domination.

While some Indonesian novelists let their minds imagine the life of women who are trying to free themselves from male domination, in Canadian literature some women novelists also have paid serious attention to the attractiveness of women. This became the object of their inspiration for their works. The reason Canadian women novelists write the novels on women's issues, is not mainly for financial interest. But more than that, they want to raise the life of women, especially the oppressed ones, to attract other people to pay attention to the problems that women usually face, especially those related to male domination. Besides, the way female protagonists encounter all of their problems can motivate other women not to be controlled by other people. On the contrary, they have to empower themselves to become free themselves from all oppression and other people's control.

From a feminist perspective, the involvement of women novelists in the literary world demonstrates that they are struggling for acknowledgements, that not only can men be novelists, but so can women. M.G. Hesse in Women in Canadian Literature states, "as society allows women greater freedom, the writers increase the variety of their characters, psychological insight becomes more profound, and women naturally lose their stereotyped image and gain recognition 'on their own terms' for which they strive individually and collectively in their search for full self-realization" (1976: xiii). Furthermore, Judi Coburn in Baker's Dozen Stories by Women also says, "the work of the many women writers who have been pivotal in moving thousands of women towards a feminist consciousness are examples of the complex relationship between women's literature and feminist ideas" (1984: 9).

Based on these statements, it can be proved that women have gained recognition as writers. Or in other words, people have admitted that, like men, women can also be writers. Hence, this is actually one way of showing their capability in empowering themselves in a particular area.

Meanwhile, in line with the government program on empowering women in Indonesia, some attempts have been made to realize the program. These attempts are done not only through academic institutions at which women can learn to get more knowledge, but also through published material like the novels. By reading novels, people especially women not only entertain themselves, but also can learn how to empower themselves through the female protagonists of the novel.

Based on the above considerations, I am interested to conduct a comparative study on the notion of power as it is reflected in Canadian and Indonesian novels by viewing it from feminist perspective. Thus, besides giving various opinions about power, especially by feminist scholars, philosophers, and thinkers, I would like also to show how these notions of power can be seen and reflected in literary works, especially through the female protagonists of the two novels. After that, I would like to compare how the female protagonists of Canadian and Indonesian novels are different and similar in reflecting those notions of power.

1. 2. Object of analysis

The objects of analysis of this thesis are two novels written by two women writers. They are The Edible Woman written by Canadian novelist, Margaret

Atwood, and Karmila written by Indonesian novelist, Marga T. In terms of elements of the novel such as character, plot, and setting, the novels differ considerably. However, they are the same in theme. Both raise women's issues and both also belong to the period of the contemporary novel. Based on the differences and similarities, the analysis will be focused on how the notion of power given by feminist scholars is reflected through the female protagonists of each novel.

It is interesting to read how women novelists express their ideas on women's issues since they may fully represent what they see or feel. This is different if men raise women's issues for the themes of their novels. It cannot be denied that what they write is just based on what they see or hear, but not on what they feel. In fact, they write it from men's point of view. Therefore, this is the reason why I choose these two prominent female novelists. In addition, the two novels portray the life of women who try to free themselves from male domination by empowering themselves. Through their characters, the novelists try to show to the readers how the female protagonists enjoy their lives and empower themselves without fully relying on male authority. The female protagonist of the two novels do not deny that they need men in their lives; however, as human beings who think that they have the same rights as men, they do not want to be tied or dominated by men. Therefore, they try to struggle to empower themselves as much as they can.

1. 3. Objectives

There are some objectives I would like to achieve in analyzing how the female protagonists of The Edible Woman and Karmila reflect the notion of power. First, how do the female protagonists of the two novels reflect the notion of power as given by the feminist scholars? Second, what is the difference and the similarity is between the way the female protagonists of each novel empower themselves in order to free themselves from male domination? And third, how can literary work such as novels, on one hand can be read by women as entertainment for leisure time, but on the other hand, can be a lesson for them to empower themselves?

1. 4. Methodology

This research focuses its analysis on the contextual data obtained from the two novels. Therefore, library research will be applied in order to obtain and analyze the data. In the first step, I collected some books and printed materials that are useful to provide some theoretical background related to the notion of power given by feminist scholars, thinker, or philosophers. After that, based on the theoretical background I found from them, I analyzed the two novels by looking at how power is reflected in the female protagonists of the two novels. Then, through their reflection, I tried to find out the difference and the similarity between them to see how each female protagonist asserts the power she has. And last, I conclude the main points that I can get from the analysis and see what are the benefits of reading the two novels, especially for women in empowering themselves.

1. 5. Feminist Literary Criticism

Is there any difference between men and women writers? To answer this question, it is interesting to trace theory on feminist literary criticism related to the works of women writers. In the 1960's in the United States and France, many women were active in various political movements, and discovered that, despite their participation, men continued to construct images of women based on stereotypical sexist assumptions. In that time, it was men who made the decisions and women who made the tea. Post-sixties feminism grew and feminists recognized that women should also represent themselves in the political realm, and contested negative verbal and visual images of women. As a result, women gained consciousness, which was manifested in many ways. They attempted to break the barriers of the past.

One way that women could represent their struggle to break the barriers in that period was through literary works. Through literary works, they could fully and freely express their ideas, their problems, their impression, and their expectations on anything related to their life. Besides, they also could explain that their own existence was meaningful, their view of things was valid and intelligent, and their suffering was imposed. In addition, through literary works, they could also convey a belief in their collective strength to resist and remake their own lives.

So in general, the works of women writers in this period mostly portrayed the aspects of women's lives that had been erased, ignored, demeaned, mystified, and even idealized. Unfortunately, their works were still not fully exposed to or embraced by public readers. This phenomenon continued to

happen until the 1970s. Not only America and France, but also the feminist literary critics in the 1970s were occupied with the idea that women writers had been silenced by and large excluded from literary history. A desire to rediscover the lost works of women writers occupied the minds of feminist critics. They wished to reveal women's life experiences and perceptions about society so they would be recognized. These critics demanded status and recognition for women writers, out of awareness that critical attention concentrated mostly on male writers. Their aim was not simply to fit women into a male-dominated tradition, but also to write the tradition of women themselves.

Due to this, many women writers fiercely resisted having their works considered as women's writing because they transcend a purely female point of view. One critique that deals with women's writing is given by Anne Stevenson as she notes in Morris' Literature and Feminism, "A good writer's imagination should be bisexual or trans-sexual" (1993: 93). According to Stevenson as she emphasizes in a critique on romantic fiction there are, "large numbers of women who write romantic fiction of the kind that seems to conform to the conventional ideals of femininity and masculinity and who passionately assert their identification as women with these ideals" (1993: 93). On this idea, Mary Eagleton quoting Joyce Carol Oate's view in Feminist Literary Theory also states that "to have a 'male' or 'female' style is 'symptomatic of inferior art' where the female might degenerate into mere propaganda on women's issues" (1986: 200). In contrast, Catherine Belsey and Jane Moore state in The Feminist Readers: Essays in Gender and the Politics of Literary Criticism, "there is

something distinctive in the way women writers have used certain images” (1989: 200).

Eagleton adds, “if the women writer writes about woman, she risks the label of ‘partially’, ‘narrowness’, ‘a woman’s book’ (1986: 40). Thus, “if women do attempt to write, they are simply bringing to the major body of established male texts the ‘feminine’ qualities they are supposed to represent in life generally” (1986: 41. If we look at to these statements, it seems that the effort of women writers to express their idea through literary works and to be recognized still faces challenges. It is because the concept of what women writing should look like is still a polemical point of argument among critics. To wait until one particular concept of women’s writing is established will inhibit the willingness of women to write. Therefore, women writers’ decision to keep writing is a great encouragement for other women to produce their work. As a result, apart from various responses on their capability to write as men, a number of great women writers have appeared. Some of them have become very prominent literary writers. So, women writers in the following periods then perhaps should feel gratitude to the previous women writers since they had been motivators for them to also represent women’s voice in their literary works.

Chapter Two

Theories of Power and Gender-Related Issues in Indonesian and Canadian Contexts

This chapter will explore the theoretical background and critical reviews on the notion of power offered by some philosophers and thinkers. The aim of exploring these is not to find out which idea is the best, but to show the variety of notions on power especially in regard to gender-related issues.

In order to direct the discussion, in the first section, I would like to draw on some basic definitions of power. In the second, I discuss power in relation to feminist terms. In this section some feminist concepts of power and critical reviews of it will be put forward. In the last, I will analyze gender-related issues both in Canada and in Indonesia in regard to the focus of analysis.

Before proceeding to the meaning of power in terms of feminist contexts, I would like to draw on some basic definitions of "power" taken from some dictionaries. The reason for taking the meaning of power from these dictionaries is to give an introductory explanation about power in general. Therefore, based on the general meaning, it will be easy to know the meaning of power as a broader concept. After that in the next section I would like to continue with the meaning of power in feminist contexts. Based on these meanings in the next two chapters I would like to analyze how power is reflected in the female characters of the two novels, The Edible Woman and Karmila, which are the objects of this study.

2.1. What is Power?

In The Norton Dictionary of Modern Thought, "power" is one of the central concepts of political theory which sociologists have sought to define by distinguishing it from *authority* on the one hand, and from *force* on the other" (1999: 677-68). It is briefly defined as "the ability of its holders to exact compliance or obedience of other individuals to their will, on whatsoever basis" (1999: 678). Meanwhile, in CollinsEnglish Dictionary, '**power, powers, powering, powered**' is defined as follows:

1. If someone has **power**, they have a lot of control over people and activities.
2. Your **power** to do something is your ability to do it.
3. If it is **in** or **within** your **power** to do something, you are able to do it or you have the resources to deal with it.
4. If someone in authority has the **power** to do something, they have the legal right to do it.
5. If people take **power** or come to **power**, they take charge of a country's affairs. If groups of people are **in power**, they are in charge of a country's affairs.
6. You can use **power** to refer to a country that is very rich or important, or has strong military forces (1995: 1287).

In addition, in The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, it is written that "the meanings of "power," "influence," "control," and "domination" are uncertain,

shifting, and overlapping" (1972: 424). Therefore, instead of seeking a single analysis of "power," there are five main features that can be considered:

1. an intention manifest in the exercise of power;
2. the successful achievement of this intention;
3. a relationship between at least two people;
4. the intentional initiation by one of actions by the other;
5. a conflict of interest or wishes engendering a resistance that the initiator overcomes (1972: 424).

Based on the above statements, it can be said that power is the ability owned by someone to control another person. Or in other words, those who have power have the ability to do what they desire, especially to control other people. They can make decisions by themselves and free themselves from the oppression done by other people. So, basically power exists in the body or mind of each individual. Hence, each individual has power in herself/himself. The problem is now how people who have power can actualize themselves or how they can empower themselves in making decisions. Especially for women, if they have power why don't they use it to show that they can empower themselves? This is an opportunity for them to actualize power they potentially have, especially to free themselves from any kind of oppression or to put themselves on an equal footing with men.

Given the above general definition of power, it is easy now to know more about power in terms of feminist contexts, which will be explained in the next section. Or at least, the above preliminary meaning can help lead us to

understand what broader concepts of power are, especially from a feminist point of view. These concepts can be used as a starting point in analyzing the two novels, The Edible Woman and Karmila.

2.1. Feminist Concepts of Power

For some people like those in Indonesia, 'power' tends to be related to military forces. This may be true if it is viewed from a political point of view. But what will be explored here is the notion of power in relation to feminist contexts. To start the exploration, I will briefly consider comments by a number of philosophers and thinkers such as Michel Foucault, Jana Sawicki, Sandra Lee Bartky, Jo Rowlands, Susan J. Hekman, and some others. These scholars' ideas on power get serious attention in academic contexts, especially in Women's Studies, where their ideas are always put as a matter of discussion. It is expected that different ideas on power will be useful in helping to analyze how female characters in the two novels, The Edible Woman and Karmila can empower themselves to free themselves from male's domination, or at least reduce gender inequality between women and men.

I would like to start with the theoretical concept of power given by Michel Foucault. Foucault is a contemporary French philosopher whose ideas, concepts, or theories of power are discussed among feminist thinkers, students of Women's Studies, or people who are interested in studying or dealing with gender-related issues. He offered a new concept of power, which can be related to patriarchal power. His writings explore the shifting patterns of power within society and the ways in which power relates to the self.

In order to understand more about Foucault's ideas of power, it is good to look at the 'juridico-discursive' model of power in which Foucault rooted his critique. In her Disciplining Foucault, Jana Sawicki writes that this model "underpins both liberal theories of sovereignty (that is, legitimate authority often codified in law and accompanied by a theory of rights) and Marxist theories which locate power in the economy and the state as an arm of the bourgeoisie" (1991: 20). There are three basic assumptions involved in this model as Sawicki adds;

1. Power is possessed (for instance, by the individuals in the state of nature, by a class, by the people).
2. Power flows from a centralized source from top to bottom (for instance, law, the economy, the state).
3. Power is primarily repressive in its exercise (a prohibition backed by sanction) (1991: 20).

Although Foucault does not deny that this model of power describes one form of power, to some extent he has his own theory of power, which he divides in three basic ways;

1. Power is exercised rather than possessed.
2. Power is not primarily repressive, but productive.
3. Power is analyzed as coming from the bottom up (1991: 21).

From these concepts, it seems that Foucault's ideas are contrary to the 'juridico-discursive' model of power. It is because Foucault emphasizes power

as an exercised action or ability that can be done by individual and comes from the individual itself. Or in other words, power can be gained through exercise and it comes from the individual itself. If it is so, then everybody is able to assert it without restricting whoever, wherever, and however the individual is, including women. As long as it is exercised and produced by the individual, she/he can assert the power. Thus, this idea is clearly different to one of the ideas of power given by Karl Marx. Marx emphasizes that power can be gained through economics. The more possessions someone has the easier it is for the individual to have power. To some extent I would not deny that economics is very important in all aspects of life. But strength coming from the self is much more important to force the individual to take action or to make decisions about what individuals will do next for her/his life. This strength can be a motivator for the individual to be a successful person in terms of economics. So, related to women what Foucault has proposed is very useful in encouraging and making women realize that they have power within themselves and that it can be used to empower themselves, especially when they are under oppressive conditions. Or at least, what Foucault has said about power can indicate that women also have power that they could use to free themselves from male domination.

In addition, Hubert L. Dreyfus, a philosophy professor at Berkeley University, states in his article "Being and Power: *Heidegger and Foucault*" that for Foucault, power is "the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society" and "[P]ower produces; it produces reality", that is, it determines what it makes sense to believe or to do (2001: 2).

According to Dreyfus, for Foucault, power controls the actions of people while nonetheless leaving them free: "power is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are free. By this we mean individual or collective subjects who are faced with a field of possibilities in which several ways of behaving, several reactions and diverse comportments may be realized" (2001: 2). Thus, Dreyfus believes Foucault's ideas that power is an action engaged in a free subject, both an individual and a society, who are faced by possibilities in which they are asked to behave or to react. From this point of view, it is more obvious now that women both as individuals and social creatures have the potentiality to behave or to react towards all possibilities that will happen to them. Or in other words, women have power to do what they wish to do, for example making decisions, especially when they are under oppression. The problem is how women are encouraged to engage in action for the sake of themselves. This engagement is what many feminists have done especially in Western countries in which they try to make people pay attention to women's voice and try to show that women are not subordinate to men.

Meanwhile, Catherine Brace, a professor who teaches in Human Geography at Exeter University, quotes Foucault's idea on power that according to which "power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything but because it comes from everywhere. There is no binary and all-encompassing opposition between ruler and ruled at the root of power relations" (2001: 1). From this we can say that power exists everywhere between the ruler and the ruled. By all means, wherever there are ruler and the ruled, there is power in them. If it so, it means that women whether they are rulers or ruled, there is also

power with them. Apart from the ruler or the ruled, this idea at least is useful to convince women that they could empower themselves without considering whoever, wherever, and however the women are. Or at least this idea can be a moral support for women to determine what they should do to be equal with men.

Besides Dreyfus and Brace, other scholars have also expressed their views on Foucault's thoughts about power, mainly because some of them think that Foucault's theory is problematic. Jo Rowlands, a feminist researcher, in her article "*Questioning Empowerment*", defines power as "the ability of one person or group to get another person or group to do something against their will" (1997: 9). Rowlands starts from the assumption that the more power one person has, the less the other has. If two people want to have something which is incompatible, and one finds the way to do it, it means that she/he has exercised power. Furthermore, Rowlands offers ways to understand and to conceptualize power, which focus on 'processes'. They are:

1. **power over: controlling power, which may be responded to with compliance, resistance (which weakens processes of victimization) or manipulation**
2. **power to: generative or productive power (sometimes incorporating or manifesting as forms of resistance or manipulation) which creates new possibilities and actions without domination**
3. **power with: a sense of the whole being greater than the sum of the individuals, especially when a group tackles problems together**

- 4. power from within: the spiritual strength and uniqueness that resides in each one of us and makes us truly human. Its basis is self-acceptance and self-respect which extend, in turn, to respect for and acceptance of others as equals (1997: 13).**

Thus, individuals are empowered when they are able to maximize the opportunities available to them without constraint. Or in other words, Rowlands emphasizes power as participation in applying or producing the strength which resides within the individual to control or to resist any possibilities that tend to dominate or manipulate the individual in cases where this domination or manipulation does not give a mutual respect to the individual. These four ways that Rowlands offers all seem to be close to what Foucault has said about power. Here, Rowlands tries to support Foucault by saying that power is strength residing in each individual and manifested in an action or resistance to tackle domination. At least Rowlands admits that power exists in every individual including women.

In addition, Rowlands also gives three dimensions of empowerment according to the level it operates at. They are:

- 1. personal: developing a sense of self and individual confidence and capacity, and undoing the effects of internalized oppression**
- 2. relational: developing the ability to negotiate and influence the nature of a relationship and decisions made within it**
- 3. collective: where individuals work together to achieve a more extensive impact than each could have had alone. This includes**

involvement in political structures, but might also cover collective action based on co-operation rather than competition (1997: 15).

All these dimensions are very important to women in that they help women to empower themselves in different ways. However to prioritize, perhaps number one 'personal' is the most important since it helps women to be more confident in order to undo oppression. Or in other words, starting from the individual's confidence, a greater power can be asserted. This is a good starting point for women to be together with other women in order to facing all the possibilities that can be barriers for them. By all means, the power which is supported by a group or community will produce stronger power than being alone.

Naila Kabeer, quoting Steven Lukes' from his article "Power: A Radical View," sees power as three different categories: as "power to", "power over", and "power within". First, "power to", here Lukes defines power as "the capacity of an actor to effect the pattern of outcomes against the wishes of other actor and asks the question 'who prevails in decision-making?" (1994: 224). Second, "power over", which Lukes describes as power which "no longer rests in the ability of some actors to initiate, decide and veto decisions, but also in their ability to confine decision-making to 'safe' issues" (1994: 225). Third, "power within" which Lukes describes as the one that is "concerned with 'the socially structured and culturally patterned behavior of groups, and practices of institutions' which help to shape not only whose interests will prevail but also how different actors perceive their interests" (1994: 227).

From these categories, it seems that Lukes not only admits that power exists in each individual or an actor like Rowlands, but also admits that power exists in a group. Besides, Lukes also elaborates how power not only relate to the ability to make decisions but also to how the individual perceives it. So, basically what Lukes has stated about his three kinds of power is not much different from what Foucault has described as Sawicki has explained before. Although Lukes does address gender difference in this notion of power, however, his idea on it is important for women, especially in supporting them theoretically to make decisions in their interest. This idea helps women to realize that they have power within themselves as Rowlands has described, and they could assert it especially when they want to free themselves from any oppression. Hence, indirectly this idea can be moral support for women to take an action in order to empower themselves.

Unlike Lukes and Rowlands, Nancy Hartsock, a leading feminist critic of poststructuralism, in her article "Foucault on Power: A Theory for Women?" emphasizes the differences between theories of power about women and theories of power for women. According to Hartsock, the former theories include the subjugation of women as yet another variable to be considered, and the latter theories begin from the experience and point of view of the dominated. These theories, as Hartsock adds, give attention not only to the ways women are dominated, but also to their capacities, abilities, and strengths. They can thus be used as guides for a potential transformation of power relationships that is for the empowerment of women (1990: 158). The problem is that there are

some factors such as racial and cultural differences that divide women or unite them with men.

Responding to Foucault's ideas, Hartsock argues that Foucault's world is not her world because, in Foucault's world, things move, rather than people; this is a world in which subjects become obliterated or, rather, recreated as passive objects, a world in which passivity or refusal represent the only possible choices. Moreover, Foucault argues that "subjects not only cease to be sovereign but also that external forces such as power are given access even to the body and the forces which constitute the subject as a kind of effect (1990: 167). To this idea, Hartsock says "reading Foucault persuades me that Foucault's world is not my world but is instead a world in which I feel profoundly alien" (1990: 166).

Although Hartsock argues that Foucault's world is not her world, to some extent she believes that there are some indications that Foucault is "with power," that is he understands the world from the perspectives of ruling groups. This is because Hartsock divides power first: from the perspectives of the ruling group, other "knowledges" would appear to be illegitimate or "not allowed to function within official knowledge". And second, Foucault calls only for resistance to and exposure of the system of power relations. Thus, Foucault says that one should "entertain the claims" of subjugated knowledges or bring them "into play" (1990: 167). On this Hartsock agrees since she says that, if we are to construct a new society, we need to be assured that some systematic knowledge about our world and ourselves is possible.

Meanwhile, Jana Sawicki in her *article* "Feminism, Foucault, and "Subjects" of Power and Freedom" in Hekman's Feminist Interpretation of

Michael Foucault, also critiques Foucault's idea of power. According to her, Foucault has claimed that wherever there is power there is resistance. For Sawicki, Foucault sometimes seems to be "describing forms of power that insinuate themselves so deeply within the subject that it is difficult to imagine how change might be possible" (1996: 161). Consequently as Sawicki adds, the individual as 'subjected' is "either bound to others by dependency or control, or to categories, practices and possibilities of self-understanding that emerge from medico-scientific discourses associated with the 'normalizing' panoptic disciplines" that Foucault describes in his genealogical writings (1996: 161-162). Dealing with this, Sawicki quotes Nancy Fraser who characterizes the scenario of the perfected Panopticon as one in which "disciplinary norms have become so thoroughly internalized that they.... [are] not experienced as coming from without" (1996: 162). Furthermore, Sawicki also refers back to Nancy Hartsock who argues that "Foucault's 'wholesale' rejection of modernity and its emancipatory theories, his refusal to envision alternative orders, and his emphasis on resistance and destabilization over transformation rob feminism of elements that are indispensable to its emancipatory goals (1996: 162). Or in other words, according to Sawicki, Harstock claims that Foucault's analysis of power fails both to serve "feminism because it is not a theory developed for women", and fails to "provide an epistemology which is usable for the task of revolutioning, creating, and constructing" (1996: 162).

To support Harsock's ideas, Sawicki quotes Joan Cock's ideas when Cock comments upon Foucault's 'anarchistic' tendencies:

[W]e must be clear on his two great weakness, both constitutional

weaknesses of anarchism. These are the inability to support any movement that through its massiveness and disciplines unity would be popular and yet powerful enough to undermine an entrenched legal-political regime; and the inability to stand on the side of any positive new cultural-political order at all, such an order's always being at once a new system of imposed prohibitions and permissions, with respect to which opposition properly can respond only negatively. Both inabilities are symptoms of a basic failure of nerve before the whole question of order--which, after all, every tolerable as well as intolerable mode of social life must and will have, and which any serious counter movement at some juncture will have to develop as well. (1991: 163)

From this we can see that Sawicki tries to show women for Foucault's 'anarchistic' idea result in a theory in which their weaknesses are not able to support any movement and are not able to stand on the side of any positive new cultural-political order at all. If this is the case, then women could not actualize themselves to develop a political movement. By all means on one hand, Foucault's ideas can be moral and theoretical support for women, but on the other hand, they cannot be fully relied on to transform the cultural-political order. In order to anticipate this, perhaps women should just focus on the idea that power can be gained from within them to empower themselves.

Related to the way of how women can assert their power, Sandra Lee Bartky, cited in Sawicki's article, also comments on the discussion of power related to the fashion/beauty complex in contemporary America. She says that

“many women have resisted or ignored feminist critiques of prevailing standards of fashion and beauty because abandoning them threatens women with de-skilling and challenges their very sense of identity” (1996: 164). Thus, this form of patriarchal power operates by attaching women to certain norms of feminine identity. Bartky’s use of Foucault corrects a deficiency that most feminists find in his writings: its androcentrism.

Moreover, Bartky in Femininity and Domination believes that people are born male and female, not masculine or feminine. According to her, femininity is “a mode of reacting and reenacting received gender norms which surface as so many styles of the flesh” (1990: 65). She also considers three categories of such practices. First are “those that aim to produce a body of a certain size and general configuration”. Second are “those that bring forth from this body a specific repertoire of gestures, postures, and movements”. And third are “those directed toward the display of this body as an ornamented surface” (1990: 65).

Bartky also emphasizes that women’s space is not “a field in which her bodily intentionality can be freely realized but an enclosure in which she feels herself positioned and by which she is confined” (1990: 67). So what she means in the article by the “loose women” is “manifest not only in woman’s morals, but also in her manner of speech, and quite literally in the free and easy way she moves” (1990: 67-68). From this, we can see that what Bartky says is different to what Foucault has said about the resistance of the body. Bartky seems to believe that power is not a resistance of the body. But it is an ability that has already been there within the individual that may come out when the individual is under the control or domination by other people. So, here Bartky tries to put aside

Foucault's ideas on patriarchal power by stating that power does exist in each individual including women. Thus, when women are faced with a problem, their power will certainly react and come out to resist the problem. To some women maybe this power does not come out because of socio-cultural or political conditions. Or these women seem to have no power. However, when they could not stand the situation in which they feel that they are under control by other people, their power will tangibly come out to react to the problem or oppression they have.

In addition, Foucault, as Bartky writes, has argued that the transition from traditional to modern societies has been characterized by a profound transformation in the exercise of power: by what he calls "a reversal of the political axis of individualization" (1990: 78). Power in modern societies according to Bartky is now seeking to transform the minds of those individuals who might be tempted to resist it, and not merely to punish or imprison their bodies. Responding to this idea, Bartky says that this idea requires two things: first, "a finer control of the body's time and its movements; a control that cannot be achieved without ceaseless surveillance and a better understanding of the specific person, of the genesis and nature of his "case", a second "a new knowledge of the individual; modern psychology" (1990: 79).

So, what Bartky emphasizes here is that Foucault observes power from "the tower at any time: the inmate takes over the job of policing himself" (1990: 79). Changes have happened to women in that in modern technologies as Bartky adds, "woman's behavior seems less regulated now than it was in the past. She has more mobility and is less confined to domestic space" (1990: 79). In

addition, Bartky notes also that the Western woman today “enjoys what to previous generations would have been an unimaginable sexual liberty” (1990: 79). For example, as Bartky notes, “divorce, access to paid work outside the home, and the increasing secularization of modern life have loosed the hold over her of the traditional family, and in spite of the current fundamentalist revival, of the church” (1990: 79).

Bartky also states that “as modern industrial societies change and as women themselves offer resistance to patriarchy, older forms of domination are eroded. But new forms arise, spread, and become consolidated” (1990: 80). Moreover, Bartky says that “women are no longer required to be chaste or modest, to restrict their sphere of activity to the home, or even to realize their properly feminine destiny in maternity: normative femininity is coming more and more to be centered on woman’s body—not its duties and obligations or even its capacity to bear children, but its sexuality, more precisely, its presumed heterosexuality and its appearance” (1990: 80). What is new, as Bartky sums it up, is the “growing power of the image in a society increasingly oriented toward the visual media” as well as “the spread of this discipline to all classes of women and its deployment throughout the life cycle” (1990: 80). This point of Bartky’s ideas is perhaps a very important support for women, since she does not only reveal her ideas about power, but also gives way to assert that power. Or in other words, indirectly, Bartky shows that media can be a means for women to empower themselves. It means that Bartky supports that women who are involved in the literary world, especially those who have produced literary works, have empowered themselves. Hence, what Bartky says about power is that it is

a moral support for women to empower themselves, especially to free themselves from any oppression or male domination. Perhaps not all women can read or understand Bartky's ideas, but at least her ideas can motivate other feminist thinkers or people who are concerned that women should find a way to improve the status of women so they are not subordinated to men.

2.3. Gender-Related Issues in Indonesia

Indonesia is one of the four biggest countries in the world. According to the 1990 Population Census its population is about 179.3 million (1993: 13). This number increases every year. Now there are approximately 200 million people, 56% of whom are women. The country is unique for its diversity in ethnicity, religious/belief, and language. There are about 583 languages and dialects spoken in the archipelago. They belong to the different ethnic groups of the population. Although the people of Indonesia are different in ethnicity, belief, and language, they are one in what is so-called *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity).

Gender relations in Indonesia, so far, have been seen as strongly patriarchal. Women are expected to speak, dress, and behave like princesses, obedient to husbands, and to take care of all their household chores (cleaning the house, cooking and preparing food for the household members, washing the dishes and clothes, and so forth). There is also a notion of the so-called conventional patriarchal power between men and women in the country that we can trace to the fact that many Indonesian women are strongly dependent on their kin (father, brother, husband, and family).

As in most other Asian nations, Indonesian women also are often expected to play the roles of the 'housewife' or 'mother' as part of the practice of 'Adat Timur', the oriental custom, rather than the roles of career women. These women are viewed to be incapable and as having no rights to handle any business deal beyond the domestic sphere. Thus, in general as ISLE notes, "they are not given access to control the acquisition, use and allocation disposal of resources and benefit their families own. Women do not have the same right as men to decide freely and responsibility the number and spacing of their freedom, dignity, and personal held views" (1999: 65-6).

Generally speaking, in Indonesia, people respect women with many symbols that can be viewed as part of the status of women in relation to men. Each group of the believers of the religions that are known to Indonesian people have different ways of worshipping the existence of women. For example, for Hindus, women are regarded as the mother of the Earth or motherland (Ibu Pertiwi) and for the Moslems, they are the symbol of 'heaven' for every single human being. A well-known proverb states, 'heaven is where the mother's foot-sole is located'. The Moslems' holy book "Qur'an" deals with this by stating that a son or a daughter is then obliged to obey and love his or her mother three times more than to his or her father.

According to Aisha B. Leemu and Fatima Heeren, "Both men and women are accorded full spiritual equality (if they practice the principles of Islam, they will receive equal reward) and intellectual equality with men (all Moslems, men and women, have a duty to search for knowledge although they have to go to China/across continent/abroad)" (1978: 14-6). No bar or prohibition on women

pursuing studies is implied from the Holy Kor'an and the Prophet Hadith. As a result, more Indonesian women, especially those who come from the families that value knowledge, gain success and power within the male-dominated society. People are becoming aware of the need to have more women with 'brains' than merely with 'beauty' and skills in 'household chores'.

State policy in Indonesia, in addition, has always rewarded men and women their salary from the bases of equal amount. If a woman is an associate professor, she may get promoted to the next career rank if she has completed and fulfilled all of the requirements needed, just as a man can.

At the national level, more women in Indonesia now have highly-ranked positions in the executive, judicative, and legislative domains than in the past. More women have become ministers, engineers, lawyers, and have entered professions that used to be dominated by merely men. Now even the President of the country is a woman.

It is not surprising for Indonesia to have more women in the distinguished professions because the women's movement in Indonesia itself can be traced from their role in the struggle for the national independence in August 17, 1945. Long before this struggle for independence, the political role of women in the country culminated with the first Congress (Kongres Perempuan Indonesia) on December 22, 1928. Up to the present, the date is still celebrated as the Mother's Day (Hari Ibu).

Furthermore, in 1964, the "Dharma Pertiwi" (wives of the military) was formed, followed by "Dharma Wanita" (wives of civil servants) in 1970, as well as "Pendidikan Kesejahteraan Keluarga" (the organization for social and family

support) in 1980. Saparinah Sadli and Marilyn Porter in their article "Importing/Applying Western feminism: A Woman's Studies University Linkage Project" say that "while membership of these organizations is compulsory and the hierarchy within them reflects a members' husband's rank, they remain national organisations of women, and are able to represent women's interests (1999: 443).

PKK has been viewed as having successfully empowered many women in Indonesia, especially the ones who live in the rural areas. This organization has received negative and positive responses from the society. The negative response is mostly related to the actors or the women who executed and managed the programs who have been the elite women: the wives of executive government and private officials. The argument is that the position of these elite women seemed to strengthen the domination of their husbands/men, which is inevitably part of the patriarchal system. However, on the positive side it is worth knowing that, through PKK many rural women have been given opportunities and new knowledges or experiences like the ability to read, write, and speak "Bahasa Indonesia" (the national language); to develop women's skills like knitting, cooking modern cuisine; to make use of their yards in gardening and planting traditional medicine herbs; as well as to engage public performances (speeches, organizing community activities, and assisting in community health services). As a result, a number of achievements have been recognized that came from rural women especially the ones who had no formal educational background.

While the consciousness of women in empowering themselves increases rapidly, in the world of literature numbers of women have been motivated to write and to portray the life of women in such forms as the novel, short stories, or drama. Around 1970 new developments, which brought about an important change in the position of literature in society and opened up new perspectives for both writers and readers, gradually took place. Publishing houses and the mass media started to appear, as well as monthly female magazines.

Meanwhile, the impact of economic changes also influenced the life style of people. In urban areas as Tinneke Hellwig cited Suryakusuma, "the appearance of a middle and upper class with sufficient financial means brought into being a new, Western lifestyle in which men were the breadwinners of the family and women kept house and looked after the children" (1994: 162). The presence of maids gave women an opportunity to have free time. And in order to utilize their time, they read novels as entertainment. Even some of them were not only as "readers but also as writers" (1994: 162). This phenomenon marked the involvement of women actively in the Indonesian literary world, especially in fiction writing. Since they addressed women's issues in their works, therefore, their readers were mostly women too. By using literary works, these writers try to take part in the process of teaching and encouraging Indonesian women in order to empower themselves. The way these writers do this is by presenting how female characters in, for example, the novel, overcome their problems, especially the ones which are related to the ways in which women free themselves from male domination. One of the novels, which shows this problem is Karmila written by Marga T. Through the analysis of the novel, it can be seen

that how women use the power they have to overcome the obstacles they have from men. In such ways, we can see how gender-related issues in Indonesia are portrayed in literary work.

2.4. Gender-Related Issues in Canada

Starting from the realization that in patriarchal societies, women and men live different lives and have different experiences, some women have been motivated to conceptualize feminist theories in order to manifest power. These theories help them to understand the power and privilege differential between women and men. Or in other words, they want to know how the differential came into being, how the oppression of women by men is related to other forms of social oppression such as race and class, and how women's oppression can be overcome.

Perhaps feminists differ in the way they identify primary features of women's oppression, and the way they use strategies or approach. However, they mostly have in common themes such as production, reproduction, sexuality, and socialization. From these themes, feminists have determined women's conditions throughout history and across cultural, class, and racial barriers.

Realizing that women should have equal place with men has motivated some Western women to fight for equal rights. This also brings Canadian women to take a part in any action on behalf of women, to achieve their desire to have the same opportunities as men. Compared to Indonesian women, perhaps Canadian women are visibly more active in pursuing their right to be

equal with men. However, they have the same intention in which they both are seeking equal rights and freedom from male domination.

In order to do this Canadian women have engaged in some movements to gradually remove the unequal treatment they get. For example, they are increasingly getting the education needed for better paying work, and public opinion has supported their right to work and equal pay. In terms of the female labor force, Pat Armstrong in her article "The Feminization of the Labor Force: Harmonizing Down in a Global Economy" in Rethinking Restructuring: Gender and Change in Canada says, "by 1992, 42 per cent of the female labor force and 41 per cent of the male labor force had completed post-secondary education at either the university or the college level" (1996: 31). Most importantly, Canadian women who retain responsibility for the household and family and at the same time participate in the labor force have increased massively.

Marjorie Griffin Cohen points out in her article "Paid Work" written in Canadian Women's Issues, that the action to ask for equal treatment in paid work is in accordance with the goal of feminist movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s. This goal was "to demonstrate inequalities in this type of work: differences in pay and occupational distribution are quantifiable and, therefore, make the inequalities between men and women more visible and convincing as arguments for change" (1995: 83). Cohen also states that "the growth in the sector of the economy has had profound implications for the lives of women because it has brought more women, and more married women, permanently into the labor force" (1995: 85). Cohen proves this by giving a statistical number of women who are working for pay. According to her, "in 1968 about 37 per cent

of all adult women were working for pay. And by 1991 the majority of women (about 58 per cent) were in labor for at any time" (1995: 85).

Perhaps one of the reasons why women are paid less than men is because they are believed to be less productive. Although this opinion is not fully true, in general opinion, it is said that physically women are weak. Therefore, if they work in a factory for example, their production of work is believed to be less than what men do. Besides, men, not women are thought to be responsible for the family income. I believe this is a wrong perception, based on the inequality treatment given to women. In many cases, most of women's work is actually double or triple that of men. This is because women who work outside home also do household work and take care of the children when they go home after work. Therefore, it is not surprising if this is what feminists think of as challenge, since it is contrary to the reality of working women's lives. We have to admit honestly that, although men are physically stronger than women, it does not mean that women should be treated unequally to men, especially with technological changes. The reality has proved that the role of women in the labor force has influenced the growth of national income. Or in other words, the involvement of women in labor force not only increases family income, but also national income. Therefore, the way women's labor force participation is rewarded should be as valued as men's.

Nowadays in Canada, generally we may see in every aspect of life women have fully participated in bringing themselves to be involved in the public. Those who used to just stay home doing household work and taking care of the children now extend their space by going outside the home for work or

engaging in activities which used to be reserved for men. This is a great change that Canadian women have expressed in order to show that men are not the only 'bread winner' for the families, but women are also. Here we can see how they reflect the concept of power that they have by not being dominated by males. With the power that exists within themselves, they try to actualize themselves by taking part in all aspects of life. This can be proved for example by the percentage of women who work in different positions between 1971 and 1981. Marlene Mackie in her book entitled Gender Relations in Canada: Further Explorations quotes 'The Globe and Mail', noting that "in 1981, 20 percent of business owners were women. Between 1981 and 1986, the number of self-employed women rose by 27 percent, while the number of self-employed men increased by just 7 per cent" (1991: 2710).

Although the status of women in Canada almost equals that of men, especially in work pay, gender-related issues still are prominent issues to be discussed, especially among feminists. This is because to be equal with men, there are still many obstacles that women should overcome since gender-related issues include cultural, political, or racial issues. So, these issues can be broader than what we may think. Therefore, this is homework for all women not only in Canada, but also all over the world to find out ways to address these challenges.

Chapter Three

Analysis of The Edible Woman

Chapter Three of this thesis will focus on an analysis of The Edible Woman, a Canadian novel written by Margaret Atwood. Before starting the analysis, the biographical sketch of the writer is presented. The aim of presenting this is to introduce her and her works, so that a general introduction of her literary themes can be seen. The second part of the chapter presents the analysis of how 'power' as it has been discussed in Chapter Two is reflected, especially through the female characters of The Edible Woman. The reflection of this power is viewed from a feminist perspective. Hence, the interpretations are basically referred to the notions of power given by some philosophers and thinkers discussed in Chapter Two.

3.1. Biographical Sketch and the Works of Margaret Atwood

Margaret Eleanor Atwood was born on 18th November 1939 in Ottawa, Ontario. She began writing at sixteen when she attended Leaside High School in Toronto, where she contributed prose and verse to school literary magazine. After that, her mature writing appeared and in 1961 she published her first volume of verse, Double Persephone, which won the E.J. Pratt Medal, she also won a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship on graduation at Victoria College, University of Toronto. In 1963-64 she wrote her unpublished novel, Up in the Air So Blue, and continued by publishing another volume of her poetry The Circle Game, which won the Governor's General Award. During this time, she also worked in

Toronto for a market-research company, a place where for the first time she conceived the idea to write The Edible Woman. Then she continued writing the first draft of it between 1964 and 1965. In 1968 she moved to Edmonton and began writing The Animals in that Country, which won the Centennial Commission Poetry Competition. In 1969 The Edible Woman was published in Canada, England, and the United States. At the same time, she also wrote some books of poetry such as Procedures for Underground, The Journals of Susanna Moodie, and Power Politics.

1972 may have been the most important year of her literary career since she expressed the full potential of her creativity by writing not only a novel, Surfacing, but also a book on criticism, Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature. Between 1976 and 1981, she wrote some more novels, such as Lady Oracle, Dancing Girls, Life Before Man, and Bodily Harm. In the next years, she wrote a book, Second Words: Selected Critical Prose, and short stories entitled Murder in the Dark: Short Fictions and Prose Poems and Bluebeard's Egg, as well as a book of poetry Interlunar. In 1985 she wrote The Handmaid's Tale, a novel which won both the Governor-General's Award and the Los Angeles Times Award. The years after that she wrote the novels Cat's Eyes, Wilderness Tips, Good Bones, The Robber Bride, Alias Grace, and The Blind Assassin.

According to Pamela Kester-Shelton in Feminist Writers, Atwood is "one of Canada's major contemporary authors on the international scene; her novels have been twice short-listed for the Booker Prize and her work translated into more than 22 languages" (1996: 31). No wonder she has gotten numbers of awards and prizes.

As a writer, her works reflect the life around her and most of them draw attention to the relationships between mankind and nature and between man and woman. Frank Davey in Profiles in Canadian Literature (2) writes that "many of the relationships between men and women in Atwood's work parallel this destructive relationship between mankind and nature, with one of the lovers seeking to control and dominate the other" (1980: 57). Such relationships can be seen vividly in The Edible Woman.

The Edible Woman is one of Atwood's novels that takes this issue to the fore. Although this novel portrays the life of a female character struggling to untie herself from man's shackle, Atwood refuses to consider it as a feminist novel. This is how she answers Margaret Kaminski's question in Margaret Atwood: Conversations, edited by Earl G. Ingersoll.

Kaminski: Do you consider The Edible Woman a feminist novel?

Atwood: I wrote it in 1965, but it didn't appear till 1969 in Canada and 1970 in the States. In 1965, if you'll recall, there wasn't a feminist movement. There had been, but there wasn't at that time, and it didn't really get going, I think, till '68 or '69 in the States and in Canada later that. So at the time I wrote it, I did not consider it a feminist novel because that terminology was not in use.

Kaminski: Well, aside from the terminology, there are things in it that remind me of feminist themes, such as women not being able to get good jobs although they have college education, and "the men upstairs" having the good jobs.

Atwood: I don't consider it feminism; I just consider it social realism. That

part of it is simply social reporting. It was written in 1965 and that's what things were like in 1965 (1990: 27).

This is very interesting because, although the feminist movement had not yet appeared by the time Atwood was writing this novel, Atwood had anticipated the idea to put women's issues as her theme. Although there were other novels such as those written by Mavis Gallant in 1950s which raised women's issues before the women's movement, the presence of Margaret Atwood's novels seemed to attract many audiences. Perhaps she had had a premonition that later on this issue would become a popular, not only among literary writers but also among philosopher and thinkers. So writing and publishing The Edible Women in that time was the right time. No wonder that the novel was subsequently labeled a feminist novel.

One of the characteristics of most of Atwood's novels is that woman is an object of attention. Frank Davey in his article in Jeffrey M. Heath's Profiles in Canadian Literature (2) notes that "the usual voice in Atwood's poetry and fiction is that of a woman who has become frightened, alienated, or embittered by her experience" (1980:58). Women in such situations as Davey draws can also be seen in Atwood's novels: for example, Marian McAlpin in The Edible Woman, the narrator of Surfacing, and Mrs. Moodie in The Journals of Susanna Moodie. These women experience irrational feelings about the effects of their relationship on other people including their friends, husbands, or lovers. Even Davey emphasizes that woman in Atwood is most often represented as "victim" and man as the "manipulative oppressor" (1980:56). One of good points in

Atwood's works is how women thought to be victims empower themselves to free themselves from the men who oppress them.

Another characteristic of Atwood's novels as George Woodcock says is "there are no old women - no Hagar Shipleys - among of her heroines, nor, except in the recollection of past experience, is any of her leading characters a young girl" (1990:15). However, although her heroines are young, they are old enough to handle some kind of life crisis. Even Woodcock adds that 'they are all in fact women who have accepted the mores of the twentieth-century consumer society and lived according to them, in many cases by directly serving that society" (1990:15). One of the reasons why Atwood also put an element of modern society in her works is that she assumes as Woodcock writes that society "produces emotionally sick people who will only be able to cure themselves by challenging and defeating its manifestations within themselves" (1990, 16). This particular situation can be seen in her novel Surfacing.

Life Before Man is Atwood's novel whose female character is rather different than others. If her female characters in other novel such as The Edible Woman and Surfacing all are young girls, in this novel one of the heroines is an older one. An older woman as female protagonist is one of the three centers of consciousness that Atwood introduces to Life before Man. The other center of consciousness as Carol Beran writes in Living over the Abyss: Margaret Atwood's Life Before Man are "her look at a male character from inside, and what many readers have perceived to be her bleakest vision of human society" (1993: 13). Perhaps these centers of consciousness are also particular

characteristics that distinguish her works from those of other contemporary literary writers.

Besides the three novels above, there are many other novels of Atwood's that become popular and also received awards. One of them is Cat's Eye. This novel was published in 1988. According to Arnold E. Davidson, Cat's Eye "in some ways is the most personal of Atwood's novels" (1997: 14). This is because in this novel she presents her life experience through the female protagonist. This life experience includes her girlhood in Toronto and the north woods, as well as a woman artist. This novel is interesting because Atwood reworks all her previous novels such The Edible Woman, Surfacing, Lady Oracle, Life Before Man, Bodily Harm, and The Handmaid's Tale as Davidson comments,

"Cat's Eye, for example, partly evokes all of Atwood's previous novels - The Edible Woman's critique of consumerism and the commodification of women, Surfacing's interrogation of female identity, Lady Oracle's protagonist both victimized as a girl by other little girls and transmuting childhood suffering into art, the vast deployment of time implicit in Life Before Man, Bodily Harm's poetics of pain, the therapeutic telling of a painful personal story in The Handmaid's Tale" (1997: 13).

Like the previous novels, Cat's Eye is also about the life of a woman who has problems with the people around her. Reviewers such as Richard Baultch and William French see Cat's Eye as "explicitly antifeminist in that it shows a woman suffering at the hands of other women" (1997: 22). Meanwhile, other reviewers such as Alice McDermott detect in the novel an "undercurrent of

misogyny" (1997: 22). On the contrary, Sherrill Grace says that the novel "is not rejecting feminism" (1997: 22). This idea is supported by Sharon Thompson who similarly says that this novel is "a critique of gender segregation and fundamentalist bigotry, not of being born female" (1997: 23).

Based on some of Atwood's novels above, it can be seen that in general, women's issues, particularly the issues that relate to male domination over woman, dominate Atwood's writings. It is no wonder that her work induces some response given by literary critics. Even more than that, her works not only enrich the treasury of Canadian literary world, but also enrich the treasury of feminist critique. This is one of the reasons why I chose The Edible Woman because this novel vividly portrays how its major female protagonist struggles to free herself, especially from male domination. She not only tries to escape from the men around her, but also challenges men. She is not afraid of anything men can do to her. She is sure that she can empower herself to oppose male domination. This point is very intriguing to analyze from a feminist perspective.

3.2 Power as it is reflected through the female protagonists of The Edible Woman

Before analyzing how power is reflected through the female characters in The Edible Woman (EW), in general we could predict that this novel is written for, from, and about woman. Or in other words, women become the focus of attention of the novel. The title as well as the cover page gives readers the first clue that the work is about woman. Although the title is only a symbol of the meaning behind the plot, literally it can be interpreted as meaning that the novel

is about a woman who can be eaten. Furthermore, the cover page of the edition published by Seal Books (April 1978) also illustrates something related to women since the picture of a refrigerator on this page is drawn like the shape of a woman's body. Although Atwood may not have influenced the choice of cover, it seems that, starting from the outside, the novel emphasizes that it is woman who will become the object of discussion.

In addition, at the beginning of the novel, the readers are also introduced to the atmosphere of the office where women dominate the staff positions. It is a department of a research office where Marian McAlpin, the female protagonist of the novel works. Marian describes the company as layers of ice cream with three floors: the upper crust, the lower crust, and the gooey layer in the middle. The gooey layer is where her department is located.

Our department is the link between the two: we are supposed to take care of the human element, the interviewers themselves. As market research is a sort of cottage industry, like a hand-knit sock company, these all housewives working in their spare time and paid by the piece. ... (EW: 12).

Because our department deals primarily with housewives, everyone in it, except the unfortunate office boy, is female (EW, 12).

Using the term layers of 'ice cream' to describe the office perhaps is another clue to know that the novel also deals with something related to 'food'. However, 'food' here does not mean something edible. It is only a metaphor of

what the novel is about. If the word 'food' is connected to the title of the novel, it is certainly impossible to think that woman is edible. So, what is meant here refers to the relationship between food and woman. Or in other words, perhaps it identifies food with woman as the one who often has problem with eating habits. Besides, Marian's department is located in the middle layer of 'ice cream' perhaps to describe that this is the place where women are always put. They are always surrounded by men and never are put at the top.

According to Elspeth Cameron in her article "Famininity, or Parody of Autonomy: Anorexia Nervosa and The Edible Woman," one of the reasons why Atwood puts a 'cake' in The Edible Woman was that "she wanted to link a cake-lady to the notion – common in the 1950s – that woman was a kind of confection. Women, she had observed, were "offered to be devoured," an idea that in her mind was associated with cakes because of the convention of a woman jumping out of cake" (1985: 46).

So, the above description is only a general view out of the elements of the novel, in order to see that the novel is about women. To obtain a full description of the relation of the novel to woman and power, the following analysis may be helpful.

To start the analysis, The Edible Woman is a novel which voices the intention of a woman to free herself from an unsatisfactory relationship with the ambiguous assistance of some eccentric friends. Marian McAlpin, works for research in Toronto. She has a boyfriend, Peter Wolander, who is a lawyer and who she feels has substituted her as a cake. She has a roommate, Ainsley, who

is less ordinary than she in that she is intent upon motherhood, but determined not to marry.

At the beginning of the plot, Marian loves to eat. But then she becomes incapable of eating as she finds all she wants to eat are living things. The plot turns upon Marian's agreement to marry Peter, but she decides to escape from his domination and goes with a graduate student, Duncan, which nicely complicates the plot. She feels that Peter dominates her because she is just regarded like a cake that he can eat anytime. Seeking escape with Duncan, whom she meets at laundromat, she finds that he is also a cannibal or more insidious kind of parasite. Having discovered that there is no external solution, she returns and bakes 'the edible woman'. Having offered it in vain to her outraged fiancé, she proceeds to eat it.

From the above plot, it seems that the novel tells us that there is something flaring up in Marian related to the freedom she seeks. Her life runs smoothly at first. But when she is faced with the world outside her, the problems come, not only from men, but also from women.

It has been mentioned that Atwood's female protagonists mostly are women who are frightened, alienated, or embittered by their experiences. These experiences include their relationship with other people around them such as family, friends, or lovers. This particular experience happens to Marian when Mrs. Grot of the Accounting department offers to sign her up to a pension plan. Although Marian realizes that she is eligible to have the pension plan, she refuses to sign it, because she feels that she is still too young to think about a pension plan.

“Isn’t it too soon for me to join the Pension Plan? I mean-don’t you think I am too young?” (EW, 13).

Furthermore, thinking about the pension plan just brings her to a situation she cannot yet imagine. Even for her, the pension plan just bothers her. As a young woman, she wants to be free from any burden. Not only free from other people’s control or pressure, but also from any rule that can control her action and space. As a young woman who has just graduated from university, what she needs now is just to work and to enjoy her young age, not to be depressed or panicked by a pension plan.

“I don’t think I’d like to join the pension Plan,” I said. “Thank you anyway.” (EW, 13).

I signed it, but after Mrs. Grot had left I was suddenly quite depressed; it bothered me more than it should have..... I couldn’t think about it..... A pension. I foresaw a bleak room with a plug-in electric heater. Perhaps I would have a hearing aid, like one of my great-aunts who had never married. I would talk to myself; children would throw snowballs at me.... (EW, 14).

From this situation we can see that, although Marian finally signs the pension plan, she feels that no one could force her to have it, not even Mrs. Grot, her senior colleague. She has to decide it by herself. It is only she herself who can decide whatever she wants to do without being forced or oppressed by other people. Therefore, before she signs it, she needs to argue with Mrs. Grot

to express her reasons. This is to show that, although she is eligible to have the pension plan, she has the right to decide whether to have it or not. Furthermore, she is also sure that when she has signed it, her signature will be just put in the file and never be touched anymore. And that is all. So why should she bother herself just for something that maybe useless for her? Why not just think about anything else instead of the pension plan?

Perhaps the reason why Marian argues with Mrs. Grot is because Marian feels that the way Mrs. Grot asks her to sign is oppressing her. It is because Mrs. Grot seems to force her to sign the pension plan. As a colleague, Marian does not expect Mrs. Grot to behave like that. Therefore, she needs to show that she does not want to be forced. Under this situation, Marian should show her power.

From an Indonesian cultural point of view, as an employee, Marian's refusal to sign the pension plan is a risky action. This is because signing it is a part of obligation in her office. For most Indonesian employees, objecting to the rules that have been stated by the office or company is an impossible action to do since it will run the risk of losing the job. However, from a Canadian cultural point of view, what Marian does perhaps is something possible to do. So here, although she knows that signing the pension plan is a rule, however, she is not afraid to refuse to sign it. She is very brave to tell with Mrs. Grot that she does not want it. Apart from signing or not signing the pension plan, actually what Marian has done in response to Mrs. Grot is a reflection on how she has empowered herself not to be controlled by other people, including woman. Indirectly, she does this as an expression that each individual has her/his own

right to do what she/he thinks is good for her/him. No body could control or force her to do anything she/he does not want to.

Hence, if we refer to the notion of power presented by some philosophers or thinkers as it is discussed in chapter two, the notion of power given by Foucault and Rowlands are perhaps close to what Marian has done to Mrs. Grot. In the novel, Marian is portrayed to be the one who is pressured by Mrs. Grot regarding the pension plan. However, Marian tries to resist Mrs. Grot's control over her by refusing to sign it. Here, Marian shows that, although she is still junior staff at the office, she has right to decide whether she will join or not join the pension plan. Or in other words, she empowers herself as a resistor to Mrs. Grot's people who want to control her. Empowering herself in that situation means that she applies 'where there is power, there is resistance' as Foucault has defined power.

Like Marian, indirectly, Mrs. Grot also applies the notion of power given by Rowlands. It is because finally she could make Marian sign the pension plan, although she first has to argue with Marian. But at least, she also has empowered herself to get Marian to do something against her will. So basically, both Marian and Mrs. Grot have power to control each other. However, if Marian's refusal to sign the pension plan is seen from Marian's view, it means that she has successfully empowered herself to resist Mrs. Grot's control. On the contrary, if it is seen from Mrs. Grot's view, it is Mrs. Grot who has empowered herself because she has successfully asked Marian to sign it finally. The difference is, Marian empowers herself because it is for the sake of herself too. Nobody asks her to do that, while Mrs. Grot empowers herself to do her job

following the rule of the company to ask all staff signing the pension plan.

Indirectly, she does that not for herself, but as part of her job. However, that empowers her as an employee or a person.

Apart from the obligation to be obedient, actually what Marian has done to Mrs. Grot is something risky for her. If it is viewed from an Indonesian cultural point of view, arguing with Mrs. Grot again can affect her job because Marian does it without considering that she will lose her job. She might be thought as stubborn staff. However, she does not care about this. She just feels that she needs to be free. We can see here that her freedom to decide whether joining the pension plan or not is the most important thing. Or in other words, making her own decision is her right.

Another scene that can be analyzed on how power is reflected through the female protagonists of the novel occurs when Marian argues with Ainsley, her roommate, about feeding a baby. Once Marian invites Ainsley to visit her friend Clara, who has just had a baby, Ainsley who has been decidedly anti-marriage, suddenly says she wants to have a baby. Marian is surprised because she could not think how Ainsley wants to pregnant without getting married.

"I knew you'd say that," she said with amused contempt. "No, I am not going to get married. That's what's wrong with most children, they have too many parents" (EW: 34).

The most important thing is that Ainsley wants to have a baby without being married. On one hand, she vividly shows her radical feminism by wanting to a single parent without relying on a husband. But on the other hand, it seems

that she refuses to accept the reality that to be pregnant, she needs a man to fertilize her. This is a biological factor that Ainsley could not deny. Although it is so, for Ainsley, a husband just ruins the family. She says this because she notices that Clara and Joe, Marian's friends, do not have an ideal situation for their child. Clara does not breast-feed her baby. And she thought that it must be Joe who asks her not to do that.

"Nonsense," Ainsley said darkly, "I bet Joe put her up to it. In South America they breast-feed them much longer than that. North American men hate watching the basic mother-child unit functioning naturally, it makes them feel not needed. This way Joe can give it the bottle just as easily. Any woman left to her own devices would automatically breast-feed as long as possible; I am certainly going to." (EW: 34).

In this situation, Marian tries to explain to Ainsley that Joe is a good husband. It is just a matter of the baby who has just got her teeth and who hurts her mother when she is given breast-feeding. Therefore, if Clara does breast-feeding her, it is not because she or Joe does not want it. Here, it seems that Marian is more understanding about mother-child relation than Ainsley since she knows that Ainsley does not like children.

I tried a personal attack: "Ainsley, you don't know anything about babies. You don't even like them much, I've heard you say they're too dirty and noisy." (EW: 34).

The way that Marian convinces Ainsley about the relationship between parents and child is to remind her about the real meaning of femininity.

According to Marian, femininity is not just expressed through having a baby. But more than that it involves considering how to support the baby and how to deal with other people's prejudices about it. This is the point that Marian wants her to think about again, unless she will have problems regarding being pregnant without a husband. The plot becomes clearer when Ainsley replies on how she has wrong perceptions of the meaning of femininity.

"Every woman should have at least one baby." She sounded like a voice on the radio saying that every woman should have at least one electric hair-dryer. "It's even more important than sex. It fulfills your deepest femininity." (EW: 35).

Although Ainsley is just her roommate, as a mature woman Marian feels that she needs to help her by explaining how having a baby in that way is wrong. According to Marian, Ainsley just knows the meaning of femininity on the surface, but not its deepest meaning. Or in other words, Marian realizes that it is possible to have a baby without a husband, but thinking that a husband just ruins the family is wrong. Here, Marian tries to convince Ainsley that, as a social creature, the individual cannot live alone. She needs to interact and socialize with other people, including men. What Ainsley thinks is that, on one hand, she accepts the biological character of being a mother, but on the other hand, she refuses to be the husband's wife. Or in other words, she just needs a man's help

to make her pregnant without expecting him to help her in raising up the child together.

Perhaps what Ainsley thinks is something acceptable in western society, but in developing countries like Indonesia, where the family unit consists of husband, wife, and children, maybe more like grandparents, the family still needs to be legitimated by marriage. Not to do so is something unusual, even strange. Apart from agreeing or disagreeing on what Ainsley wants, Marian has tried to do the best to remind her of the effects of her idea. Although Marian is also still single and realizes that she is in the same status as Ainsley, she feels that, as a woman, she needs to have a husband to share her life. If Ainsley has the idea like that, for her, maybe it is not wrong. On the contrary, that is the way she wants to empower herself as a woman who also can be a mother without having a husband. And for Marian, the way she convinces Ainsley is a part of how she wants to reflect the power she has in order to make her understand. Positively, her control over Ainsley is not to dominate her, but for the sake of Ainsley too. The power that Marian reflects here is a kind of power that is perhaps suitable to Luke's notion of 'power to', 'power over', and 'power within'. This is the power in which one is trying not only to affect but also to convince and even to shape a wish of someone. For me, this particular idea is interesting since it can be seen through a literary work like a novel. And of course what is portrayed here may happen too to the real society it reflects.

The condition of being dominated by men also can be seen in the relationship between Marian and her fiancé, Peter Wollander. Although Marian knows that Peter loves her, even wants to marry her, she feels that he

dominates her freedom. Or in other words, she feels that Peter does not fully love her since he sometimes ignores her and does not care much about her. In one-scene, Marian, Peter, Ainsley, and Marian's friend, Len, are having dinner together. While they are talking, Marian suddenly leaves them and runs away. In response to this action, she expects that Peter to follow her. But she is disappointed because Peter just sits and even pretends nothing has happened to her. Here, Marian realizes that her presence is not worthy. She even feels that for Peter, talking about hunting with Len is more important than she is. To remember about Peter's hunting just makes the situation worse for her. This is because Marian knows that Peter likes hunting very much. But Peter does not tell her much about that. As Peter's girl friend, Marian actually expects that he should tell her much about his hobbies, but he does not. So, she feels disappointed in thinking that her position with Peter is not special. As a result, she sees that Peter is far away from her. Physically Peter is close to her, but psychologically he is not.

I attuned my self to Peter's voice; it sounded as though it was coming from a distance. He was telling Len a story, which seemed to be about hunting. I knew Peter used to go hunting, especially with his group of old friends, but he had never told me much about it. He had said once that they never killed anything but crows, groundhogs and other small vermin. (EW: 65).

Again in this scene, Marian is faced with a problem with other people around her. But this is interesting because the problem comes from people who

she loves very much. In this case, it is her fiancé, Peter. Being concerned about Peter's treatment to her, finally she escapes and leaves Peter, Len, and Ainsley. Here, Marian tries to show that although she loves Peter, Peter should not ignore her. He should respect her. She obviously shows that, without Peter, she could stand on her own. Her action to leave them all is a reflection of her refusal to be disrespected. Perhaps she feels that the way Peter loves her is just like the way he wants to control her. So, running away is the reflection of her desire to be free from anyone. Or in other words, in such a situation, she still has the ability to stabilize her feeling by gaining her power to resist other people's domination over her. Moreover, Peter has offended her deepest feeling by saying that she has rejected her femininity. In response to this, Marian is even more offended because Peter does not only not respect her, but more than that, he compares her attitude with Ainsley's.

"Ainsley behaved herself properly, why couldn't you? The trouble with you is, " he said savagely, "you're just rejecting your femininity." (EW: 77).

It can be reasonably accepted that Marian feels anger at this because, as a woman, she feels that Peter is too rude to her. Fortunately, being dominated like that, she gains her power to react to Peter's sentence.

"Oh, SCREW my femininity," I shouted. "Femininity has nothing to do with it. You were just being plain ordinary *rude!*" (EW: 77).

From the above scene, it is clear how Peter really wants to dominate and control her. Saying that Marian is 'rejecting her femininity' is a sign that Peter

defines femininity as behaving well in accordance to man's wish. So directly, on the one hand, he expects Marian to behave as well as he wants, but on the other hand, he actually looks like he is controlling all Marian's behavior. This is certainly a form of domination of Peter over Marian in which he wants her to entertain him, but on the contrary it hurts Marian's feelings. Therefore, on this, Marian, without being afraid of losing him, classifies Peter in the class of the people in the deodorant ads. She thinks like that because Peter speaks rudely to her. Besides, she does not want to be compared to Ainsley. Or in other words, she shows her feminism as Ainsley has done, but in another form. So, indirectly, although she sees that Peter has tried to dominate her, Marian also has empowered herself to take revenge on him. Marian's reaction to Peter perhaps is suitable to the notion of power given by Hartsock. Hartsock emphasizes theories of power, which give attention not only to the ways women are dominated, but also to their capacities, abilities, and strength. Hence, Marian applies this notion when she runs away and realizes that Peter is not the only man she could love. Therefore, losing him is not a big problem. This is much better than letting herself being oppressed by Peter. And what is happening next? Her reaction to Peter finally motivates him to propose to her for marriage. Perhaps Peter does this in order to keep having her. However, Marian's freedom cannot be substituted by a marriage proposal. It is finally proved by her act of letting Peter go and canceling their engagement. It is obviously seen here, that although Marian feels she is dominated, she does not merely accept this treatment. On the contrary, she even tries to empower herself with the ability and the strength that she has within herself to resist this domination.

Free from Peter, her burden is not over. She meets another man in the laundromat. He is Duncan. At first, she feels that Duncan is a nice man. Therefore, when both their laundries are done, Marian does not object when Duncan kisses her. Even after that, it seems that Marian likes him because once she goes to laundromat just to see him, not to do her laundry. In doing this Marian feels happy. At least she has found another man who is more affected than Peter. But after being with Duncan, finally she doubts that he is much different from Peter. Perhaps this is because she sees that Duncan is not serious about her. When Marian escapes from Peter at his party, she goes to the laundromat to look for Duncan. Then they stay overnight at the hotel. But the day after she escapes. When she asks Duncan to accompany her to meet Peter, Duncan refuses. From this, Marian feels that like Peter, Duncan does not care about her. He just needs her physically, not psychologically. He even says that Marian's problem with Peter is hers. It is not his problem.

"Don't ask me, that's your problem. It does look as though you ought to do something: self-laceration in a vacuum eventually gets rather boring. But it's your own personal cul-de-sac, you invented it, you'll have to think of your own way out." (EW: 277).

Marian stood up too. She had been calm but now she could feel desperation returning in her, seeping through her flesh like the effects of a drug. "Duncan," she said, "could you maybe come back with me and talk to Peter? I don't think I can do it, I don't know what to say, he's not going to understand....". (EW: 277)

"Oh no," he said, "you can't do that. I am not part of that. It would be disastrous, don't you see? I mean for me." He wrapped his arms around his torso and held on to his own elbows. (EW: 277).

In this situation, Marian finally thinks that she should return to Peter. Unfortunately, when she bakes a cake for Peter, Peter does not eat it. Perhaps he feels that Marian just wants to be fool towards him. Then he leaves her. But by the time he leaves, Marian has really realized that his love is not true. Having felt like this makes her appreciate her freedom. And suddenly she feels she is so hungry and then eats the cake. Symbolically, this scene can be seen as representing the freedom of Marian, who has successfully revealed the oppression of man. Or in other words, she feels that she is free now from Peter's domination and finds herself back to normal life. By all means, her effort to empower herself has brought to success. If 'woman' is edible, now she is not anymore, but the cake is.

Everything gets better, when Ainsley and Peter are gone from her life. Marian lives alone. At the same time, Duncan's roommate, Fischer, also gets married and has moved to another place. It is interesting because finally at the end of the story, the two people with the same condition meet. Duncan comes to her apartment. And Marian tells him that she has steak for lunch. Duncan has guessed that Marian's eating habit is back as a mark that she has got her freedom. No one is destroying her anymore as she has thought. Duncan responds very well to this situation that actually it is he who is destroying her.

“Search your soul,” he said, gazing hypnotically at me from behind his hair. He drank some coffee and paused to give time, then added, “But the real truth is that it wasn’t Peter at all. It was me. I was trying to destroy you.” (EW: 293)

Perhaps Duncan says this because he loves her. Marian has behaved unusually because, psychologically, Duncan’s image has disturbed her mind when they first met. Luckily, Marian has done the best by leaving Peter when she feels has been ‘eaten’ by him. So, in The Edible Woman the cake is just a symbol of a woman who feels that she has been dominated by other people, especially by men. Finally, Marian finds what Indonesian women call her ‘real’ man, Duncan. At the end of the story, Marian offers Duncan to eat a cake. Duncan is surprised because he does not know that Marian could bake a cake.

“I didn’t know you could bake cakes,” he said after the first forkful. “It’s almost as good as Trevor’s.” (EW: 291).

This scene indicates that everything is back to normal. Nothing is to be worried anymore. No one could dominate her anymore. She has got her freedom and her man. This portrait of situation perhaps just a real portrait of the society of Atwood’s which is interestingly composed in a very intriguing plot.

Chapter Four

Analysis of Karmila

Chapter Four of this thesis will focus on the analysis of Karmila, an Indonesian novel written by Marga T. The first part will present a biographical sketch of Marga T. and her works, as well as the writing of Karmila. The second part will present an overview of Marga T. and the development of women novelists in Indonesian literature. The third part will present an analysis of the novel to see how power is reflected through its female protagonists.

4.1. Marga T. and the Writing of Karmila

Marga T. is one of the Indonesian women novelists whose personal biography is not much written about by the mass media. It seems that she prefers to produce her writings silently, while also doing her main job as a medical doctor without being exposed in the media. Marga T. was born in 1943 in Indonesia of a Chinese family. She studied medicine at Trisakti University, one of the famous private universities in Indonesia. Her educational background in medicine enriches her novels with medical terminology as in Karmila. Furthermore, since she grew up in a Christian family, most of her stories are placed in a Christian setting.

Before Karmila was officially published in 1973, the story had appeared in 1970-1971 as a continuous story in Kompas, one of the leading newspapers in Indonesia. In 1976, the novel was made into a film and attracted very large

audiences. It was extremely successful. In 1997, Karmila was made again into a serial film for television audiences. For the second time, it was tremendously successful. The second adaptation of Karmila was even more successful than before. It is not only attracted so many audiences in the cities, but also in the villages where television broadcasting could be received. And the most important attraction was the acting of Karmila as the major female protagonist had motivated lots of Indonesian women to be brave to speak and to make decisions on their own. This could be seen when Karmila was broadcast on the television serially. We could see it everywhere: at home, at the office, at school and on public transportation women were talking about Karmila. They all were talking about how Karmila empowered herself not to be dominated by men, as well as how she showed that woman's dignity could not be bought by money. Indirectly, their giving their ideas and support for Karmila's action on the problems she had to face shows that the female audience has tried to speak rather than being passive. Or in other words, these women have tried to empower themselves by giving their ideas on particular problems that women maybe face in their lives. The effect of broadcasting Karmila not only encouraged Indonesian women to speak, but also influenced their dress style. Wearing clothes just like what Karmila wore on the television became a trend. It seems that those who wore 'Karmila-look' dress felt proud and more confident. This is additional evidence of how Karmila established a lesson on how to empower Indonesian women through fashion. If it is so, if we can refer to the notion of power presented in Chapter Two, what Sawicki has said about gaining power through 'fashion' and 'beauty' may be true. This is an obvious reality that

happened among Indonesian women as they tried to imitate the way the artists dress as they watch them on television. Or in other words, what has been written by Marga T., and supported by the mass media has indirectly taught Indonesian women to learn how to empower themselves for the sake of themselves too.

Karmila is a serial film that women can be recommended to watch not only as entertainment, but also as a lesson for Indonesian women on how to act, to behave, and to make decisions without pressure from other people, especially men. Now the success of Karmila can be proved by admiring how it has been reprinted seventeen times.

In addition, Karmila is a novel which blows fresh air into the world of Indonesian literature, especially in the novel genre. It is a work published in the right time when Indonesian society needs entertainment writing close to daily life, simple, but real and touching the deepest heart of readers. It is not only a novel that everybody can read, but also a novel that has a close relationship to the development of the publishing history in Indonesia. It is the first novel published by Gramedia, a well-known publisher in Indonesia. It also has inspired Gramedia's policy to publish popular and high quality novels. Furthermore, the writing pattern of Karmila is a new milestone for Indonesian novels up to the present. The reason is because the dialect of the language that Marga T. uses in the novel is an Indonesian language spoken daily by young generation.

It has been mentioned before that the works of Atwood are influenced by her personal life. This is also true of Marga T's works. Most of her works illustrate

the life around her. For example, by the time she was writing Karmila, she was a student of a medical faculty. No wonder if medical terminology such as 'anamnesa', 'diparasintese', 'schizophren', and 'gravide' embellish the story of Karmila. A. Teeuw in Modern Indonesian Literature (I) notes that Marga T "wrote this book while herself a medical student, and the setting of the book is the romanticized world of hospitals, doctors, students, nurses and patients" (1979: 162). Furthermore, the conflicts that arise in the plot are also conflicts that may happen in the daily life of society. So, what Marga T. expresses in the novel is close to what is happening to many people. This is one of the reasons for the novel's success. Another reason is the happy ending of the novel which, when it appeared in newspapers, readers had expected. This expectation is also addressed to Kabut Sutra Ungu, another novel written by another woman novelist, Ike Soepomo. To this Teeuw says, "the comments of the readers of the serial induced the author to provide their stories with a more truly happy ending before their publication as books" (1979: 158).

After her success with Karmila, Marga T. became more popular, especially when her second novel, Badai Pasti Berlalu (The Storm Will Surely Blow Over) was published and made into a film. Besides these two novels, she wrote other novels whose themes are on woman's issues. According to Tinneke Helwig, Marga T. is "one of the most productive Indonesian writers" (1994: 177). Since her success with Karmila and Badai Pasti Berlalu (The Storm Will Surely Blow Over), she has produced more novels such as Gema Sebuah Hati (A Heart's

Echo), Bukan Impian Semusim (Not A Dream Of Just One Season), Sepotong Hati Tua (An Old Heart), and Sebuah Illusi (Illusion).

4.2. Marga T. and the Development of Women Novelists in Indonesian Literature

The year 1970 marks the beginning of the development of Indonesian literature, especially the novel genre. This is the result of the improvement of the Indonesian economy, which was marked by the increasing purchasing power for all kinds of goods, including newspapers, magazines, and books. As a result, popular monthly magazines began to appear such as Femina, Sarinah, Kartini, and Ayahbunda. The target audiences of these magazines are women because women, especially those, who come from the upper class, are the ones who have the leisure time to read. This is related to another impact of the improvement of the Indonesian economy, in which the social classes of the society become more differentiated. Helwig, quoting Suryakusuma, says that "in the urban areas the appearance of a middle and upper class with sufficient financial means brought into being a new, Western life in which men were the bread-winners of the family and women kept the house and looked after the children" (1994: 162). Since women who come from the upper class are able to afford hiring a maid, as a result, household jobs are done by the maid. Hence, these women have the spare time to do something else rather than doing the household jobs. The appearance of women's magazines at a time when these women have relatively little to do motivated them to utilize their leisure time by reading. Therefore, little wonders that most of the readers of these magazines

are women. On this Helwig comments that “women, as the non-productive or consuming group, were a large potential market for the printed word” (1994: 162).

To see how Karmila has dealt with empowering women actually can be seen not only through its female protagonist, but also through the writer of the novel. Writing this novel, perhaps is one of the ways that Marga T. has empowered herself. She uses this means not only to channel her talent as a writer, but also to earn some money. Social changes in Indonesian economics have motivated some women to do something that can produce money. And I believe that the other woman writers also do the same. Thus, this is a reflection of what was happening in the 1970s in Indonesia.

The are parallels with England in the seventeenth century. For example, Lady Mary Wroath wrote Urania for financial purpose. According to Dale Spender, “it seems as though Lady Mary Wroath was the first woman to take up her pen for many of the same reasons that women today take up their pen to earn money” (1986: 11). Perhaps we cannot deny that to some extent, in order to empower themselves, women need to earn money. But it does not mean that, the more money they have, the more power they have too. What is meant here is that if they have money, they can more easily decide what is the best thing they can do, especially in supporting the life of the family. By all means, they can prove that they can do what men can do as ‘breadwinner’. The idea that women should have money is supported by Mary Gordon as she quotes Woolf’s thoughts in a Foreword to A Room of One’s Own: “... women must have money

and privacy in order to write – is inevitably connected to questions of class” (1981: viii). What Gordon means here is that, with money, women can make their lives better. Or in other words, in order to do something to get some money, women’s body and mind should be healthy and their sense should be delightful “One cannot think well, love well, sleep well, if one has not dined well” (1981: ix).

Thus, we may say that Marga T. is a woman writer who is very fortunate, since she is taking advantage of circumstances to choose the right time to earn some money. By the time the economic growth of Indonesia was getting better than it used to be, lots of Indonesian women, especially those who live in the cities had leisure time and relatively little to do, Marga T. appeared to attract their attention to induce them to spend money to buy her novel. With her works, Marga T. not only entertained them, but also let them to learn how to empower themselves.

For Indonesian women like Marga T., having a chance to support the family financially through her novels, can be regarded as one way of empowering herself in order to remove the image that women’s place is in the kitchen. By the involvement of women in the literary work, directly they participate in increasing the growth of the national economy. Hence, it is clear that women play a prominent role in development.

The improvement of the economic sector in Indonesia affects not only the development of printing history, but also the area of education. Lots of Indonesian women have had a chance to continue their study. This is another

similarity that was happening too in England in the seventeenth century. If in the period of 1970s, lots of women had a chance to get higher education, similar events were happening in England in the 17th and 18th centuries. Women started to think about getting an education. The difference is, in the period of 1970s, Indonesian women had a chance to continue their education into higher institution after finishing high school. But in England, they had just started to learn from the very basic grade, both through getting the education in formal schools and through self-study. So, no wonder if some of them educated themselves. Spender in Mothers of the Novel, comments on this as follows, "A surprising number of women educated themselves. 'Surprising' because in this day and age we are accustomed to think of even reading, for example, as something which must be taught, yet many are the women who seem to have acquired their skills with minimum of tuition. And many are the women who taught themselves a foreign language, by means of a dictionary" (1986: 15).

The impact of the economic growth in Indonesia, in which a lot of women have had the opportunity to obtain higher education and training affects the change of women's activity in many kinds of jobs. Consequently, some women are not only consumers but also producers. On this Helwig, quoting Sapardi and Sardjono, notes that "with a domino effect women became involved in literature not only as readers, but also as writers" (1994: 162). Helwig adds, "they became editors of women's and girl's magazines and entered the literary world from different angles" (1994: 162).

Due to these transformations, not only did the number of women writers increase, but the number of their works also increased rapidly. It cannot be denied that the 1970s is the period in which women began to take an active part in fiction-writing, including Marga T. She is one of the women writers who uses women's issues for her themes and addresses her works to female readers. After Marga T, other women writers have appeared and followed her writing style, and altogether they have produced a new kind of Indonesian literary genre defined as *sastra pop* (popular literature). Helwig writes that "writings are considered popular literature if they are part of the mass media and, as a facet of industrial culture, are degraded into commercial objects that must be sold for a profit" (1994: 164). In addition, Helwig adds, "They (popular novels) have a typical urban character, in terms of both their (mass) production and consumption and their themes. Most of them are easy reading, with little psychological development or self-reflection geared to the general public" (1994: 178). But Helwig refuses to say that this kind of novel is the same as 'dime store romances' in the West. On this, she writes "the term 'popular novel' in Indonesia does not have the same connotation as dime store romances in the West" (1994: 165). Helwig perhaps says this because the appearance of this kind of novel not only attracts many people to read, but also enhances the reading habit in Indonesia. This kind of novel is opposed to *sastra berbobot* (serious literature), as the works of previous periods of writers are defined. Helwig defines *sastra berbobot* (serious literature) as follows; "In so-called serious literature, the characters reflect on both the events which occur around them and their own actions, and there is more psychological depth" (1994: 164).

4. 3. Power as it is reflected through the female protagonists of Karmila

Karmila is one of the most popular Indonesian novels that can be used as a lesson for moral value. It is useful not only for women, but also for men. Its mission is to reinforce commitment to the marriage and responsibility for the family. It is about a woman's struggle to be equal to men, and not to be merely a victim. The novel tells the story of a young good Indonesian woman, Karmila, who has been trapped and raped at a crazy party, held by her friend. As a result, she is pregnant, although in fact she has a fiancé who is studying in Australia.

Karmila does not accuse the man, Feisal, who rapes her. Although Feisal himself is ready to marry her and become the father of her baby, Karmila refuses to do that unless they agree to divorce when the baby is born. Feisal agrees heavy-heartedly. Then they get married. After Karmila gives birth, they divorce. Feisal brings the baby, Fanny, to his house. Karmila who thinks that her job is finished suddenly is asked again by Feisal to feed the baby. Again Karmila refuses to do that unless Feisal pays her every month. Feisal for the second time agrees heavy-heartedly. At one point the baby is sick when Karmila is about to leave for Australia. Fortunately, Karmila's maternal instinct to take care her baby forces her to cancel the trip. She takes cares of the baby until the baby get well. Then she finally decided to remarry Feisal until she gives birth to her second child, Tasia.

However, although their marriage seems to be happy and Karmila has succeeded in becoming a doctor, her love for her fiancé, Edo, has never faded away. It is the same for Edo. Blessed by Feisal's repentance, gradually Karmila

realizes that her husband really loves her. Besides, Edo also has found another woman to be his wife. Finally Karmila's love for Edo fades away, and she loves her husband sincerely and tenderly. The story ends when Karmila gives birth for her third child, Daniel.

Reading the synopsis of Karmila, it seems that there is nothing special in the plot, setting, and the characterization. It is just a simple story that may happen in Indonesian society. However, if we look at to the mission that the novel has, Karmila is very interesting novel to be analyzed, especially if it is viewed from a feminist perspective. The reason is that Karmila tries to present how someone fulfils a commitment and accepts a responsibility. Karmila, the female protagonist of the novel, is only a student in a medical faculty. Although she comes from a middle-class family, she has strong religious beliefs. It is just a matter of her unluckiness when a man, Feisal, whom she does not know, rapes her at her friend's party.

To see how power as defined in Chapter Two is reflected through the female protagonists in the novel, we could start from the very beginning by looking at the way Karmila, as the major protagonist, encounters all the problems she has, especially the ones that arise from people around her. In this novel, Karmila is a well-educated woman who comes from a good and happy family. She is a nice and beautiful woman. As a student of the medical faculty, she spends most of her time studying and reading. Furthermore, she has a deep religious belief as she always prays and mentions the name Mother Mary. Although she is calm, she can be very strict and brave when she feels someone insults her. In such

situations, her power will be vividly seen. Then we can see how she is apparently not a stupid woman. She encounters all the problems she has in positive ways. She is not rash in making the decision on what to do with the man who has raped her. She just calmly overcomes her problems until the man who raped her and his father feel guilty and regret. She even successfully makes the two men feel shamed and feel that they are not "real" men. The way she handles the two men not only gives a positive solution to her problems, but also to the men. She could help to unite the Gurongs' family as it is told at the beginning of the novel that he is separated from his wife because of their internal family problem.

To see how Karmila empowers herself, we should go to the scene when she refuses to blame and prosecute Feisal who has raped her. To some people, what Karmila does is something very stupid. Generally in Indonesia, if someone is raped and made pregnant, the woman will demand that the man should accept responsibility. This is better than letting the baby be born without being legalized by a marriage between the mother and the father. It is a big shame for the woman and for the family if the baby does not have a father or the father does not want to take the responsibility. However, what happens to Karmila is the opposite. She even withdraws her indictment and lets the man go free from the jail. The reason why she refuses to marry this man is because she does not want to have a husband and a father of her baby like Feisal, as she thinks he is a scoundrel. She knows that Feisal is very bad man. Therefore, she prefers to

overcome her problem by herself without being helped by Feisal or Feisal's father. Therefore she lets the man to be away from her.

"Aku tidak mau bajingan itu menjadi ayah anakku! Tidak mau! Tidak! Tidak!" Wajahnya menunjukkan kecemasan yang sangat besar
(Karmila: 34)

"I don't want that scoundrel man to be the father of my baby! I don't want him! No! No!" Her face shows serious anxiety. (English translation)

As a woman who needs the man who has raped her to accept the responsibility, Karmila expresses the power she has in order to protest that her dignity cannot be bought by money or wealth. Although she knows that she is going to have trouble if she has a baby without a husband, that is better than letting Feisal or his family buy her dignity with money. For her, money is not everything. There is one thing more valuable than money, her dignity as a woman. Her aim using this strategy really shocks: Feisal's father is shock and struck. This is because Feisal's father always thinks that everything can be overcome with money, including persuading Karmila to marry his son. He then realizes that Karmila's refusal is a slap in the face for the bad way he has educated his son to be a rapist. He never thought that after raising his son with his 'money' affection, finally his son has become a bad man who has shamed his face through his bad behavior. His belief that money can solve any problem is finally seen as untrue. Dignity is more important rather than the money he

has. However, money is nothing for him if Karmila does not withdraw her claim on his son and makes everything known through the newspaper. So, perhaps what Karmila has done the one hand is something stupid. But, on the other hand, it is a victory for her in showing how as human beings she and her family still have higher honor than the Gurongs, Feisal's family. There is something special in the way the female protagonist of the novel overcomes the conflict she has by accepting it as her destiny given by the Lord. As a religious person, she believes that she will be able to handle everything without regretting what has happened to her.

As a result of Karmila's refusal to accept Daud Gurong, Feisal father's offer, Gurong asks his son to do anything to pay his gratitude and respect to Karmila. Daud sees and realizes that Karmila is really a nice and kind woman who is a victim of his son's bad behavior. He explains to his son that his power as the one who has a lot of money is nothing in the eyes of Karmila. Fortunately, Feisal also realizes this. Therefore with all his ways, he tries to approach her to show that he is not as bad as she has thought. As a racer who is used to being proud with his friends, finally Feisal feels as nothing compared to Karmila. But he could not blame anyone for behaving as he did. He just knows that his father and his mother were separated when he and his brother were still children. Since his mother left the house, he and his brother had had no affection from her.

From this situation, we could see that the role of mother and father is very important in raising and educating children. The impact of his parents'

separation has induced Feisal and his brother to develop in a dysfunctional way. As the head of the family, Feisal's father did not have enough time to educate his children properly. He spent most of his time just looking for money. He has never thought that this would have bad effects on his children's psychological development. One of his sons, Feisal, has become rapist.

Being a bad man is not only the result of how Feisal's father has raised and educated the children up, but also the result of how as a husband, he has ignored his wife and preferred his business to his family. Karmila's response to the problem has shamed Daud Gurong, Feisal's father, but also Feisal himself. As a son he can ask everything from his father, but in the eyes of Karmila he feels that he is powerless and nothing absolutely. When he comes to Karmila and asks for Karmila's time to talk about his behavior, calmly Karmila refuses.

"Bolehkah saya bicara sebentar dengan engkau?" tanyanya dengan rupa rendah hati.

"Untuk apa?"

Feisal tertegun sebentar.

"Persoalan kita," katanya dengan muka merah.

"Persoalan apa?"

Feisal menjadi amat malu. Wajahnya merah dan pucat bergantian.

"Saya ingin minta maaf."

"Mengenai apa?" tanya Karmila dengan rupa kurang sabar. "Bukankah kita tidak saling mengenal? Saya sendiri tidak mengenal saudara. Perlu apa minta maaf? (Karmila: 67-68).

"Can I talk to you?" asks Feisal humbly.

"For what?"

Feisal is mute silently.

"Our problem" says Feisal with his red face.

"What problem"

Feisal is so ashamed. His face is getting more red and pale and red again.

"I hope you could apologize to me"

"For what?" asks Karmila impatiently. "I think we don't know each other, do we? I myself don't know you. Why do you ask for an apology?"

(English translation)

From this scene, it is clearly seen that the way Karmila responds and pretends she does not know Feisal shows how she feels as a woman, she has power over Feisal. Although she has been a victim of Feisal's bad behavior, to some extent she can also make Feisal be a victim of her response. As in fact she has known already who Feisal is, she should not pretend she does not know him. But the way she pretends is to slap to Feisal's pride in being a man, who expects all women would submit to him. Karmila wants to open Feisal's eyes that she is not the one that he could defeat as he wishes. She is different. She is not the kind of woman who can be defeated by his money or false love. For Karmila, Feisal's good-looks are nothing compared to his bad behavior. Even when Feisal keeps asking to accept his apology, Karmila calmly leaves him.

“Karmila, katakanlah, ya,” pintanya. “Saya sangat ingin menebus dosa itu. Bila engkau tidak sudi memberi kesempatan, seluruh hidup saya akan binasa begini.”

Karmila bangkit berdiri dan menatapnya tajam.

“Sudah cukup kau tebus dosamu hari ini. Pulang sekarang. Lain kali boleh disambung.” Dan dia berjalan cepat-cepat masuk, meninggalkan Feisal yang terkejut setengah mati. (Karmila: 69)

“Karmila, say yes please” Feisal begs. “I really want to expiate my sin to you. If you don’t give me a chance, all my life will be miserable.”

Karmila stands up and looks at him sharply.

“You have expiated your sin. That’s enough today. Go home right now. You can continue expiating it next time.” And she hurriedly goes into her room, and leaves Feisal who is startled unexpectedly. (English translation)

Feisal does not surrender to Karmila’s response. He keeps asking her to accept his apology. Karmila finds herself in a dilemma when Feisal says that he not only wants to ask her to accept his apology but also wants to marry her.

Karmila does not believe what Feisal says. She even tells Feisal strictly not to come again to meet her.

“Mila (Karmila), barangkali engkau salah tangkap. Maksud saya, saya ingin menikah denganmu. Saya ingin menebus dosa. Sebab saya mencintaimu.”

“Omong kosong!!”

“Saya bersungguh-sungguh dengan maksud saya. Saya bukan seniman. Tidak pandai merangkai kata-kata. Saya ini bajingan, seperti yang kau katakan tadi. Tapi saya mencintaimu dan saya ingin mengubah hidup saya.”

“Aku tidak mau menikah denganmu! Titik! Engkau boleh pulang sekarang dan jangan datang-datang lagi.” (Karmila: 71)

“Mila (Karmila), maybe you are wrong. What I mean is that I want to marry you. I want to expiate my sin because I love you.”

“That’s bullshit!!”

“I am serious. I am not an artist. I am not able to compose words. I am scoundrel as you’ve just said. But I love you and I want to change my life.”

“I don’t want to get married with you! Full stop! You may go home now. And don’t ever come again.” (English translation)

Actually Feisal seriously wants to marry her. But again Karmila refuses him. Although she needs a father for her baby, since she thinks that Feisal is scoundrel, she behaves as if she does not need him. She feels that she could

give birth to her baby without getting married. What Karmila does to Feisal is something contrary to what most Indonesian women may do. Perhaps someone who has the same problem like hers will agree if the man who has raped her will be responsible to her. It is because having a baby without getting married or without having a husband is a big shame to the family. Even perhaps women who face this problem do not think carefully anymore. As long as the man wants to be responsible to his behavior, then they believe that everything is going to be alright. However, for Karmila, her dignity is more important than accepting Feisal's apology. The thousand times Feisal comes to her asking her to accept his apology is not equal to the loss of her dignity. Because of Feisal's bad behavior, she not only loses her 'virginity', but also loses her future. Her dreams to get married and to have a happy family with Edo have gone. She feels that she has betrayed Edo's true love. This is the reason why she does not want to forgive Feisal.

Another scene in which we can see how Karmila shows she does not want to be dominated by men occurs when she is ready to get married with Feisal. She agrees to do this but on one condition: that after the baby is born, then they have to divorce. Karmila forces Feisal to sign a commitment to this effect because if he refuses, Karmila does not want to have contact anymore with him. Under this condition, Feisal does not have any alternative. He has to sign it.

"Tidak peduli. Pokoknya tertulis di sini bahwa aku menikah dengan engkau, cuma supaya anak ini punya ayah titik. Aku tidak terikat

hubungan apa- apa dengan engkau. Aku tidak akan tinggal bersamamu. Aku tidak akan menikah dengan engkau di gereja. Aku tidak akan Menjadi istrimu. Dan segera setelah anak ini lahir, kita akan bercerai kembali dan anak ini kamu ambil.” (Karmila: 74).

“I don’t care. You have to write here that I marry you just to make sure the baby has a father, full stop. I am not tied by any relation with you. I don’t want to stay with you. I don’t want to get married with you in the church. I don’t want to be your wife. As soon as the baby is born, we should divorce and you should take the baby with you.” (English translation)

It is seen here how Feisal is powerless in the hand of Karmila. Although from her deepest heart Karmila needs a father for her baby, she has to show Feisal that a woman cannot be treated unfairly as a man often wishes to treat her. She has a right to speak. She has a right to be listened to. And she has a right to decide what she wants to do without being oppressed by a man. A man can do anything with his money, but he cannot buy a woman’s dignity. Other women maybe do not care about this, but it is not for Karmila. She is a well-educated woman, both in the academic world and in religious matters. And she knows that a man cannot fool her. Therefore, she struggles to be equal herself with men. In other words, she thinks that, if Feisal could destroy her, she could do the same. This is a strong power that she has as the one who has been the

victim of man's greediness. Physically maybe she is weak when Feisal rapes her, so that she could not fight him. But mentally and spiritually she is much stronger than Feisal. For her, Feisal is only a foolish and childish man who is trapped and cursed by his behavior.

To see the contrast between The Edible Woman and Karmila in terms how they assert their power to free themselves from male domination, in Karmila, Karmila precisely shows how she strongly rejects the commitment to get married with Feisal. Or in other words, the way she rejects it is expressed through her direct speech to Feisal and his father. However, Marian in The Edible Woman reacts through the refusal of her body to accept any kind of food or drink that she is usually eats and drinks. Or in other words, she becomes 'anorexic' because her fiancé, Peter, does not give any confirmation on their marriage that she wishes to bring into realization. Thus, Peter's ignorance of their marriage makes Marian feels that Peter just makes a fool of her. As a result, she compensates for it in a psychological reaction in which she cannot eat anything. All the things she used to eat now become something alive that makes her frightened to eat. So, if we contrast these two novels, on the one hand, Karmila refuses to get married, but on the other hand, Marian expects it. This is something very interesting and unusual because, generally for Indonesian women, marriage is one particular event that most women expect and want to do it.

Karmila's refusal to get married with Feisal, is an unusual solution since giving birth without having a husband is a risky decision. The reason is because

if she does so, the image of the society to her will be bad. However, Karmila does not care about that. It seems that she believes what she does the right thing by accepting Feisal as her husband. For her, it is much better to be a single parent than to be Feisal's wife. Here, Karmila successfully empowers herself as woman who cannot be easily forced or dominated by man. What she does is the best for her. This is one of the reflections on how Karmila has shown us that women cannot be tricked by men. Perhaps Feisal is successful unexpectedly in defeating her in the rape, but Karmila is the winner for ruining Feisal's dignity as a man. This scene of the novel is a good lesson for women, especially Indonesian women, to not be tempted by material and social status. Dignity for women is much more valuable and important than money.

Although Karmila and Marian are different in the way they assert their power, they are similar in the way they react to men's domination over them. Or in other words, they both are the same as two smart women who do not want to be insulted or to be made fools by men. For them, their freedom to do what they should do in their life is their own, not men's.

Another contrast that can be seen between Karmila and The Edible Women is through Karmila and Ainsley. The way Karmila encounters her pregnancy is different from the way Ainsley thinks about it. To some extent, it cannot be blamed that Karmila is reluctant to take care of her baby. It is because she is pregnant through unexpected intercourse with a man who is not her husband. So, she is not wrong if she neglects her pregnancy since the baby in her womb is an unwanted baby. However, as a religious woman, she believes

that it is a sin if she aborts the baby. Therefore, she should let it be born. As a result, although she does not expect it, she still keeps the baby alive until it is born. This is also one of the reflections on how Karmila empowers herself. Although she is in a very bad situation, she is still strong enough to encounter all the problems she has. Here, she also shows us that as an educated woman, she knows that abortion can end her life. Thus, she is still fully optimistic that there still maybe a long way to go for such young woman like her for her life. She calmly passes her isolated days at her auntie's house waiting for the baby to be born.

On the contrary, Ainsley, the second female protagonist of The Edible Woman, has different opinions on the way to deal with pregnancy. Although Ainsley is not married, as a woman, she in fact expects to be pregnant and have a baby without considering getting married or not. It seems that for her, depending on a man as a husband is not her choice. She believes that she could undergo her life with her baby without being supported by man. Therefore, she just needs a man to impregnate her. And after that, everything she could handle by herself.

Referring to the theoretical background, looking at the way Karmila empowers herself reminds me of the notion of power given by Foucault. Foucault emphasizes that everybody owns power. Or in other words, power is within the body itself. However this kind of power perhaps is invisible until it resists. It just appears when the individual is under the condition in which she/he is not feeling well, especially when she/he is under oppression. The resistance

of the body is visible because of power within it. Therefore, Karmila empowers herself as a reaction to the situation in which she feels that other people dominates her. Her decision not to marry Feisal is the expression of how she asserts the power she has within herself. In addition, I may say that she also reflects the notion of power given by Jo Rowlands. This is because she applies the idea of the more power she has, the less the other has. When she refuses the Gurongs' offer to marry Feisal, on the one hand, Karmila gains her power. But on the other hand, her refusal becomes a slap for the Gurongs. As a result, Mr. Gurong and his son, Feisal feel nothing as men. They become powerless in the eyes of Karmila. When Karmila offers another alternative in order to accept the Gurong's offer, they agree without any objection. This particular reaction of the Gurongs at once implicitly asserts the idea that power cannot be gained through material means alone, as stated by Marx. Or in other words, this particular scene removes the idea given by Marx whose dogma lies in material conditions as Bartky writes, "Dogmatics Marxists have regarded consciousness as a mere reflection of material condition..." (1990: 14). To some extent this idea is true. But it is not true to the situation Karmila faces. All the money and the high social status of the Gurongs become nothing and priceless compared to the dignity that Karmila defends. Hence, in this novel, through Karmila, some ideas of power have been reflected. In addition, the impact of reading and watching the film of the novel has taught Indonesian women to empower themselves in making decisions for the sake of themselves too, as well as to gain power through fashion as Sawicki states.

Besides Karmila, the reflection of how a female protagonist asserts her power can be seen through Mrs. Gurong, Feisal's mother. In the novel, Mrs. Gurong is illustrated as a wife who unexpectedly leaves her family because she feels that her husband just pays too much attention to his business. Her husband just prefers to earn money as much as possible rather than taking caring of family. As a result, Mrs. Gurong leaves her responsibilities as a wife and as a mother of two sons. Actually she loves her husband and children. But since she is ignored, she moves and lives in another place. Although she knows that her leaving will have bad effects to the psychological development of her children, she ignores this. She just lets her husband raise the children. She is the type of woman who cannot be treated by a man as the man wishes to treat her. By leaving the house, perhaps she believes she could solve her problems and show her husband that she could live without him. She does so as the reaction to the situation in which she sees that her husband is just spending his time outside home. This is actually realized by her husband, but he just could not stop doing it. Mr. Gurong realizes that, when finally once he is back home and finds his wife has gone leaving the family.

“Suatu hari dia pulang siang-siang dan mendapati istrinya pergi. Pergi? Ya, pergi, kata babu. Kapan? Tadi pagi. Selalu pergi. Selalu. Selalu? Hampir tiap hari. Hampir tiap hari.. Ya. Ya. Sedan hitam. Fiat putih. Becak. Bus, barangkali. Ya. Ya. Aku mau dijadikan banci? Aku ditertawakan istriku? Aku dijadikan target kehilangannya? Aku akan perlihatkan, siapa Gurong! Aku akan ajar dia kesopanan” (Karmila: 26)

“One day he is back home and finding his wife has gone. She has gone? Yes, she has gone, the maid says. This morning. Always. Always? Almost every day. Yes. Yes. Black car. White Fiat. Pedicab. Bus, maybe. Yes. Yes. She wants me to be powerless. Is she laughing at me? She wants me to be the target of her leaving. I will show her who I am! I will educate her how to be polite. (English translation)

The above dialogue shows us that Mrs. Gurong leaves the house because she wants to show to Mr. Gurong that he is not only the man who can give her affection. This is because Mr. Gurong suspects that his wife has gone with another man who can give her all the attention she needs. As a man he feels powerless and insulted. His dignity seems to be trampled by this woman. Whether Mrs. Gurong is right or wrong in making the decision to leave her husband and her children, actually what she does is the expression of her feeling that she does not want to depend on a man. This is a way that she empowers herself not to be pressured by men. She gains her power as the way she thinks is the right way to do rather than being ignored all the time. Again, through Mrs. Gurong's role in the novel, the kind of power reflected by her is the same as what Sawicki states. According to Sawicki power is 'possessive'. Basically, what Sawicki says is not different to what Foucault and Rowland state, namely that power resides within the individual self. So, if Mrs. Gurong makes a decision to leave her family and go with another man, it is not because she is egoistic. But this is only a reflection how she could not stand anymore to the

pressure of the situation she has. At first, she may be just fine with her husband. However, accepting this situation for a long time has forced her to do something that can show she could empower herself by overcoming her problems. Although the way she uses her power is not good for her children, at least she proves that no one could control or dominate her including her husband who actually she loves.

This is the same with Marian in The Edible Woman. She loves Peter, her fiancé. But she needs to show him that he could not make a fool of her. Or in other words, the two novels, Karmila and The Edible Woman, both illustrate how their female major protagonists have a limited toleration of abuse by men. To some extent, especially for Indonesian woman, obedience to the husband is a manifestation of how one loves her husband. However, to another extent, this particular idea cannot be accepted as it brings women to the situation in which they feel oppressed. Therefore, if a woman like Mrs. Gurong leaves, it does not mean that she does not love her husband and her children. What it means is that she needs also her husband loving her in the form of spending much time with her and taking care of the family. If Mr. Gurong does this, certainly she will not leave him. This can be proved when finally Mrs. Gurong is back home to stay with the family. She is ready again to take on her responsibilities of being a wife and a mother. She makes this decision because at last she feels that her husband has promised not to ignore the family anymore. He will be a good husband and father taking care and spending much time with the family. If it is so, Mrs. Gurong has applied the notion of power that states that power exists

within the self. It will tend to appear when the individual is under control or pressure.

Thus, from the above scene, it can be said that Karmila is not only a novel consumed for women readers to learn how women can solve their problems like Karmila has, but also for men to learn how separation between husband and wife can give negative effects to the children.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

In Indonesian universities, Canadian literature has not been yet as popular as English or American literature. However, the interest of students, especially in the English Department of Hasanuddin University to learn it is increasing. The reason is not only because Canada is an English-speaking country like England and America, but also because Canada has a lot of prominent literary writers whose works have their own characteristics. Therefore, it is interesting to learn and to compare them with other countries' literary works including with Indonesia.

In addition, In Indonesia, women's issues have become crucial issues to be discussed since a lot of Indonesian women have been victims of gender discrimination. The reason is not only because women have been culturally structured to be subordinated to men since the period of colonization and even before, but also because they do not know how to empower themselves or they are not brave enough to do it. This is due to the lack of education and opportunity for women to empower themselves.

Power can be simply seen as an ability to empower oneself without being controlled by other people. Or in other words, each individual has power within her/himself depending on how she/he shows it in particular situations. Someone is said to be empowering herself/himself when she/he can make any decision without other people's control or domination. However, there are many ways to think about empowerment. There are various definitions of power given by

philosophers or thinkers. They all explain it differently. Some emphasize power over. But increasingly scholars argue that power exists within each individual and is expressed best in actions/relationships. Generally, power appears or comes out when someone is under a particular situation which makes the individual react in order to resist a particular problem.

As a developing country, empowering women in any sector in Indonesia is one of the government's policies in order to involve women in the process of development. However, to do this, women still face many obstacles. These obstacles do not come from the women themselves, but also from men. When women empower themselves, sometimes men see them not as good partners to work with, but as opponents. Or sometimes women themselves are not self-confident to empower themselves, as they do not want to be labeled as doing something beyond their nature or character. Therefore, they should learn and see, especially women from developed countries who have gone faster in dealing with women's empowerment. We do not have to be shy to learn from them as long as what we can learn is beneficial for empowering Indonesian women.

One of many ways to learn how to empower women is through literary works. Literary works such as women's novels are not only works to entertain the readers, but also a means to teach people especially women readers. Through the female protagonists of the novels, the readers can learn how these women encounter their problems to free themselves from male domination. This kind of novel is read not only to see how female protagonists overcome their problems and assert their power, but also to motivate the women readers not to

merely rely on men's control. Furthermore, they encourage women to feel free to do what they desire to do without any oppression from other people. Thus, the novels teach women not to let other people control them or do something they do not want.

The Edible Woman is a Canadian novel that seems to be not much different from most Indonesian women-focused novels. However, through the comparative approach of this thesis, contrasts can be seen. This contrast is very helpful especially for Indonesian women, to see how a young woman like Marian McAlpin is so brave to assert her power without considering some aspects that maybe risky for her future life and career. To some extent, she could have lost out her future if for example, she argues with Mrs. Grot, her senior colleague. But doing this is her way to assert her power as a resistance towards Mrs. Grot's control. If this situation is seen from an Indonesian cultural point of view, what Marian does is something that most Indonesians will not do. The reason is because as a young woman, arguing with someone older would be categorized as impolite behavior. Furthermore, as new member of a company, women are supposed to behave as nicely as possible. For western people, speaking out is more common and can be seen in everyday life. Everybody including the children is free to express most of her/his ideas. From a very young age, western children have been taught to be self-sufficient and be free to say what they want to say most of the time. They have been taught how to give their argument on what they believe and do. On the contrary, in Indonesia, most of the children are taught to be obedient to older people, even when something that is wrong. This kind of situation leads children to be docile people until they

grow up. As a result, they become less self-confident. Some of them even come to feel inferior.

Viewed from Western culture, perhaps Karmila's refusal to marry Feisal is something that she deserves to do. She is free to decide whether to marry or not the man who has raped her. Raising a child or being a single parent without having a husband in Western countries is something normal and can be accepted by the society, although this is a fairly recent phenomenon. However, in Indonesia, this is still a scandal among the society, especially religious figures. There have been some Indonesian women who have decided to raise children, but these are not their own. They are mostly still their kin. So, they have a blood relationship with the children, but are not the mother.

In addition, becoming a mother unexpectedly, like what Karmila experiences, cannot be fully accepted in Indonesia. If this happens, the mother and the child will be expelled from society. By all means, psychologically they will be oppressed. As a highly educated woman, Karmila is a figure of woman who has a more positive thought on encountering her problems. To some ordinary women in Indonesia, mostly they would have an abortion in order to overcome their problem. In terms of religious matters, this solution is contrary to the rules of any religion in which killing the baby is a sin. However, this may be the easiest way for ordinary Indonesian women to relieve themselves from being ashamed. But Karmila's decision to keep the baby provides another possibility for women in Indonesia. Karmila is educated and so decides not to take the medical risks of abortion. Women readers can learn from this. So, perhaps it can

be said that education affects the decision-making of Indonesian women to empower themselves through this novel.

The Edible Woman and Karmila are the only two examples of a numbers of women novels whose female protagonists reflect how women assert the power they have. However, these two novels cannot be judged as the representation of Canadian and Indonesian women as a whole. Although The Edible Woman and Karmila both are seeking for their freedom to untie themselves from male domination and oppression, the way they assert their power is different. The reason is that, in terms of a cultural point of view, each female protagonist of the novels comes from different cultures and societies. Or in other words, since each country is different in its culture, therefore, to see how power can be asserted is different too. For one culture, asserting power in a particular action can be viewed as something small, but in the other culture it perhaps something very big. Hence, the aim of this thesis is not to see which female protagonist of the novels can be categorized as the woman who has asserted her power correctly, but to see how women in general overcome their problems by empowering themselves. Or in other words, this thesis is also to help women from Indonesia and Canada to learn each from other and to take advantage from sharing the problems represented in the two novels. In any case, it is clear that cultural contexts affect what women will and can do, and thus their expression of power.

In addition, this thesis shows how women through literary works could empower themselves. The woman here means not only the female protagonists of the novels, but also indirectly the women who have written the novel. This

thesis is only a starting point for me to be involved in a feminist research by taking literary works as objects of research. Furthermore, I expect that this thesis could encourage me and my colleagues at my home university, to do more feminist research on literary works. It is expected also that this thesis could motivate my students at the English department to learn other literature than that of English and American. Therefore, any criticism and suggestions are welcome.

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