



**MAGGIE'S STRUGGLE IN PLACING HER
EXISTENCE AT THE PATRIARCHAL SOCIETY**

IN

THE MILL ON THE FLOSS

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An Extended Essay

A FINAL PROJECT

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1. Background of the Study

Novel *The Mill on the Floss* is one of George Elliot's novels that describing the situation and condition of the English society and also representing human life in 1837-1901 century which is called Victorian Era. At the moment, women were dominated by men and considered inferior. The condition is portrayed in this novel because the novel tells about the life of women, especially the life of the main female character, Maggie Tulliver, who is the victim of the standard beauty in her family. It is interesting to analyze this novel because it describes Maggie's life in her family that is dominated by her parents and her family, and is shackled by the patriarchal society. The Mill on the Floss shows how difficult the struggle of women is in placing her existence in the patriarchal society. This final project will show the conflict that Maggie experiences to fight for her existence in the patriarchal society.

2. Scope of the Study

Like other novels by George Elliot, *The Mill on the Floss* articulates the tension between circumstances and the spiritual energies of individual characters struggling against these circumstances in the patriarchal society. This study is limited to

Maggie's struggles to show her existence in the patriarchal society and the conflicts that she undergoes in her struggles.

3. Objective of the Study

The purpose of the study is in line with the background of the study and scope of the study. Basically, this essay is written with two main purposes as follows:

- a. To analyze Maggie's struggles to show her existence in the patriarchal society.
- b. To reveal the conflicts that she experiences in her struggles to oppose the patriarchal society.

4. Method of the Study

According to *The Mill on the Floss* novel that describes the situation and condition of the English society which is represented the human life in 1837-1901 century which is called Victorian Era. At the moment, women were dominated by men and considered inferior. Those women were the object and men were the subject as the stereotype. The writer would like to explore how Maggie struggles to get out of the patriarchal society using the feminist theory.

"Feminist approach to literary criticism is the critical analysis of literary works based on the feminist perspective. In particular, feminist literary critics tend to reject the patriarchal norms of literature "that privileges masculine ways of points of view and marginalizes women politically,

economically and psychologically. (http://www.ehow.com/way_5819656_feminist_approach_literary_criticism.html), accessed on 11 September 2012).

In this case, the writer feels that feminist approach to literary criticism is the most perfect theory to analyze because this theory appears the rejection of the rules at the patriarchal society like Maggie's did to show her existence as a woman which can be seen from Maggie's struggle in education and in against the stereotype as a fallen woman.

In this Final Project, the writer also used the qualitative research. It is the type of research that uses library study and textual analysis based on elected theories. Atar Semi states: "*Penelitian perpustakaan merupakan penelitian yang dilakukan dikamar kerja peneliti atau diruang perpustakaan, dimana peneliti memperoleh data dan informasi tentang objek telitiannya lewat buku-buku atau alat audio visual lainnya*". (1990:120).

For this method, the writer applied the theory feminist after reading and analyzing about the conflict that Maggie's happened

CHAPTER 2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A patriarchal society is one whereby men are the decision makers and hold positions of power and prestige, and have the

power to define reality and common website (<http://answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20080722141831AAHy9mq>), accessed on 12 July 2013) actions. In these societies, women are presented with an interpretation of the world define by men, and a history of the world define by men's actions. For instance, in history we learn about war and read the stories of male writers, where as the stories of women are scarcely told. This erasure of women's lives alienates women and fails to provide them with relevant role-models. In contrast, matriarchal societies place women in central decision making position such as community leaders, where they play a central role in the community and the society.

The role of women in society is very different today compared to the role of women in the Victorian society, in the 19th Century as described in the life of Maggie Tulliver in Elliot's *The Mill on the Floss*. In that time, women were dominated by men. The fact was that Mary Anne Evans had to use a pen name of 'George Elliot' as she was a woman, or otherwise, her works would not have been published. This shows the attitudes towards women, in the country and in the social circle. Today women stand side by side with men, in the struggle for independence, and are playing a key role in the search for a lasting peace and consolidation.

In the Victorian Era, women were house wives, these women stayed at home and tended to the house and family. During the Victorian Era, women never traveled alone but

women have to travel with their husbands and family to specific locations. The men of the Victorian Era believed that a woman's place at home. Women inhabited a separate, private sphere, one suitable for the so-called inherent qualities of femininity: emotion, passivity, submission, dependence, and selflessness, all derived, it was claimed insistently, from women's sexual and reproductive organization (Kent 30). In this period, marriage was possibly one of the most significant points in a woman's life, it was simply a necessity for survival (<http://rodriguez9-2.pbwih.com/Women+In+The+Victorian+Era>).

In Victorian Era, the struggle of women in the patriarchal society can be seen from George Eliot. Actually, is not a woman writer but George Eliot is one of a woman writer who create a novel. She appears the novel with using her pen name "George Elliot", in fact she is a woman with name "Mary Ann Evans". It is one of part of the struggle of women in the patriarchal society.

In this Final Project, the writer used feminist approach of literary work. Generally, the writer will use feminist theory. That theory was chosen because the major character is suitable with this theory. This novel shows the domination of men or women in a patriarchal society even though the women work hard in placing their existence in their life. In fact the women stand up under the men's domination. According to Paul Ady quoted in Jared Lewis, feminist approach to literary criticism "is the critical analysis of literary works based on the feminist perspective. In particular, feminist literary critics tend to reject the patriarchal

norms of literature that privileges masculine ways of thinking or points of view and marginalizes women politically, economically and psychologically." (http://www.ehow.com/way_5819656_feminist_approach_literary_criticism.html, accessed on 11 September 2012).

Besides, there are also many kinds of the definition of feminist theory. In the opinion of Eline Showalter quoted in Bressler, American feminism is essentially textual, stressing repression; British feminism is essentially Marxist, stressing oppression; and French feminism is essentially psychoanalytic, stressing repression. All group attempts to rescue women from being considered the other (1998:186).

Bressler himself claims about the aim of feminism as follows: all women will realize that they are not a "non-significant other," but that each woman is a valuable person possessing the same privileges and rights as every man. Women, feminists declare, must define themselves and assert their own voices in the arenas of politics, society, education, and the arts by personally committing themselves to fostering such change, they hope to create a society where the male and female voices are equally valued (1998:180).

CHAPTER 3 DISCUSSIONS

In George Elliot's novel, *The Mill on the Floss*, Maggie is the main female character who is always oppressed by the male characters around her and those oppressions make her suffer. Maggie lives in a patriarchal society which has its own patriarchal traditions where men get higher status than women. The patriarchal tradition is used to justify men's oppression. In fact, the setting of this novel in 1860s describes the burden of women's life in the world which is controlled by men. Maggie is one of the victims of this heavy going life. The higher status is given to men and the lower status to women, so it creates inequality between men and women, where men have more privileges to do what they want; while women are less important and have fewer privileges. Because male's domination appears in every sector of life, men are encouraged to oppress women, where oppression means a pattern or system of inequality, which gives power and privilege to members of one group of people at the expense of another (Rozaqoh, 2009:61).

1. Culture of Women at the Patriarchal Society

In the following quotation, it can be seen that what Maggie has to do is decided by her father and her brother, while what her mother has to do is decided by her husband. Actually, Maggie is

better than Tom in their intelligent but as a woman Maggie always has fewer privileges than Tom. At least Maggie also wants to study like Tom but she is not permitted to school by her father. It shows from the dialogue of her father when her father chat with Mr. Rilay about concerning the best school for Tom, Maggie is ordered by her father to help her mother in the kitchen.

"At the sounds of this name,...there were few sounds that roused Maggie when she was dreaming over her book but tom's name served as well as the shrillest whistle:.. "you see I want to put him to a new school at midsummer," said Mr. Tulliver...after that I want to send him to a downright good school, where they'll make a scolard of him." "o father," said Maggie, in a vehemently cross tone, "I don't want to do my patchwork." "What! Not your pretty patchwork, to make a counterpane for your aunt Glegg?" "it's foolish work," said Maggie, with a toss of her mane,_"tearing things to pieces to sew 'em together again. And I don't want to do anything for my aunt Glegg-I don't like her." Exit Maggie, dragging her bonnet by the string, while Mr. Tulliver laughs audibly." (Elliot, 1960:13-15).

According to the above quotation, we can see that Maggie has to work as a woman actually who always follow with the rules and follow the order of the man (her father especially). In Maggie's case, the powerful figure in her family is her father. He makes every decision and does everything that they wish without discussing it with their family.

In George Elliot's novel, *The Mill on the Floss*, Maggie's mother is the female character who always follows her husband's rules. She has to follow her husband's decision although her husband's decision is not suitable with her thought. It can be seen from this quotation:

"Well, Mr. Tulliver, you know best: I've no objections. But hadn't I better kill a couple o' fowl and have th' aunts and uncles to dinner next week, so as you may hear what sister Glegg and sister Pullet have got to say about it?...if Tom's go to a new school, I should like him to go where I can wash him and mend him; else he might as well have calico as linen,...And then, when the box is goin' backards and forrads, I could send the lad cake, or a pork-pie, or an apple...My children can eat as much victuals as most, thank God..." "No, no, Bessy; What I'm thinking on, is how to find the right sort o' school to send Tom to, for I might be ta'en in again, as I've been with academy..." "Well," said Mrs. Tulliver, "so far as talking proper,...I shouldn't mind the lad being brought up to that" (Elliot, 1960:9-11).

From those quotations, we can see that Mrs. Tulliver wants Tom to go to the best school nearby so that she is still able to take care of his boy such as sending him food and cookies, keeping his linen clean, and so on. On the contrary, Mr. Tulliver wants to send Tom to the best school possible no matter the distance. In the end, Mrs. Tulliver has to surrender to her husband's decision.

Maggie's mother conforms to the roles attached to her by the society, and acts as an obedient wife. For the case, we can see that there are fundamental differences between men and women. At the patriarchal society, women have to follow the decision of the men because the stereotypes of women are also dominated by men. This moment has cultural feminism because Mrs. Tulliver and Maggie's follow the citizen's deconstruction, patriarchal society. In this case also has the other concept that man is a subject and woman is an object. In here, Mr. Tulliver is a subject because he decided Maggie's life and Maggie is an object because her life was decided by her father.

2. Maggie's Struggle against the Oppression in Education

In George Eliot's novel *The Mill on the Floss*, the topic of oppression is vividly portrayed. Maggie has to fight against the oppression in education. Actually Maggie is not permitted to study by her father because in her father's mind what Maggie's doing is not useful for her life. Maggie is only supposed to follow her father's order. When he finds Maggie reading a book, he becomes very angry and orders that Maggie shut her book at once and go to her mother who is in the kitchen. It can be seen in the following quotation:

"...Shut up the book, and let's hear no more o' such talk. It is as I thought-the child 'ull learn more mischief nor good

wi' the books. Go, go and see after your mother." (Elliot, 1960:17).

In here, we can see that Maggie is regarded as male property, she is a female who has to take care of household matters with her mother and without intelligence. In this case, Mr. Tulliver does not care about his daughter's future especially her education although her daughter is as clever as her son. It is shown in Mr. Tulliver's dialog with Mr. Riley about Tom's education. At the same time, Maggie comes to Mr. Riley and says that she likes reading books and then Maggie explains about the book that has been read by her but her father wants her to her get away and helps her mother.

In this case, Maggie does not follow her father's order but she goes to her small bookcase. Maggie's struggle can be seen from the quotation in below: "*Maggie ran in instant to the corner of the room, jumped on a chair, and reached down from the small bookcase a shabby old copy of Bunyan, which opened at once, without the least trouble of search, at the picture she wanted.*" *Here he is," she said, running back to Mr. Riley*" (Elliot, 1960:17).

From the quotation, Maggie works hard to search many kinds of book that she puts in the small bookcase to show her book collection book for Mr. Riley. She does it because she wants to show her ability in reading books. In this case, she has simple a way to save her books in a small bookcase without her father's knowing her action. We can also see that she is against her

father's decision to show her existence in the patriarchal society by herself.

Maggie's keeps struggle against the structure of patriarchal society in education after her father shows the different treatment for her and her brother. Because of this, she always learns by reading many kinds of book that she saves in the small bookcase without her father's knowledge. She always learns and studies because she wants to show her existence and she wants to show her unusual intelligence as other girls. Her manner to show her existence succeeds when she is invited by her father to Tom's school for a long time. She explains about many lessons that are taught in Tom's school. This can be seen in the following quotation:

"I'll help you now, Tom," said Maggie ... "I'm come to stay ever so long, if Mrs. Stelling asks me. I've brought my box and my pinafores, haven't I, father?"... "I should like to see you doing one of my lessons! Why, I learn Latin too! Girls never learn such things. They're too silly." "I know what Latin is very well," said Maggie, confidently. "Latin's a language. There are Latin words in the dictionary. There's bonus, a gift..." "o, I can't help it," said Maggie, impatiently. "Don't tease me, Tom. O, what books!" She exclaimed, as she saw the bookcases in the study. "How I should like to have as many books as that!"... "I believe you!" Said Tom, with an emphatic nod. "I think all women are crosser than men," said Maggie. "Aunt Glegg's a great

deal crosser that uncle Glegg, and mother scolds me more than father does.” “well, you’d be a woman,” said Tom, “so you needn’t talk.” “but I shall be a clever woman,” said Maggie, with a toss. “o, I daresay, and a nasty conceited thing. Everybody’ll hate you.” “Mascula nimina in a,” he began. “No, Tom said Maggie, “that doesn’t come next. It’s Nomen non crescens genitivo...”... Very well then, said Maggie, pouting. “I can say that as well as you can. And you don’t mind your stops. For you ought to stop twice as long at a semicolon as you do not at a comma, and you make the longest stops where there to be no stop at all.” (Elliot, 1960:120-125).

From the quotation above, we know that Mr. Tulliver prefers his son to go to school and get a good education to his daughter but in fact, Maggie is cleverer than Tom who gets good school. For this case Mr. Tulliver’s follow the citizen’s deconstruction. He quested that only their son who can help theirs in the future and he quested that Maggie didn’t help theirs because Maggie is a woman so that she isn’t able to do something in Tulliver’s family. Tulliver’s family doesn’t care her cleverness, but they chuckle at Maggie after they look Maggie’s rejection. So there are feminist thought. She works hard to make the some for Tom in education with learning many kinds of book in the house. For this case, we can see that a deconstruction citizen refers to patriarchal society because patriarcha has walked up for period to period. Besides, in this case has radical feminism that showed by Mr. Tulliver’s

willingness to send his young son at the best school. We can see how Maggie struggles to show her existence in the patriarchal society although she is viewed as a weak woman like other women by her father. Her existence can be seen from Tom words to Maggie and also from Maggie’s manner when she explains about the lesson that Tom learns.

3. Maggie’s Struggle against the Stereotype as a Fallen Woman at the Patriarchal Society

Basically, the women who lived with the men before marriage were disgusted as a fallen woman. For that case, in *The Mill on the Floss* novel, Maggie does not follow her patriarchal society’s rule about woman’s love.. It can be seen from Maggie’s happen with Stephen. Maggie and Stephen get on board and ride to Mudport before it begins raining. Maggie is exhausted and feels that no decisions can be made today. Stephen feels he has triumphed and murmurs words of love to Maggie, about their life together; Maggie goes to sleep for the night on deck with Stephen watching over her. For this moment Maggie was disgusted as a fallen woman, because she lived with the man that actually they are before marriage. Finally she is isolated by the citizen of her town and also by her family. In here Maggie don’t give up, Maggie reaches Dr. Kenn’s and tells him everything. Dr. Kenn is receptive—he has read Stepehn’s letter and believes Maggie. He congratulates her on the “true prompting” of her instinct to return to her past and her friends. Dr. Kenn urges Maggie to find work

in another town and offers to help. But Maggie explains that she has already written to excuse herself from her summer work, as she desire to stay in St. Ogg's. Dr. Kenn agrees to try help her find work in St. Ogg's but finally Dr. Kenn

CHAPTER 4 CONCLUSIONS

After presenting the result of the study in the previous chapter, the conclusion is taken in this part. The conclusion is drawn based on the objective of the study. First, culture of women at the patriarchal society, Maggie has to do what is decided by her father, while her mother has to do what is decided by her husband. Basically, Maggie is better than Tom in their intelligent but as a woman Maggie always has fewer privileges than Tom and she is ordered by her father because there is a stereotype that women has to follow the men order. Second, in Maggie's struggle against the oppression in education, Maggie is only supposed to follow her father's order in education but in fact she is not permitted to study by her father because in her father's mind what Maggie's doing is not useful for her life. Facing the treatment in the patriarchal society, Maggie keeps struggling against the structure of patriarchal society in education by learning and reading many kinds of book that she was saved in a

small bookcase without her father's knowledge. Third, Maggie's Struggle against the Stereotype as a Fallen Woman at the Patriarchal Society. Basically, a marriage for a woman in a patriarchal society is very important so she has not gusted as fallen woman. In this case, in *The Mill on the Floss* novel, Maggie does not follow her patriarchal society's rule about woman's love. She ignores that rule by standing outside of Dorlcote Mill for five days with Stephen at Mudport. It makes her family and the citizen of Dorlcote Mill reject her because they knew that the worst has happened, she has return unmarried and disgrace. They put men as superior and put women as inferior. Her struggles appear in several acts, they are: in educational and in gusted as fallen woman. As a result, basically, men and women are equal in everything if a woman gets a space to show her existence. The strength of man is caused by the circumstances.

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