



EXTENDED ESSAY

***KATHERINE'S STRUGGLE TO CHANGE HER STUDENTS' MINDSET
IN MONA LISA SMILE WRITTEN BY DEBORAH CHIEL***

A FINAL PROJECT

In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement For S-1 Degree in English Literature
In English Department, Faculty of Humanities Diponegoro University

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Writing

Literary works are often used as a mediator or a bond between literary work readers and the real world outside. The readers are able to feel some imaginative experiences that they never felt in the real world only by enjoying the beauty of words in the literary works. By their genre, literary works are categorized into prose (novel), poem, and play. These three genres of literary works provide an imaginative aspect. The words that are used in the novel are mostly denotative words, so it will be easy to understand the whole meaning of the story. The writer chooses "*Mona Lisa Smile*" by Debora Chiel to reveal how hard it is to change a culture in a society. In this novel, this conflict is very strongly shown through the main character, Katherine, who is struggling to against her college rule that still keeping conventional rules. The writer will analyze the problem by using Feminism Literary approach, especially in Cultural Feminism concept.

1.2 Problem of the Study

- a) What are the intrinsic aspects of the novel?
- b) Why did Katherine Watson feel oppressed by her new study environment in Wellesley College?
- c) What does Katherine do as an effort to change her students' mindset from conventional thinker to the open minded women like what she wants?

- d) What are the effects of Katherine's action of changing her students' mindset that caused some problems into Wellesley College environment?

1.3 Purpose of the Writing

- a) Explaining the main intrinsic aspects of the novel, such as plot, setting (time, place, and social), and characters (major and minor characters).
- b) Revealing some factors that make Katherine Watson feel oppressed by her new study environment in Wellesley College.
- c) Analyzing the actions that Katherine does as an effort to change her students' mindset from conventional thinkers to the open-minded women like what she wants.
- d) Analyzing the effects of Katherine's actions of changing her student's mindsets and summarizing if she can make it and get what she wants or even fail.

1.4 About the Author

Deborah Chiel was born in October 2nd, 1948. She has been living in New York since 2009 up to now. Deborah Chiel attended Hillhouse High School in New Haven and graduated class of 1966. She has written some novels, for example *Accused*, *Curly Girl*, *Die Hard With a Vengeance*, *Great Expectations*, *Lean on Me*, *Music box*, *Sabrina*, *Something to Talk About*, *The War*, and *Walk in the Clouds*.

1.5 Method of the Study

1.5.1 Method of Research

In this final project, the writer uses library research in analyzing the topic to gain accurate data and information about object of the study. Library research means reading some supporting books, and also searching for the addition of supporting articles from newspapers, magazines, or internet sources.

1.5.2 Method of Approach

The study will employ the Feminism Approach for getting the answer of the study problems that has been explained in the aims of study of this final project. More specifically, the writer decides that *Cultural Feminism* approach is the best concept to analyze some conflicts in this novel.

CHAPTER II

SUMMARY

Katherine Watson, UCLA graduated in B.A and Master degree of Art, in all of her life, she wanted to teach in Wellesley College, Massachusetts, since it is well known as the most conservative college in America in that period. That's why, when the position was opened in the "Art History Department", she pursued it until finally she was hired. Wellesley College is a women conservative university for female students that prepare them to become a housewife after

graduated from the college. Her goal of coming into this institution is that she wants to make a change in a school that is preserved the traditions too tightly into the more open-minded one. Watson continues to provide an understanding for the students, that they have the same opportunities as men to go to the college and take the education as high as they want to. Katherine thinks that marriage will be one of the factors that block this purpose. At that time, breaking conservative rule is considered as dangerous and threatening action. That's why Katherine's effort of teaching out of the syllabus makes Wellesley College's professors upset. At the end of the story, Katherine starts to feel that this is not a proper place for a forward-minded lecturer like she is. Her disappointment was getting stronger because one of his students named Betty considers that she, as a lecturer in the department of art history, was born to start war against the marriage. These undeniable pressures make her decides to stop the struggle in that place and she finally resigned from Wellesley College.

CHAPTER III

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

3.1 THE INTRINSIC ASPECTS OF NOVEL

3.1.1 Plot

Plot is defined as the chronological events which are happened in the development of the story. Plot consists of five stages of development, those are exposition, raising action, climax, falling action, and denouement.

3.1.2 Character

Character can be generally explained as persons, animals or certain subjects who appear in one kind of story, like short story, poem, film, drama, or novel. According to its importance of role, character can be divided into two, those are major character and minor character.

3.1.3 Setting

Setting is the situation of a story in where, when, and how the story takes place. There are three types of setting, they are place setting, time setting, and social setting.

3.2 THE CULTURAL FEMINISM APPROACH

3.2.1 The Definition of Feminism

As we know, Feminism is a concept that strives for an equality position between men and women. In the most common understanding, **feminism collides that the women have the absolute right to gain enough informations and to make choices about plans in their live.** The first step to of feminism process is movement. Movement here means the effort that the women do to make their position in society is equal to men.

3.2.2 The Definition of Cultural Feminism

Cultural feminism is a concept of feminism where the women are strived to fulfill their natural role that is clearly different with the men do. Since long times ago, women have a natural pattern in society, they have to be married then

be a good housewives and mothers. Before the development of feminism concept, the women accept this pattern as a hereditary obligation. All they have to do is prepared themselves to go through this 'duty'. It makes the high education seems impossible for them to reach.

The story of Katherine struggle in the novel set in 1953, while in the 1950's, a feminine image was created in the media making the housewives and mothers be the ideal models for all women in society. Here is where the conflict began to raise. When the world is still keeping image of women to be a "good housewife and mother", as they meant to be, Katherine wants to change this culture. She want every women are deserved high education as they wish. This is the conflict that the writer wants to expose in this thesis. How the conflict raises, how Katherine faces it and struggle it, and how is the effect of Katherine struggle to women around her.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS

4.1 The analysis of main intrinsic aspects of the novel.

4.1.1 Plot

4.1.1.1 Exposition

This part begins when Elizabeth Warren (Betty) tells the reader about Katherine Watson's brief background.

4.1.1.2 Raising action

The conflict begins to raise when Wellesley College committee blamed Katherine for doing subversive action by teaching too much modern art that is not listed in the lecture syllabus.

4.1.1.3 Climax

The conflicts of the story reach its peak when Katherine feel oppressed because the president of the college threatens her to fire her if she continues to teach material out of the syllabus. This condition is getting worse with Betty's critical article in school newspaper.

4.1.1.4 Falling action

This part comes when Katherine decided to surrender and resign from her position as an Art History teacher in Wellesley College.

4.1.1.5 Denouement

Katherine finally accepts the reality that Wellesley College is not a proper place for her visionary and progressive thinking. She decides to resign from that college.

4.1.2 Character

4.1.2.1 Major Characters

a) Katherine Ann Watson

Katherine is a progressive and visionary thinker that wants to change the conventional tradition that applied in the college and wants to help every woman to reach high education.

b) Elizabeth Warren/Betty

Betty is one of the smartest students of Wellesley College. She is very critical and idealist. At first, she seems like Katherine's biggest enemy.

c) Joan Brandwyn

Joan is one of Katherine's students in Art History Department. She wants to continue her study in Yale University taking Law Major. Knowing this, Katherine strongly motivates Joan to continue her study to Yale.

4.1.2.2 Minor Character : Conny Baker (Wellesley student), Giselle Levy (Wellesley Student), Nancy (Wellesley teacher and also Katherine's boarding house owner) Bill Dunbar (Italian Professor), Amanda Armstrong (College's nurse), Jocelyn Carr (President of Wellesley College), Spencer Jones (Betty's boyfriend/husband), Tommy Donegal (Joan's fiancé), and Paul Moore (Katherin boyfriend/ex boyfriend).

4.1.3 Setting

4.1.3.1 Place Setting : Wellesley College environment, Massachusetts, United States of America.

4.1.3.2 Time Setting : Fall 1953 to Spring 1954

4.1.3.3 Social Setting : In 1950's, Feminism movement was in its development. This issue was spread and started to be admitted widely around the world in the beginning of 1970's. So in 1950's, conventional rule of women was still strictly applied in the society. It is better for

women not to take high education, because building a family in the early age was considered as a priority.

- 4.2 Some factors that make Katherine Watson feel oppressed by her new study environment in Wellesley College.

Katherine starts to receive first pressure when the Head of College, President Jocelyn Carr, knows this, she asks Katherine to stop teaching modern art, because Wellesley College is conservative and traditional, so she has to teach based on materials that are given in the syllabus. Then Mrs. Carr threatens her, if she keep doing that, she was afraid if Katherine cannot continue teaching in that College anymore. This, makes Katherine oppressed because she feels like there is a wall that is built to blocks her thoughts.

- 4.3 The actions that Katherine does as an effort to change her students' mindset from conventional thinkers to the open-minded women like what she wants.

The most prominent effort that she does in Wellesley College is teaching modern art that is very clearly forbidden. She leaves the material that is provided in the syllabus, and she asks her students to look new art that they never seen before. Another small effort to break the rule, she give the application form of Yale Law School for Joan in secret.

- 4.4 The effects of Katherine's actions of changing her student's mindset and summarizing if she can make it and get what she wants or even fail.

At first her effort seems like changes Joan mind to enter Yale Law School because when she applied for it, she is accepted. But then Joan married her boyfriend and forgets her dream to be a lawyer. Actually Joan

wants to continue her study to Yale, but then she have to surrender because as a woman, she has to give priority to build new family, as the culture ask her to.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

After analyzing the *Mona Lisa Smile* novel written by Deborah Chiel, it can be concluded that changing the tradition is not as easy as turning the palm of the hand. Katherine's eager wish to change the mindset of her female students is not yet strong enough to penetrate the walls of tradition that is so strongly attached at Wellesley College community for hundreds of years. On the other hand, the students of Wellesley College also faced the same difficult choices. Most of them are intelligent women who want to learn things as high as they could, but they also want to continue the tradition of their institution to be housewives immediately after the graduation.

Finally, we can conclude that any changes require a long process that could not happen instantly, moreover, to change a culture that has been run for many generations. In this case, we should be more realistic, and Katherine has done it well by decide to resign from Wellesley College. At least, she has left a deep impression on her students' mind by getting them to see things widely and out of the box.