



Patriarchal Power and Feminist Reflection

in Anita Diamant's *The Red Tent*

**A FINAL PROJECT**

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# **Patriarchal Power and Feminist**

## **Reflection in Anita Diamant's *The Red Tent***

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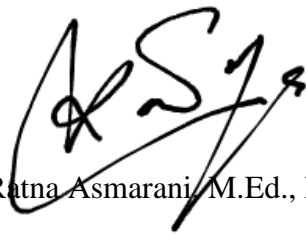
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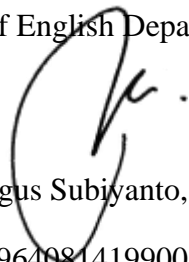
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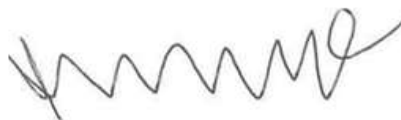
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## MOTTO AND DEDICATION

*If something is destined for you, never in a million years will it be for somebody else.*

*This project is dedicated to  
My beloved mother and father  
To all the good people who support me through up and down*

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis objective is a novel written by Anita Diamant titled *The Red Tent*. The purpose of this writing is to analyze the patriarchal power within Dinah's family circle and the reflection of how feminist act against that system. Hence, patriarchal and feminism approach will be concerned to complete the analysis. In obtaining the data, the writer will use a library research. A trusted books, articles, e-books, and also credible websites are taken to support all the data needed. In making this thesis more creditable, the writer will use a cultural feminism, patriarchy, and resistance theory. The Result of this writing shows that a practice of patriarchy system runs on family of Dinah and she is the one that does not have an agreement to that patriarchal system which encourages her to commit an action intended to stop that system running.

Keywords: Patriarchal system, Feminism, Resistance

## A. INTRODUCTION

Literature is one of the best media for people in speaking out their thought. Through the eloquence of writing, people have such media to express their mind. Generally, literature is divided into three kinds of genres: novel, poetry, and drama. Nevertheless, these three arts of writing may have a different form of writing. Novel is considered as a basic prose which means that stories or situation written in a novel are pictured vividly, while poetry is straight to the emotion of a reader and the words used are formed into lines or stanzas. Drama is mostly written in dialogue and it is made to be performed.

Stories or events written in literary works may content a fictitious narration, yet some of them denote a satire or even a criticism to what is happening in our society. Therefore, the existence of literary works is reasonably important for us. One of the example of literary works that the writer considers as a portrait of disagreement of social construction is a novel entitled *The Red Tent* written by Anita Diamant.

The writer sees the novel as a rebuttal for a patriarchy system that is constructed in our society. Patriarchy system is briefly described as a belief says that men have more rights, more power, and men are the ones who run the society and therefore women should obey men. The destructive effects of this social construction are many but one that is obvious is that women have less possibility to express themselves, in many aspects of life.

Through the main character, Dinah, Anita Diamant wants to bring up her feminism thought unto the reader. She believes that women should not be



constructed the way patriarchy does to them, women must not be treated as 'other' within society. Through her novel, Anita Diamant has great urge to convey the reader that women are important just as the moon and the sun are important for the living.

The writer intends to analyze the practice of patriarchy system that occur in the novel. Furthermore, the writer is as well interested to analyze the feminism thought that Anita Diamant tries to enlighten. Feminism itself is a movement created by a group of women that protest the social norms which at the time this movement arises, are more likely assimilated to make men more powerful than women. Feminism believes that society is needed to be reconstructed relating to equality between men and women.

In the novel, Dinah is the main character. She is the grand-daughter of Laban, who has 5 wives. The wives are Adah, Mer-Nefat, Huna, and Tefnut and Ruti. Each of the wives has only one child. Adah gave birth to Leah, the mother of Dinah, Mer- Nefat gave birth to Zilpah, Huna gave birth to Rachel and Tefnut gave birth to Bilhah. Dinah is the last born of Leah and is the only daughter of a child born. She is grown up among men. She is a family of shepherd and lives in shelter called the red tent.

The story begins by Dinah telling about her mothers' life. Starting from the arrival of Jacob at the land where Dinah's family lives. Rachel is the first girl Jacob has seen in the land and he is in love at the first sight by her beauty and asks Laban's permission to marry her after several days of his arrival. However, his intention meets refusal from Adah because she thought that Rachel is still unripe and has not

bled yet. Jacob then marries Leah instead. They both have a blissful honeymoon that cause the pregnancy of Leah. Laban then makes an offering of his two daughters his other daughters's dowries. After nine months of Jacob arrival, Rachel got her very first period. By then, she demands her wedding with Jacob be set immediately. She marries Jacob. One by one, all four Laban's daughters bear sons –Leah has six sons, Zilpah and Bilhah have two each- but Rachel who happens to be miscarried and eventually becomes midwife. Thereafter, Rachel bears sons –two at last.

Being the only daughter amidst other brothers, Dinah has her time mostly spent with her mother. With Leah, she learns how to bake, cook and how to make a pungent winey beer to be served for the men around her house but when she is with Rachel she is embraced with her beauty and usually only lies her head on Rachel thigh, silently admires her aunty's beauty. Bilhah Frequently narrates untold and secret stories to her about the goddess and those words chosen by Bilhah while narrating the stories makes her say no words but listen. While Bilhah tells about the past, Zilpah bewilders Dinah with her ability to see the sign of the nature. Zilpah believes that natures could speak and if they are able to listen to them, it will give us a pure clarity about life.

Dinah knows every details about her mother from head to toe. Four of them have given her a different lessons that can she can use to empower herself later when she lives by her self. Several years later, Jacob takes the family just outside of the Shechem. Dinah gets her period and begins following her aunty, Rachel, to be widwife's apprentice. Being midwife's apprentice allows Dinah to go to many

places and meets a number of people. One day when she helps her aunty to deliver a son of the king's concubine in Shechem, she meets the prince of the kingdom and instantly in love with him. A weeks later after Dinah leaves the kingdom, the queen requests her to come again and plans to make her a bride for the prince. Shalem, the prince, then comes to Jacob to ask his permission and get accepted in one condition -all people in Shechem should be circumcised so this would fit for association with the tribe of Jacob. They have the agreement and all of men in Shechem will be circumcised. For the reason of Dinah's safety, her brothers take Dinah Home. She gets very upset with her brothers and run away to Egypt and lives there with her mother-in-law. There she gives her first birth, Re-mose. One day, she meets Benia at the market, a master carpenter, and loves him at the first sight. They get married after several months of acquaintance and Dinah becomes a renowned midwife in the town.

They spend time together happily until one day Dinah dreams of her mother. That is the last time she ever sees her mother again before Dinah passes away.

## **B. PROBLEM FORMULATION**

1. How does patriarchal power rules the family of Dinah in Anita Diamant's *The Red Tent*?
2. How does the feminist reflect to that patriarchal family in Anita Diamant's *The Red Ten*?

## **C. PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH**

- 1.To analyze how patriarchy controls the family of Dinah in Anita Diamant's *The Red Tent*

2. To Analyze how feminist reflection toward patriarchal family in Anita Diamant's *The Red Tent*.

#### **D. METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION**

To collect the supporting data for this analysis, writer will use library research as a method of data collection. This research concerns a collection of some books, e-books, journals, articles, and other forms of reliable and credible writing. The primary source of this analysis is a book written by Anita Diamant entitled *The Red Tent*.

#### **E. THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK**

##### **A. Theory of Patriarchy**

The word patriarchy has been echoed sine long time ago. It is originally used to represent a particular type of male-dominated-family. A member of family which contain a women, son, daughter, servants, and bondsman are all under controlled of male authority. This is kind of system male domination for all aspect of life which subordinate women in a number of ways ((Bhasin 2006:3)

However, in its wider definition, patriarchy refers to a manifesto and institutionalization of male power toward women, daughter, son, and all family members. It then impacts that men are powerful in all important foundation within society in general and that women are weaken to have access or control over themselves (Learners 1989:239). Hence, this situation will totally revoke of women rights, influence, resource, and role in a society.

Based on two definitions above, the writer then conclude that patriarchy is institutionalized male dominance. In this line with this, Sigmund Freud stated that women psychology is determined by their biology and therefore this will clarify their abilities and

role in running a system in our social life. Sigmund Freud stated as well that women anatomy is destiny and he has belief that normal human is was male (Freud: 1977:124).

### **A. Theory of Resistance**

The word of Resistance has mostly been a consequence of subjugation. Oxford advanced learner's dictionary defines subjugation as the act of defeating somebody and gaining control over somebody or something. The act of defeating proceeds to the level of domination over the conquered entitled as an invariable outcome, the suppressed or subjugated individual or group would naturally burst out in order to oppose or to destroy the domination.

The act of resistance not only demands weapon to conquer the power holds, but it also calls for courage and a vigorous heart to front the hegemonic oppression and systematic violence.

Women active involvement in resistance has also become a significant aspect of writing in various forms against oppression, thereby shaping a feminist voice in the liberation struggle. Those writing of women tell their story, their struggles, their mistakes, their pain, their confidence play a part of it. The rise of feminist literature, hence as an oppositional stance to male dominion.

The literature of resistance sees itself further more as immediately and directly involved in a struggle against ascendant or dominant forms of ideological and cultural production.

### **B. Theory of Feminism**

Ever since men have established the idea of patriarchy belief, which has been rooted through the centuries, and the discrimination towards women never goes to end, women themselves create a movement against it. That movement later

creates an ideology that tries to stop men's dominance. Their ideology is then called feminism.

Literature is one feminist media in order to accomplish the goals. Through the eloquence of writing, women intend to reveal their voice relating to inequality. Feminism recognize that literature has strong connection in reflecting and shaping the cultural assumption within society. Thus, through the eloquence of writing, they write a story that empower women or even critique of patriarchal or woman marginalizing.

The main ideas of their voice involves of several ideas, all of which originate with the following beliefs: a) society is controlled, constructed by and favoring men, b) an odd ways of thinking that assists the subordination of women and disregard of issue specially affecting women, c) this system of male domination should be discontinue and substitute with a system that promotes equality for both man and woman (R. Tong, , in [\*International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences\*](#), **2001**).

Theory of feminism gives an analytical portray for understanding women. It gives the clarity of how women's role and experience within society, and also social difference from men's. For example, the cultural feminism theory that will be used in helping the writer analyzes the novel. This feminism theory has a different point of view in seeing values associated with women and feminity.

### **3. ANALYSIS**

#### **A. The Strong Patriarchal Power in the Family of Dinah**

A man who has belief that he is superior between women will lead him to do such abuse to women. The Red Tent gives an example of a father who happens

to do such a thing. In the life of his family, Laban is neither an ideal husband nor father. His treatment over his wives and daughters cannot be proven right. He is an old greedy man who thinks that he is the one who has power over his wives and his granddaughters. Thus, he has right to do everything as he wishes. One day, he went for a three-day trading journey to Charchemish. In that place, he gambled and lost all of his coins. However, his intentions of him for playing more and more lead him to do such evilly thing. He put Ruti, his fifth wife, as a bet so that he could have another chance to play the game. '*Laban had lost more than his coins in Carchemish game. He had gambled away Ruti as well,*' (Anita Diamant: 1997: 67). Sadly, the fortune is not with him at the time.

In the family of a patriarchal culture, a man is a decision maker. Nothing will happen without the acceptance of man. As Laban has gambled Ruti in Carchemish, the bondsman comes straight to land of Laban to take Ruti away to be his slave. '*and now a trader had arrived to claim her as his slave,*' (Anita Diamant: 1997:84). Hearing the conversation between Laban and the trader, Leah approaches her husband and gets down on her knees, takes Jacob's hand and kisses his fingers so that Jacob will not let Ruti be taken away. (Anita Diamant: 1997:85)

If Jacob does not agree with Leah, Ruti will obviously will leave the land with the bondsman. But then he agrees and pays the bondsman so that they will not take Ruti. This occasion pictures of how women lack the authority or capacity to act in the family.

Physical harassment also happens in the family of patriarchal culture. Laban is a man that easily uses his hands to torture his wives. In one occasion when one of his wives burnt her cook, Laban undoubtedly punch her wife until she falls to the ground (Anita Diamant: 1997: 18) Ruti also experiences a physical harassment '*but*

*then she gave off bearing and he began to hit her and calls her name so ugly ... Ruti's shoulder stopped with despair and several her teeth were broken from the force of Laban's fist,*' (Anita Diamant: 1997:92). Men's power over women within patriarchal family is not arguable. Wife has no reason to not disobey men.

A father who has belief that he is the one who should be obeyed and the one who runs the family will disrespect his member. In the novel, Diamant pictures the possibility of sexual harassment that a father tries to commit. The part that proves this sexual harassment is when Zilpah brings a Laban's midday meal to his place. Inside the place of Laban, Zilpah then being harassed by Laban. Laban get her hands and put his finger around Zilpah's nipple. This sexual harassment also happen to Leah '*Laban had put his hand under her robes,*' (Anita Diamant:m 1997: 20).

The harassment is not the only thing that happen within patriarchal family. Moreover, patriarchy obviously leads to sexes-oriented task. In the novel, Anita gives an illustration of job that should be done by father. A father must earn the money and keeping the family wealth while a mother keeps the household and takes care of a children. In the family a woman is valued by their cook, '*... let your daughter-in-law show me whether they can cook,*' (Anita Diamant: 152), (*I burned the first bread and burst into tears. I even sacrifice a bit of the next loaf so that Jacob might Fancy me,*' (Anita Diamant: 17).

## **B. Feminist Reflection to the Strong Patriarchal Family**

It is needless to say that a father plays crucial role in defining and keeping the family wealth. Thus, father's power is precisely needed within family. Though, the family is not all about masculinity. There is a presence that should be counted in rather than a father. This presence as well plays important roles in keeping the cycle of a family runs orderly. A mother or woman is one of the reasons why a



family is a family.

In *The Red Tents*, Anita gives an example of how women plays important role in keeping the family wealth, '*the family's good fortune and increasing wealth were not entirely the result of Jacob's skill. My mother's labors accounted for much of it,*' (Anita Diamant: 45). By this sentence said by the female character, Diamant attempts to clarify the reader that mothers also have the capability in increasing the wealth of a family.

In the Red Tents, the boundaries between men's life and women's life are vivid. The women have a place called the red tent. This is a place where they gather and tell story to each other, this the place where the boundaries between men and women meets clarity, this is the place where Dinah gets all the lessons from her mother and aunties, this is a place where all the truths are revealed and new life begins (Anita Diamant: 1997: 158)

Dinah is a female character that Diamant portrays as an ideal women. Dinah is just how women should be. Through the chain that connects her with her mother and aunties, Dinah becomes a perfect woman. In the novel, Diamant portrays how the chain between daughter and mother will give effect to a daughter (Anita Diamant: 1997: 2). She inherits Rachel's beauty, she owns Zilpah power of using such as discourse, she possesses Bilhah's understanding of nature language, and the last but not least Dinah knows how to please men 's mouth with her cook from her mother.

Not like her mother and aunties who has no chance in making a decision for they own life and who never have enough courage to find their husband guilty even if he has done something terrible to them, Dinah has a strong moral strength to face danger, fear or difficulty. '*Jacob, I cried with the voice of a wounded*

*animal. Jacob, I howled, summoning him by name, as though I were the father and he the wayward child,*' (Anita Diamant: 206). She personifies her anger to Jacob when he lies to her and murders her beloved husband, Shalem. *'You are unclean and you are cursed. I said, spitting into the face of the man who had been my father,'* (Anita Diamant: 207). She shows that she is not mentally or intellectually deficient and she will not let Jacob authority get her weaken. She then leaves her family behind and decided to go back to Egypt, *'the silence was absolute and solid as a wall when I turned away from them. Barefoot, wearing nothing but a shift, I walked away from my brothers and my father and everything that had been home,'* (Anita Diamant: 207).

Her life is interfered by none, she has the most authority where to go and with whom she lives.

Carrying out her mother and her aunties' story into her own life leaves Dinah Behaves like an angel and haven for those whose soul and life is tortured while delivering a baby. She rubs off her power and courage to other women in order to gain the feel of worth living to their mind, to strengthen their mental to face all the worst. Dinah sings a song to a mother who is about to deliver a new life. Through this song, Dinah spreads her saving grace, hoping it could be a kind companion for all women.

*'Fear not, the time is coming. Fear not, your bones are strong. Fear not, help is nearby. Fear not, Gula is near. Fear not the baby is at the door. Fear not, he will live to bring you honor. Fear not, the hands of a midwife are clever. Fear not, the earth is beneath you. Fear not, we have water and salu, fear not, little mother. Fear not, mother of us all,'* (Anita Diamant: 241-242).

Dinah Sings this song for a mother who carries a seed of life. Dinah Sings this song to remain all mother to fear nothing

## **CONCLUSION**

Women have constantly been undermined in the eyes of our society. just as the Red Tent portrayed the helplessness of women. Not only that women being judged as 'other' that make them weak and less authority in our surrounding, but also the idea of men are more powerful and should be respected more are the reason why the patriarchal system keeps rooting in our society.

The Red Tent characterizes kind of women that have more possibility in having a patriarchal treatment. It describes that women who has believe that men are the only one who responsible for the family wealth thus women should only do the household is the reason why men hold primary power and predominate in roles of political leadership, moral authority, social privilege, and family control.

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