

**PERJUANGAN WANITA MENGATASI DOMINASI PRIA DALAM  
PAVILLION OF WOMEN KARYA PEARL S BUCK**

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**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini mengkaji semangat feminisme para wanita dalam mengatasi dominasi kaum pria yang tercermin dalam novel *Pavilion of Women* yang ditulis oleh Pearl S Buck. Permasalahan yang akan dibahas adalah: 1) Bentuk perlawanan dan usaha kaum wanita dalam mengatasi penindasan kaum pria yang tertulis dalam novel tersebut; 2) Hambatan apa saja yang dihadapi para wanita tersebut dalam upaya mereka membebaskan diri mereka dari kungkungan kekuasaan sistem yang lebih mengutamakan kaum pria.

Pendekatan yang diterapkan dalam penelitian ini adalah *New Historicism* dan *Cultural Materialism*. Kedua pendekatan tersebut cocok untuk menganalisa karya sastra yang mengangkat tema ketidaksetaraan gender antara wanita dan pria dalam berbagai kegiatan dan kehidupan sosial dan ekonomi maupun dalam hal peranan di bidang lain, misalnya pendidikan, politik, hukum dan organisasi.

Hasil penelitian menyimpulkan bahwa pendidikan dapat menjadi sarana penting untuk meningkatkan kemampuan diri kaum wanita sehingga dapat mengatasi tradisi yang cenderung menyisihkan kaum wanita dan lebih mengutamakan kaum pria. Keterlibatan dalam organisasi pergerakan kaum wanita membuaht mereka lebih berani dan percaya diri serta memiliki posisi nilai tawar dalam menghadapi dominasi kaum pria.

Kata kunci: Kesetaraan gender, dominasi pria, kebebasan wanita, pendidikan, Organisasi pergerakan

***FEMINIST STRUGGLE AGAINST MALE DOMINATION  
IN PEARL S BUCK'S PAVILION OF WOMEN***

**Abstract:** *The research entitled *Feminist Struggle to Overcome Male Domination* analyzed feminist struggle to overcome male domination in Pearl S Buck's novel *Pavilion of Women*. Problems that were discussed were: What kind of fight and efforts were done by women to overcome male domination as reflected in the novel; what challenges were faced by women when they tried to free themselves from the confining power of the patriarchal system that gave privilege to man. Approaches applied in the research were *New Historicism* and *Cultural Materialism*. They were suitable to analyze literary works whose themes were related with gender inequality between man and woman in all aspects of social life. Conflict of role interest—such as in education, politic, law and organization—were concerned by the two approaches.*

*The research concluded that education was such important means to improve*

women's ability that they could overcome the old tradition that tended to marginalize women and gave more priority for men. Engagement in woman movement and other kinds of organization enabled them to be brave and more confident and have bargaining position to eliminate gender inequality and to gain their rights.

**Keywords:** *gender inequality, male domination, woman struggle, education*

## INTRODUCTION

Mythology that tells that Eve was created from one of Adam's ribs had underlied the view that women are under the control and protection of men. The view inspired the implementation of the patriarchal system that places men as leaders. Patriarchy would entitle man to become the leader of the family in the smallest scope, and the head of state or king at the highest level in the government system. For thousands of years this concept has been implemented by various nations around the world. But entering the nineteenth century the consciousness and spirit of emancipation began to emerge among women to equalize their position with men. The man dominance in various aspects of life has been decreasing from era to era. The women have intensively done various movements to obtain an equal position as men. It is characterized by a variety of

movements performed by women. The declaration of International Women's Day on March the 8th proves that the woman existence and role is increasingly considered and taken into account.

Discussion on the rights, role and fate of women in social life has never ended since the old age to the present. Various positions that are previously dominated by men, now they are mostly occupied by women. In education, for example, many women have the opportunity to take education to the highest level (Doctoral / S3 / Professor). In the field of governance high positions such as president or prime minister, ministers, director generals, governors, regents until the lowest position such village headman has been occupied by women both in Indonesia and foreign countries. The political field has already been

participated by women . In business field one has often encountered women as the supreme leader of the company.

The life of women with their lack of chance to actualize their potential and several cases of women as victims of violence committed by men has inspired some the author to express protest, and provide a mirror of the movement, desire, suffering and struggle of women in reaching similarity of their basic human rights.

Pearl S Buck with her novel *Pavilion of Women* tries to raise the problems faced by the Chinese women in a battle with the tradition that tends to put women in subordinate positions under the domination of men. By creating a character named Madame Woe who has the awareness to liberate herself from the oppression and exploitation by men, Buck tried to present her views related to the actions and behavior of women who can provide solutions to enable women to be free from gender inequality. Because there are efforts to empower women in the fight against the man dominance which is reflected in the novel *Pavilion of Women*, the study is given title:

Feminist Struggle to Overcome Male Domination. A common problem that should be solved and given attention to research with gender perspective is that gender inequality frequently affects women in various aspects of life both within the family and society. To escape from this gender inequality is necessary to the empowerment of women in accordance with the conditions surrounding them, which span the hierarchy more detail in various dimensions as formulated by Karl and Sara H Longwe. To more : early the problem is formulated as follows: 1. What is the shape of women fight against man dominance?, 2. What barriers hinders women's efforts to empower themselves?

Gender discourse began popular in early 1977, when a group of feminists in London did not any longer use old issues such as patriarchal or sexist ones, but they replaced it with a gender discourse (Scowalter, in Sumiarni, p: 1). In *Women's Studies Encyclopedia* (Vol I: 153) it is explained that gender is a cultural concept that seeks to make a difference in terms of role, behavior, mentality, and emotional characteristics between

men and women that develop in society.

Equality of women and men includes equal position before both the law and in a pattern or style of daily life in the family and society. The embodiment, of legal guarantee in the pattern of life and daily lifestyle, which is characterized by attitudes of women and men in their relationships with one another, both within the family and in the community of in a caring, mutual respect, mutual trust, mutual support, mutual empower, and they give each other a chance to grow and develop themselves optimally and continuously, and to determine the choice of field service to the community and the development of the nation and the world community, freely and responsibly (Ahmad, in Sumiarni, 2004: 24).

Gender awareness emerges as a result of the confusion of understanding of the difference between the sexes and gender roles. Sex differences are characterized by different biological organ function between women and men, which could not be interchangeable with respect to functions and duties. For example an uterus organ which belong to only the

female; this causes only women who can conceive and bear a child. While men have a penis, Adam's apple and produce sperm. Although men have sperm as a human seed, they cannot conceive and deliver a child of man because they do not have a uterus ((Mansour Fakih, 2001: 4).

Injustice / Gender inequality occurs because it is influenced by a variety of symptoms:

**Androsentism:** is namely to understand a phenomenon centered on the interests of men only; for example, the training of the technology is given only to men, because men are the head of household.

**Gender bias:** the tendency on certain sex, because of the patriarchal system, tends to favor the men. Examples: men's wage is higher than woman wage because women are housewives.

**Double standard:** the measuring the same phenomenon with an ambiguous standard. For example, a similar activity is considered only to be fitly done by women and do not deserve to be done by men.

**Over generalization:** a phenomenon occurs to one category only (women only, or men only), the result is applied to both.

The gender perspective and gender awareness is based on the principle of gender equality as *a goal to be achieved*. Therefore, Gender Research or Research Methods of Non-sexist must avoid or eliminate bias symptoms mentioned above so that there is a balance between women and men (Keppi Sukesi, 2002:2-3)

In the view of the New Historicism, although both historical text or literature is a discourse which seems to present or reflect an external reality, really the concept consists of symbols--verbal formations in the form of an ideological product or cultural buildings on an era. Cultural and ideological symbolism in the text applies especially to reproduce, confirm and propagate power structures of domination and subordination that characterize a particular society. Literary text is just one of many types of texts that include religion, philosophy, law, science and others which are influenced by the specific conditions of time and place, and the literary text does not have its own status or privileges. Literary texts represent the diverse sound dissonant (view), and these voices do not only reveal the

orthodox party, but also the strength of the current era, in which subversive texts are produced. Furthermore, things seem to be artistic *resolution* of the plot of literature that is very intriguing to readers, it is really deceiving, because it serves to envelop conflicts that are related to power, class, gender, social group which is a real tension that underlies the surface meaning of literary texts (Abrams, 1998: 251)

Concepts, themes, and procedures of the new Historicism criticism began to take shape in the late 1970s and early 1980s, which can be seen in the writings of Renaissance English literature experts. They directed their attention to the literary works of pastoral and mummery and especially in drama, and they emphasize the role in shaping the texts with the nuance of social and economic conditions. In the literary research the adherents of New Historicism focus on the idea and the suffering of those who are oppressed, marginalized and poor. Meanwhile, students interested in the English Romantic period develop a conception of the relationship between literature and history, and they argue that the representation in literary texts is not just

a reflection of reality but a form of ideology that is concrete. Proponents of Historicism who are interested in the English Romantic literature often call their criticism procedure as a political reading of the literary texts; they emphasize the oppression, displacement, substitution, which is a political ideology of the author. The main purpose of the reader (critics) politically to literature is to elaborate the disguise ideology and oppression in order to reveal the political conflict and the history and oppression, which is really the main topics hidden in a text (Abrams, 1998: 252).

Cultural Materialism is a term, which is used by the Marxist critic Raymond Williams, which was adopted by several British experts to show the Marxist orientation in New - Historicism. They argued that no matter how strong the inherent nature of textuality in history, a cultural and literary product at a certain level is always conditioned by the strength of the actual material and production relations in their historical past. Especially they are interested in political significance, and in particular aspects and subversive effects of a literary text, that did not only happen in

his time, but also in later periods associated with the text version in theaters and cinemas. Proponents of cultural materialism emphasize that their criticism is oriented on political intervention in their day, in a real commitment to the transformation of a social order that exploits people based on race, gender, and class (Abrams, 1998: 253).

Cultural studies imply an analysis of the production and reception of all forms of cultural institutions, processes, and products. One of them is that literature is seen as one of many types of symbolic construction. Their main concern is to identify the role and historical change, the forces of political, economic and social power structures that generate, transmit and disseminate meaning, truth, value, relative status of diverse cultural phenomena and their institutions-including the institution of traditional literary production and assessment, and even their own areas of the study of culture.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Since the object of this study is the literature, the research method applied is descriptive qualitative

method. Furthermore, in the process of data analysis this study will use two approaches, which consists of Literary Criticism Feminism and Gender Analysis.

As implied in the title of this study, this study will examine the role of women and their struggles against gender inequality which is reflected in the novel Pavilion of Women written by Pearl Buck. Therefore, the method of this study is the feminist literary criticism and gender. Feminist literary criticism is a criticism that sees literature with a special awareness of the existence of gender which is associated with the culture, literature, and human life. Gender makes a lot of differences; among of them is the difference among writers, readers; and external factors that influence the situation of the literary writing (Sugihastuti, 21).

Gender Analysis is a tool used to study the life of society as a system based on the structure *and social relation* between women *and men*. With the *genderanalysis* one can find *and* identify problems coming from the gender aspects and how to find the problem solving. There are various

criteria of analysis as described below. The application of each method is suited with the dominant gender issues that emerge, and on what activities are used; whether to identify problems, conduct research, apply programs or to design programs (Sukesi, 2).

According to KeppiSukesi, the gender analysis has many types. One of them is the gender analysis model proposed by Karl that emphasizes five components that must be analyzed, namely: well-being, access to resources, critical awareness, participation and control (Karl in KeppiSukesi, pp. 11-12).

**Dimension of well-being** can simply be measured by the fulfillment of basic needs such as food, health, housing and so on. To what extent these things can be enjoyed by women and men.

**Dimension of access to resources**, for example in agriculture consists of land, labor, credit, information and skills. The gap between women and men in resource productivity results in differences between women and men.

At the dimension of awareness or critical consciousness needs the

consciousness that gender disparity occurs because of social and cultural factors that are subject to change. Disparity occurs because of the assumption that the economic, social and economic position of women is lower than men. Awareness means the growth of a critical attitude.

The next dimension is **participation**. The gender gap in participation is indicated by the fact that the lower class is not represented in the elite institutions. Empowerment efforts are directed towards organizing women that play a role in the decision making process and their interests are represented.

This study aims to find different forms of representation of gender issues relevant to the situation of today's society as reflected in the novel *Pavilion of Women* written by Pearl S Buck. In addition, the research seeks to find ways of solving various problems of gender inequality that is offered in the novel.

## **ANALYSIS**

Through her novel *Pavilion of Women* Pearl Buck portrays the feminist struggle to overcome male

domination, which is supported by the Chinese tradition that tends to marginalize women's position. In her novel Buck tries to present women as a strong and capable person that should not be only dominated by man. In the novel there are some women characters. Each of them has her own way in conducting the struggle against male domination. The women characters are Madame Wu, Madame Karg, Rulan, and Lynyi. In the following sections each character's efforts against male domination and Chinese are discussed.

### **Madame Wu's Efforts to Overcome Male Domination**

Buck provokes feminist spirit that embodies Madame Wu, the main character of the novel. In this section the researcher will trace some evidences of Madame Wu's efforts to get freedom from man domination. Her efforts include the ending of her sexual service to her husband, the determination of her sons' wives and the management of family business.

### **Madame Wu's Ending of Sexual Service for Her Husband**

In the opening chapter of the novel Buck describes Madame Wu as a

person who can receive the succession of leadership in the big family. This can be seen in the quotation below:

She was ready for this day. A woman's fortieth birthday in a rich and old fashioned family was a day of dignity. She remembered very well when her husband's mother had passed such a day, twenty-two years ago. On that day Old Lady, had formally given over to her son's wife the management of the house with its many members. For Twenty-two years Madame Wu had held this management in her own hands, skilfully maintaining its outward habits so that Old Lady did not notice changes, and at the same time making many changes. (Buck, p.5)

In the quotation above readers can see that Madame Wu will celebrate her fortieth birthday that is considered as a day of dignity. It is the day when a woman has reached her highest maturity. For twenty-two years she has functioned as a wife for her husband and the manager of the big family. When she was sixteen and a newly-married wife to the husband, the Old Lady, her mother-in-law, considers Madame Wu as the suitable one to carry out the management of the big family with its many members. She does only function to serve her husband but also to perform various important appointments that usually become the responsibility of the head of family. She

is such a clever manager who really masters her duty that she can satisfy the needs of all members of the family, especially her mother-in-law.

The fortieth birthday is also the day of freedom for a woman. The evidence can be seen in the description of Madame Wu's attitude that Buck writes as below:

For Madame Wu herself this was a day to which she had long looked forward with a strange mingling of relief and quiet sadness.

The part of her life was over and the second part about to begin.

She did not fear age, for age had its honors for her. She would with ease bear in dignity and in the respect of her family and her friends. Nor was she afraid of losing her beauty, for she had learned to change with the years so subtly that it was still more apparent than her years. (Buck, p. 7).

When a Chinese married woman reaches the age of forty, it is regarded as the time for the woman to end all heavy tasks. She can delegate them to her daughter-in-law as the younger generation. She will not be bothered by any burden that has so far confined her movement. She can enjoy herself with any activities according to her own willingness, and not because of a duty. That is why Madame Wu feels

relieved when her fortieth birthday comes because she has conducted all duties and services since she was a newly-married woman.

Madame Wu also wants to quit the duty of pregnancy and delivering babies. She plans to find a concubine (a second wife) for her husband so that she does not have to serve husband sexually. This is implied in her conversation with her friend Madame Kang who visits her, which is quoted below:

Madame Wu lifted her eyes, They were long and large, and the black irises were very distinct against the white, and this gave them their look of ageless youth. She spoke with cool clarity. "Ailien, I have decided that today I shall ask my son's father to take a concubine." (Buck, p. 12).

Madame Wu's decision to seek a second wife for her husband signifies her retirement married life. In other words she should not have biological relationship with her husband. Her husband's need of sexual intercourse can be fulfilled by the presence of a second wife who will substitute for her previous function she has done with her husband for twenty-four years.

Her intention to find another

woman for her husband is also stated to her son and maid servant Ying before she tells her husband. When she visits her eldest son Liangmo she lets him know her plan to seek a second wife for his father.

She surveyed him with her steady beautiful eyes as though she did not hear this. "My son" she said, "since doubtless we will be interrupted soon, I will speak at once of what I am planning to do. I have decided upon a thing, and let me feel it is due you, as my eldest son, to tell you what I plan. I have decided to invite your father to take a concubine." (Buck, p. 20)

Hearing her plan Liangmo surely does not believe it. His reaction shows his **disagreement** to his mother's plan. He knows that so far her father is such a faithful husband for his mother that her statement really strikes like thunder. He is very sure that his father has never had such a crazy thought that will damage his relationship with his mother.

When Madame Wu tells her maid servant Ying, the servant also really cannot hide her objection to her mistress's plan.

"Perhaps you are right," Madame Wu replied. "I have been thinking of such things myself. Ying, I shall ask my sons' father to take a small wife."

She said this so calmly that for a moment she knew it was not comprehended. Then she felt the comb stop in her hair, and she felt Ying's hand holding her hair together tighten at the nape of her neck.

"It is not necessary for you to speak," Madame Wu said. The comb began to move again too quickly. "You are pulling my hair," Madame Wu said.

Ying threw the comb on the floor. "I will not take care of any lady but you!" she burst forth.

But Ying went down on her knees on the tiled floor beside Madame Wu, and she sobbed and wiped her eyes with the corner of the new sateen jacket which she had put on for the day. "Oh, my mistress!" she sobbed. "Does he compel you, my precious? Has he forgotten all your goodness and your beauty?" (Buck, p. 35).

The idea of finding another woman in addition to her mistress does not really comfort Ying's feeling and expectation. For her, Madame Wu is the only best mistress whom she could serve for the rest of her life. The presence of another lady will certainly destruct the harmony in the big house.

The most important moment is when Madame Wu and her husband are in the bedroom after the feast of her fortieth birthday. It is two-pairs-of-eyes meeting between Madame and her

husband. She directly expresses her intention to find a concubine for her husband. This can be seen in the following quotation below:

"Have I offended you?" he asked. He was now wholly awake. She saw his dark eyes clear.

"No," she said. "How can you offend me after twenty-four years? But—I have to come to an end." "Come to an end?" he repeated. "Today I am forty years old," she said. She knew suddenly that this was the moment, now, in the middle of the night when around them the whole house lay sleeping. She moved away from him as he sat there on the bed and lit the other candles with the one that burned. One after another they flared, and the room was full of light. She sat down by the table and he sat on the bed, staring at her. "I have been preparing for this day for many years," she said. She folded her hands on her knees. In her white silken garments, in the moonlight, her hands on her knees, she summoned all the strong forces of her being. He leaned forward, his hands clasped between his knees, still staring at her. "I have been a good wife to you," she said. "Have I not been a good husband to you?" he asked. "That always," she replied. "As men and women go, there could not be better than we have had. But now the half of my life is over." "Yet the half of yours is far away," she went on. "Heaven has made this difference between men and women." He listened as he

listened to anything she said, as though he knew that her words always carried a weight of meaning beyond their bare frame and beyond, perhaps, his comprehension. "You are a young man still," she went on. "Your fires are burning and strong. You ought to have more sons. But I have completed myself." He straightened his lounging body, and his full handsome face grew stern. "Can it be that I understand what you mean?" he asked. (Buck, p.40-41).

From the quotation above one can see that Madame Wu has prepared her plan to end her biological service for her husband when her fortieth birthday comes. It means that she has served her husband for twenty-four years since their marriage. She thinks that the age of forty is the limitation of her half of life. The half of her life is over, while her husband's life is still far away. And even a man is still very young in his age of forty. A woman of forty age should not continue to serve biologically to her husband who is still very young. It is not good for a woman of forty to bear and deliver a baby. This will disturb her health. A woman body can be regarded as the land for her husband's seed. A good seed should grow on a good land. This

can be seen in Madame Wu's reason quoted below:

Her reason recalled her from such futile questioning. Could anyone change what Heaven had decreed? Heaven, valuing only life, had given seed to man, and earth to woman. Of earth there was plenty, but of what use was earth without seed? The truth was that a man's need went on even after his bones were chalk and his blood water and this was because Heaven put the bearing of children above all else lest mankind die. Therefore must the very last seed in a man's loins be planted, and that this last seed might bear strong fruit, as the man grew old the seed must be planted in better and stronger soil. For any woman, therefore, to cling to a man beyond the time of fertility was to defy Heaven's decree. (Buck, p. 45).

In the quotation above Buck describes the different degree of fertility between man and woman. Man fertility will continue to grow maturer than woman. Man can produce good seed although his age reaches forty age. However, woman fertility will degrade when her age reaches forty. To produce good quality of children, man's seed must be planted in good and fertile soil of woman. That is why Mister Wu's future children must be delivered by a younger woman. It is the idea behind Madame Wu's

decision to seek another woman for him. Consequently, she can retire from the duty of bearing and delivering babies. This reason makes Madame Wu confirmed in her objection to have flesh relationship with her husband. Yet, she will not cut off her relationship with him. She will build spiritual relationship with him and other members of the great Wu family.

When she had thus reasoned, the distant large pain melted away in her, and she felt released and calm. She felt, indeed, restored to herself and almost as she had been as a girl. How strange and how pleasant it would be to lie down at night and know that she could sleep until morning, or if she were wakeful that she could be wakeful and not fear waking another. Her body was given back to her. She pushed up her sleeve from her arm and contemplated her flesh. It was as firm and as sound as ever. Nourished and cared for and infused now with new freedom, she would live to be very old woman. But that she might live happily she must be careful in all her relationships, but most of all with him. She must not allow herself to be cut off from him. Certainly this would not be easy when the tie between them would no longer be of the flesh, but of the mind and spirit. Then she must consider new ways of his dependence upon her, yet

ways which would in fairness divide him from the newcomer. (Buck, p. 46)

After considering her reason dealing with reproductive process, she feels relieved and thinks that it will not offend anyone, especially her husband. She will be able to enjoy her freedom totally without having to feel guilty. However, when Old Lady knows that she has moved to another bedroom separate from her husband, her mother-in law becomes quite angry and she cannot accept her explanation. This can be seen in the quotation below:

Old Lady sighed and walked on toward the door. When Madame Wu took her elbow she pushed her half spitefully. "Don't touch me," she said peevishly. "I am very angry with you." Madame Wu did not answer. She followed Old Lady into the sitting room. "You didn't tell me you were moving in here." Old Lady said in her harsh high old voice. "I am never told anything in this house." She sat down as she spoke. "I should have told you," Madame Wu agreed. "It was very wrong of me. I must ask you to forgive me." Old Lady grunted. "Have you quarreled with my son?" she asked severely. "Not at all," Madame Wu replied. "Indeed, we never quarrel." "Do not make words for me," Old Lady commanded. "I am able to hear

the truth.” “I will not make words, Mother,” Madame Wu replied. “Yesterday I was forty years old. I had long made up my mind that when that day came I would retire from my duties as a female and find someone for lord who is young. He is only forty-five years old. He has many years left him yet.” (Buck, p. 50).

Her opinion that her forty age is not suitable any longer to serve her husband cannot stop Old Lady’s accusation that there has been serious problem between Madame Wu and her husband. The old woman thinks that her son has played with another woman behind Madame Wu. Although Madame Wu denies such accusation, her mother-in-law considers that she has stopped to love her husband; and the separation of bedroom certainly will arouse various rumors as it is implied in the quotation below:

“No, there is not another woman,” Madame Wu replied. “Your son is the best of men, and he has been nothing but good to me. I am selfish enough to want to keep fresh between us the good love we have had. This cannot be if I am ridden with fear of a belated child, and surely it cannot be if my own fires slacken while his burns on.”  
People will say he has played the fool and you have revenged yourself,”  
Old Lady said sternly. “Who will

believe you have of your own will withdrawn yourself—unless indeed you have ceased to love him?”

“I have not ceased to love him,” Madame Wu said.

“What is love between a man and a woman if they don’t go to bed together?” Old Lady inquired. (Buck, p. 51)

In the quotation above Madame Wu explains that her biological relationship with her husband will be imbalanced. Her husband’s desire is still growing, while hers has slackened. If she forces herself to serve her husband, she will always worry that it will be possible for her to deliver a belated child. Her baby will be retarded if he is born from unfertilized uterus.

### **Rulan’s Objection to Concubinage**

Rulan is one of Madame Wu’s daughters-in-law. She appears to be a progressive woman who wants to change Chinese tradition that discriminate woman position. When she has heard that Madame Wu plans to find a concubine for her husband, she visits her mother in law, and she protests the plan and she directly express her disagreement. Their debate about concubine can be seen in the quotation below:

But if I were like Meng and the others,” Rulan said in her stormy impetuous I would not feel so badly now over what you have done, Mother, you must not let father take another woman.” “It is not a matter of letting him,” Madame Wu said, still mildly, “I have decided that it is the best thing for him.” The color washed out of Rulan’s ruddy face, “Mother, do you know what you do?” “I think I know what I do,” Madame Wu said. People will laugh at us,” Rulan said. “It’s old-fashioned to take a concubine.” For Shanghai people, perhaps,” Madame Wu said, and her voice conveyed to Rulan that it did not matter at all what Shanghai people thought. (Buck, p. 75)

Because Rulan has been engaged in feminist movement, the application of concubinage belongs to old tradition that should have been left. However, her husband Tsemo thinks that her mother’s decision is based on certain reason that gives some benefit for all.

“If our mother wants a concubine,” he said, “it is for a reason, for she never acts without reason, Yenmo, it is your turn.”

“Reason” Rulan had cried with contempt. “Guard your tongue,” Tsemo had said sternly, not lifting his eyes from the chessboard. (Buck, p.59)

Despite Madame Wu’s Wu’s

reason, Rulan thinks that Madame Wu has not known yet that the new law forbids the practice of taking concubine.

“Mother, it is now actually against the laws for a man to take a concubine, do you know that?” “What laws?” Madame Wu asked. “The new laws,” Rulan cried, “the laws of the Revolutionary party.” These laws,” Madame Wu said, “like the new Constitution, are still entirely on paper.” She saw that Rulan was taken aback by her use of the word Constitution. She had not expected Madame Wu to know about the Constitution. “Many of us worked hard to abolish concubinage,” she declared. “We marched in procession in the Shanghai streets in hottest summer, and our sweat poured down our bodies. We carried banners insisting on the one-wife system of marriage as they have it in the West. I myself carried a blue banner that bore in white letters the words, ‘Down with concubines.’ Now when someone in my own family, my own husband’s mother, does a thing so old-fashioned, so—so wicked—for it is wicked, Mother, to return to the old cruel ways—” (Buck, p.59-60)

Rulan’s protest to Madame Wu’s idea of finding concubine refers to her opinion that a man taking concubine is against the laws of the Revolutionary party. Still, Madame Wu considers that the laws like the new Constitution

cannot be practiced yet because it is still a trending topic on newspaper, and it has not been legalized. Rulan who has participated in the street remonstrations in Shanghai streets insists that concubinage should be abolished. She and her friends insist that the one-wife system of marriage should be applied in the family as it is done in the West. She thinks that the practice of concubine as a part of old ways is very wicked. If her own husband took a concubine, she would divorce him. This can be seen when she answers her mother-in-law's question as it is quoted below:

“My child,” Madame Wu asked in her sweet reasonable voice, “what would you do if Tsemo one day should want another wife, someone, say, less full of energy and wit than you are, someone soft and comfortable?” “I would divorce him at once,” Rulan said proudly. “I would not share him with any other woman.”

Further, Rulan demands that there must be the equality of man and woman. In the marriage a woman should be satisfied with one husband. Similarly, a man should be satisfied with one wife. It is obvious that she has adopted Western value. The marriage consists of one husband and one wife.

Madame Wu lit her little pipe again and took two more puffs. “A man's life is made up of many parts,” she said. “As a woman grows older she perceives this.”

“I believe in the equality of man and woman,” Rulan insisted. “Ah,” Madame Wu said, “two equals are nevertheless not the same two things. They are equal in importance, equally necessary to life, but not the same.” “That is not what we think nowadays,” Rulan said. “If a woman is content with one man, a man should be content with one woman.”

Madame Wu responds Rulan's thought of equality of man and woman by explaining that the age of forty is the time for a woman to rest and care for her body. And it is time to stop dividing herself by delivering babies and take care of them.

“Child,” she said, leaning toward Rulan, “I think Heaven is kind to women, after all. One could not keep bearing children forever. So Heaven in its mercy says when a woman is forty, ‘Now, poor soul and body, the rest of your life you shall have for yourself. You have divided yourself again and again, and now take what is left and make yourself whole again, so that life may be good to you for yourself, not only for what you give but for what you spend the rest of my life assembling my own mind and my own soul. I will take care of my body carefully,

not that it may any more please a man because it houses me and therefore I am dependent upon it.”

Rulan represents a modern woman who denies old tradition. That is why she is the only daughter in law who dare oppose Madame Wu’s decision in finding a concubine for her husband. To Rulan the decision disagrees to the principle of equality between man and woman that she strongly fights. Woman must get the same treatment as the man does. She feels to entitle to defend this principle because she regards herself as a new woman. This can be seen in the quotation below:

All this she had excused boldly to herself and to him because, she said, she was a new woman, not old-fashioned, not fearful of men, but believing, she said, that men and women were the same. (Buck, p. 65)

Although Rulan has strongly delivered her various thoughts and reason against Madame Wu’s decision to find a concubine for her husband, Madame Wu can wisely and intelligently defend her decision.

In her married life with Tsemo, Rulan always shows her fond of everything that has certain foreign influence. She also keeps foreign books

on the shelf. She decorates her bedroom with foreign pictures. This can be seen in quotation below.

The bed was curtainless, and there were, instead, curtains at the window. Some foreign pictures hung on the walls, and among the books on the shelves along the walls there were foreign books. On the bare bed Rulan lay. Her head was on a high pillow, and her short hair fell away from her face and showed her ears. They were small and pretty as little shells Madame Wu noticed them at once. “I have never saw your ears before” she said kindly. They are very nice. You should wear earrings. I will send you a pair of gold ones.” Rulan turned her dark brilliant eyes upon Madame Wu. “Thank you, Mother,” she said with unusual meekness. Madame Wu was alarmed at this meekness. “I am afraid you are very ill,” she exclaimed. “I am tired.” Rulan admitted.

“You have happiness in you, perhaps?” Madame Wu suggested.

But Rulan shook her head. “I am only tired,” she repeated. She began to pleat the silk coverlet with her her brown fingers. “Rest yourself, then,” Madame Wu said. “Rest yourself. There is nothing in this house that cannot be done by someone else.”

She nodded and smiled and went out again to Tsemo. He was writing foreign letters, one after the other, a foreign pen in his hand. He rose when she came

back, the pen still in his fingers. "What do you write?" she asked. "I am practicing my English," he said. "Who teaches you?" she asked. He flushed. "Rulan," he replied. She understood at once that he was ashamed, and so she said something else quickly. "Rulan is tired. She must rest." "I shall compel her," he said eagerly. "She is too active. Yesterday she went to a meeting of the National Reconstruction Committee at the City Council House and was chosen its president. When she came home she was exhausted." (Buck, p. 112)

**In the quotation above** one can also see that Rulan has taught English to her husband Tsemo. She also keeps being engaged in the movement organization. And even she has been chosen as the president of the organization.

**Made Wu's Ability to Read as Evidence of Her Intelligent and to Get Various Knowledge**

Madame Wu's ability to read has started since her childhood. Her father has taught her to read because he has seen the education system in foreign countries that he has visited. Her intelligence and wisdom has been recognized by her father in-law when

she was still a newly-married woman to her husband. This can be seen in the conversation between Madame Wu and her father in-law quoted below:

She had then put another of clear questions to him. "Our Father, do you think my mind will never be beyond that of my lord's at fifteen?" He had been further embarrassed at this question. But he was an honest old man, although he was a scholar, he wrinkled his high pale yellow' brow. "Your mind is an excellent one for a woman," he had said at last. "I would even say, my daughter, that had your brains been inside the skull of a man, you could have sat for the Imperial Examinations and passed them all with honor and become thereby an official in the land. But your brain is not in a man's skull. It is a woman's skull. A woman's blood infuses it, a woman's heart beats through it, and it is circumscribed by what must be a woman's life. In a woman it is not well for the brain to grow beyond the body." (Buck, p. 79)

In the quotation above one can also see the discrimination between man and woman that is conveyed by her father-in-law. It seems that it is only a man who can be clever and have more knowledge than a woman. A man can attend school and sit for the Imperial examinations, while it is not good for a woman to know things beyond her

family life.

Had she not been so dainty a creature her next question might have seemed indelicate. But she knew Old Gentlemen loved her and comprehended what she was. Therefore she asked again, "Is this to say, Our Father, that a woman's body is more important than her brain?" He had stroked his small white beard, and something like sorrow had come into his eyes. "As life has proved," he said, "it is true that a woman's body is more important than her mind. She alone can create new human creatures. Were it not for her, the race of man would cease to exist. Into her body, as into a chalice, Heaven has put this gift. Her body therefore is inexpressibly precious to man. He is not fulfilled if she does not create. His is the seed, but she alone can bring it to flower and fruit in another being like himself." They had both laughed, her laughter young and rippling and his dry and old. Then he was grave again. "But what you have asked me," he went on, "is a thing about which I have thought much and especially since you came into my house. We chose you for our son because you were beautiful and good and because your grandfather was the former viceroy of this province. Now I find that you are also intelligent. To a pot of gold has been added jewels. Yet I know that in my house you do not need so much intelligence--yes, a little is good so that you can keep accounts and watch servants and

control your inferiors. But you have reasoning and wonder. What will you do with them? I cannot tell. In a lesser woman I should be alarmed, because you might be a trouble inside these four walls which must be your world. But you will not make trouble because you also have wisdom, a most unusual wisdom for one so young. You can control yourself." (Buck, P. 142)

When it was only ten days she has got married with Mr. Wu, Old Gentleman invited her to his library and he told her how to treat her husband.

On the tenth day after the marriage, Old Gentleman had sent for her to come to his library, and had talked with her thus about his son: "He is what you will make him. Some men make themselves, but he will always be made by women. Yet you must not let him know this. Never reproach him with his own weakness, for then he will become wholly weak. Never let him feel that but for you he would be useless, for then he will indeed become useless. You must search for the few strong threads in him and weave your fabric with those, and where the threads are weak, never trust to them. Supply your own in secret." (Buck, p. 99-100).

This quotation shows that Madame Wu who is an intelligent woman, has been chosen by her father-in-law to

strengthen and educate Mr. Wu whom Old Gentleman considers as a weak man. She has been trusted to be able to guard his husband during their family life. It is proved that for twenty-four years Madame Wu has become the leader of the family who has handled and controlled all family members and fulfilled their needs. However, she takes ten years to discover that she can really overcome and comprehend her husband, and she also comes to know that her husband does not have better intelligence than she does. This is described in the quotation below:

It had been perhaps ten years before Madame Wu had come to the full comprehension of the man to whom she was married and whom she love still, with tenderness. So slowly, so gradually that she had not felt the pain of disappointment, she had found all the boundaries of his mind and soul. The space within these boundaries was small. The curiosities and questions which had at first excited her because she had taken them to be stirrings of intelligence, she saw now had no root. (Buck, p. 100).

So far she has tried to be patient to accept his narrowness of mind and she has let herself to be confined within his limited knowledge. However, she cannot stand it forever. She has planned

to get her freedom from the boundaries on her fortieth birthday.

It was at this time that she herself had stepped out beyond his boundaries and had her own spread as far as they would. But this she did not tell him. Indeed, why should she, since he would not have understood what she said? Enough of her remained within his boundaries so that he thought she was still there with him. But she had already begun to dream of her fortieth birthday and to plan for what she would do when the day came. (Buck, p. 101).

When the tenth birthday party has been performed, she conducts all her plan. She finds another woman to substitute her in serving her husband biologically in bed. She has got a concubine. And the woman has come to the house.

### **The Objection to Foot Binding for Chinese Woman**

Women is seen as a decorative figure in the household who should still look charming in front of their husbands in addition to their duties of caring for children whom they deliver every year.

Chinese women are also deprived of their freedom as a result of the applied tradition of foot binding. Foot binding, the cruel practice of mutilating the feet of young girls, was once pervasive in

tum-of-the-century China, where it was a sign of wealth and marriage eligibility. For a millennium—from the 10<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> centuries-- the practice flourished on and off, deeply ingrained in Chinese society. Even after it was outlawed in 1912, many women continued to clandestinely bind their daughters' feet, believing it would make them more attractive to suitors. Foot binding is a custom of binding Chinese women's feet tightly and the wearing of small size shoes should be worn from teenage up to adulthood. Thus, the feet of Chinese girls cannot grow bigger although they grow older. When these girls become women who deserve to get married, their feet keep small so that they cannot walk freely out of their houses. Rebellion against the tradition of foot binding is presented in the novel *Pavilion of Women*. Buck the author of this novel deliberately created a character of a father who has modern education and extensive experience traveling overseas.

In the novel the objection to foot binding is described as the father unbinds his daughter's feet from bandages. Her mother binds her feet when her father was still on duty out of

town, When the girl's father came home, he was furious seeing his daughter tortured with both legs bound tightly without his permission. The small girl's feet have been bound for several months until her father came home. This can be seen in the following quotation:

Madame Wu's feet were a little narrower than they might have been by nature. This was because many years ago when she had been a child of five her mother had begun to bind them. Her father was then traveling in foreign countries with Prince Lu Hung Chang. She had looked at her father's pictures taken in those foreign countries, and her nurse had told her about his wisdom and his goodness. Her mother, too, spoke of him often, but always to correct some waywardness in her. "What would your father say to you now?" her mother had inquired often. Because the little could not answer this, since she did not know, she always gave up her waywardness. When the mother called the child to her one day, and the child saw the long white bandages of cotton cloth she began to cry. She had seen all this happen to her older sister, that sister who had once run and played so joyfully and now sat all day silent over her embroidery, unwilling even to stand upon the sore bound feet. The mother had stopped to stare at her second daughter severely. "What would your father say if he came home

and found your feet splayed like a farmer's wife feet?" she had demanded. The little girl's sobs had sunk into a whimper, and she had let her feet be bound. To this day Madame Wu remembered the month of that agony. Then the letter came saying her father was coming home. She endured half a month more, for her father's sake. When he came home she had forced herself to walk to him on those little feet. What joy was like to the joy that came next. Before she had time to see his face or to call his name, he had given a harsh cry and lifted her in his arms. "Take these bands off the child's feet!" he had commanded. There had been hubbub and outcry. She could never remember a single word of that battle between her elders, but she never forgot the storm. Her mother had cried and grandmother had screamed with anger and even her grandfather had kept shouting. But her father had sat down and kept her on his knees, and with his hands he had taken off the bandages and made her feet free. She could still remember the pain, the joy, of the freed feet. He took them in his hands, one then the other, and rubbed them gently to bring in the blood again, and the blood running into the pinched veins had been first agony and then joy. (Buck, p. 124)

Her father's willingness to free her feet from bandages results from his view from foreign countries he has visited. He wants to apply and teach them to her

daughter.

Her father had learned new ways in new countries, and he had insisted that she be taught to read. When he died of a sudden cholera at the end of a hot summer three years later, it was too late to bind her feet again, and too late for ignorance because she already knew how to read. She was even allowed to keep on with reading because she was betrothed and Old Gentleman was pleased that she could read and that her feet were not bound (Buck, p. 125).

The quotation proves that Madame Wu's father wants his daughter to be able to learn knowledge by teaching her to read. She can read many books that make her cleverer than other women who cannot read. That is why Old Gentleman was glad to choose her as his daughter-in-law. She can read many books kept in the library of the great Wu family. This makes her know how to manage the cost of the family needs carefully and every month she always asks some report from her servants. They include reports from the cook, the main servant in charge of clothing, carpenters.

To all such affairs Madame Wu gave her close and entire attention. It was her talent that whatever she did, it was with the whole of her mind and for that

time nothing else was. When one affair was settled, her mind went wholly to the next one. Thus during this day she accepted one task after the other. It was only when dusk came on and the household matters were finished that she acknowledged her own thoughts again. "I am not a fool, though all the world around me are fools," Madame Wu said quietly. "When certain steps are taken and none prevents them, then more steps taken." (Buck, p. 142)

All of her sons always do her will. One of her sons is Fengmo. For him his mother is the woman who should be respected, obeyed and not ignored. All of her words contain truth and wisdom that cannot be denied. This can be seen in the quotation below:

Her voice, so clear, so musical, was nevertheless full of portent. Fengmo loved and feared his mother at the same time. To him she was always right, and the few times that he had disobeyed her she had not punished him, but he was always punished nevertheless. Slowly and hardly he had learned that what she said carried wisdom. Madame Wu asked. "Are you so weak? You must learn to take from a person that which is his best and ignore all else. Come, try the priest for a month, and if you wish then to stop his teaching, I will agree to it." It was the secret of her power in this house that she never

allowed her will to be felt as absolute. She gave time and the promise of an end, and then she used the time to shape events to her own end. (Buck, p. 143).

Madame Wu's good tact and strategy always helps her in applying all of her will and plan to other persons so that they cannot find any way to object and prevent them. And even children in the great house are not afraid of her and they always obey her. This can be seen when father Andre visits her in the quotation below:

Brother Andre looked at her with sudden appreciation in his deep eyes. They did not fear you, but they obey you," he said. They are good children," she said, and was pleased with his understanding. (Buck, p. 152).

### **Madame Kang Representing a Woman Confined in Chinese Old Tradition**

Madame Kang is another woman character in the novel *Pavilion of Women*. She is presented in the novel as the contrast for Madame Wu who is strong and can control and plan according to her willingness. While Madame Kang is a woman who should submit her life to serve the man and give her husband many children. Below

is the description when she has to tell her eleventh pregnancy despite her many children to her friend Madame Wu.

Madame Kang's plump face was embarrassed as she heard these kindly words. She took out a flowered silk handkerchief from her bosom covered her face with it and began to sob behind it, not hiding her weeping, since they were alone.

Now, Meichen," Madame Wu said in much astonishment, "tell me why **you** weep."

**She put** out her hand and pulled the handkerchief from her friend's face. Madame Kang was now laughing and crying together. "I am so ashamed," she faltered "I cannot tell you, Ailien. You must guess for yourself." "**You** are not—" Madame Wu said severely. "Yes, I am," Madame Kang said. Her little bright eyes, so merry, were **tragic**, too. **You**, at your age, and already with so many children!" Madame Wu exclaimed. "**I am** one of those women who conceive when my man puts even his shoes by my bed," Madame Kang said. (Buck, p. 163).

Her pregnancy proves that she never refuses to serve biological relationship with her husband. This condition proves that she always fulfills her husband's desire whenever he wants her. Even, she does not substitute for

her function at bed by finding another woman for her husband.

I could not bear—to do what you have done," Madame Kang replied. "Perhaps you are you are wise, but I cannot be wise if it means somebody between my old man and me." (Buck, p. 155)

The above quotation shows that Madame Kang cannot share her husband with another woman. Although she has to deliver a baby every year, she thinks it as the best duty for a Chinese woman to give her husband many children.

#### **Linyi Foreign Education inspires her to Demand her Future Husband of Ability to Speak a Foreign Language**

Linyi is one of Madame Kang's daughters. In that time some western influences had permeated into Chinese young generation's mind. One of them is the ability to speak a foreign language. Linyi has also learned to speak foreign language. This also has influenced her view to other person who cannot speak a foreign language. She tends to under estimate another person who cannot speak a foreign language. This is told by Meng, Linyi's sister as it is quoted below:

'How I would like to have my sister here!' Meng cried. She clapped her hands and her rings tinkled together. Then her hands dropped. "But, Mother, I must tell you. Linyi thinks Fengmo is old-fashioned."

"But why?" Madame Wu asked, astonished. "He has never been away to school. He has only grown up here in this house." Meng explained.

"Your mother should never have let Linyi go to school that year in Shanghai." Madame Wu said. Severity hardened the beautiful lines of her mouth.

"Of course Fengmo could still go away to school," Meng said. She covered a yawn behind her dimpled hand.

"I will not send Fengmo away at the time when he is not yet shaped. I wish this house to shape my sons, not a foreign school." Madame Wu replied. (Buck, p. 109)

In the quotation above one can see that Linyi is a young girl who gets education in Shanghai. She can also speak a foreign language. She thinks Fengmo as an old-fashioned boy because he has never been to school and he cannot speak a foreign language especially English. Her mother Madame Kang tells about her attitude to Madame Wu. This can be seen in the quoted conversation between Madame Wu and Madame Kang as follows:

Madame Kang looked doubtfully at her friend. "I would be glad for you to have her," she said. "She needs to be married and have her mind taken up. But I love her too well not to tell you her faults. I feel she will demand foreign learning in Fengmo even she is willing to marry him. She will think it is shameful that he speaks no foreign language."

"But with whom would he speak it?" Madame Wu asked. "Would she and he sit together and talk foreign tongues? It would be silly."

"Certainly it would," Madame Kang agreed. "But it is a matter for pride, you know in these young women, nowadays, to chatter in foreign tongue." (Buck, p. 132).

In the quotation above Madame Kang tells about her daughter Linyi who demands the ability of speaking a foreign language in Fengmo who is expected to become her husband. Linyi also feels a certain pride because of her ability to speak a foreign language. Furthermore, her view to her traditional family also changes. She is often angry with her mother and also children who behave too traditionally which is quite different from those she has met in Shanghai. Her behavior at home can be seen in the quotation below:

Madame Kang clapped her hands

twice together. "Good!" she cried. Then she let her plump hands drop. "But that Linyi," she said, mournfully. "It is one thing for me to say good. How do I know what she will say?" "You should never have let her go to a foreign school," Madame Wu said. "I told you that at the time."

"You were right," Madame Kang said sadly. "Nothing at home is good enough for her now. She complains about everything. She quarrels at her father when he spits on the floor, poor soul. She wants us to put jars on the floor for spittle. But the babies pick up the jars and drop them and break them. And Linyi is angry because she wants all the babies to wear cloths tied about their little bottoms. But with thirteen small grandchildren under this roof still not able to contain their water, how can we tie cloths about all of them? Our ancestors taught us wisdom in seatless trousers. Shall we flout their wisdom? We have three wash maids as it is." (Buck, p. 131)

Because Linyi has gone to a foreign school, she wants to apply everything from the school in her house. She becomes to know about the importance of healthy environment, the wearing of cloths around babies' little bottoms. She does not like her father's bad habit of spitting on the floor of the house, which is certainly disgusting

because western people have never done things like this.

When Fengmo and Linvi get married, they want the wedding party to be done as they like in the new time that is different from the old-fashioned way.

The two mothers talking together had decided to follow the children's wishes, and they did not have the old-fashioned long wedding which they had given to Liangmo and Meng. Three days' feasting was too long for these impatient two, Fengmo and Linyi. They wanted the swift marriage of the new times, a promise made before the elders and that was enough. (Buck, p. 171)

The new couple, Fengmo and Linyi, want to start their married life according to the new system that is more suitable for both of them.

## CONCLUSION

In the novel *Pavilion of Women* each woman has certain way to overcome male domination.

1. Education is the most prominent way that can be used to get the same opportunities as the man does. With the ability of reading Madame Wu can enlarge her knowledge from many books so that she grows smarter even than his husband. Her father

gives the greatest support for her to get out of the confining Chinese tradition, such as foot binding and the forbidding of reading books. Education has made Linyi have a bargaining position to a man who wants to marry her. She dare demand the ability of speaking a foreign language as the requirement for the candidate of her husband.

2. Engagement in the organization of feminist movement also gives a woman chance to get the same treatment as man. Rulan's demand of one wife for a man is a meanstodeny discrimination for a woman who is required to have only one husband. Her objection to the practice of concubinage in the family is an effort to equal role in the family life.
3. The mastery of business management by Madame Wu proves that a woman can earn a living and get money. Therefore, she must not depend on her husband to obtain
4. For a woman who fears to free herself from male domination she will prolong her suffering as a mother who always delivers babies for years and care for them so that

they reach certain age that do not need her attention. Madame Kang is an example of a woman who submits to her fate as woman under man control and domination.

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