

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I would like to draw a conclusion from the analysis of theme through the portrayal of two female major characters in the previous chapters.

Through the portrayal of the female major characters in both novels, *Offred* and *Ellador*, I can see that they have to face the same problem, which is related to their being women. In both novels, women are considered inferior to men. The men in both novels think that women are not as important as them because women are considered domestic beings. Moreover, women are also regarded as weak. They are limited and can be limited. These reasons make the men underestimate women.

From the analysis of *The Handmaid's Tale*, I find that Offred's characteristics have helped her to overcome the gender oppression she faces. She is brave, smart, and critical. These characteristics eventually give her strength to stand firm in the society where she lives, Gilead. Gilead is a place where women

are regarded as handicapped people. Thus, I conclude the theme is courage, intelligence and critical thinking will help women to overcome the gender oppression they face.

From the analysis of Herland, I find that Ellador's characteristics have helped her to eliminate the negative perceptions that men have about women. She is open-minded, smart and strong-willed. These characteristics eventually become a proof for the men that women are not inferior, stupid and submissive as the men previously thought before they go to Herland. Herland, where Ellador lives, is a female land. Thus, I conclude the theme is open mindedness, intelligence and being strong-willed will help eliminate the negative perception about women.

Having analyzed the characteristics of the female major characters in both novels, I can see that both Offred and Ellador have positive characteristics. The characteristics can help them face their situations. And from these characteristics, the themes of the two novels are revealed.

Having analyzed the themes, I come to a realization that these themes can be applied in reality. Until today, women are still considered as weak beings, second class citizens and are still put in the lower position compared to men. Although there have been women movement to get the equality, but in fact there are still limitations for women. I think women need to brace themselves against the unfair treatment, and from the theme of The Handmaid's Tale, I learn that women need to have positive characteristics like Offred so they can survive from the oppression.

Not quite different from the novel The Handmaid's Tale, the theme of the novel Herland still have the same issue, about being women. Women are still

considered not to be as good as men that they are given certain limitations. It actually indicates a negative perception about women. As I have stated, women are considered weak beings, stupid, narrow-minded and are not competent compared to the men. Women need to be able to defy the negative perception. And the theme of Herland shows that women now, with their positive characteristics, manage to eliminate the disadvantageous opinions towards them.

As I have stated before that the themes of both novels are about the positive characteristics that women have will help them not only to overcome the oppression but also to eliminate the negative perception about women. Since the problems women face are still the same until today, I think the themes of both novels are universal. It is applicable to every woman in the world. By having positive characteristics, women would be able to stand firm in their life. And when there is a chance, give proofs to people so that women will not be considered as inferior to men. I believe that both themes are also capable to provide enlightenment for the readers especially women in facing the problem in their life. Hopefully it is useful to give women a better future.

After analyzing the two novels, I find some differences between them. First of all, although the female major characters have to face the same problem about their gender, they face it in different ways. Offred has to face it directly, whereas Ellador has to face it indirectly. It happens because of the setting of both novels. Gilman's Herland is set in Herland. It is a place where women are the rulers of the state. There are no men to take part in governing the country. The women live in peace and happiness until the three male explorers come with their negative perception about women. Atwood's The Handmaid's Tale is set in

Gilead. It is a place where men are the rulers of the state. There, women have to follow the system which mostly does not give benefit to women, especially handmaids. They even have to suffer from oppression. This system leaves Offred no option but to face the unfair treatment directly. Thus, Offred has to face worse problems compared to Ellador.

The other difference is the ending of both novels. Ellador has succeeded to change the men's view about women. The men begin to have more respect and appreciation towards women. While in Offred's case, there is not any sign of change in the men and the story ends with Offred being sent out of her place. It cannot be decided whether she is sent to other place or is released. However, throughout the story, her characteristics have helped her to stand firm in dealing with the bad condition in her society.

These two novels, as I have mentioned in the Background of the Study, are considered works of science fiction, which are created with a didactic element, meaning to teach people (Fredy). Moreover, through these works, readers both men and women readers are expected to have a better future because they could learn from the past (Baccolini).

These two novels are also the means for the authors to express their expectations because science fictions are known to "always have a kind of mirror relation to the writer's own world. They may offer models for the future, or more frequently they may make satiric attacks on present society and deliver strong warnings against the consequences of particular kinds of political and social behaviour" (Fredy). Here, I can see that both novels actually have the same purpose. They are created to show the expectations of the authors. The authors

want to express their right as women. They hope that women get more respect and appreciation.

Finally, from this analysis, I learn that positive characteristics can help people in facing different situations in life. Sometimes, positive characteristics such as being smart, strong-willed and open-minded can make people respect each other. Sometimes, one can also stand firm in bad situations by being brave, smart and critical. Actually, if one combines all those characteristics, he or she will have enough strength to live in this uncertain world.