CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this chapter I would like to analyze Women's Limitation in Wilkie Collin's The Woman in White. The analysis of women's limitation is divided into two sections: single and married women.

4.1. Single Women Limitation

Basically, patriarchy is used as a set of social relations where the men dominated the household, so that makes them able to take over and control women. Patriarchal family is one of the characteristic of the traditional family in Victorian age. For example, in Wilkie Collin's The Woman in White novel, which is described by Fairlie's family. In the novel, men are the householder, while wife and children are considered as men's property. Single women are their father's property and married women are her husband's property. Like the property, women must have a high value and marketable. The marketable itself is caused by the expectation that women should be well married - married rich people who has a title and position. It cause women have to the characteristic of the ideal lady to attract rich men. The construction of the ideal lady makes an obligation for women to be pretty, innocent, loveable, gentle and patience. Laura Fairlie, the main character, exemplifies the ideal lady in Victorian age, as described below:

> *'A fair, delicate girl, in a pretty light dress, trifling with the leaves of a sketch-book, while she looks up from it with truthful, innocent blue eyes--that is all the drawing can say; all, perhaps, that even the deeper reach of thought and pen can say in their language, either. The woman who first gives life, light, and form to our shadowy conceptions of beauty, fills a void in our spiritual nature that has remained unknown to us till she appeared.'(Collin, 1991: 45)*

The data above shows that Laura Fairlie is visible image of the construction of women's characteristic in Victorian age. She is described as a fair woman and she is seen more beautiful with*"innocent blue eyes… and form to our shadwy concetions of beauty"*Laura's beauty also can be seen through Walter Hatright's admiration when he first saw her

> *"Mingling the vivid impression produced by the charm of her fair face and head, her sweet expression, and her winning simplicity of manner, was another impression, which, in a shadowy way…".(Collin, 1991: 46)*

The quotation above describes that the characteristic of the ideal lady who is described as fair women with sweet expression and simplicity of manner. The beauty and femininity are an extra value for women. Women characteristic must be like an angel because women are considered as a gentle's human beings. The characteristics above have the good impact for their appearance because it makes an extra value for them. On the contrary, there are a lot of women who do not have the characteristic of ideal lady. As the way Martha Vicinus in "Suffer and be still: Women in Victorian age" states that *"throughout the victorian period the perfect lady as an ideal of femininity was tenacious and all persuasive, in spite of its distance from the objective situation of countless women*". From the quotation,

it indicates that the ideal femininity is an important thing in that age. However many women cannot attain it. It is represented by Laura's sister, Marian Halcombe. Marian is Laura's step sister who has darker skin. The appearance of Marian will be described below:

> *"The lady's complexion was almost swarthy, and the dark down on her upper lip was almost a moustache. She had a large, firm, masculine mouth and jaw; prominent, piercing, resolute brown eyes; and thick, coal-black hair, growing unusually low down on her forehead. Her expression--bright, frank, and intelligent--appeared, while she was silent, to be altogether wanting in those feminine attractions of gentleness and pliability…." (Collin, 1991: 28)*

From the data above, it is clearly seen that Marian has different characteristic of the ideal lady. Marian is ugly, dark and she has a masculine mouth and jaw. Therefore, her values are unequal to Laura. In the first meeting, Walter Hatright even thinks that Marian does not have feminine attraction which can make men interested. Marian also realizes the lack of her feminine attraction. She knows that she is inferior in terms of beauty and wealth compare to her sister. Although the story does not focus on her pursuing her own happiness, the quotation below clearly shows that beauty and wealth do give a limitation to women, in this case Marian Halcombe.

> *"My mother was twice married: the first time to Mr. Halcombe, my father; the second time to Mr. Fairlie, my half-sister's father. Except that we are both orphans, we are in every respect as unlike each other as possible. My father was a poor man, and Miss Fairlie's father was a rich man. I have got nothing, and she has a fortune. I am dark and ugly, and she is fair and pretty. Everybody thinks me crabbed and odd (with perfect justice); and everybody thinks her sweet-tempered and charming (with more justice still). In short, she is an angel; and I am---- Try some of that marmalade,*

> *Mr. Hartright, and finish the sentence, in the name of female propriety, for yourself. (Collin, 1991: 30)*

The quotation above quotation explained is recount of Walter Hatright and Marian Halcombe are met on the first time. Marian is introducing and explaining who she is. Her appearance which is different with her beautiful sister makes her feel distinguished. So that it make people thinks that she is considered as evil.

Meanwhile in the contrary of her appearance, Marian is actually smart and has a lively personality, but that is invaluable in marriage market. Besides, the society has constructed that beautiful women is like an angel and ugly woman is like an evil. Thus, the only possible way for economic security which is marriage is limited.

Being beautiful and fair are not the only compulsion for women. They have to be able to play a piano or embroidery. The ability is an extra value for the women who want to look attractive in men's eyes. Laura is one of the characters who represent it. As we can see the data below:

> *"In the evening she went to the piano, choosing new music of the dexterous, tuneless, florid kind."(Collin, 1991: 156)*

The data above describes the ability of Laura's playing piano. She plays a beautiful song for her family in the dinner. Her ability of playing music particularly a piano is one of the ability that women must have.

Women who have ability in art have higher values in marriage market. It means that their chance gets bigger to marry rich people from the higher social nobility. Basically, the aim to get trained in arts is to get a husband that will

secure their position in the society. As Marion Made says that *"A refined girl had only one purpose in life – to find a husband. She was educated and trained for the marriage market. Once she had achieved her goal, she spent the rest of her life in the home, raising her children and obeying her husband."* (1991: 58). From that quotation, the writer assumes that women will learn and train her ability for one purpose which is to get a husband, marriage market. The fact is that there are no other jobs available for women in that time. They have to be married for their own future. Women cannot work except as governess with a poor salary. These situations really give a limitation to women.

Women also cannot choose a husband. Their parents will look for a good matched for their daughter. The consideration is based on the status and wealth. Parents will look for a rich and high status son in law. Laura also experiences the same situation; she is matched with the man who has an equal status by her father:

> *"She was engaged to be married, and her future husband was Sir Percival Glyde. A man of the rank of Baronet, and the owner of property in Hampshire." (Collin, 1991: 70)*

The data above describes that Laura have been matched with the man, Sir Percival Glyde, who is chosen by her father, a man who has rank and wealth. Economic background is the important reasons in choosing a husband. Economic is also the reason for men in choosing a wife. Women who come from rich family and have a bigger marriage settlement will be easy to get a husband. On other hand, women from a poor family cannot get or hard to get a husband which also means they do not have security for their future.

In addition to being daughter, Laura does not have a right to reject the order of their father because a daughter is like their father's property. They must obey and be submissive to their father, and so does Laura. Although she does not agree with her engagement, she must accept it. Moreover, in her father death bed. She even cannot break the engagement though she is in love with Walter Hatright. It will be shown below:

> *"I can never claim my release from my engagement,' she went on. 'Whatever way it ends it must end wretchedly for me. All I can do, Marian, is not to add the remembrance that I have broken my promise and forgotten my father's dying words, to make that wretchedness worse." (Collin, 1991: 154)*

The data above explains that Laura cannot break the engagement. Besides, if she breaks the engagement, the consequences will be uncomfortably for her and she also breaks her father's last wish. In that age, women who break the engagement will cause negative effect for family's name. As the Martha Vicinus says that *They knew the dangers beneath them – on false step and a family's reputation was lost. For the respectable a "bad sister could mean the loss of work for other members of the family, so moral purity had an added economic edge(1973: xiii).* The quotation shows that women are responsible for the family's respectable name. They even have to keep the engagement against their will only for their family's sake. Therefore, Laura chooses to follow her uncle wish as her guardian after her father deceased. As shown in the quotation below:

> *'Oh Marian!' she said. 'You crying! Think what you would to say to me, if the places were changed, and if those tears were mine. All your love and courage devotion will not alter what must happen, sooner or later. Let my uncle have his way. (Collin, 1991: 172)*

Laura has to accept Sir Percival Glyde as her husband though she does not love him. Her guardian does not really think that her feeling is important. Thus, she has to endure her own unhappiness because of the match.

Women also cannot maintain the intimate relation with her close friend. It is experienced by Laura's maid, Fanny:

> *"She could give me no explanation whatever of her sudden dismissal. Sir Percival had ordered that she should have a month's wages, in place of a month's warning, and go. No reason had been assigned – no objection had been made to her conduct. She had been forbidden to appeal to her mistress, forbidden even to see her for a moment to say good-bye. She was to go without explanations or farewells, and to go at once". (Collin, 1991: 280)*

The quotation above describes when Marian visit Mrs. Michelson house. The purpose of Marian arrival is to ask where is Fanny lived. Fanny is a maid who has long accompanied Laura. Because Fanny is intimate with Laura, it makes Marian wants to meet Fanny to know the reason of her sudden dismissal.

Although Fanny has devoted herself to work on the family for a long time, movey intimate with Laura. The one who has the rule is Sir Percival Glyde. He can dismiss the maid without Laura's consent on it.

In addition there are some female characters experiencing same limitation as Fanny, one of which is:

> *"It was impossible for a person in my situation to meet any proposal, made in these terms, with a positive objection….. Let me, however, say again that it was impossible for me, in my dependent position, to act otherwise than I did." (Collin, 1991: 364)*
> " *I had no right to expect that she should do so. It matters little now. I was sorry for her, I was indeed heartily sorry for her all the same." (Collin, 1991: 374)*

The quotation above we can see that the same limitation which experienced by Eliza. Eliza's position as housekeeper will have no effect to change the situation becomes better in Blackwater Park as same she wants helped Laura as Fanny. Because Eliza just as housekeeper,she could only obey the rule by householder at that time; Sir Percival Glyde.

We can see from both Fanny and Eliza that the lower class can only obey the orders of the householder, they have no freedom well that's helpful for theirself as well as others. As quoted by Norton (1855:9) that An English wife has no legal right even to her clothes or ornaments; her husband may take them and sell them if he pleases, even though they are the gifts or relatives or friends, or bought before marriage.

The data above clearly shows that single women get a lot of limitation.The limitation is due to the economic terms; women dependent to men- their father or guardians. It causes women to follow the rules that are applied by the patriarchal system. Women are only considered as properties which have a value just like a property.The assessment of their value is based on their effort in achieving the ideal characteristics of a woman in Victorian era. Thus, women \ should be looking pretty, have expertise, obedient to the family, especially those the men. Even women are responsible for the honor of their family. Many women receive all of the construction because women are dependent financially and they do not have opportunities in the public sphere. All the skills that are taught and are owned by women are usually just a trivial skill.It is only the way to attract the future husband.

4.2. Married women Limitation

The previous data have shown there are many limitations faced by single women. Married women also face the same limitation. Generally, the purpose of marriage is to achieve the happiness but it is not similar with marriage at the Victorian time. Marriage in Victorian age was basically synonymous with economic security, especially for women. It means moving out and exchange of the father's into the husband's house without having any kind of responsibility or concern about money. It is experienced by Laura in the novel. Laura is just considered as the valuable goods who change from her father hands, to the guardian and then to her husband. The aim of Laura's education is just to increase her value in the marriage market so that it makes equitable for her to get a husband who has a position and wealth. All of those happen because there are no jobs available for women at that time except to marry and get rich husband to support her. Although a woman came from rich family, she still has to secure her future with a well marriage.

Women are not the only one who are concerned on economic security in marriage, a lot of men are also searching a wife from rich family in order to get a marriage settlement from his wife. According to Hubbel, Marriage settlement is an arrangement made before marriage and in consideration of it whereby real or personal property is settled for the benefit of the husband, the wife and the issue of the marriage(1920:1281). The purpose of marriage settlement is to keep women's possessions for their selves. It is in order to avoid a husband spend all the money given by his wife and left her with poor circumstances.

There are vary of agreement can be made. Any properties that women have from her marriage settlement legally belong to them, but any rents or other income from that property are owned by their husband. It is caused by the law that makes women's identity absorb into their husband, so that her husband controls his entire wife properly. As Norton said that women have no possessions, unless by special settlement; her property is his property (1855:8)

Laura also faces the same situation. Her father has granted her a big marriage settlement, twenty thousand pounds. After she married to Sir Percival Glyde, the money is under her husband control. Before Laura got married, she signed an agreement that gave the power to her husband to control all the wealth that she owned.

> *"My careful consideration of the statement made by yourself, and my knowledge of Lady's Glyde position, as defined in the settlement, lead me, I regret to say, to the conclusion that a loan of the trust money to Sir Percival Glyde (or, In other words, a loan of some portion of twenty thousand pounds of Lady Glyde's fortune)…" (Collin, 1991: 258)*

The quotation explain when Marian received a letter from a messenger; William Kyrle. The contents of this letter contains about marriage settlement that gave Sir Percival Glyde the power to take care of marriage settlement that was money of twenty thousand pounds. Granting power of Attorney is indeed already due to when a man and woman married, the law considered the wife's legal identity to be absorbed into her husband; this meant that everything a woman owned before her marriage became the property of her husband, to dispose as he pleased.

Based on explanation above, we can see that there is limitation for women in owning a property. Although she comes from a well off family who had a big wealth from her parents, still her property is belongs to her husband. She legally becomes the property owner but she has no power to access it, because everything is under her husband's control. Although she was rich, Laura remains dependent on economic term to her husband.

Besides, the limitation on owning a property, the wives cannot maintain the intimate relation with her own family. The marriage looks like farewell to their relatives, as the following:

> "*Poor dear Laura hardly leaves me for a moment all day, and last night, when neither of us could sleep, she came and crept into my bed to talk to me there. "I shall lose you so soon, Marian," she said; "I must make the most of you while I can." (Collin, 1991: 445)*

The data tells that a night before she got married, Laura asked Marian to accompany her. She wanted to feel the intimacy for the last time before she was separated with Marian. It showed that there were the boundaries or the distance between them. Generally, the women needed a friend to express her feeling. But, because she would get married then she could not tell everything to her sister anymore.

> *"The change which her marriage has produced in our relations towards each other, by placing a forbidden subject between us, for the first time in our lives; the melancholy conviction of the dearth of all warmth of feeling, of all close sympathy, between her husband and herself, which her own unwilling words now force on my mind; the distressing discovery that the influence of that ill-fated attachment still remains (no matter how innocently, how harmlessly) rooted as deeply as ever in her heart--all these are*

> *disclosures to sadden any woman who loves her as dearly, and feels for her as acutely, as I do." (Collin, 1991: 345)*

The quotation above shows that marriage restricted women intimacy with their sister. Women were forbidden to talk about private matter, even with their own sister because the most intimate person was their husband.

Husbands could also determine their wife society. Although a wife disliked someone who was known by her husband, a wife must make friends with the wife of her husband's friend. As cited below:

> "*Sir Percival and Count Fosco are old and fast friends, and their wives will have no choice but to meet on civil terms." (Collin, 1991: 221)*

The data above explains that when a woman married, she should follow her husband rules, including choosing friends. Besides, she was responsible to make good relationship with her husband's friend. It should be done to keep the honor her husband's name in the society, because people' opinion was very important for Laura's husband career.

Another limitation was that women have to suppress their felling. Laura also suspected if her husband didn't love her just before they got married. When Sir Percival Glyde brought him to celebrate the honeymoon in Rome, where they visited the tomb of Cecilia Metella, Laura was inspired to ask her husband to find out how deep her husband's love to her:

> *"Would you build such a tomb for me percival?" I asked him. "You said you love me dearly before we were married, and yet, since that time --" I could get no farther. Marian! He was not even looking at me! I pulled down my veil, thinking it best not to let him see that the tears were in my eyes. I fancied he had not paid any*

> *attention to me, but he had. He said "come away," and laughed to himself as he helped me on to my horse. He mounted his own horse and laughed as we rode away. "If i do build you a tomb, he said, it will be done with your own money". (Collin, 1991: 248)*

The quotation describes when Laura was retelling what happened on their honeymoon with her husband to Marian. Laura tried to ask her husband: "Would you build such a tomb for me Percival? And her husband answered was not augur as she hoped "If I do the build you a tomb, he said, it will be done with your own money."

The cemetery in the 19th century is identically vintage. The structure and art that existed in the high tomb was really precious at that time, especially for the tomb of lady who was loved by her husband. If the wife died then her husband would create a beautiful tomb for her.

Build a cemetery is a mark of a great love of devotion by a husband toward his wife. In the Victorian era, there are many tombstone's symbols planted which has a lot of meanings. When carving tombstones shaped picturesque then it shows how great her husband loved his wife. For example in India, the King made the Taj Mahal in memory of his beloved wife. The greater funeral and tombstones are made, the more visible the love of the husband towards his wife.

Laura asked a question because she would like to know if her husband loved her or not. The answer showed his indifference, he even rudely said if he built the Tomb for her, he would build a tomb with Laura's own money. But as a wife she couldn't reproach her husband over the painful word. Laura could only accept what her husband said to her.

Sir Percival Glyde was unkind to Laura. But as a wife she did not have the right to dispute her husband's painful treatment. On the contrary, a wife was obliged to keep her husband's feelings, as seen from the following quotation:

> *"Who cares for his causes of complaint? Are you to break your heart to set his mind at ease? No man under heaven deserves these sacrifices from us women. Men! They are the enemies of our innocence and our peace--they drag us away from our parents' love and our sisters' friendship--they take us body and soul to themselves, and fasten our helpless lives to theirs as they chain up a dog to his kennel. And what does the best of them give us in return? Let me go, Laura--I'm mad when I think of it!" (Collin, 1991: 355)*

Based on Marian's word it could be learned that Laura more concerned on Sir Percival's feeling then her own. However her husband was indifference to Laura's feeling. Marian tried to question for Laura's own interest. However, as a sister she could not do anything to help Laura.

In addition, the suppression was not only done by Laura's husband, also by her husband friend. Count Fosco evil plan was continued after Laura finished her honeymoon; he wanted to hide Laura identity. He suggested to Laura to go to London by making false information that Marian Halcombe was sick. The truth was that Marian Halcombe was not sick, but she went to Blackwater Park. After Laura arrived in London, she got ill treatment from Count Fosco:

> *"He pushed me into the room, and locked the door of me!" (Collin, 1991: 289)*

Laura could not defend herself, first because Count Fosco was psychally stronger and he had power even greater than her husband. As she said *"The Count is the vilest creature breathing! The Count is a miserable Spy!" (Collin, 1991: 285).*

After Laura got the ill treatment, she got a heart disease and Count Fosco said that Laura died because of that illness. In fact, Laura still alive, but she could not do anything for Laura because based on the law Laura belonged to her husband. To solve their problem they need another man to help them.

The data above clearly shows that married women also get a lot of limitation, same as single women. The law has restricted women in owning property. Moreover the treat that women got is only like property that can be moved from father to husband. Their value is based on how much the marriage settlement that women have. If their have big marriage settlement, so they get a rich husband. Unfortunately, the property itself cannot be accessed by them but by their husband. That condition makes a married women should obey to their husband, married women cannot maintain the intimate the relation with her own family, must make a friends with her husband's friend, surpress their feelings when their husband do the bad things.