

CHAPTER II

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

This chapter elaborates the position of woman that is represented through discourse in “Phenomenal Woman”. In this poem, the existence of feminist language is reflected in the pronoun response (I, You, They, and Themselves). The poem discusses a woman's ability or strength over anything that directly denies the gender stereotypes that people have for women. In this case, the researcher analyzed women’s representation in the poem using feminist stylistics theory by Sara Mills. To analyze the poetic language style, the researcher used feminist stylistics framework. Besides, in analyzing the poem the researcher poetic language and also helped by Feminism Body Politics theory to strengthen the analysis of how women are represented in the “Phenomenal Woman” poem. Feminist stylistics of the poetic language style is identified one by one whether they are informs of word, phrase, sentence, and discourse level analysis.

2.1 Phenomenal Woman

- (1) *Pretty women wonder where my secret lies.*
- (2) *I'm not cute or built to suit a fashion model's size*
- (3) *But when I start to tell them,*
- (4) *They think I'm telling lies.*
- (5) *I say,*
- (6) *It's in the reach of my arms*
- (7) *The span of my hips,*
- (8) *The stride of my step,*
- (9) *The curl of my lips.*
- (10) *I'm a woman*
- (11) *Phenomenally.*
- (12) *Phenomenal woman,*
- (13) *That's me.*
- (14) *I walk into a room*
- (15) *Just as cool as you please,*
- (16) *And to a man,*
- (17) *The fellows stand or*
- (18) *Fall down on their knees.*
- (19) *Then they swarm around me,*
- (20) *A hive of honey bees.*
- (21) *I say,*
- (22) *It's the fire in my eyes,*
- (23) *And the flash of my teeth,*
- (24) *The swing in my waist,*
- (25) *And the joy in my feet.*
- (26) *I'm a woman*
- (27) *Phenomenally.*
- (28) *Phenomenal woman,*
- (29) *That's me.*

(30) *Men themselves have wondered*

(31) *What they see in me.*

(32) *They try so much*

(33) *But they can't touch*

(34) *My inner mystery.*

(35) *When I try to show them*

(36) *They say they still can't see.*

(37) *I say,*

(38) *It's in the arch of my back,*

(39) *The sun of my smile,*

(40) *The ride of my breasts,*

(41) *The grace of my style.*

(42) *I'm a woman*

(43) *Phenomenally.*

(44) *Phenomenal woman,*

(45) *That's me.*

(46) *Now you understand*

(47) *Just why my head's not bowed.*

(48) *I don't shout or jump about*

(49) *Or have to talk real loud.*

(50) *When you see me passing*

(51) *It ought to make you proud.*

(52) *I say,*

(53) *It's in the click of my heels,*

(54) *The bend of my hair,*

(55) *the palm of my hand,*

(56) *The need of my care,*

(57) *'Cause I'm a woman*

(58) *Phenomenally.*

(59) *Phenomenal woman,*

(60) *That's me.*

2.2 Politics of Bodies

The terms body politics refers to the practices and policies through which powers of society regulate the human body, as well as the struggle over the degree of individual and social control of the body. Individual and movements engage in body politics when they seek to alleviate the oppressive effects of institutional and interpersonal power on those whose bodies are marked as inferior or who are denied rights to control their own bodies (www.encyclopedia.com). There are three criteria found to identify the poetic language style in politics of bodies, such as bodies as sites of conflict, women's bodies as men's ideal patriarchal paradigm, and women's bodies as discourse.

2.2.1 Bodies as Sites of Conflict

Body as the site of conflict in this poem means that a female as deviant or individual. Deviant means abnormal. It is the conflict between abnormal and normal. This poem can be divided into two parts, namely the body as doing something that means that the body is active (mannerisms) and the body that is not doing something that means the body is silent (physical characteristics). In "Phenomenal Woman", it is illustrated that there is a difference between I and Them in looking at a woman's body. This can be seen in stanza 1:

(1) *Pretty women wonder where my secret lies.*

(2) *I'm not cute or built to suit a fashion model's size*

(3) *But when I start to tell them,*

- (4) *They think I'm telling lies.*
- (5) *I say,*
- (6) *It's in the reach of my arms*
- (7) *The span of my hips,*
- (8) *The stride of my step,*
- (9) *The curl of my lips.*

The word “Pretty Woman” is generic noun, meaning that women in general have a normal and general view of beauty. Furthermore, *I’m* in the second line *I’m not cute or built to suit a fashion model's size* means that “I” have their own beauty standards for women in general. “Pretty women” means women’s bodies become conflicts; then in this case it is answered in lines 6-9 with a metaphor of body that shows the new standard of beauty of the “I” which is considered abnormal by women in general. In this regard, lines 6-7 use the body as doing something that means the body is active (mannerisms). In line 6, *It’s in the reach of my arms* illustrates the stretch of the speaker's arm. According to Cambridge Dictionary the word “reach” that is someone's reach which is the distance within which they can stretch out their arm and touch something. Therefore, the metaphor *it's in the reach of my arms* means that the speaker has huge arm or another woman has huge arms. In the previous research about *Phenomenal Woman* by Moh. Tabir .A., it is mentioned that *it’s in the reach of my arms* means obviously describes that speaker has huge arm or the speaker describes another woman’s big arm. It does not only the huge arms of the speakers as black woman, but also in this line, the speaker tries to convey that she is a good woman because she has good social connection to the other people. Line 7 *the span*

of my hips” illustrates the speaker's body shape. The word “span” means “the length of something”. The word “span” is a word to describe the speaker has a wide hip or she is only discussing other women who have wide hips. In the previous research, Moh. Tabir .A. mentioned *the span of my hips* meaning that the word “span” is used to describe that the speaker’s hip is wider than other women’s. Therefore, the metaphor *the span of my hips* means that the speaker tries to convey that she is an ideal woman with wide hips. Men usually appeal to women who have wide hips. In this regard, the term wide hips is used because people in general love to see a beautiful woman with small hips, while in this poem, she describes her beauty with wide hips.

Thus, in line 8, the poem discusses the body that is not doing something that means the body is silent (physical characteristics). Line 8 *the stride of my step* illustrates about the way the speaker walks. The word “stride” is defined in the Merriam Webster Dictionary “a long step” or a “manner of striding”. Therefore, the metaphor in *the stride of my step* means that the speaker walks in a long step, describing the way the stern speaker walks. On the other hand, the speaker may not walk firmly, but she just imagines herself walking with steps to differentiate her steps. The author tries to convey that she is a nimble woman. The previous research about “Phenomenal Woman” by Moh. Tabir .A. mentions that men describe that black women have a character by walking in long steps, in this sentence, she is a nimble woman. The term “a nimble woman” is used, because the author describes her beauty in taking steps with a nimble movement, in the sense that she is neither weak nor slow.

Moreover, in line 9 it can be seen that the poem uses the body as doing something that means the body is active (mannerisms). Line 9 *the curl of my lips* illustrates the author's lips. Literally, the word “curls” is defined in Merriam Webster's Dictionary “a bundle of twisted hair”. The word “curl” is generally associated with curved hair, but in this section it is used to describe the speaker's thick lips. The metaphor in this line means thick lips are also a characteristic of black women, but in this sentence, the author may want to show that she is an attractive woman. In the previous research it was mentioned that the black women look pretty with their curly lips. In general people see that thin lips are a beauty. However, in this poem the author describes her beauty with curly lips.

In stanza 2:

- (14) *I walk into a room*
- (15) *Just as cool as you please,*
- (16) *And to a man,*
- (17) *The fellows stand or*
- (18) *Fail down on their knees.*
- (19) *Then they swarm around me,*
- (20) *A hive of honey bees.*
- (21) *I say,*
- (22) *It's the fire in my eyes,*
- (23) *And the flash of my teeth,*
- (24) *The swing in my waist,*
- (25) *And the joy in my feet.*

The word “a room” is a generic noun that means the inside part of a building that is separated from other parts by walls, floor, and ceiling (Cambridge

Dictionary). The meaning of a room in this regard is a room that has a sense of privacy displayed in that room is sexual. In this case it begins to explain its effect on men. The author explains how exuded a strong sensuality is that catches their attention every time she enters a room. Every time she walks in front of them calmly and confidently, they stand on his arrival or melt from their wishes for her. Then they swarm around her, and vie for her attention. This means that the poem represents a woman's body as a conflict. Then answered in lines 22-25 there is a metaphor of body that shows the beauty standard of "I" which is considered abnormal by women in general.

Line 22 reads *it's the fire in my eyes*. According to Oxford Dictionary, fire is a light, flame and heat or something that is produced when something burns. It is the representation of the heat of feeling, readiness to act, passion, fervor, enthusiasm, and spirit which is burning. Therefore, the metaphor *it's the fire in my eyes* means that the eyes of the author reflect her personalities which are joyful, full of spirit, enthusiastic, and passionate. Line 23 *and the flash of my teeth* illustrates an expression referring to the author's smile. The word "flash" in Cambridge Dictionary is defined as a sudden bright light that quickly disappears. Therefore, the metaphor in *the flash of my teeth* means it is clear enough to know that this line pictures the author's sudden smile.

The previous research on *Phenomenal Woman* by Moh. Tabir. A. mentions the author's sudden smile. In this line, the author wants to show that her strength also lies in her smile. She tries to convey that she is also a friendly

woman by keeping nice smile. Lines 24-25 *the swing of my waist* and *and the joy in my feet* indicate the speaker's gesture that she walks with her waist swinging. The manner of her walk can make her look attractive before men. Then, having an emotion of great delight or happiness is caused by something exceptionally good or satisfying, keen pleasure, and elation. The author's character is shown in the way she walks. Therefore, the metaphor in the lines means the author tries to convey that she is an elegant woman like others shown from the way she walks and she always enjoys her life wherever she walks. People around her wonder by seeing her walk.

In stanza 3:

(30) *Men themselves have wondered,*

(31) *What they see in me.*

(32) *They try so much*

(33) *But they can't touch*

(34) *My inner mystery.*

(35) *When I try to show them,*

(36) *They say they still can't see.*

(37) *I say,*

(38) *It's in the arch of my back,*

(39) *The sun of my smile,*

(40) *The ride of my breasts,*

(41) *The grace of my style.*

The word “men” is a generic noun that means an adult human being (Cambridge Dictionary). The author continues reflection on men. In this regard, the reaction between women and men when they see her is described. The author states that she is like other women. Men also wonder what is special about her. However, she takes her analysis to a higher level when she suggests for the first time that she really has another type of beauty altogether. She has a mysterious inner beauty that cannot be seen or understood by men even when she tries to show it. They are blind to what makes a beautiful woman from the inside, because they only judge her - and possibly other women - based on their physical appearance. This means that this poem represents a woman's body as a conflict. Then answered on lines 38-41 there is a metaphor of body that shows the beauty standard of “I” which is considered abnormal by women in general.

Line 38 reads *it's in the arch of my back*; the word “arch” is defined in *Merriam Webster's Dictionary* as something that has a curved shape like an arch. Moh. Tabir.A. mentions in his research that *it's in the arch of my back* refers to the curve of the author's body. This line illustrates the author's curvy body. The woman's body is more attractive with a curvy back. Through this line, the speaker conveys that she has a good body shape like other women.

Line 39 *the sun of my smile* illustrates the author is like the Sun that always gives brightness and light to people while giving happiness to people. They are almost the same in terms of benefits to make people happy and bright

when people see them. In other words, the author's smile gives warmth and joy to everyone like the Sun.

Line 40 *the ride of my breasts* illustrates the type of journey that is carried out on the author's breasts. On the other hand, it can be interpreted that in fact, men are always interested in and obsessed with breasts. The author tries to convey that she as a woman is still an object of men, from the implicit sexual object that ride her breasts. Here are two dimensions, a look and involvement of body sexual.

Line 41 *the grace of my style* illustrates the author's elegant style. The word "grace" in the Cambridge Dictionary is defined as "a quality of moving in a smooth, relaxed, and attractive way". This shows that the author is attractive that can make others, especially men, interested in her. Besides, she is also beautiful in her own style which is different from other women's. Therefore, she becomes the center of attention among others around her.

Stanza 4:

- (46) *Now you understand*
- (47) *Just why my head's not bowed.*
- (48) *I don't shout or jump about*
- (49) *Or have to talk real loud.*
- (50) *When you see me passing*
- (51) *It ought to make you proud.*
- (52) *I say,*
- (53) *It's in the click of my heels,*
- (54) *The bend of my hair,*

(55) *the palm of my hand,*

(56) *The need of my care,*

The word “my head” is a generic noun that means the part of the body above the neck that contains the eyes, nose, mouth and the brain” (Cambridge Dictionary). The author explains how his previous memory must help the readers understand her better. Now, at this time, readers must be able to understand the author's life and appreciate her quality. The author explains that she does not bow her head in shame, because she is proud of whom she is. She also does not draw attention to herself - she just becomes herself, who naturally attracts others to her. She tells the readers that she must be proud of her when she passes, because she is a woman who is confident and self-respecting. The author details the additional qualities about her, describes her joyful journey, the natural beauty of her physical attributes, and the needs of the world for a woman like her. All of these things have happened in her life because she is a woman who is phenomenal and proud of it. This means that in this poem it is represented that a woman's body is a conflict. It is answered in lines 53-56 by a metaphor of body that shows the beauty standard of “I” which is considered abnormal by women in general.

Line 53 *it's in the click of my heels* illustrates the world of fashion; “heel” is one type of woman’s shoes. The word “heel” means “part of the human foot, below and behind the ankle” (Merriam Webster Dictionary). Therefore, heels can be interpreted as high heels. In this line, the author can convey that she is a woman who is very fashionable and trendy like other women. Besides, high heels have the impression of sexual attraction. Line 54 *the bend of my hair* illustrates

the author's hair. Literally, the word "bend" is defined as "bends or turns, especially on roads or rivers". Considering that the word "bend" describes hair, it can be assumed that the author's hair is curly. The speaker as a black woman has a characteristic of curly hair. She feels confident and beautiful with her curly hair.

Line 55 *the palm of my hand*, illustrate the symbol of strength or superiority of her. The word "palm" means "the inside part of a hand from a wrist to the base of a finger" (Cambridge Dictionary). She has the power to control other people. The meaning of control others is that her hands are smooth that can control people with tenderness. Line 56 *the need of my care* illustrates the kindness of the author. The word "care" is used for the quality of motherhood of speakers. Motherhood is needed for every woman to imply her femininity. On the other hand, the sentence above can be interpreted that the author is a good social person because of her attention to everyone. The author can be considered a woman from her appearance, but she is indeed a helpful woman.

Besides the metaphor of body, this poem also explains the fragmentation. Fragmentation itself just explains about the parts of the body.

Stanza 1;

(6)*It's in the reach of my arms*

(7)*The span of my hips,*

(9)*The curl of my lips.*

In lines 6, 7, and 9 of stanza 1 the woman identifies herself by anatomical elements, such as “arms, hips, and lips”. She composes a number of separate objects which are considered beautiful in their own right.

Stanza 2;

*(17) The fellows stand or
(18) Fail down on their knees.
(22) It's the fire in my eyes,
(23) And the flash of my teeth,
(24) The swing in my waist,
(25) And the joy in my feet.*

In stanza 2 the anatomical element of woman herself is fragmented into some parts of body; eyes, teeth, waist, and feet. The marked difference reflects the representation of male and female. The woman attempts to drive men to lust.

Stanza 3:

*(38) It's in the arch of my back,
(40) The ride of my breasts,*

Then, in stanza 3 lines 38 and 40 the woman mentions the anatomical elements of the body by continuing her reflection on men from the previous stanza. It continues the reaction of the men when they notice her. The physical characteristics mentioned are “back and breasts”. She emphasizes both parts of the body to seduce men.

Stanza 4:

(47) *Just why my head's not bowed*

(53) *It's in the click of my heels,*

(54) *The bend of my hair,*

(55) *the palm of my hand,*

The last stanza in line 47 “*Just why my head's not bowed*” shows that she has her own power. It also implies confidence. Then, the woman attempts to conclude by completing some parts of appealing body, which have not been mentioned before. The fragmented anatomical parts of the body are heels, hair, and hand.

Thus, this poem, besides the fragmentation, also explains the focalization. Focalization explains the process whereby the events in story are related to the readers through the consciousness of a character or narrator. According to Rimmon Kenan and Bal via Mills, focalization can be either external or internal to the story; external focalization ‘is felt to be close to the narrating agent’ (1995:139). External focalization can also occur in narrative told in the first person either when the temporal and psychological distance between narrator and character is minimal or when the perception through which the story is rendered is that of the narrating self rather than the perceiving self. One test which Rimmon-Kenana devised might be employed to disclose whether a text is internally or externally focalized is to attempt to ‘rewrite’ the extract in the first person. ‘If it is feasible—the segment is internally focalized, if not—the focalization is external’.

In this regard, the focalization in this poem is found in stanza 1 lines 1 to 4 and stanza 4 lines 46 to 51.

Stanza 1 lines 1 to 4:

- (1) Pretty women wonder where my secret lies.*
- (2) I'm not cute or built to suit a fashion model's size*
- (3) But when I start to tell them,*
- (4) They think I'm telling lies.*

In this stanza, the focalizer is the internal focalizer (IF). The word "I" is simultaneously recognized being the focalizer and narrator and the focalized object is pretty women. Pretty women are considered to be the focalized object because the focalizer focuses on their perception towards her.

Stanza 4, lines 49 to 51:

- (46) Now you understand*
- (47) Just why my head's not bowed.*
- (48) I don't shout or jump about*
- (49) Or have to talk real loud.*
- (50) When you see me passing*
- (51) It ought to make you proud.*

The focalizer in this last stanza is internal focalizer (IF), and the focalized object is the word "you" which refers to the women and men that she has already mentioned in all previous stanzas because this last stanza summarizes the whole poem.

2.2.2 Women's bodies as men's ideal (patriarchal paradigm)

In the poem "Phenomenal Woman" by Maya Angelou in stanza 3 lines 1-2 "*Men themselves have wondered*", "*what they see in me*." Men is a generic noun that is men (The word "men" is a noun that means an adult human being (Cambridge Dictionary)). Men show them as gender. Thus, they are a generic pronoun. The word "they" as a pronoun used as a subject of a verb to refer to people, animals, or things already mentioned or, more generally, to a group of people not clearly described (Cambridge dictionary). The word can be interpreted as men in white community or referred to all of men in white and black community. The poem *Phenomenal Woman* says the man wonder what is seen from the author. This means the physical standard that is "in me", not in accordance with the ideal of men. The logic of men cannot understand the beauty of the person "I". It means that in the poem it is depicted that beautiful women (in general according to the patriarchal system) and enchanting, are judged physically. That is evident in the relationship between line 2 in stanza 1 "I'm not cute or built to suit a fashion model's size" and line 1 in stanza 3 "*Men themselves have wondered*" where the author is not physically beautiful (see line 2 stanza 1), but it can be interesting. In this poem the author draws it according to the standards she has made herself, because the whole female body belongs to the woman.

In women's bodies as men's ideal (patriarchal paradigm), focalization can be found in stanza 2 lines 14-20 and stanza 3 lines 30-36.

Stanza 2, lines 14-20:

- (14) *I walk into a room*
 (15) *Just as cool as you please,*
 (16) *And to a man,*
 (17) *The fellows stand or*
 (18) *Fall down on their knees.*
 (19) *Then they swarm around me,*
 (20) *A hive of honey bees.*

In the stanza above the focalizer is the woman as the internal focalizer (IF) or internal narrator, and the focalized object is the man and the fellows. The man is described from the point of view of the woman that they are attracted towards her when she is entering a room.

Stanza 3, lines 30-36:

- (30) *Men themselves have wondered*
 (31) *What they see in me.*
 (32) *They try so much*
 (33) *But they can't touch*
 (34) *My inner mystery.*
 (35) *When I try to show them*
 (36) *They say they still can't see.*

The focalizer in stanza 3 is internal focalizer (IF), and the focalized object is the men. This stanza is almost similar with the first stanza because it has the same case. The difference is laid on the focalized object. They are men who wonder the beauty they cannot see in her. In this stanza the author wants to show “inner mystery”. In this regard, she has something even more interesting that

everyone are not able to see. That means “inner mystery” is contrast from physical appearance because it is formless and known as metaphysical which is naturally everlasting.

2.2.3 Women’s Bodies as Discourse

Women’s bodies as discourse is how the body is portrayed or described. When the body is portrayed or described, it also becomes problematic. There are several types of bodies that are considered good and bad. However, the human bodies, especially women’s, are very often compared and discussed by men in general or even by other women. Because of the conversation about the women's bodies, the women themselves often have serious concern about their bodies so that people will talk nicely about their physical appearance. In this case, it can be said that narcissism is a feeling of love for itself as excessive as it is. In accordance with Frederick Rhodewalt, narcissism is characterized by an inflated self-image and addiction to fantasy, by an unusual coolness and composure shaken only when the narcissistic confidence is threatened, and by the tendency to take others for granted or to exploit them (2007). In this regard, the narcissism is not only for you, but also for others. This makes a woman always change or make her body as attractive as possible or in accordance with people’s expectation. Although there are also some women who change their body shape to be very attractive because of the oddity, still most women want their bodies to be considered good by men, by other women or even by themselves.

In accordance with Simon de Beauvoir, long before the eventual mutilation, women are haunted by the horror of growing old. The mature man is involved in enterprises more important than those of love; his erotic ardor is less keen than in the days of his youth; and since in him the passive qualities of an object are not called for, the changes in his face and body do not destroy his attractiveness. In woman, on the contrary, it is usually towards thirty-five, when all inhibitions have been finally overcome, that full erotic development is attained. Then it is that her sexual desires are the strongest and she most keenly wishes to have them satisfied; she has gambled much more heavily than men on the sexual values she possesses; to hold her husband and to assure herself of his protection, and to keep most of her jobs, it is necessary for her to be attractive, to please; she is allowed no hold on the world save through the meditation of some man (1953: 147-148).

The last lines of each stanza saying “*I’m a woman, phenomenally, phenomenal woman, that’s me*”, show repetition leading to an interpretation that strength, beauty, and grace come to form the femininity already attached to it; rather than the external nature given by society. Examined in the poem’s choice of words, one cannot escape one’s decision to use the word “phenomenal”. According to dictionary.com, the word can have several meanings. The first and most obvious is “highly extraordinary, exceptional” and this fits right in with what the author says in the poem. The author is an exceptional woman, who intrigues both men and woman, but also exceptional because she is a woman. However, the word “phenomenal” is directly related to phenomenon, which means “a fact,

occurrences, or circumstance observed or observable”. The word phenomenal is referenced in the line above, which is how the body is portrayed or described.

Stanza 1:

- (1) *It's in the reach of my arms*
- (2) *The span of my hips,*
- (3) *The stride of my step,*
- (4) *The curl of my lips.*

In this stanza, the author tries repeatedly to show her innate femininity and strength by showing word choices like in the lines 6-9 “*the reach of my arms, the span of my hips, the stride of my step, the curl of my lips*” to emphasize the word “phenomenal” based on the shape of the body.

Stanza 2:

- (22) *It's the fire in my eyes,*
- (23) *And the flash of my teeth,*
- (24) *The swing in my waist,*
- (25) *And the joy in my feet.*

Thus, stanza 2 indicates that lines 22-25 “*the fire in my eyes, the flash of my teeth, the swing in my waist, and the joy in my feet*” are used to emphasize the word “phenomenal” based on shape of the body.

Stanza 3:

- (38) *It's in the arch of my back,*
- (39) *The sun of my smile,*

(40) *The ride of my breasts,*

(41) *The grace of my style.*

Stanza 3 shows her innate femininity and strength by using the words in lines 38-41 “*the arch of my back, sun of my smile, ride of my breasts, grace of my style*” to emphasize the word “phenomenal” based on the body shape.

Stanza 4:

(53) *It's in the click of my heels,*

(54) *The bend of my hair,*

(55) *the palm of my hand,*

(56) *The need of my care,*

In the last stanza, the author’s innate femininity and strength are shown by word choices in lines 53-56 “*the click of my heels, bend of my hair, palm of my hand, need of my care*” to emphasize the word “phenomenal” based on the body shape. In this regard, there is a movement of form and formless.