

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Before the feminist movement in the mid 19th century, women did not have many rights and choices. They should become housewives that revolve around family, motherhood, and children. Those were the only role that women should have. The society in the 19th century believed that men and women have different roles. Women were considered physically weaker. After marriage, everything that women have now belongs to her husband. Even their property and money belong to the husband (McBeath n.d.). However, in the mid 19th, the first wave of the feminist movement began. The first wave of the feminist movement was fighting for equality in education, labor, and electoral rights (Atria n.d.). This movement becomes the leader in freeing women from an inferior position in society.

After centuries of oppression, women started to have a desire for power and influence. They think that oppression is more than enough. Women can stand independently without men controlling each aspect of their life. After the long journey of fighting for their rights, women finally broke free from the shackles of men. They started to have education rights, voting rights, property rights, then nowadays almost in all political aspects, women are involved. Each of the women changes throughout the years could be seen from how society portrayed women. The journey of how women fight for their freedom was also written down as history

in many literatures, both non-fiction and fiction. One form of literature that involved women deeply is fairy tales.

Fairy tale is one of the most popular literary genres that has existed for centuries. This literary work can be considered as classic. Fairy tale started as an oral story that adults share to their children and often becomes the bedtime story for them. As it began with oral stories, fairy tales are passed down from each teller before the tales are recorded in a written form. Based on Michaelis-Jena, hundred years ago, these oral stories were originated from German women, especially spinners. Those women told tales at night to keep them company and awake as they spun. In fairy tales, women have prominent roles as they play the role of both protagonist and antagonist. On the one hand, the women in fairy tales are portrayed as innocent, beautiful, and virtuous. However, they are as evil witches and cruel stepmothers (Nanda 2014). This is maybe because the stories were originally told by a group of women. Fairy tales portrayed women differently from modern reality. Independent women in fairy tales are seen as evil and scheming, whereas independent women are considered charming and attractive in the modern day. Fairy tales value passivity and women's attribute. Independent female is seen as undesirable and inappropriate. The male has to save her from harm and danger (Nanda 2014).

As one of children's literature, fairy tales played a detrimental role in educating children. Many studies affirmed that children's books indirectly educated the children with the gender roles portrayal. The portrayal in the books effect the children's mindset and thinking later in their lives. It is found that in children's

literature, female characters reinforce traditional gender roles which are passivity and occupational limitations (Meganck 2010). Children's books often portrayed female characters as the one that acted upon not the active party. They are portrayed as naïve, innocent, and dependent. On the other hand male characters are portrayed as strong, independent, and capable (Singh 1998). This is the same case as in fairy tales as one of children's literature.

In the early period of fairy tales, women were portrayed as 'damsel-in-distress'. However, as society changed from the traditional value and norm about women to emancipation of women, fairy tales also evolved to reflect the real condition in society. Thus, there are changes in the portrayal of women in fairy tales. The female characters possess more freedom to choose and more rights to decide what they want to do in their lives. These visible changes will be discussed in the two texts of this study which are Hans Christian Andersen's *The Little Mermaid* and Alexandra Christo's *To Kill a Kingdom*.

As one of the most well-known classic fairy tales, Andersen's *The Little Mermaid* has been adapted into many media. There are movies, books, even theater play. The most heard is Disney's *The Little Mermaid* (1989). It was an animated adaptation of Andersen's but Disney gave some changes in character and plot. Not only movie, there are many *The Little Mermaid* retelling in some contemporary novels. One of its retelling is the object used for this study which is Christo's *To Kill a Kingdom*. Other than Christo's, there are others like *Daughter of Siren Queen*, *Fable*, *Sea Witch*, *The Surface Breaks*, and etc. *The Little Mermaid* has been adapted into a play in Broadway Musical *Home* (Home 2008). From these examples

it could be seen that Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tales have enormous influence in contemporary literature. Based on this influence, the writer wants to examine the changes between the classic fairy tale and the contemporary version of fairy tale.

The two texts could become sources to analyze the dynamic of women in fairy tales as both texts are similar, some elements showed to be the same, but differences can also be seen clearly. Based on these assumptions, this study will analyze the relationship between the two literary works using intertextual approach. This study will also compare and contrast the two literary works. The writer chooses those texts because there are some kinds of alternation and modification in the latter text that makes it more compatible with the following era after many social movements such as feminist movements. The modification made by the author makes the writer interested in what way the modification works in the later text.

This study examines the two texts in order to find the development or modification of women's portrayal and the intertextual relation between the texts that was reflected in the main characters of both texts. This study aims to identify the connection of Andersen's *The Little Mermaid* with Alexandra Christo's *To Kill a Kingdom* with some similarities and differences in terms of how women are portrayed that is reflected in the main character of each text. This study might become the opening for other studies since fairy tales are something that almost everyone knows, but these days, fairy tales are considered as ancient or classic. Therefore, any kind of study that used these classic fairy tales and its retelling could become the outcome in introducing modern fairy tales.

Intertextual approach will take a role to identify the connection between the two texts. Intertextuality is a term introduced by Julia Kristeva in the late 1960s (Allen 2000, 14). In her book, *The Bounded Text*, Kristeva stated that an author does not create their texts from their own minds, but they compile them from the previous texts that they have read. Quoted from Kristeva, a text is ‘a permutation of texts, an intertextuality in the space of a given text, in which several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize one another’ (Allen 2000). Riffaterre also puts forward the term “Hypogram”. This term refers to the previous text that influenced the later text and becomes the later text background, quoted from Allen, “a text’s hypograms will be those of its signs which relate to already existent semiotically signifying words or words-groups within the sociolect” (Allen 2000, 122). To identify the intertextual process in both texts, the writer also uses two out of eight elements of fairy tales intertext by Kevin Smith which are Allusion and Revision. These two elements are the most suitable to be used to identify the intertext relation between the two texts as allusion is implicit reference to a fairytale within the text which include the character names (Smith 2007, 20). At the same time, revision was chosen because the second text—*To Kill a Kingdom* is a contemporary or modern fairy tale which based on Andersen’s *The Little Mermaid* as Smith stated that any ‘new’ version of a fairytale counted as a re-vision (Smith 2007, 34).

In this study, Hans Christian Andersen’s *The Little Mermaid* will become the first text or the hypogram, whereas Alexandra Christo’s *To Kill a Kingdom* will be the second text or the transformation as Andersen’s *The Little Mermaid* is a classic fairy tale but *To Kill a Kingdom* is a relatively new text that was published in 2018.

The Little Mermaid was first published in 1837 as a part of a larger collection in *Fairy Tales told for Children*. The story is about the little mermaid, the youngest of six mermaid princesses that struggle to be with her beloved and fulfil her dream. The second text is *To Kill a Kingdom* by Alexandra Christo, first published in 2018. *To Kill a Kingdom* is a dark fantasy novel with a taste of romance. The story revolved around Princess Lira, the heir of Kingdom of Keto in her journey of revenge and deceit.

Previously, there are some studies conducted using Hans Christian Andersen's *The Little Mermaid*. The study is entitled *What Does The Little Mermaid Want? – A Comparative Analysis Of H.C. Andersen's "The Little Mermaid" and Walt Disney Studio's Animated Film "The Little Mermaid"* conducted by Diana Ostrat. The study analyses and compares the wants and wishes of *The Little Mermaid* from Andersen's *The Little Mermaid* and Ariel from Disney's *The Little Mermaid*. The aim is to find the main theme of what the mermaids wish for and the similarities and differences between those wishes. Grouping and comparing the evidences were done to analyze the ideas. The result showed the three main wishes of the mermaids are the human body, prince, and immortal soul. The issue in Ostrat's study distinguishes the study with the writer's study. This study focuses on women's portrayal in the two texts, but Ostrat's study focused on the wishes of the mermaids. In terms of using both texts, which are *The Little Mermaid* and *To Kill a Kingdom*, there is no more previous study could be found.

The next study is entitled *Influence of Chinese Culture on the Interpretation and Acceptance of Andersen's Fairy Tales: in the Case of The Little Mermaid* by Guolong and Tangjun (Guolong and Tangjun n.d.). The study examines Andersen's fairy tales, biography, and Chinese acceptance using *The Little Mermaid*. By providing a historical survey and various Chinese interpretations of Andersen's fairy tales throughout the years, the study then summarizes four modes which are Zhu Zuoren, Ye Shengtao, Ye Junjuan, and Cao Wenxuan. Another result shows that there are three elements that influence the Chinese interpretation of Andersen's fairy tales. The first is the changing understanding of Andersen as an author, the age difference between disparate audiences, and the shifting of Chinese social context and cultural needs. The gap can be seen clearly as this study focuses on the development of women's portrayal in the text and the intertextual relation between the texts. However, Guolong and Tangjun's study focuses on the Chinese interpretation towards Andersen's fairy tales.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Based on the background of the study in the section above, the statement of the problems can be formulated into two questions below:

1. How are women portrayed in the main characters of *The Little Mermaid* and *To Kill a Kingdom*?
2. How is the intertextual relation between *The Little Mermaid* and *To Kill a Kingdom*?

1.3 Objective of the Study

This study aims to answer those above questions as follow:

1. To identify the women's portrayal in *The Little Mermaid* and *To Kill a Kingdom*.
2. To investigate the intertextual relation between *The Little Mermaid* and *To Kill a Kingdom*.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Alexandra Christo's debut novel, *To Kill a Kingdom*, is one of the contemporary fantasy novels based on fairy tales or even a retelling of a fairy tale. This was stated clearly by Christo herself, that her novel was based on Andersen's *The Little Mermaid*. This analysis will be built upon the influence of Hans Christian Andersen's, *The Little Mermaid*, as the classic fairy tale that helped shape the portrayal of women in society during its time. Christo makes use of this influence, to reshape the portrayal of women that compatible with the modern and contemporary era. Based on this statement, the findings of this study could help to highlight the women changes in society based on the different women's portrayal from the two texts.

This study aims to identify the connection between Andersen's *The Little Mermaid* and Alexandra Christo's *To Kill a Kingdom*, with some similarities and differences in terms of how women are portrayed that is reflected in the main character of each text. This study could become the opening for other researchers or students from Universitas Airlangga. Fairy tales are something that almost

everyone knows, but these days fairy tales are considered as ancient or classic. Therefore any kind of adaptation of fairy tale could be the new output to continue the existence of fairy tales.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

Intertextuality	: A relationship of copresence between two texts or several texts: that is to say eidetically and typically as the actual presence of one text within another (Genette 1997).
Fairy tales	: Narratives set in a fictional world where preternatural events and supernatural intervention are taken wholly for granted.
Women portrayal	: Representation of women, how the society expects and sees women.
Self-sacrifice	: One characteristic of ideal women in pre-feminist or 19 th century period that they like to do altruism.
Ambitious women	: Women that have a strong desire for achievements or goals.