

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In the Victorian Era, gender stereotypes looked very strict; men had more power over women, which was detrimental in all aspects of life (Cossar 2021). Married women also help their husbands to take care of their business. For women born in the lower class, before they get married, they are required to learn to cook, clean, weave, and various other housewife skills. However, if women are born in the upper class, they are luckier because they do not need to learn everything. Their servants are ready to do the job. Women are also not allowed higher education (Appell 2012).

In the Victorian Era, society was divided into four main classes – upper class, middle class, working class, and lower class. Upper-class women, or what can be called noble women in the Victorian Era, lived surrounded by luxury. These noble women often spend their time attending the balls. However, they have a purpose in attending the balls. They are looking for a suitable partner for them to marry, have children, and be educated as the upper class behaved.

Gender stereotypes that began to develop in the Victorian Era led to gender division, and this can be seen, for example, as most men who want to channel their lusts more by paying for prostitutes, especially in big cities there are special districts where prostitutes are easily found, they need to select and pay for

their services because in the Victorian Era, sex education was still considered very taboo, and such a lifestyle caused syphilis and other sexually transmitted diseases to run rampant because these men passed the disease on to their wives, causing death mostly in their mid-40s. This is much different from what is experienced by women, and they are not allowed to talk to a man alone. There must be a married woman to accompany them (Hughes 2014).

Society also expects that women must be innocent, not know anything about the world of sex, and have no sexual instincts. Society considers an ideal woman to give up her dream, ignore her feelings for a man, and must be willing to sacrifice for her family (Gökçek 2020). Even the gender division was strengthened by law in the Victorian Era, not only in the domestic sphere, but women often experienced inequalities in law and politics which upheld Victorian ideas about gender and society. This made British society at that time define public and private spaces based on gender (Ostrander 2019). An example is Ziegenfuss saying that there were some general rules for marriage in the Victorian Era. The first rule was that men and women living in the Victorian Era had to marry of the same class, or they could marry someone of a higher class, but they could not marry someone of a lower class than them. The second rule is that if a man wants to propose to a woman, besides preparing himself, the man must prepare a gift that symbolizes that he can support the lifestyle of the woman he wants to marry.

The third rule is that if a single woman is 21 years old, she can inherit some money and property, but if the woman is married, the money and property

will be controlled by her husband (Kurnia 2011). Even though women often get it, that does not mean they give up. They still support each other and other oppressed people. This is evident in the early 19th-century middle-class women made a campaign against slavery. They tried to get other women not to consume sugar grown by enslaved people (Digby 1992).

The Victorian era is a fascinating subject to study since we can obtain a good image of the era's severe gender division problem. The Victorian era is depicted in works of literature as a period in which women's hopes are limited to being a wife and mothers. This is due to patriarchal society's underestimation of women's worth, but some women are beginning to dare to act, eventually recognizing women's value. Although gender norms have evolved, especially in the contemporary period, some individuals believe they can show their gender expressions more fluidly. Some individuals have begun to respect individuals of other sexes. However, some still believe that men are superior to women and think that women are weak. This causes women to continue being treated unfairly in a patriarchal or conservative society. In reality, women nowadays are more courageous in their actions and expressions of ambition.

As already written above, gender is divided into male and female. According to Paola Giuliano, there are distinctions in how each norm and culture responds to gender roles due to a particular past that tends to be maintained despite changing historical conditions. Even the past has a significant impact on the gender conventions of today (Giuliano 2017, 21). One of the examples of gender problems that still exist from ancient times to the present is

the existence of gender inequality. One of the sexes feels that their people are the most superior people and considers the other gender weak. Gender inequality exists because it is caused by an imbalance of control, access, and participation between men and women (Fitrianti and Abdullah 2012, 85).

Gender inequality is a social deviation from the balance in women's and men's representation in social life. Also, gender inequality is a major obstacle to human development. Due to gender inequality, women often get unfair treatment (Young, Fort and Danner 1994, 55). Due to gender inequality, women often get unfair treatment. For example, women cannot make decisions for their own lives and have to follow unwritten rules made by society.

An example of the regulation is that women are only allowed to do household chores such as cooking, taking care of children, and serving their husbands, and that is all. Women are not child-making machines or cleaners without pay. Women have the right to work outside the home and the right to get a higher education. Even if, in the end, after receiving higher education and ending up at home, there is no loss at all. It is an advantage because they are educated by broad-minded women and have high morals if they have children. However, unfortunately, people in ancient times thought women did not need a high education. It would be wasted because they would only take care of the house in the end.

Because women often get unfair treatment from society and are more miserable than men, this has created a movement called the feminist

movement. The feminist movement existed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This made patriarchy blindly dominate the era. Patriarchy is a social structure and practice whose perpetrators are men dominating, oppressing, and even exploiting women (Walby 1990, 214). Men are considered essential and main actors in a society still dominated by patriarchy because men are deemed potential, strong, and productive creatures.

Meanwhile, society considers women as creatures with no potential, weak, and unproductive. Because of this thinking, fields such as economics, law, and politics are dominated by men. Because men already dominate the field, it makes women marginalized and under the control of men in domestic matters (Karimah 2017, 2). In the 19th century, women could not freely determine their destiny or even the identity they wanted. This can be seen in Jane Austen's novel entitled *Pride and Prejudice*, the rich man in the novel is described that the way rich men tame women just like them and society tame nature around their plantations makes women's position domesticated (Muji 2010).

Because patriarchy still dominated society at that time, it made traditional gender roles regular, and it was normal for society to place expectations on and categorize the roles of each gender. Gender roles are a form of different expectations that society groups have for individuals based on their gender, values, and beliefs about gender. For example, women should get married at a young age (early 20s). They will be ridiculed in their late 20s because people think being a spinster should be avoided. Therefore, it is not uncommon for women to marry in their early 20s because they are afraid of being ridiculed and

considered unsuitable in the community's life. The cause of women who never get married in their early 20s could be that they have to help support or care for their families, prepare their mental first, or even some are afraid to get married because they see their friends who are already married get treatment. Gender roles are the result of individual interactions with the environment around them. The environment tells individuals to behave according to their beliefs and gender (Blackstone 2003, 335).

To Sir Phillip with Love is a novel that Julia Quinn wrote. Julia Quinn is a famous and talented writer. She has written many works, and her works often become bestsellers and have won several awards. In 2007, Julia Quinn won two nominations at the RITA Awards, Quinn's novels that won award was *On the Way to the Wedding*, which won the Best Long Historical Romance of the year category, and *The Secret Diaries of Miss Miranda Cheever* won the Best Regency Romance of the year. Then in 2009, she won an award at the RITA Awards with the book entitled *What Happens in London* as the Best Long Historical Romance of the year. *To Sir Phillip with Love* novel makes its first appearance in 2003. This novel is one of the novel series written by Quinn about the stories of Bridgerton's eight children. The time setting that occurs in this novel is during the Regency Era in 1824, to be exact, which takes place in the city of London.

The Regency Era was the end of the reign of King George III because he was no longer fit to rule England. After all, he was sick. Then his son, George IV, became his deputy, but after his father died, George IV became king of England. There were significant political, social, and economic changes in Britain. This era

can be felt in London when different demographics mix and converge, and it is more felt in the social space.

The most popular social area was a pleasure garden, such as a fairground. The middle and upper classes love places like that. Aristocrats such as wealthy, title-holders, and independent citizens had close access to the Royal Courts of Queen Charlotte but were not bound to the Court's rules and regulations, as was the case in Tudor times. At the bottom is a world of poverty, crime, and gambling. The activity was wild but energetic it was supported by George IV, who openly indulged his fun. This made the aristocrats seen as celebrities today. This was very out of reach and capable of giving rise to a cult culture that seems all too familiar by today's standards (Valentini 2020).

The last name owned by the family also affects their social class. For families whose last names end in Ton, such as Bridgerton or Featherington, families whose last names ended in Ton were considered high society in England. This continued until the end of the Regency Era and the reign of George IV. Ton was also used against the Upper Ten Thousand New Yorkers in the 19th century. It was also used by most of London's nobles and wealthy merchants or bankers. However, this study will carry out the story of the fifth child in the Bridgerton family, a woman named Eloise Bridgerton.

Eloise has quite a different personality than her other sisters. Unlike her sister, Daphne, who decided to marry at 21 years old with Simon Basset, the Duke of Hasting. However, in this novel, Eloise is 28 years old but never married. This

is because Eloise has a free spirit. Eloise also feels that women do not have as many opportunities as men in any field. Eloise thinks that women are not only born to serve their husbands but women are born more than that. It is not because Eloise does not want to marry at all, but she longs for the presence of a man who wants to marry her on the condition that he will treat Eloise like a queen or at least like a princess.

Even though we are now in the 21st century, talking about 19th century England does not make us seem old-fashioned or outdated. Instead, the 19th-century England is fascinating to discuss, like the time setting in the novel *To Sir Phillip with love* by Julia Quinn. This is because we can understand how the 19th century differentiated between men and women, how women always got unfair societal actions, and why this could happen. Even though we are already living in the 21st century, basically everything is sophisticated and more familiar with gender fluidity. However, unfortunately, there are still people who have old-fashioned thoughts like people who lived in the 19th century. They still look down on women and think they only deserve to do housework, no need for higher education, no need for women who disobey. This is because some people still have patriarchal thoughts, which can even lead to the oppression of women.

In addition, the novel about the Bridgerton family was made into a series called *Bridgerton* on Netflix, and it turns out that many people like the *Bridgerton* series. In the Victorian Era, there were many ideas about how romance was then, but of course, it was not the same as what happened in the original. This is because women who lived in the Victorian Era were far from being "romantic."

After all, according to Juliette Wells, in the interview of an article entitled *Why Are Regency-Era Shows Like 'Bridgerton' So Popular?* for Smithsonian Magazine, stated that women who lived in that era were utterly restricted and filled with societal expectations, which made women's space to move less freely (Thulin 2022). Another reason the Bridgerton series is very popular with people is that this series can package romance stories with comedy spices. The clothes worn by casts in the Bridgerton series are stunning and colorful.

Men are considered superior in gender inequality, while women are often seen as weak. Of course, this is an act that is unfair to women, and this treatment has been going on for generations to inspire women with an activist spirit to seek justice as Simone de Beauvoir says in her book entitled *The Second Sex*, which contains an opposition in a question whether women and men have the same or different positions. De Beauvoir expresses her opinion that supports women's equality. However, she also struggles with the reality of sexual differences. In her book entitled *The Second Sex*, de Beauvoir states that the freedom experienced by women has begun to improve, but that does not mean that feminists refuse entirely to be part of the world of men in any aspect.

From the related studies above, this study will focus on the gender inequality experienced by Eloise Bridgerton in the novel entitled *To Sir Phillip with Love*. The gender inequality that Eloise experienced is analyzed through her characteristic that leads to feminism spirit. In the previous related study, it can be concluded that women are still getting inequality treatment, such as deciding for their own life. To assist in this research, the writer decided to use the theory of

feminism written by Simone de Beauvoir with a theory called *The Second Sex*. This theory will help the writer explore the characteristics of feminism that Eloise wants: equality. The writer uses de Beauvoir's theory because, according to the writer, what Eloise wants with de Beauvoir's theory has something in common: wanting gender equality, but that does not mean there is no need for male assistance at all. The appropriate method to analyze this research is qualitative methods and feminism.

1.2 Statements of the Problem

When viewed from the background of the research that has been written above, here are the statements of the problem that can be analyzed in this study:

1. How does the patriarchal society portrayed in the novel treat Eloise Bridgerton in the novel *To Sir Phillip with Love*?
2. How does Eloise Bridgerton fight gender inequality in the novel *To Sir Phillip with Love*?

1.3 Objective of the Study

The following are the objective of the study:

To find out how the patriarchal society treated Eloise Bridgerton. To analyze Eloise's characteristics used to fight the gender inequality that she experienced.

1.4 Significance of the Study

It needs to be researched because the writer sees that the formulation of the problem in this novel is still often found in the current era. There are still many

women who are deprived of their freedom because of the existence of a society that still has patriarchal thoughts, causing injustice to most women, which is called gender inequality. This research also seeks to inform women about the rights they have. With this research, women are expected to be more courageous in voicing their opinions. This research can also tell people out there to be more daring to do what they want to do without thinking about what the community will think, and women also have the right to decide what they want.

Furthermore, this research is also helpful for the district to add more insight into gender inequality, and hopefully, it can awaken them from the restrictive patriarchal thinking. Then, the benefits that the writer can take from this research are that the writer knows more about the feminism theory she uses in this research. Her eyes are more open to issues of gender inequality.

1.5 Definition of key terms

Domination: a social power that results in an imbalance in power

Family: an institution where a couple of adults raise their children (Dermott and Fowler 2020)

Gender inequality: Unfair treatment of individuals depending on their gender, whether overt or covert (wani 2019).

Patriarchal society: men commit compulsion and acts of violence against women, which only spread because of coercion and violence (Johnson 2014)

Object: something that looks real that can be touched