

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The issue of gender seems to be an integral part of our society and culture. Commonly, the issue revolves around the subordination of one group to the other. There is also still a lack of protection for the rights of women. Equality and the removal of all forms of inequality towards women are frequently at the forefront of discussions. Primarily, the issue often concerns the subordination of females by males as, for long, a woman is traditionally subordinate to men in a patriarchal society. Moreover, the patriarchal society that always sees women as subordinates exists until now (Sampson 2020, 187). It is not difficult to find opinions from writers to theologians regarding the status of women's inferiority in social structure. Alexander Pope, for example, a poet and satirist in the Augustan period, once claimed, "Most women have no character at all," showing how he showed little regard for women in his work (Düllman 2009, 1). The poets' opinion shows the generality of women as being inferior and having less worth in society and literature.

The traditional stereotypes still happen today because of the patriarchal culture. Patriarchal culture believed that women's oppression was natural. The

oppression experienced by women happens for various reasons, including social status. According to Rosida and Rejeki (2017), the chance for women of lower status to be oppressed by men is more likely to happen than for women who have privilege. Even today, women's rights are still often limited by patriarchal society. This degrading notion of women was widespread in Western society, and it was no wonder that women themselves accepted their inferior status. A famous instance of it in the course of English literature is Jane Austen. Even when women got talent, they strived to conceal it instead of proudly showing it. In her novel *Northanger Abbey* (1817), Austen once advised that if a woman is intelligent, she should hide it well. Jane Austen was famous for concealing her talent in writing by publishing her book anonymously (Irvine 2005, 13). It shows how women in the Western social structure accepted their role as inferior by trying not to show up for their work because society would judge them. Women aristocrats were not expected to pursue a career; they were expected to marry.

The wind of change to this inferiority came in the nineteenth century when women advocated for equal status with men under the feminist movement or feminism. Feminism is a movement that strives to create an equal status for women in politics, the economy, and society (Hawkesworth 2006, 29). According to Sarah (2001, 193), the feminist movement aims to strip down common stereotypes regarding women having an inferior status in society. In this case, critics explore the depiction or representation of women in literary work to reveal misogyny lurking in the text. Misogyny or hatred towards women is manifested in many ways, such as objectification, hostility, male privilege, belittling women, and others

(Kramarae 2000, 1374). There is an enormous feeling of hate hiding in men's hearts toward women (Illing 2020). In this case, feminist critics work under the premise that the novel inserts misogynistic tendencies into the work.

George R.R. Martin's novel *A Dance with Dragons* (2011) is a unique case for feminist criticism that ought to search for misogynist tendencies in literary work. This novel was written by George R. R. Martin and was published on July 12, 2011, and won a Locus Award for Best Fantasy Novel in 2012. *A Dance with Dragons* is the fifth volume of the book series of *A Song of Ice and Fire*. The first volume is entitled *A Game of Thrones* (1996), the second volume published in 1998 is entitled *A Clash of Kings*, the third volume is entitled *A Storm of Swords* (2000), and in 2005 the fourth volume was published entitled *A Feast for Crows*. The other two planned volumes will be published, entitled *The Winds of Winter* for the sixth volume and *A Dream of Spring*. The study focuses on the fifth volume, entitled *A Dance with Dragons* because many female representation issues are found in novels.

A Dance with Dragons is a novel about the fight for the Iron Thrones, where other kingdoms threaten the Seven Kingdoms' future because of the competition. Many female characters in this novel either play a significant role or minor role characters. Instead of explicitly presenting his female characters with misogynist tendencies, the novel portrays them as bold and powerful characters. This portrayal challenges the traditional stereotype that deems women as weak and inferior. This can be found, for instance, in the portrayal of Daenerys Targaryen is portrayed as a

leader who had command over dragons. She and her army conquered Meereen, one of the largest cities in the continent of Essos. Another influential character in the novel is Arya Stark. She is the daughter of declining house Stark in the north. In this fifth installment, she received training as an assassin from the faceless man in the city of Bravos. Melisandre, or the Red Priestesses also one of the most powerful characters in this novel. The woman is so brave and respected by many people because of her ability to talk with her Lord. Daenerys, Arya, and Melisandre are presented as powerful female characters that play a significant role in the story.

In contrast with other novels that contain a misogynist issue, such as the novel entitled *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy or *EILEEN* by Ottessa Moshfegh, which portrayed women as weak and passive, this novel hides the misogynist issue behind a powerful representation of women. However, aside from those powerful representations, this novel is dominated by male characters, and women are presented ambiguously throughout the story. There is ambiguity found in the novel. Therefore, it is still necessary to take an approach that criticizes this depiction. The study employs a feminist approach to this study, specifically De Beauvoir's Second Sex theories. This concept deals with the issue of equality, an issue that is related to the ideals of second-wave feminism. Equal rights and opportunities for women were the primary focus of second-wave feminism, which seeks to accomplish these ideals. After World War II, this was especially relevant to the question of whether women should have the right to work and whether they should be treated equally in the workplace. Henceforth, with this approach, the study can explore more the representation of females in the novel. This approach

can prove whether the powerful female representation challenges the traditional stereotype or is still inserted with misogynist tendencies.

A feminist approach to literary criticism emerged in the early 20th century. Consecutively, many critics and researchers use this approach in analyzing a literary work. However, many researchers use the work of a female author in analyzing the struggle of the fight against the patriarchy or the empowerment of women. There are seven related studies to this study. The first study by Jasmine and Selvalakshmi (2021) study Arya Stark's struggle against gender stereotypes in the literature. The second study written by Suárez (2017) analyses feminist value in *A Song Of Ice And Fire*. In their study, Alarcos (2010) and Susilowati (2021) studied female characters in literary work. The last, Alqaryouti and Ismail (2019), Bozorgimoghaddam and Moeen (2014), and Resti and Soelistyarini (2016) analyze women's portrayal as *The Second Sex* in novels. These related studies will be further reviewed. The study expects to understand and conduct better research than these previous studies. This novel is catchy because some of the female characters are portrayed as having power and being equal with the opposite gender, and it puts the female in the same position as men in that era. However, some patriarchal portrayals of their characters are interesting to be discussed. Therefore, this study analyzes how each powerful female character is portrayed in the novel and reveals whether there is misogyny lurking behind the struggle of powerful female representation presented in the novel.

Simone De Beauvoir believes women are viewed as “the Other” and inferior to men throughout her book entitled *The Second Sex*. It is common in the book for women to be shown as a human’s terrible or fragile one. De Beauvoir contends that men classified women as “the Other”, the lower, and undeserving of responsibility. In *The Second Sex*, Beauvoir also explores women’s difficulties in gaining economic, political, and sexual independence. The second wave of feminism was inspired by the concepts and opinions de Beauvoir put forward in her writings at the time.

1.2 Statement of the Problems

According to the background of the study, this research evokes one research question:

1. How are the powerful female characters in the text presented ambiguously?
2. How is misogynist tendency portrayed behind Daenerys, Arya, and Melisandre in *A Dance with Dragons* novel?

1.3 Objective of the Study

According to the statement of the problem already mentioned, there are two objectives of this research.

1. To know how the portrayal of powerful female characters in the text is presented ambiguously.
2. To identify the misogyny tendency portrayed behind Daenerys, Arya, and Melisandre in *A Dance with Dragons* novel.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This research is conducted to provide a clear view to the reader regarding the issue of women in literature, especially in the novel. By conducting this research, the writer expects to provide a critical response to the existence of hidden misogynist traces in the representation of a novel famous for having powerful female characters entitled *A Dance with Dragons*. The writer also expects to provide a point of view that even though a novel gives power to female characters, misogynist traces still possibly exist in the novel. Moreover, this research is also expected to contribute to the knowledge of feminism which relates to gender equality and gender in literature in Indonesia, especially in the English Department of Universitas Airlangga. The study's outcomes were expected to encourage the reader to notice women's issues, especially the Faculty of Humanity students focused on feminism and women in literature.

1.5 Definition of Key-Terms

1. Representation: This term depicts or reflects anything in a particular method. This research is used to portray the characters in the novel.
2. Feminism: This term deal with women's oppression in that it is based on a feminist lens.
3. Misogyny: Misogyny is hatred towards women that can be manifested in many ways, such as objectification, hostility, male privilege, belittling women, and others (Kramarae 2000, 1374)

4. Patriarchy: Patriarchy is the analytic notion that refers to a set of global, societal, and economic connections and organizations built around the socially defined gender inequalities of men and women. (Nash, 2009)
5. Second Sex: This is a concept about women as the object or the Other and argues for women's equality.