

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the background of the research, the statement of the problems, research objectives, research significance, previous studies, the definition of key terms, and the organization of the writing.

1.1 Background of the Research

Issues related to women, such as injustice and inequality in terms of gender, appear in various aspects and fields of life, such as social, economic, cultural, environmental, political, and so on. In the social and cultural context related to the field or world of sports, inequalities of rights, opportunities, and even discrimination are still clearly visible. Based on the various issues and problems of women related to gender inequality, the feminist movement emerged. Through the existence of gender ideology and the fact that sport has been created from men's experiences and values, real gender equality relies on transformation from the definitions of masculinity-femininity and societal views on sport (Rubinfeld, 2002).

The cause of discrimination against women is the division of the domestic sector which results in limited space for women to move. According to Bemmelen, the problems of gender inequality experienced by women include limited access to education, values held by society, values and gender roles that are known to society in general, and internalized values and policies that are gender-biased (Fitrianti & Habibullah, 2012). Ihromi said that discrimination is a form of attitude and behaviour that violates human rights (Unsriana, 2014). Thus far, discrimination against women is still happening, one of which is in the field of sports, in the form of a stigma about the position of women as athletes that have not disappeared. The public's view of women is also largely shaped by what has been described by the mass media such as novels.

Therefore, literary feminism is associated with the existence of women in literary works that fight for women's rights in social class. Therefore, the awareness that women are a social group vulnerable to discrimination due to social construction formed based on the masculinity paradigm needs to be introduced in more detail to the community. Fortunately, more and more novels are now

appearing with female leads that tell stories from a female perspective, such as *The Queen's Gambit*. This novel seems to portray feminism in the field of sports, which is reflected in a woman who takes part in chess which men usually dominate in terms of attitudes, behaviour, actions, gestures, perspectives, and so on. This shows that women can compete with men.

The Queen's Gambit tells the story of the life of an orphaned female chess player, Elizabeth Harmon or commonly called Beth, in her quest to become the greatest chess player in the world. On the other hand, she also struggles with tranquilizers, alcohol addiction, and emotional problems. The title of this novel refers to the chess opening. The story's time setting begins in the mid-1950s and continues into the 1960s. This novel begins in Lexington, Kentucky, and tells the story of nine-year-old Beth after losing her mother in a car accident and being taken to an orphanage. Beth met Mr. Shaibel at the orphanage, who works as a janitor. Beth, interested in the chess game, then asks Mr. Shaibel to teach it, but he refuses because Beth is a stranger. The next day, Beth Harmon returned to Mr. Shaibel and said that she was not a stranger because she lived in the orphanage and showed Mr. Shaibel that she already knew a little about how to play the chess pieces from watching. Mr. Shaibel was still not attracted to Beth until he said that girls do not play chess. Moreover, it was common for orphanages to give daily tranquilizers to make children more obedient that year. Beth had visualization skills which she improved with tranquilizers at night before bed, which eventually led to her becoming addicted.

A few years later, Alma Wheatley and her husband from Lexington adopted Beth. After Beth adapts to her new home, she decides to enter a chess tournament and win it. She had previously never participated in a chess championship and had no rank. The committee could not believe that Beth would enter the tournament against the male-dominated champions. Even though she said she was sure, Beth Harmon was still offered to enter the beginner category. The tournament committee also predicted that Beth Harmon would soon be defeated, especially by Harry Beltik, the defending champion of Kentucky. However, it turned out that Beth was

able to beat Harry Beltik and has the ambition to become the world champion and beat the defending champion from Russia, Vasily Borgov.

Based on the opinion above, in this study, the researcher will analyze a novel entitled *The Queen's Gambit* by Walter Tevis, focusing on the woman's existence. In this study, the researcher used a feminist approach. Ritzer and Goodman say that gender inequality influences the patriarchal pattern of the division of labor and sexism. This gender equality can be achieved by changing the division of labor through certain institutions such as work, law, media, education, family, and so on (Ritzer, 2012).

The researcher analyzed this novel because *The Queen's Gambit* has a unique story, phenomenon, and extraordinary representation of women compared to other literary works. In addition, this novel also represents feminism from a different side, namely feminism in sports, which provides moral values and a good view of the strength and persistence of women. Walter Tevis can visualize the story and behaviour of Elizabeth Harmon so that he can convey various messages to the readers. The message is represented through the woman's existence played by the main character, Elizabeth Harmon.

Based on the explanation the researcher has conveyed, the researcher chooses the title "The Woman's Existence in Walter Tevis's *The Queen's Gambit*" as the research that will be analyzed. In this study, the researcher will analyze the woman's existence in the Novel *The Queen's Gambit* from the main character, Elizabeth Harmon.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The novel entitled *The Queen's Gambit* has a unique story and phenomenon compared to other novels. In addition, this novel also represents feminism from a different side, namely feminism in sports. The main female character in this novel also has a unique style because she tries to compete with male dominance in sports, especially the game of chess in the United States in the 1950s. Thus, this research analyzes the woman existence of the main female character, Elizabeth Harmon, in *The Queen's Gambit* novel. Based on the background and problem formulations above, this research is formulated into the following questions:

1. What is the main character's portrayal in *The Queen's Gambit* novel?
2. How are the woman's existence in *The Queen's Gambit* novel?

1.3 Research Objectives

Concerning the statement of problems, this research has two objectives to be achieved by the researcher as follows:

1. To find out the main character's portrayal in *The Queen's Gambit* novel.
2. To analyze the woman's existence in *The Queen's Gambit* novel.

1.4 Research Significances

By doing this research, the author hopes that this research can be useful, with both theoretical and practical benefits.

1. Theoretically

This research is expected to be useful in the future. It can add insight into knowledge about literary works in the form of novels, especially studying novels from the perspective of existentialist feminism and the woman's existence of the main character in *The Queen's Gambit* novel so that this research can be used as a reference for further research that has similarities with this research.

2. Practically

This research is expected to provide new references that are useful for the public in knowing and understanding the field of literature, especially existentialist feminism regarding women's lives in the main character of *The Queen's Gambit*, in showing its existence in society.

1.5 Previous Study

Many researchers have analyzed the woman's existence in literary work. Therefore, the researcher conducted a review of previous studies as literature which will be used as a reference for literature as well as a comparison of the authenticity of this research to avoid similarities with studies that previous researchers have carried out. Some of them are as follows:

1. Thesis entitled *Woman Existence Reflected In Laksmi Pamuntjak's The Questions Of Red Novels (2014): A Liberal Feminist Approach* by Nidaul

Khoiriyah (2017). This study analyzes the woman existence of Amba, reflected in Laksmi Pamuntjak's *The Questions of Red* novel. The type of this research is qualitative research with a liberal feminist approach. The data from this study is the novel's narration, monologue, and dialogue. The result of this study is: 1) Amba's struggle to get into existence, be an independent woman, and have high self-confidence. 2) The portrayal of the woman's existence through Amba's strength in dealing with her problems.

2. Thesis entitled *Character Analysis of Mary Ashley Based On Feminism Approach in The Novel Windmills of The Gods By Sidney Sheldon* by Novianti (2008). This study aims to analyze the major female character and how those characteristics reflect feminist ideas. The data of the main character and characterization are based on the behaviour and the attitude of the main character collected and the evidence from the dialog in the novel. The results from this study are: 1) Mary Ashley is an educated woman, a good negotiator, obstinate, decisive, courageous, heroic, and independent. 2) Mary is not a stereotypical woman who keeps the household passive and dependent on men. She is independent in mind, economy, and action. 3) Mary proved herself in a country that believed women to be inferior to men. She also can enter the political field through her education and becomes a professional ambassador.
3. Thesis from Muh. Iskandar Susilo (2019) entitled *The Struggle of Woman Reflected in Cigarette Girl Novel by Ratih Kumala*. This study discussed women's struggle, which is reflected in *Cigarette Girl Novel* by Ratih Kumala. This research aimed to achieve women's existence and focused on women's struggle in *Cigarette Girl* to refuse their *liyan* in society. This study used existentialist feminism Simone de Beauvoir's theory. The data analysis showed that there were some kinds of women's struggles, according to Beauvoir, as follows: women can become intellectuals, women can work to achieve a socialist transformation of society and transcend its boundaries. The conclusion is that women have the capability and self-sufficiency to manage and develop their life to get social status by being intellectuals, transcending their boundaries, and working to achieve a socialist transformation.

4. A Bachelor Thesis entitled *A textual analysis of traditional representations of Women in The Queen's Gambit* by Zofia Rucka (2021). This study analyzes the representation of the main protagonist in the Netflix entitled *The Queen's Gambit*. The writers chose four separate scenes from four different episodes. The selection of the four scenes depends on the themes and problems related to the concept of the traditional representation of women in audiovisual media, namely representation, gender ideals, traditional gender representation, and traditional representation of women in audiovisual media. The selected scenes show the development of the main protagonist's character and how he deals with issues regarding the impact of his gender on his profession in his life and career. This study uses the method of textual analysis from John Fiske's theory regarding cultural codes and their categorization to levels in television. The results of this analysis are then based on the author's further and detailed contextualization of the elements of mise-en-scene and dialogue. The results of this study indicate that the main protagonist is portrayed as a very intelligent, independent, and passionate woman, thus contradicting traditional representations of ideals of gender and women in audiovisual media on a large scale. Furthermore, this research also shows that contemporary audiovisual media needs more with out-of-control female protagonists like Elizabeth Harmon from *The Queen's Gambit* to show and dissociate the biased stereotyped representations influenced and consolidated by oppressive systems such as patriarchy.

Based on the previous studies above, the research on the woman's existence in *The Queen's Gambit* novel had not been discussed. In general, studies that analyze woman's existence use feminist theory. Nevertheless, the problems faced by the figures are different, so the research results are also different. Therefore, the difference between the research that will be carried out and the previous studies is in terms of the object to be studied, namely the novel *The Queen's Gambit* using Simone De Beauvoir's existentialist feminism study. The women's awareness who come from various circles is trying to achieve the same things as men, such as

freeing themselves from stereotypes, racism, domination, violence, hegemony, and so on, as experienced by the female character in *The Queen's Gambit* novel.

1.6 Definition of Key Term

Key terms are taken from words in research papers. These key terms are written down to make readers understand this research problem more easily. In addition, the writing of these key terms is also provided to avoid misunderstandings in this research. In this research, the researcher uses the following key terms:

Feminism: Feminism is a social and ideological movement that fights for women's rights in all aspects of life, such as political, economic, social, and others.

Feminism in Sports: Women can play well in sports and should be allowed to play and should be given proper facilities in the sports, as given to men.

Discrimination: A different treatment of fellow human beings based on gender, skin color, class, race, ethnicity, economic, social, religion, and others.

Stereotype: An assumption about an individual only seen through a certain background or characteristic.

1.7 Organization of Writing

This research is divided into five chapters to analyze the Woman Existence of the Main Character in *The Queen's Gambit* Novel.

Chapter I: Introduction, consists of the background of the research, statement of the problem, research objectives, research significances, previous study, definition of key term, and organization of writing.

Chapter II: Theoretical underpinning, consists of Simone de Beauvoir's Feminist theory, the relationship between existentialism and literature, woman's existence in literature, feminism and gender, feminist literary criticism, and the synopsis of *The Queen's Gambit* novel.

Chapter III: The Research method, consist of research design, sample of data, source of data, technique of collecting data, and technique of analyzing data.

Chapter IV: finding and discussion consist of the data analysis, discussing and analyzing the data collected before, using the theory and methodology. This chapter is the main chapter where the data will process to get the final result.

Chapter V: conclusion and suggestions, explain the final result, which has been analyzed in Chapter IV, and then make the conclusions about it.

