

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This first chapter introduces about five prominent subchapters namely background of the study, research problem, objective of the research, significant of the research, and the last one is scope and limitation.

1.1 Background of the Study

We often find a proverb saying “Books are windows to the world” which means that we can get knowledge or information about many things by reading book. One of the most popular types of books is novel which is categorized as fiction type of literary works.

”Literature is the expression of human’s feelings, ideas, imaginations, thoughts, experiences, and emotions which are applied in beautiful language whose purpose is to entertain. Literature can be expressed by language, both oral and written.” (Meiliana, 2016: 1)

Nowadays we can easily find many writers with theirs famous works, including literary works that produced by women. Unlike today, the production of literary works in the past time was dominated by men, while women only became the consumers of works produced by men. Women in the past were not given the opportunity to write because they were considered as less educated people and being marginalized. This assumption was used as a gap for men to describe about women according to what is in their minds, without knowing how women really are. As mentioned by Showalter in her article *Toward a Feminist Poetics* (1979):

“If we study stereotypes of women, the sexism of male critics, and the limited roles women play in literary history, we are not learning what women have felt and experienced, but only what men have thought women should be.” (Showalter, 1979: 216)

Men describe women as weak, such as stated by one of the anthropologists that quoted in Showalter’s *Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness* (1981, p.187) that the frontal lobes of the male brain were heavier and more develop than female lobes. Based on the statement of that fact, women were inferior in intelligence. In addition, there are many more depictions of women made by men based on

women's physical or biological conditions that can be seen from the way men make the characters of women in their literary works.

Due to the images or descriptions of women that made by men were considered inappropriate, women began to describe themselves based on their own experiences or rules without adapting male's models. Women at that time began to write and publish their writings, but women published their writings under the male pseudonym in case to be taken seriously (Howell, 2014: 24).

In line with women's efforts to reconstruct the female framework, Showalter (1979) divides those reconstructions into three stages: the Feminine (1840 - 1880), Feminist (1880 - 1920), and Female stages (1920 – ongoing). The efforts of women's writing that still continues until today is no longer about how women reject men's images of women or how they can produce writing without male pseudonym, because today we already easily find women writers and their literary works. In today's phase, women reject imitation and protest against experiences as autonomous sources of art, and extending feminist analysis of culture to literary forms and techniques.

As mentioned before, today we can easily discover and enjoy literary works produced by women. Many of those literary works are then used as a source of analysis on how its social situations, cultural and traditional conditions, find the differences between women's and men's writing technique, or others. This is also become the background for the researcher to conduct this study by using Elaine Showalter's theory namely Gynocriticism. This study is conducted to find the four models of gynocriticism in a novel *Well-Behaved Indian Women* by an Indian-American female writer, Saumya Dave. This novel is used as source of data because it is relevant and interesting to be connected or analyzed by using the theory of Gynocriticism. The experiences or statements of the female characters written by Saumya Dave will be analyzed to the four models of Gynocriticism: women's writing and woman's body, women's writing and women's language, women's writing woman's psyche, women's writing and women's culture.

The novel titled *Well-Behaved Indian Women* itself was published in 2020 and presents stories about an Indian family in third generation namely Simran, Nandini (Simran's mom), and Mimi (Simran's grandmother). Those female characters come from a prominent family who live in America and are respected in their home country, India. Simran is someone who can be assumed as a lucky woman. She is smart, graduate with prestigious postgraduate degree as psychologist, can publish her own book, has a good fiancé from her own choice, and also has a prosperous family. Her family is certainly well off, because both Simran's parents are doctors. Simran's mother named Nandini is a doctor at one of the clinic in America, but she is still able to balance her personal and professional life according to what she has learned as Indian woman. What Nandini learned of course came from her mother, Mimi. She is a determined and witty matriarch of a family with many generations of bright and ambitious people who also has attained the highest level of respect in Indian society.

The similar research has been carried out in previous studies and researcher uses it as references. The previous studies are in the forms of thesis and articles that come from the same topic about Gynocriticism and from the same novel, *Well-Behaved Indian Women*. There are four thesis that rise the same theory of Gynocriticism entitled *The Specialty of Women's Writing in Selected Poems by Susan Nguyen: A Gynocriticism Study* (Isnaeni, 2021), *Identifying The Specialty of Margaret Dilloway's Writing in How to Be an American Housewife (A Study of Gynocriticism)* (Ningsih, 2017), *Demolishing Androcentric Culture and Values in Qaisra Shahraz's Zemindar's Wife* (Nufus, 2017), *The Analysis of Female Character Under Patriarchal Society in the Holy Woman Novel by Qaisra Shahraz through Feminism Approach* (Tantriani, 2021). Two more previous studies are articles entitled *The Portrayal of Gender Inequality in Well-Behaved Indian Women Novel by Saumya Dave* (Faradita & Kusuma, 2022), *Madurese Women and Binding Culture in Muna Masyari's Martabat Kematian: Gynocriticism Analysis* (Hartanto & Roifah, 2020).

These previous studies collected to be the references based on the same theory or data that be used in this study. The researcher uses these previous studies that have the same theory and data because it can be used as references and can help to understand the problems relate to the study. While the differences between the study conducted by the researcher and the existing previous studies is the data taken from the novel *Well-Behaved Indian Women* by Saumya has not been analyzed by using the theory of Gynocriticism. Besides that, this study is also different because it discusses problems that exist in Indian culture which commonly known has a lot of tradition.

1.2 Research Question

1. How does Saumya Dave portray the women characters in *Well-Behaved Indian Women* based on four models of Gynocriticism?

1.3 Objective of the Study

1. To find out how Saumya Dave describes or portrays the women characters in the novel *Well-Behaved Indian Women* based on the four models of Gynocriticism.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is theoretically and practically expected to give contribution. The theoretical contribution is first, expected to give an understanding about theory of Gynocriticism. As presented in the novel *Well-Behaved Indian Women* by Saumya Dave that contain the models of Gynocriticism: women's writing and woman's body, women's writing and women language, women's writing and woman's psyche, and women's writing and women's culture.

Then in the practical contribution, it is expected to give motivation and awareness about the goals that can be achieved by women according to their wishes and not to judge people by the gender.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

This study analyzes the novel *Well-Behaved Indian Women* by Saumya Dave. The scope of this study is literary study which specifically analyzes the novel by using theory of Gynocriticism by Elaine Showalter. The researcher focuses on analyzing the problem or pattern relate to the Gynocriticism that occurs in the novel *Well-Behaved Indian Women*. The data collected from the descriptions or utterances of the women characters in the novel *Well-Behaved Indian Women* by Saumya Dave.

While the limitation of this study is to investigate how the situation or descriptions of the women characters in the novel *Well-Behaved Indian Women* that relate to the four models of Gynocriticism. The data of this study is taken from the descriptions or utterances which are presented in the novel.