

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter includes five parts of introduction. They are the background of the study, statement of the research questions, objectives of the study, significances of the study, and scope and limitations of the study.

1.1 Background of Study

A witch is a human figure who has extraordinary magical or supernatural powers, originating from within the soul of a person who ally with the devil to gain power beyond the capabilities of ordinary people. This power takes various forms, such as being able to heal sick people, torture the lives of people who are considered a threat, predict, and reveal facts that are not yet known by ordinary people (Hutton, 2018:107). The abilities possessed by a witch become a source of strength that is able to protect herself from pressure or oppression carried out by patriarchal society. It is because the supernatural power possessed by a witch has a great impact on others. Some people think that the power of magic is evil and dirty because it is created from cruelty (Germaine & Chloe, 2019:28). However, some others consider witches to be good because they are able to ease difficulties that occur beyond the control of normal human strength.

Witch is very synonymous with woman, the figure is always depicted in the role of a woman who becomes strong and brave because she has supernatural powers. However, this supernatural power led to negative speculation about witches. That's because some people assume that witches are old women who have ancient rituals, are strange and antagonistic. Thus, their presence is feared as a threat (Germaine & Chloe, 2019:30). The description of a witch woman has a positive meaning in the fantasy radical that argues a witch woman is interpreted as a wise old woman, so the notion of a witch is a dirty old woman can be rejected. Because the fact that witch woman is the protector of the maternal instinct of an ancient character held sacred as the great seer who fought the patriarchy.

In historical notes, the figure of a witch is defined as a despised historical figure who experienced oppression and death. However, the presence of radical fantasy becomes a renewal of views on witches' women, not as despicable women who are isolated but as women they want (Sempruch, 2008:14). This event is very interesting to analyze because witches become a symbol of feminist women who are able to subvert the stigma of women who are considered lowly and weak. This is one of the problems that are often found in the community. This problem is also illustrated in literary works. Literary work is a portrait of human life that is applied in an orderly writing and contains elements of beauty. Even literary works are used as a means to criticize the phenomena that exist in life (Bertens, 2002:22). Thus, the author can convey their ideas and thoughts through writing. In addition, literary works also play a role in conveying ideas to support and shape gender ideology in society. One form of literary work is a novel. Novels consist of around thirty thousand words, which can contain fiction or nonfiction (Aliyev, 2021:25).

In this study, the writer chooses the novel "*She: a History of Adventure*" by Henry Rider Haggard as source of data. This novel was first published in 1887, but in this study the writer chooses the latest version of the novel which was published in 2016. There is no significant difference between the latest version and the old version, only changes in the more modern book cover. This novel is interesting to study because it tells the life of a witch queen who has tremendous supernatural powers, is invincible and is feared by all the people in her country. This phenomenon is a portrait of a radical feminist in fantasy story about the position of a witch woman who is able to eliminate male supremacy because of her strength.

This novel is one of the best and best-selling imaginative classics of all time. This novel has sold eighty-three million copies and has been translated into more than forty-four languages in the world. Henry Rider Haggard as the author admits that the novel "*She: a History of Adventure*" is his best work. Haggard is one of the best authors in Europe, almost all of his literary works describe adventures and political situations in Africa. Many of his novels describe stereotype issues related to colonialism, and this novel is one of them.

The novel “*She: a History of Adventure*” by Henry Rider Haggard tells about how strong Ayesha as a woman, but she can lead a tribe called *Amahagger*. She was even able to make people submit to her orders due to being mesmerized by her beauty. Ayesha is able to lead her authority by making all the slaves, subordinates, and foreigners unable to resist the power that she has. She lived two thousand years ago. In addition, Ayesha has supernatural powers that make her unable to be killed by anyone. It makes Ayesha the queen who has the highest authority in her tribe, known as “She who must be obeyed”. It is because she is considered a witch queen with her beauty, which creates subconscious fantasies for men and this is considered a form of magical power. This condition illustrates how helpless a man is when he sees beautiful women, so they have to be obedient and powerless because of Ayesha's strength. In addition, this shows that women are not always weak and always need men in their lives. But women can also be independent and lead their authority without involving men in their leadership.

The phenomena found in the novel can be investigated using the theory put forward by Justyna Sempruch, namely *Fantasies of Gender and the Witch in Feminist Theory and Literature*, which in the application of the theory classifies radical feminist that is able to elevate the position of women who are considered as subordinates in terms of sexuality, thus women can take that position (Sempruch, 2008:12). In the view of radical feminists, a witch is seen as a female character who deserves cruel treatment because she is considered a dirty woman. However, in fantasy feminists subvert that dirty perspective to witches, by bringing up gender political fantasy perspectives (Sempruch, 2008:14).

The writer found five previous studies which are used as references and novelty in analysis using the same source of data. First, an article entitled *Ayesha as a New Face of Woman: a Feminist Reading of Rider Haggard's “She: a History of Adventure”* by Iswarya. M. Student from St. Michael's Collage. It was published in *International Journal of English Language, Literature of Humanities (IJELLH)* (2018). Second, an article entitled *The Rumor of Ayesha's Immortality in ‘She: a History of Adventure’ by Henry Rider Haggard* by Bella Cintya and Suci Suryani, S.S., M.Pd from University of Trunojoyo Madura. It was published in *International*

Conference on English Studies in Indonesia (ICONESIA) (2021). Third, an essay entitled *She: a History of Adventure and Its Misogynist Attack on Early Feminism* by Rupaya Roy. It was published in *Social and Political Movements* (2008). Fourth, a thesis entitled “*Out of Living Rock”: the Assemblage of Ruins in H. Rider Haggard’s She*” by Rachel E. Rackhman a student from Brigham Young University (2021). Fifth, a thesis entitled *Male Anxieties in Haggard’s Fiction: an Analysis of the New Woman and the Threatening Female Body in ‘She’* by Yolien Ascoop a student from Universiteit Gent (2020-2021). This study shows the novelties of previous research studies, which in this study use theories that have never been applied in previous studies, namely the theory of Fantasies of Gender and the Witch in Feminist Theory and Literature by Justyna Sempruch. This theory is used to analyze the issues found in the witch woman figure.

The novel “*She: a History of Adventure*” by Henry Rider Haggard is interesting to read, because this novel tells about the life of a witch woman who is able to seize the position of a man. The tragedy in the story shows the power of a woman as a form of feminism or women's toughness in equalizing gender. We still often encounter this phenomenon in social life, the notion that women do not deserve to be leaders is still a widespread mindset in society. In addition, the beauty inherent in a woman's soul is considered a curse, capable of building sexual fantasies of the opposite sex. This resulted in the emergence of the power of a woman, who was thought to be able to trick men with her inner beauty. Therefore, the writer chose this topic in her study.

1.2 Statement of the Problems

There are two questions in this thesis as limited discussion in Henry Rider Haggard’s novel “*She: a History of Adventure*”. The following of the questions are:

1. What radical feminist are portrayed in a fantasy story by Ayesha as a witch in a novel “*She: a History of Adventure*” by Henry Rider Haggard?
2. What are the impacts of Ayesha’s power in her authority?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Based on the statement of the problems above, the study will try to discover:

1. The radical feminist portrayed in a fantasy story by Ayesha as a witch in a novel "*She: a History of Adventure*" by Henry Rider Haggard.
2. The impacts of Ayesha's power in her authority.

1.4 Significances of the Study

The results of study in a novel "*She: a History of Adventure*" by Henry Rider Haggard, are expected to have a positive impact both theoretically and practically. First, this study is predictable to be able to contribute to the development of literature and the issues that exist in literary works. Especially in this study, the writer finds the phenomenon of radical feminism that arises from a fantasy story about a queen who is a witch who represents a superwoman fantasy, thus she is able to seize the notion that power is always in the hands of men and women cannot lead independently. Second, practically this study is expected to be a reference for students who will investigate in the field of literature, especially regarding the issue of fantasies of gender and the witch in feminist theory and literature. In addition, this study can raise awareness in the wider community that men and women have the same rights and position.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

To avoid expanding the analysis, the writer decides that scope of this study focuses characters' utterances and narrator's narration, especially regarding the figure of Ayesha as a witch queen in the novel *She: a History of Adventure* by Henry Rider Haggard, who becomes the leader of a tribe. That is a portrayal of gender equality that appears in the story. The limitations of this study are to investigate the role of Ayesha who has power with her magical powers through feminist understanding, and to find out the effects of Ayesha's power in understanding fantasies of gender. The actions taken by Ayesha as a queen who has supernatural powers which are considered as magical powers are chosen as the main issue in the analysis of this study. That's because this phenomenon gave rise to an act of revival of women who are free from male supremacy. Because Ayesha has the super power, it places her as a leader, and makes men powerless.