

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

The study elaborates the oppression of women under the patriarchal structures and male domination as reflected in Rajaa Al-Sanea's *Girls of Riyadh*. In the introduction, the writer presents the background of the study, research questions, objectives of the study, significance of the study, and scope and limitation of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

The issue of gender seems endless to be discussed by all levels of society in the world. This is due to the influence of hegemonic ideology in a patriarchal culture inherent in the social system of society and maintained until the modern era today (Naufina, 2021. p. 14). In society, patriarchy is a serious social issue because it is a social construct. Patriarchy has unquestionably shaped and established itself as one of the most significant social constructs in the world and a manifestation of gender inequality (Klingorová & Havlíček, 2015. P. 21). When discussing gender issues, it deals with inequality and discrimination. Patriarchal ideology is the initial cause of gender inequality and discrimination in society. Gender inequality is a result of patriarchy and its associated stigmas, which also lead to other gender-related issues such as violence against women, oppress women, discrimination against women, and low women participation in public sector jobs.

The value of gender stereotypes is reinforced by the patriarchal culture, forming two categories of femininity and masculinity. Feminine and masculine terms in a patriarchal society give rise to myths such as men being intelligent, capable of leading, aggressive, brave, rational, emotionally inexpressive, strong, cool-headed, self-controlled, independent, active, dominant and assertive, having a high sense of self-confidence. While contradictory terms are used to describe women, such as non-aggressive, shy, intuitive, more emotionally expressive, nurturing, weak, hysterical, erratic and lacking self-control (especially during menstruation), dependent, passive, submissive, indecisive, unable to lead and lacking self-confidence (Johnson, 2014, P. 80). It means that in a patriarchal society, women

with their feminine nature are considered only capable of working in the domestic sphere such as household. For instance, they must take care of children, serve their husbands, work in the house without being paid, etc. Women are required to fulfill their nature, namely being burdened with the responsibility of caring for children, raising children, being active in production work, namely giving birth to children, producing humans and becoming sex objects. Whereas, men have the ability to lead, be dominant, assertive, aggressive, rational, brave, strong and work outside the home.

In patriarchal society, women are not suitable to take on tasks outside of their nature such as pursuing a career or making decisions. In contrast to men, patriarchal culture places men in a higher position than women. The position of women in society is only considered as a complement to men's lives. According to Walby (1990) "Patriarchy is a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women." (Walby, 1990. p. 20). It means that the patriarchal system is an aspect of male behavior and social institutions that oppresses, dominates, and mistreats women.. In patriarchal society, men are honored and have the privilege to control over women. Men dominate women not only in the personal but also public spheres such as political leadership participation, education, economy, social and property control (Rudiansyah, et al., 2021). So, this affects the role of women in society because women's rights are limited, thus affecting the development and progress of women. Furthermore, patriarchal society assumes that the presence of women is always placed in a lower position than men. As a result, women as oppressed people in society feel that their position has been withdrawn by men as the owners of higher authority. This culture deprives women of power and thus weakens women because men use masculinity to dominate over women.

According to Walby (1990) there are six structures of patriarchy that exist in society as arranged. They are patriarchal relations in paid employment, patriarchal relations in household production, patriarchal relations in culture, patriarchal relations in sexuality, male violence, and patriarchal relations in state (Walby,

1990). Social inequality in society caused by the gender gap makes women get bad treatment from men due to negative stereotypes due to the influence of patriarchal culture. The form of patriarchy has also changed over time. Furthermore, Walby (1990) divides patriarchy in two forms, namely private patriarchy and public patriarchy. Private patriarchy focuses on the feminine side of women, namely household chores, taking care of children and serving husbands as a form of stereotype attached to society. Meanwhile, public patriarchy focuses on society. There is an assumption that household chores are the nature of women and cannot be negotiated. So, the movement of women in the public sphere is very limited. These various injustices caught women's attention, which led to the development of a movement for equality. When women's concerns about eradicating the gender inequalities they faced emerged, the feminist movement began.

Feminism was born from the latin word feminine or woman. In general, the term feminism is used to describe the women's movements in various aspects such as social, political, cultural as advocacy voicing gender equality and aiming to realize equal rights and legal protection for women. In feminism, women are liberated from violence, injustice, hegemony, oppression and suppression (Winarsih, & Margareta, 2021). In line with the statement of Tong in her book "Feminist Thought". According to Tong (2009) Liberal feminism is the full freedom given by society to both men and women with equal rights or fairly. So that both can achieve equality of opportunities to develop in society. There are three aspects of liberal feminism namely equal education, equal liberty and equal rights.

Humanity problems such as women oppression not only happens in the real world but also those issues appear in a literary work. Basically, literature symbolizes the life of society in all aspects. Literature is an expression of life written in beautiful words and reflects culture and social reality. One of the most popular fictions is novels. Novels are long and complex works of prose that reveal human experience and behavior (Keerthika, 2018. P. 59). Novel is a literary work used by an author to describe or criticize a social phenomenon in society. *Girls of*

Riyadh(2007) is a novel that depicts patriarchy and oppression of women characters set in Riyadh, the capital city of Saudi Arabia.

Rajaa Al-Sanea as the author raises gender problem happened in Arab society, namely patriarchy, which is the main issue in the novel. The novel entitled *Girls of Riyadh* (2007) is a true story about four women characters named Gamrah, Sadeem, Michelle and Lamees who live under the confines of patriarchal culture and male domination. Gamrah and Sadeem depend on their husbands for their livelihood. Gamrah received oppression in the form of physical, verbal and neglect from her husband, Rashid. She is also burdened with cleaning the house, serving her husband and taking care of her children. Michelle is an Arab-American girl who lost her faith in men after Faishal, her boyfriend, refused to marry her due to lack of approval from her parents simply because she was born to an American mother. Lamees was arrested by the police just because she was caught dating with a man in the cafe. However, the four women characters won their liberation by building self-consciousness, struggling to get education, career, and struggling in making decisions. So, the oppression, violence, limitations, gender discrimination, and their characters liberation have encouraged the author's attention to write a novel. Additionally, The synopsis narrated the four women characters who live under the forms patriarchal structures.

Girls of Riyadh (2007) or (*Banath al-Riyadh* in Arabic) was published in Lebanon in 2005 in Arabic and in 2007 in English by The Penguin Press. Rajaa Al-Sanea's success in writing *Girls of Riyadh* (2007) earned her an honor as one of the 100 most influential women in Arabia. The novel was also categorized as one of the world's best-selling novels. In addition, *Girls of Riyadh* (2007) was nominated for the International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award at the Warsaw Public Library in Poland (Thalib, 2013). In this novel, there are several issues that reflect the lives of women characters in the patriarchal society in conservative countries. The story explores the lives of women characters who live under the patriarchal society and male domination. This novel also represents the liberation of women characters in patriarchal society in which they live. So, oppression, violence, limitations, and

liberation are the main issues in the novel that are very interesting to analyze because they deal with phenomena that still happen until today. So, this study can help people be aware of stopping patriarchal culture, violence, oppression, and encourage the feminist movement for gender equality. Therefore, the theoretical approach that will be used to analyze the issues is the six structures of patriarchy theory by Sylvia Walby (1990) and Liberal feminism theory by Tong (2009). Therefore, the writer decided to choose "The Structures of Patriarchy Reflected in Rajaa Al-Sanea's *Girls of Riyadh*: Liberal Feminism Perspective." as the thesis title.

There are five previous studies which have similar sources of data to this study. The first previous study by Winarni, a student at UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta. The title of the study is "*An Analysis of Gender Discrimination on The Four Main Characters in The Novel Banat al-Riyadh*." (2010). The study uses gender theory to identify the kinds of gender discrimination and uses feminist theory to see how women resist. The second previous study was conducted by Eksa Duwi Palupi in her thesis entitled "*The Roles of Family and Women in the Saudi Arabia Tradition of Marriage as Revealed in Rajaa Alsanea's Girls of Riyadh*" (2010). The study aims to analyze the roles of family and women in the Saudi Arabia tradition of marriage in *Girls of Riyadh* by Rajaa Al-Sanea. In her study, Eksa uses a socio-cultural approach to answer the problem of the study. The third previous study was conducted by Shinta Irawan in her thesis entitled "*Girls of Riyadh: The Arab American Michel's Search for A Cultural Identity*." (2011). Shinta focuses on one character named Michele with the research focus that is to explore Michele's character. The study uses a postcolonialism approach which refers to cultural differences between western and eastern cultures.

The fourth previous study was conducted by Ahmad Makin Luthfi Al-Anshori in his thesis entitled "*A Study on Main Characters' Love Life in The Novel The Girls of Riyadh By Rajaa Al-Sanea*" (2017). The study focuses on the main characters' love life named Sadeem and Michelle in the novel *Girls of Riyadh* and how their love life relates to the three components of love namely intimacy, passion, and commitment/decision. The study uses new criticism theory and A triangular theory

of love. The last previous study was conducted by Hindun entitled "*Building Identity in Global Reality: A Postcolonial Study on Rajaa Al-sanea's Novel Banaat Ar-Riyadh*" (2021). The study aims to examine traditional Saudi Arabian norms and American norms in the (*Girls of Riyadh*). The study uses post-colonial and Globalization theory.

The previous studies used the same source of data that is the novel entitled *Girls of Riyadh* (2007) to this study. The previous studies revealed gender discrimination, women resistance, roles of family experienced by characters in the *Girls of Riyadh* by Rajaa Al-Sanea. Therefore, previous study has not discussed the patriarchal structures experienced by the four women characters in which they live, both in the public and domestic spheres and the women characters liberation in *Girls of Riyadh* (2007). So, in this study the data will be analyzed in more detail about the patriarchal structures and women characters liberation in which they live. Therefore, novelty must be generated here by conducting a study about "The Structures of Patriarchy Reflected in Raja Al-Sanea's *Girls of Riyadh*: Liberal Feminist Perspective."

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the background of the study above, the writer focuses on the research questions below:

1. What are the patriarchal structures under which the four women characters live elaborated in *Girls of Riyadh* (2007) by Rajaa Al-Sanea?
2. How do the four women characters win their liberation from the patriarchal structures depicted in *Girls of Riyadh* (2007) by Rajaa Al-Sanea ?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Based on the research questions above, the objectives of the research are:

1. To identify the patriarchal structures under which the four women characters live in *Girls of Riyadh* (2007) by Rajaa Al-Sanea.
2. To describe the four women, characters win their liberation from the patriarchal structures in *Girls of Riyadh* (2007) by Rajaa Al-Sanea.

1.4 Significances of the Study

This study is expected to provide two benefits, namely theoretical significance and practical significance. First, theoretical significance. The writer hopes that this research can contribute to the development of literature, especially the theory of patriarchy and feminism. Second, to maintain the existence of the theory of patriarchy and feminism. So, this theory will endure and be wearable for literary studies in the future.

As for the practical significance, The writer hopes that this research is beneficial for students. The writer hopes that the students get more understanding about the issues of patriarchy and feminism in society. Second, the research is beneficial for future researchers because they can obtain some information that may be needed in their study. The ideas presented can be used as reference data in conducting the latest research and testing the validity of other findings. This study might also be able to answer questions from recent research. Lastly, this study is beneficial for society because it provides information regarding patriarchy and the struggle to deal with it, and adds new insight to understand more about patriarchy and feminism. So, society can minimize the occurrence of patriarchy practices and encourage feminism movement for gender equality in society.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The scope of this study is the six structures of patriarchy theory by Sylvia Walby (1990). The field of this study is about patriarchal structures and women liberation. The analysis of patriarchal structures and women's liberation as elaborated in the novel are based on Sylvia Walby's *Theorizing Patriarchy* (1990). Liberal Feminism by Tong (2009) is used to analyze the liberation of the four women characters from patriarchal society in *Girls of Riyadh* (2007) by Rajaa Al-Sanea. The limitation of this research focuses on the dialogue between characters and author narration in the novel entitled *Girls of Riyadh* (2007) by Rajaa Al-Sanea. Then revealing the forms of patriarchal structures experienced by the four women characters and their liberation from patriarchal

structure in the society is analyzed with related theories which provide answers to the research questions conducted by the writer.