

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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

1.1 Background of the Study

Women have consistently been depicted as weak, fragile, and unfit for leadership. This perception persists today, leading to societal judgments that women lack the strength to lead. In some parts of eastern Indonesia, there is a belief that education for women is unnecessary because they will end up in the kitchen and should not lead men. This reinforces the patriarchal norms that restrict women's roles in public affairs. Those ideas are in line with Idrus' statement saying that these cultural routines and stereotypes about men and women hinder efforts to promote gender equality across various aspects of life. This widespread "patriarchal culture" exacerbates the inequality between men and women in society (Idrus et al., 2023, p. 2).

According to Walby (1990), Patriarchy basically means the rule of father and used to describe a men-dominated family. Patriarchy is a structured system where men hold dominant positions at the top of a hierarchy, relegating women to subordinate roles at the bottom. The concept implies men superiority, partly stemming from a tendency to equate the occupants of authoritative positions with the inherent superiority of the men gender. Consequently, when men occupy positions of authority, it is easily inferred that men are perceived as superior (Mardiana & Andayani, 2023, p. 195). The patriarchal culture has a big influence in the development of subordination issue in society through years. Subordination involves the evaluation that one gender is inferior or lower in status than another, a phenomenon more commonly encountered by women than men (Idrus et al., 2023, p. 2). Therefore, this explanation shows that patriarchal culture has given a rise to the gender inequality that occurs in our society.

Subordination is highly associated with power and dominance by men over women which is very related to the gender inequality (Walby, 1990, p. 20). The societal framework has fashioned men with significant authority, establishing a dynamic where they tend to dominate relationships with women. According to Tyson (2006: 85), traditional gender roles portrayed men as rational, strong, protective, and decisive, while women are characterized as emotional, weak, nurturing, and submissive. The mentioned statement indicates that women are positioned in a subordinate or powerless role. Moreover, this issue of gender inequality often inflicts violence as the result of subordination. Violence occurs in family and social place involves causing harm, whether it be physical or non-physical, affecting mental well-being (Mardiyani & Tawami, 2022, p. 167). With this privilege of men, society always keeps women inferior to men, submitting a patriarchal system.

Along with the many gender inequalities and subordination issues in patriarchy society, the subjugation on women has appeared. Subjugation is a patriarchal treatment that hold the inferior status of women in comparison to men. The system has led to the imbalance of women's rights. Consequently, it appears that women have no power over men to decide as men can do especially in a family (Karim, 2019, p. 216). Subjugation is the result of the patriarchal system that suppressed women's rights and position, caused by inequality in gender and subordination in a family or society. Therefore, women are always being underrated in many fields wherever patriarchal system used. For example, women are often regarded as possessing fewer leadership capabilities than men, leading to a less favourable perception of their leadership skills (Dankwa, 2018, p. 9).

It needs to be emphasized that subordination is different from subjugation. According to Mill (2009, p. 3), the subjection of women means that women are under control by men. Women are already in a subordination position because of patriarchy system that cause inequality. They are objects that are used as men's values that can be oppressed, exploited, and subjugated, making them inferior to men. While subordination refers to the inequality of position in society that have

less opportunity and rights than man, and sometimes it gives rise to racism too (Walby, 1990, p. 19). Subordination and subjugation are both caused by patriarchy system. Give a rise to gender inequality between men and women.

As the result of these inequality rights between men and women, the movement of feminism seems to develop alongside the patriarchal system. Feminism encompasses social and political efforts aimed at achieving equality for women. It arises from the recognition of the unfair disparity in women's rights compared to those of men (Mardiyani & Tawami, 2022, p. 166). According to Tong, Feminism is divided into several types. One of them is liberal feminism which is related to the phenomenon in this study. Liberal feminism is a branch of feminist theory that emphasizes individual agency and autonomy, particularly highlighting women's capacity to assert and uphold their equality through their own decisions and actions. It advocates for the removal of constraints on women's opportunities and supports their freedom to express themselves through their choices without limitations (Miskiyah & Sofyan, 2023, p. 34).

From a feminist perspective, equality between men and women is paramount. As noted by Tong (2014, p. 11), women should have the same freedom to engage in societal activities as men. According to liberal feminists, discrimination against women is unjust, and they advocate for equal rights, educational access, and employment opportunities. For instance, a liberal feminist may support a woman's choice to become a dressmaker and own her own shop, as well as her pursuit of education tailored to her preferences and aspirations. Hence, liberal feminism seeks to expand opportunities for women, eliminate discrimination, and raise awareness about the unequal distribution of women's rights, acknowledging that progress in these areas has not fully addressed deeply ingrained social inequalities (Dankwa, 2018, p. 10).

The presence of patriarchy becomes the biggest threat to subordination especially in women subjugation issue throughout society. Patriarchy is not just about the structure and hierarchy in a society. Patriarchy have been incorporated into inequality rights and violence in a unit (Walby, 1990, p. 65). This event is very

interesting to analyse because our society is formed from a small unit, namely family and this is where the patriarchal culture formed and becomes the source of gender inequality which leads to women subjugation (Mardiyani & Tawami, 2022, p. 167). This problem is depicted in a literary works. A literary work is a structured written representation of human life that incorporates elements of beauty. These works are also employed as a tool for critiquing real-life phenomena. Therefore, literary work can help to support and shape ideology through conveying ideas by writing (Bertens, 2002, p. 22).

One form of literary work is a novel. A novel is a literary work that typically consists of an extended, fiction or nonfiction narrative in prose, portraying characters, and events (Aliyev, 2021, p. 25). In this study, the writer chooses the novel *The Spy* by Coelho (2016) as the source of data. This novel is first released in 2016 and has two times printed. Paulo Coelho is one of the best authors in Europe, almost all his literary works describe humanity and social. Coelho known as the best-selling authors of "*The Alchemist*" and "*Adultery*", he has received many awards including Crystal Awards (Goodreads, 2017).

The novel *The Spy* by Paulo Coelho depicts the story of Mata Hari's struggle to attain a dignified life and freedom back in the early 20th century. When at the age of 16, she was raped by the school principal, and it became one of the most disgusting experiences she had ever experienced. This seriously affected her life. To distract from society and escape her memories, she marries a Dutch officer, Rudolf. However, her marriage turned out to be the worst experience for her. She was dehumanized, raped, beaten, abused and objectified by her husband. He treated her like a whore. She realized that she could not escape and return home and that she would be forced to stay there for months alone. One day, she made a bold move. She decided to leave her husband and move to Paris, where she became a famous dancer thanks to her love of dancing. She wants to be herself and do whatever she wants. She sought out the wealthiest and most influential men of the time to fulfil her desires. Unfortunately, the men she dealt with trapped and manipulated her. She becomes a victim of the impending world war. She was sentenced to death after

being accused of being a German spy. Her life was full of suffering, pain, and oppression but she was strong, brave, courageous and an unusual woman of her time, sacrificing her life just to free herself from oppression and change societal perspectives.

The novel *The Spy* by Paulo Coelho is interesting to study because it is based on a true story of an enigmatic woman who has courage and pursuits to be an independent person that dared to defy convention and who paid the ultimate price. Set in the early 20th century, being a woman that deals with women subjugation treatment and inequality rights in a patriarchal society and suspected of being a spy because of her successful life. The phenomenon in the novel illustrates the concept of patriarchy system in society, showcasing the gender inequality, subordination, and violence in subjugation. Therefore, the writer chooses this novel to study the women subjugation issue through patriarchal society using liberal feminism perspective.

The following are previous studies which use the same source of data *The Spy* but with different focus of investigation. First, an article entitled *Mata Hari as a New Woman in Paul Coelho's Novel "The Spy": Magnifying Hari's Subjugation Through a Feminist Lens* by Aiman Naeem and Mehran Ali (Naeem & Ali, 2023). It was published in International Journal of Literature, Linguistics and Translation Studies (IJLLT) (2023). Second, an article entitled *Female Masculinity in The Novel "The Spy" by Paulo Coelho: a Review on The Main Character* by Dewi Rahayu, Ni Made Widisanti S., and Tetty Yukesti (Rahayu et al., 2019). It was published in Journal Albion: Journal of English Literature, Language, and Culture (2019). Third, an article entitled *Women's Oppression Reflected in Paulo Coelho's "The Spy" Novel (2016): a Feminist Perspective* by Dyan Nur Ayni a student from Muhammadiyah Surakarta University (Ayni, 2018). Fourth, an article entitled *The Struggle of Mata Hari Resisting Against Patriarchal System in Europe in Mata Hari Novel by Paulo Coelho* by Ismatul Ilahiyah and Maya Kurnia Dewi (Ilahiyah & Dewi, 2021). It was published in Undergraduate Conference on Language, Literature, and Culture (UNCLLE) (2021). Fifth, an article entitled *Woman Struggle*

in Paulo Coelho's "*The Spy*" by Eka Noviyanti, Amrin Saragih, and Muhammad Natsir (Noviyanti et al., 2020). It was published in *Linguistica* (2020).

There is a gap between the previous studies since there is no previous study that investigate about women subjugation by referring to liberal feminism lens. Liberal feminism is used to this study because it is focused on the equal treatment between women and men, and it is related to the phenomenon in the story to reveal how the main character reacts to the subjugation issues. Set in 20th century, the phenomenon on this story is related to the third wave of the liberal feminism movement that focus on woman's right and equality between men and women (Tong, 2014). This study focuses on the subjugation on women as the result of patriarchal society and the resistance of the main character as the liberal feminist movement to against the subjugation issues in the story. Thus, the novelty of this study is the writer focuses on examining the women subjugation issues by referring to patriarchy ideology and the resistance of Mata Hari against subjugation issues using liberal feminism perspective as reflected in the novel *The Spy*.

1.2 Research Questions

There are three questions in this thesis as limited discussion in Paulo Coelho's novel *The Spy*. The following of the questions are:

1. What women subjugation issues are experienced by Mata Hari?
2. How does Mata Hari show the resistance against women subjugation issues?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Based on the research questions above, the purposes of this study are formulated as below:

1. To discover the portrayal of women subjugation issues experienced by Mata Hari.
2. To discover the resistance against women subjugation issues shown by Mata Hari.

1.4 Significances of the Study

The results of this study are expected to have a positive impact both theoretically and practically. First, this study is theoretically 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 women subjugation that arises from a true story about a woman who is a poor and marginal experienced subjugation. 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 women subjugation through liberal feminism perspective. In addition, this study can raise awareness in the wider community about subjugation issue between gender. Furthermore, this research has the potential to foster a broader understanding in society that both men and women are entitled to equal rights in society.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The writer specifies that the scope of this study is applying the theory by Sylvia Walby "*Theorizing Patriarchy*" that discusses patriarchy to examine the portrayal of women subjugation. Furthermore, the writer uses the theory by Rosemary Tong "*Feminist Thought*" to analyse liberal feminism in the story experienced by the main character. The limitations of this study are the characters' utterances and the narration of the novel, which are related to patriarchy, subjugation, gender inequality, and liberal feminism.