

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the writer provides the background of the study, research question, objectives of the study, significance of the study, as well as the scope and limitation of the Study. The background of this research paper represents the information dealing with the importance of this topic to be discussed and the reasons why the writer has an interest in this topic. The research question section drives the writer focus on the study represented in the questions that are aimed to answer while the objective section explains the purposes of the research. The significance of this study is a statement that explains why this research is needed. Moreover, the scope and limitation states the research area that is explored and the limitations over this study as it enable the research to be more specific and focused.

1.1 Background of the Study

The definition of gender is different from sex since gender is a term that stands for something that is socially structured from a particular society (Tyson, 2006: 86) rather than something that relates to a biological aspect. As it is socially constructed, society tends to force women and men to act in accordance with the societal expectations that have been programmed for generations since they were born until they died as well as pressuring them to transmit it massively to the surrounding environment as well. The existence of differences in standardization regarding what are to be women and men creates quite a thick barrier that differentiates between women and men in various aspects of life. This situation is then defined by gender stereotypes.

Gender stereotypes lead women to be into the group that is most disadvantaged and oppressed. It occurs since a society that still upholds a patriarchal system places women in the most inferior position in the societal hierarchy and they cast women as emotional, weak, and submissive (Tyson, 2006 : 85). Moreover, all aspects of life seem to favour men as they are considered the rulers or controllers. As it is, society often ignores women in all aspects of life and

puts them in having limited options in living their own life. Apart from that, this also creates obstacles for women to participate in social, political and economic activities (Shastri, 2014). Furthermore, this placement immediately causes women to be considered inferior both morally, intelligently and physically compared to men (Eliyana et al, 2021). It is no wonder that women are placed to do chores rather than to work in a leadership position.

Stereotypes given to women also lead to discriminations that experienced by women as a whole. Relating to this, Ahmedshina (2020) argues that discrimination against women is a worldwide issue and become one of issues that have not yet been resolved. Moreover, this violence tends to be very complicated to resolve in an instant way since it is a very complex issue, especially since the stereotypes has been deeply embedded in patriarchal society for decades. It is evidenced due to many incidents which have been recorded that illustrate women's misery due to the gender gap. For example, women in the United States did not have the right to vote in elections until 1920 (Gidlow, 2020) and only had the opportunity to have equal social and economic rights in the 1960s and 1970s (Irshad & Sudha, 2022). Furthermore, in some countries women are even prohibited from carrying out activities outside the home such as driving or traveling without supervision from men (Rabaan & Dombrowski, 2021). It is no wonder that this issue still exists and continues up to these days.

Apart from that, women stereotypes are also captured in literature or literary work as it is a medium that reflects real world events as a statement presented by Welleck and Warren (1970: 89) in which they mentions that literature is a media of language which depicts social situations. In this case, literature reflects what conventions and norms that arise in society. This reflection based on human experience in literary works covers all aspects of life including culture, customs and social realities that exist from the time and place where the literary work is created and it is the reason why literary work and society are interwoven (Odinye & Anaelom, 2024). Nor is this exempted in the case of the depiction of marginalization felt by women, where this incident is also shown in literary works. Ahmad et al (2024) also mentions that as literary works consist of

units that describe all aspects of life, it also carefully explores the psychological impact of oppression experienced by victims.

One of the novelists who describe the stereotypes experienced by women in their works is Lucy Maud Montgomery. Montgomery illustrates this issue through her work entitled *Anne of Green Gables*. This novel is nominated as the best-selling book worldwide and has already been translated in 36 languages. Due to its enduring popularity, it is also included in the collection entitled 20 Classic Children Stories (2018) by Brother Grimm. *Anne of Green Gables* is a classic novel with nuance of time during the late 19th and early 20th centuries and narrates a story of the life and development of a protagonist character named Anne Shirley, an eleven-year-old orphan girl who has a cheerful, talkative and imaginative attitude. This novel begins with the desire of Marilla and Matthew Cuthbert, a sister and a brother who live on their ancestral farm, Green Gables, Avonlea, to raise an orphan boy. Unfortunately, one day when Matthew picked up the orphan, something went wrong and he found it was an orphan girl, Anne. At the beginning of the story, they were both hesitant to take care of Anne because she was a woman and society at that time said that taking an orphan girl instead of a boy would be very difficult and useless. However, even though Anne was mistakenly sent to them, after several considerations they finally decided to continue raising Anne.

The depiction of women stereotypes also experienced by other characters in this novel, such as a female character named Diana Barry who is represented as the ideal of being a woman in the society and her life is generally shaped by the societal expectations given to her particularly on settling into domestic role and Marilla Cuthbert who struggles with the traditional role as she handles all the domestic chores emotionlessly. Throughout this novel, issues related to stereotypes of women are often touched upon, quite a few challenges and obstacles are faced by Anne and other female characters in this novel when they are considered not meeting or deviating from the standard of being a woman according to the patriarchal system.

Beauvoir (2011, 403) states that women in a patriarchal society are considered as the Other. In this case, women are only seen as the subordinate and they do not have the same rights as men. Men can define themselves as individuals, while women do not in which women's definitions are defined by men as the centric of the society. Due to this situation, the standardization of being an ideal of women is also created by men.

The popularity and enrichment of this work as well as the urgency of the topic relating gender often make them a spotlight that attract researcher's attention and encourages them to conduct research. One of them is a research conducted by Elsa Nilenfors in 2024 with the title "Gender Performativity and Compulsory Heterosexuality in L.M. Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables*". This research demonstrates how Anne as the main character of this novel is open for multiple interpretations using gender and queer theory proposed by Martin (2022). The results show that the character of Anne can be seen as non-binary and queer. She breaks the norms by working in the farm and her relationship with Diana is one of the hints of her romantic feeling in relation with the queer aspect. In the story, Anne gets a lot of struggles with the societal expectations to be more feminine so she can meet the standard of being "proper girl" in her adoptive family and her environment. The other research is conducted by Elena Firozi in 2023 through her work entitled "An analytical essay on development towards conservative gender roles in the novel *Anne of Green Gables*". In her work, she demonstrates the didactic purpose of the novel using feminist approach proposed by McQuillan and Pfeiffer (2022). Moreover, the results of the study find that the main didactic purpose of Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables* is to steer the readers to the conservative gender roles that exist in the society namely to participate only in the duty related to domestic responsibilities. In this case, the researcher also argues that this novel can be one of the media which can be used in classroom in the context of giving awareness to the students related to gender norms.

Therefore, the writer tries to examine the women stereotypes and their responses using feminist theory: *The Second Sex* by Simone de Beauvoir (2011) to fill the gap of the research. *The Second Sex* (2011) is one of the most popular

works written by Beauvoir and become a ground-breaking work of feminist philosophy as well as an inspiration in the second wave feminism. This theory is applied by the writer since it enables the writes to explore regarding the topics chosen in this study.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the background of the study, the writer aims to answer the research question as follows:

1. How are women stereotypes represented in Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables*?
2. How do the female characters respond towards the stereotypes in Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables*?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Based on the statement in the research question, this research has two main objectives, namely:

1. This research aims to explore the women stereotypes represented in Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables*.
2. This research aims to reveal how the female characters respond towards the stereotypes represented in Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables*.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Male dominated society causes widespread stereotypes related to women and this does not only happen in the social aspect, but in all aspects of life. In this case, many women have limited opportunities and cannot even optimize their abilities simply because they are classified as the second sex in the social hierarchy. This not only places women at risk of verbal violence but also psychological violence. Thus, this research is expected to be able to create awareness relating to feminism, particularly on women stereotypes that exists in society. Moreover, the information contained in this study is expected to be able to add insight and become an inspiration for English Literature as well as Faculty

of Social and Cultural Sciences at Trunojoyo University and other academic fellows.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The scope of this study utilizes women stereotypes and responses in *Anne of Green Gables* by Montgomery as the source of data. In this case, feminist theory by Simone de Beauvoir (2011) is used. The feminist theory is used aiming to explore the stereotypes related to women and their responses which are reflected in the novel.

The limitations of this study is focused on the data in the form of author's narration and conversation among characters relating to women stereotypes and their responses in Montgomery' *Anne of Green Gables* found in the collection entitled *20 Classic Children Stories* (2018), as the main source of the data. The data collected then analyzed using the related theory which gives answer to the research questions of this study. Moreover, the explanations in this study only refer to the literary study, not the linguistic one since it uses the literary theory.