

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of the background of the study, Research Question, Objective of the study, Significance of The Study, and Scope and Limitation.

1.1 Background of The Study

Children's literature plays a vital role in children's learning by fostering their habits and aiding in their language and emotional development. Fairy tales, a prominent form of children's literature, serve as an important literacy medium. Through these stories, children can reflect on their Favorite characters, which helps in shaping their personalities and forming their identities, essential for socialization in real life. Early socialization involves learning about gender roles, such as appropriate ways to dress and behave. Literature serves as a key medium for understanding social roles and responsibilities, and it significantly influences a child's identity by shaping their perceptions of gender (Taylor, 2003, p.300).

In literature, women are often depicted as figures who have an important role in household affairs, such as cooking, taking care of children, and other things related to household activities. On the other hand, the roles defined by men are working, hunting, or other things. The existence of a patriarchal system makes hierarchy men maintain their dominant position through control mechanisms directed either to women or men who threaten that position (Mardiana & Ambar 2019, p.198). Such control includes various norms, namely social economic control and even power to ensure that the structure survives the benefits derived from the dominant group; cultural norms and values support the existence of patriarchal systems.

As with any system of privilege that elevates one group by oppressing another, control is an essential element of patriarchy. Men maintain their privilege by controlling both women and other men who might threaten it (Johnson, 2015, p.13). Currently, people's views about patriarchy still cannot be avoided, some may still be embedded in society, especially from the environment around where they

live and their parents who have instilled patriarchal values from an early age. Women are often the object of gender discrimination by patriarchy because women are considered to be in a lower position than men. Patriarchy shows male domination so that it subordinates the position of women (Bhatta, 2020, p.11).

Patriarchy refers to masculinity predominantly exposing man's overall dominance in all aspects of human activities to subjugate women. It consistently creates a mindset that marginalizes women socially, politically, psychologically, and culturally, thereby building an identity within men that disadvantages women (Johri, 2023, p. 3). Patriarchy and colonialism are interrelated systems of oppression that have historically worked together to marginalize certain groups, particularly women and colonized peoples. According to Spivak, a prominent figure in postcolonial studies, the legacy of colonialism has significantly impacted marginalized communities, especially in terms of gender, through language and cultural practices. This connection can be further explored by examining how the theories of patriarchy and colonialism intersect (Riach, 2017, p. 6). Patriarchy and colonialism make women silenced and marginalized and make a system where men hold power. According to Spivak women are silenced colonially and patriarchy, which is the system or role that makes men hold power (Riach, 2017, p.11).

In Spivak essay entitled *Can Subaltern Speak?* contains a discipline that combines philosophy and history with Marxist and feminist approaches, especially those that recognize the inequality of the two sexes, postcolonial studies are therefore very suitable because they include ideas and a number of disciplines that all have a critical interest in the cultural and social cultural of colonialism (Riach, 2017, p.21). Sexism is a manifestation of gender discrimination in a patriarchal culture, a conceptualization of sexism that enforces assumptions, beliefs, theories, stereotypes, and cultural narratives that emphasize gender. The existence of sexism encourages gender inequality because it is driven by a patriarchal perspective. According to Spivak, colonial oppression and patriarchy are inseparable. These two things become one with the power of law, economy, science, and other power systems colonial practices and patriarchal subaltern

women become victims of patriarchy and on the other hand submit to sexism to silence women's voices (Riach, 2017, p.44). In Spivak's opinion, patriarchy and colonialism work together to oppress women (Riach, 2017, p.44).

One of the literary works that discusses this issue is children's literature, specifically *Mulan's Secret Plan* by Tessa Roehl. This critique of postcolonialism is present in Disney's book, published by Gramedia Pustaka Utama on January 7, 2020, with 112 pages. In this story, Mulan, the main woman character, eagerly anticipates attending school. She imagines having classes like the boys, with subjects such as math, reading, writing, and self-care. However, instead of receiving the same education as the boys, she finds that her schooling is not what she expected. The school is different from a regular school; instead, it teaches household skills such as making cosmetics from rice, using them for dressing up, and cooking rice properly and economically. Women are taught to become good wives and secure good husbands in the future. The teachers are matchmakers who will pair their female students with future husbands. Additionally, the story narrates that when a girl is very skilled and receives the best grades, the matchmaker will pair her with an established man.

In Mulan's story, *Mulan Secret Plan* has a postcolonial image in the educational field, which is to make one of the groups, called Subaltern, into a marginalized group. Women are a marginalized group because they do not have access to education. In Mulan's story, *Mulan Secret Plan* has a postcolonial image in the educational field, which is to make one of the groups, called Subaltern, into a marginalized group. A group of people who are poor and marginalized so that they cannot access education (Riach, 2017, p.10). The problem is inequality which shows that women characters are treated differently from male characters and how she fights against stereotypes based on gender oppression are different learning subjects at school between boys and girls. Boys receive a more formal education than girls who only gain knowledge about the household to be matched with the best man. Here, two different genders receive different subjects because local culture gives privileges to men. The school differences in the story focus on Mulan

and her friends who get a home-based school because at that time China had a patriarchal culture that was very influential so it limited women's rights to get a higher and proper education. In the story, it is mentioned that the school where they study is very different from the school obtained by men where women's schools are based on households.

The literary criticism that will be used in this study is postcolonial in which there is patriarchy which creates gender stereotypes and assumes that one gender has advantages, this often happens to women. According to Pilcher women are very vulnerable to becoming victims of gender discrimination in social and patriarchal cultures. Patriarchal culture is a culture that focuses on feminist theory (Jane & Whelehan 2004, p.50). The patriarchal system in society is considered a norm that cannot be avoided or changed (Pierik, 2022, p75). Part of patriarchal power has exactly been in presenting itself as universal, natural, and inevitable. Patriarchal culture from the past until now still exists. One of them is other guidelines such as women having to do household work not only women must be assigned to take care of housework, but men can also do housework. Sharing equal rights roles between men and women in the household will create household harmony and improve welfare (Nasution, 2016, p.123).

In the story the patriarchal system applied in the society and the reflection of Chinese culture which is influenced by colonialism. The main character Hua Mulan and the woman character experience differences due to their gender when they access education in the school. The difference in terms of the material, the infrastructure, and the teachers of the school for women is faced by them. They are considered as women subalterns who have limitations in education due to the influence of Chinese culture. As women who are inferior to men, they do not have the opportunity to achieve higher education and they only learn about domestic responsibility in school. While men in the story get the education, such as writing, counting, and kung fu that leads them to increase their capacity to show their domination over women that makes Mulan in the story *Mulan's Secret Plan*, the women main character fights against colonialism. Anti-colonialism resistance is an

effort to free one's culture from colonial domination. This resistance can be carried out in various forms. In the story, Hua Mulan and the woman character fight cooperatively on the homeschool final exam, proving that girls can do what boys do by working together. Therefore, the woman character analyses in this study focus on the main character, namely Hua Mulan, and other woman characters in children's literature. This children's literature examines colonization or colonialism in Chinese culture, where this culture plays the role of patriarchal aspects which involve the limited rights of women to obtain education.

The story includes information about Chinese culture and insights into these traditions and values. The story has lessons and moral values that can be taken such as courage, filial obedience, and the importance of having a loyal comrade nature. The Mulan narrative in the story emphasizes Mulan's decision to defy gender norms. postcolonial perspective the story of *Mulan's Secret Plan* can be analysed through the point of view of postcolonial. So that the story can influence the perspective of young readers, and strengthen and explore the existence of these representations, shaping cultural and gender identities. Literary criticism of postcolonial analysis approaches through literary works related to the impact of colonialism, imperialism, and social and cultural oppression (Riach, 2017, p.22).

Ancient China implemented Confucian teachings and values in their daily lives. In China, when a boy is born, the family and parents are so happy with his birth. It is because the birth of a son can continue the parent's lineage like his family clan. In contrast to the birth of a girl, she is never welcomed or celebrated by her family. This makes the role of women less important because girls cannot inherit their family's name. Chinese culture makes the role of women must be required to give birth to boys. This of course goes beyond women's rights which makes them even more limited. Colonialism in aspects of Asian culture involves the limited rights of women to obtain an education. In this case, a person can be oppressed by colonialist ideology economically, politically, and socially without having to become a colonial subject, as long as he maintains the awareness that the colonialist ideology is unjust, this is felt by the main character, Hua Mulan and her friends as

the woman characters. She felt injustice while studying at a domestic school, this injustice made her learn by watching formal schools conducted by men. The existence of the colonized and colonists gave rise to the structure of hierarchy such as in colonialism, class system, and patriarchy (Riach, 2017, p.76).

In the children's literature entitled *Mulan Secret Plan* by Tessa Roehl (2020), Spivak's postcolonial theory that raises the colonial history of gender shows concern about the representation of subalterns from marginalized genders due to patriarchal ideology that makes women's rights and votes deprived. The author narrates the limitations of the education Mulan and other woman characters receive. Additionally, the story narrates that the woman character is limited in her right to speak in front of a matchmaker who teaches only for women students at the school. As from the story, Matchmaker restricts her students from talking. Subaltern people are in an inferior position in society because of class, caste, age, gender, and so on. The subalternity in *Mulan's Secret Plan* are based on differences in the education system in China, women as a subaltern group are marginalized because their right to higher education is not obtained. Colonialism on gender is affected by traditional systems such as patriarchy in the view of society which prioritizes the patriarchal system so that women are systematically not given the right or opportunity to participate in education. One of the subaltern groups is a group of women who are always discriminated against in their rights in terms of education, apart from that women are also limited in their rights to express opinions. According to Spivak subalterns are people excluded from social mobility who do not have access to education or other resources, to improve their position in society. This is because mobility and structure in society do not give subalterns the right to speak (Riach, 2017, p.38). The meaning of speaking is not to say something but to give them the opportunity to express their opinion. The position of subalterns that cause them to speak or voice their opinions becomes useless, it does not mean that subalterns cannot speak but that their position that is inferior in society causes them to be marginalized because they will not be heard (Riach, 2017, p.39).

In the study, there are five previous studies elaborated to figure out the novelty. The first previous study is an article from Ni Kadek Lolita Dewi, Ni Wayan Resen, and Wayan Sidhakarya (2021) entitled *Analysis of Liberal Feminism in the Novel Mulan's Secret Plan by Tessa Roehl*. The second is a thesis entitled *Subaltern Women in Novel Sing, Unburied, Sing* by Jessmen Ward written by Al-Hafizh Muhammad Dandi Saputra (2022) From Padang State University. The third is an article entitled *Subaltern Portrayed In Patrick Chamoiseau's Texaco* (2022) written by Ulfa Husna Khulida Maulana Malik Ibrahim Islamic University. The fourth previous study is entitled *Women's Struggle Against Islamophobia In The Novel Faith And The City By Hanum Salsabiela Rais: A Spivak's Postcolonial Analysis* written by Risma Nur Rahmawati from the University of Gadjah Mada. The last previous study is entitled *Double Colonization: A Postcolonial Feminist Study of Sia Figel's Where We Once Belonged* by Shene Mohammad Ahmed. The first previous study has the same source of data but a different theory from this study. The second, third, and fourth previous studies use the same theories about postcolonialism by Spivak. The fifth previous studies use the postcolonial feminism theory by Edward Said (1978). The Aim of this study is to find out the differences in the field of education for men and to describe the form of women's struggle for differences in the field of education in the story *Mulan Secret Plan* by Tessa Roehl

1.2 Research Questions

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

1. How do the woman characters' experience differences in the educational field elaborated in the *Mulan's Secret Plan* by Tessa Roehl?
2. How do the woman characters' struggle against the difference in the story?

1.3 Objectives of The Study

Based on the research question above, the objectives of the study are:

1. To elaborate on the difference in the educational field experienced by women characters' elaborated in the *Mulan's Secret Plan* by Tessa Roehl.
2. To describe the struggle performed by women characters' against the difference in the educational field in the story *Mulan's Secret Plan* by Tessa Roehl.

1.4 Significance of The Study

This analysis of the study is expected to provide practical benefits and theoretical benefits in postcolonial studies. The practical benefits of this study are expected to develop experience and understanding in the field of literature. In other words, it is hoped that it can be used further to add insight and knowledge to readers who appreciate literary works. For theoretical benefit, the writer hoped that this study could be seen as feasible so that it can enrich literary criticism, especially in the study of postcolonial.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of The Study

This study analyses the children's literature entitled *Mulan's Secret Plan* by Tessa Roehl (2020) using postcolonial theory. This study focuses on gender discrimination in terms of the difference in accessing education experienced by Mulan and the woman characters experience the difference as elaborated in the story. This study is limited to the author's narration and the utterances of the characters in the novel related to theory. This is related to the postcolonial theory of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1983).