

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Women's protests as a form of resistance to injustice for gender equality have been started for years. It happens in response to the different treatments experienced by the women. Women experienced different treatment in many sectors because of the existence of a patriarchal culture. Patriarchy is principally based on a paternalist view that assumes the existence of men is a phenomenon that determines the realization of a functionalist structure in the family in the social system. The paternalist concept is a symbolic significance in which men as the symbols of a leadership system based on the relationship between mothers and their children in forming a whole social life dynamic (Cornell, 2015, p.13). In this concept, women are considered secondary citizens, objects of men, and even slaves. According to Walby, patriarchy is a set of societal norms and systems in which men control, subjugate, and profit from women (Walby, 1990, p. 20). It means that in this system, men are having a major impact on women's position and treatment. Men are always superior, while women are always inferior. Women are also restricted from participating in certain fields or even not getting the same rights as men.

Patriarchy comes from the word patriarchate, which means a structure that places men as the sole, central, and all-encompassing rulers. This patriarchal system shows that there are gender inequalities and injustices that affect social life, economically, socially, politically, and marriage life. The patriarchal system constructs stereotypical categories for men and women, such as strong, intelligent, aggressive, and effective are traits inherent to men, while submissive, ignorant, virtuous, and ineffective are traits inherent to women. According to Walby, there are two forms of patriarchy: domestic patriarchy and public patriarchy (Walby, 1990, p. 20). Domestic patriarchy leads to household chores as a form of women's stereotype and nature, so the oppression of women often occurs. Meanwhile, public patriarchy leads to the structure of society which is intended as; household

patriarchal relations, patriarchal relations in work, relations in the nation and state, violence committed by men, relations in sexuality, and interrelated and dominating men over women.

In a society that still adheres to the patriarchal system, women are assumed to only be able to do women's work, which is usually done at home. They are also seen as the source of problems and are often associated with weakness and oppression. This perspective reinforces the idea that women are more emotional than men, who prioritize logic, making emotions a sign of weakness (Cornell, 2015, p. 13). The term "patriarchy" denotes a structure where men are the central and ruling figures, leading to gender inequalities and injustices across social, economic, political, and marital domains. This system constructs stereotypical categories, assigning traits like strength and intelligence to men while confining women to roles of submission and ignorance. According to Walby (1990), patriarchy manifests in domestic and public forms, with domestic patriarchy enforcing women's roles in household chores and public patriarchy extending into work, state, and social violence. Language plays a crucial role in this system by reflecting and reinforcing these gender norms, with gendered language contributing to the normalization of gender inequality. Semiotics, as described by Roland Barthes, helps us understand how patriarchal values are embedded in cultural symbols and texts. By examining language and semiotics, we can uncover how patriarchal ideologies are communicated and maintained through societal discourse, revealing the systemic nature of gender oppression.

Patriarchal culture is the cause of the various kinds of violence that occur to men and women. Because the label of privilege is owned by men, many of them feel they have the right to exploit women's bodies. An example of the effects of cultural patriarchy is in the realm of the household. Women are always required to be able to do various kinds of housework that are included in domestic work, from cleaning to providing food. If a woman is unable to meet these demands, then she can be ostracized by the people around her. However, in a patriarchal culture, men are not required to do household chores. Thus, when men do so, they tend to be praised as if they are doing something extraordinary. As for the realm of personal

life, women are constantly encouraged to pay attention to their appearance in detail. Starting from the skin, body shape, the right clothes, and others. Women also need to follow things that are agreed upon by society, such as women having to wear modest clothes, not being allowed to leave the house late at night, and so on. All of that is an excuse for protecting women. However, patriarchal societies overlook the more important issue of educating women. There are still many groups who believe that higher education is only enough for men and not for women. Because it is enough for women to stay at home, do domestic work, and look good (Mshweshwe, 2020, p.3).

The real problem that exists in society is that women bear negative representations that are not only directed at certain people but also the whole population of women. They are considered incapable of working, emotional, weak, and even considered as satisfiers in a relationship. This means that men are considered active, civilized, rational, and intelligent, while women are the passive, and less intelligent ones. Women are generally portrayed as meek, polite, well-mannered, running household affairs, and as someone who is physically weak but mentally strong. In addition, women are almost always identified with household chores. This is a stereotype experienced by women in society in general (Azis & Sunra, 2022, p.75).

From the previous explanation, patriarchal culture highly contributes to how society constructs the representation of men and women. The contestation of the representation of men and women can be seen from the construction of men and women in Media. It goes the same with the representation of women in literary work, women are often used as objects of study in literary works. Seeing the nature of women who tend to be unique and considered interesting, most authors choose a female point of view in representing their work. Where each event in each chapter is a composition of what the author thinks, experiences, feels, hopes, and tries to change the situation. Thus, the events that the author tries to realize are an expression of approval or an expression of rejection of the circumstances that occur around her. The emergence of these events cannot be separated from the author's

self and soul in building the story. Because literary works that are born in society are the result of the author's imagination and reflection on the social symptoms around her. Representation not only reflects reality but is also a scenario played by a culture organized by ways of representing things, patterns, and existing power. When associated with literary works, the representation of women is the depiction of things or phenomena that occur in society with the author as the creator of literary works. Society and culture in general are realities, while literary works are often referred to as imagination. Authors have their way of conveying ideas and criticizing the social conditions that occur (Fatmasari, 2023, p.5).

Up until now in literary works, the occurrence of male hegemony over women is understood as a difficult matter. This is in line with the opinion that in almost all literary works, whether produced by male or female authors, male dominance is always stronger. Women are always the second sex, second-class citizens, and subordinated (Moore, 2022, p.4).

Based on the phenomenon that occurs above, many authors express their ideas through their works. According to research results, literary works are a medium for authors to communicate and convey their ideas. Literary works can also influence the mindset of readers. As Arizah says in her article, "Through literature, the mindset of a person or group of people can be influenced, because literature is culture, while one of the elements of culture is value." (Arizah, 2020, p.509). Many female authors try to change this perception, changing how women are represented in their works. One author who actively writes about feminism is Charlotte Perkins Gilman. She is an author who actively writes literary works such as short stories, poems, and books. Most of her works talk about gender between men and women and the gender inequality that still occurs in society.

In the short story "The Yellow Wallpaper," Gilman shares her personal experience during a period of psychosis after giving birth to her child. Even though her husband is a doctor who provides treatment, he does not cure her illness but instead exacerbates it to depression caused by the many restraints he imposes on her health. So, she becomes obsessed with the disgusting yellow wallpaper in her room. This story is first published in the New England Magazine in January 1892.

Besides "The Yellow Wallpaper," there are six other works by Gilman that also depict gender inequality and male dominance. "Three Thanksgivings" (November 1909), "The Cottagette" (August 1910), "Turned" (September 1911), "Making a Change" (December 1911), "If I Were a Man" (July 1914), and "Mr. Peeble's Heart" (September 1914) all criticize the social norms of the time and highlight the psychological and social impacts of male dominance and gender inequality (Gilman, 1977).

The related issues of gender problems of women in Gilman's popular short stories have been discussed in several thesis and journal articles with different topics. Previous studies that discuss the same issues using the source of data from these short stories which focus on gender issues have six thesis and journal articles, the thesis that discusses symbols have four thesis, the thesis that discusses oppression has seven thesis, the thesis that raises the issue of ideology have four theses, the thesis that raises the issue of patriarchy have six thesis, and the thesis that focuses on psychology has five thesis. To find out more clearly about this previous study, it will be explained in chapter two.

Based on the previous studies above, it can be concluded that there are gaps that can be addressed in new research. First, none of the studies use all seven short stories in "The Yellow Wallpaper and Other Stories" by Charlotte Perkins Gilman. Second, all research clusters show that no study focuses on how Gilman portrays male characters in the stories. The third difference is the theory used in the research. So far, the research conducted on this literary work has focused more on how women are depicted and how women struggle.

This study addresses these gaps by discussing the topic of men's representation. Since Gilman is known as a feminist author, this study aims to examine how men are portrayed from a feminist point of view. The research delves deeply into how the author represents male characters in each short story. Few other studies have analyzed the representation of male characters in Gilman's work, making this analysis significant. The portrayal of men in these short stories reveals how a female author represents male characters.

The focus of this study is on male representation, applying different theories as tools of analysis. Stuart Hall's Representation approach underpins this study. The main definition of representation is the use of language to convey something meaningful to others (Hall, 1997, p.13). This theory is used to analyze how the image of men is represented in the short stories. According to Hall (2003) in his book "Representation," there are three types of representation: intentional representation, constructionist representation, and reflective representation. Intentional representation is how someone talks about something to convey their personal intentions. Constructionist representation is how ideas are built 'in' and 'through' language. Reflective representation is how someone conveys an idea that reflects a concept (Hall, 1997, p.15).

The writer uses the constructionist approach, which focuses on how language is used to build meaning. In this constructionist approach, there are two main methods: the semiotic approach and the discursive approach. This study uses the semiotic approach to explain how signs and meanings are formed through language (Hall, 1997, p.25).

Hall's approach explains how symbols and meanings emerge, so this theory is suitable for analyzing this topic. The semiotic approach focuses on the study of signs and symbols and how they are used to create meaning. In the context of representation, semiotics explores how meaning is built through systems of signs, whether in written or visual form. Roland Barthes, a key figure in semiotics, says that a sign consists of the signifier (the physical form of the sign, such as words or images) and the signified (the concept or meaning associated with the signifier) (Barthes, 1977, p. 32-45).

In literary analysis, the semiotic approach helps researchers understand how texts use signs and symbols to build specific meanings. This includes analyzing how characters, objects, and settings in stories are represented and how they contribute to the overall meaning of the story. Using this approach, researchers can better understand how authors like Charlotte Perkins Gilman use language and symbolism to convey feminist messages and social criticism against male dominance and gender inequality.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the background of the study above, the focuses of this study are translated into the following questions:

1. How are men represented in the short stories entitled *The Yellow Wallpaper and Other Stories*?
2. Why do such representations occur in the short story entitled *The Yellow Wallpaper and Other Stories*?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

1. To find the representation of men in the short story *The Yellow Wallpaper and Other Stories*.
2. To elaborate the reason why the representation of men in the short story *The Yellow Wallpaper and Other Stories* can occur.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The writer expects this study to give some benefits theoretically and practically.

1. Theoretically, this study is expected to enrich knowledge about male representation in literary works, using Stuart Hall's representation approach and semiotics theory by Roland Barthes.
2. Practically, it is hoped that this study can help the readers to understand more about the use of the representation and semiotics theory. This study can provide a reference contribution for practical further study regarding the use of representation in media and literary works. The results of this study can be used by the general public, researchers, and academics as a reference for further research related to gender studies issues, especially the representation of male images according to female writers.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study focuses on analyzing the representation of male characters in the collection of short stories titled *The Yellow Wallpaper and Other Stories* by Charlotte Perkins Gilman. The analysis uses Stuart Hall's representation approach and Roland Barthes' semiotic theory to examine how Gilman portrays male

characters in these stories. The study includes all seven short stories in the collection as sources of data. The study is limited to the portrayal of male characters specifically within the context of *The Yellow Wallpaper and Other Stories*. It does not cover Gilman's other works or consider the broader context of her entire body of work.