

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Discrimination against women is a topic that has always been a hot topic of conversation from time to time. The discussion included minimal guarantees of women's equal rights. One happened in America in the 18th century, where protection and guarantees for women's rights were still fragile in the eyes of law and society. Even from a religious perspective, women's duties, rights and obligations have been indirectly limited and determined from the moment women are born. This limitation can occur because they believe that women are born as vulnerable creatures equipped with a womb and also a soft nature. These limitations are in the form of women's duties and functions which are limited to being housewives and serving as men's servants (Welter, 1966).

Americans believe that regardless of fame, achievement, or wealth, a true woman will be judged on a pillar called the four cardinal virtues. The four pillars include piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity. Even when anyone, family, or even society, male or female, try to tamper with the complex of virtues that aim to improve, they will be an enemy of God, civilization, and the republic (Welter, 1966). In short, no matter how great women are in terms of career, education or economics, they are still considered as creatures who only focus on domestic duties and rights.

It was also supported by the Christian figure Saint Paul. St. Paul believed in the idea from Jewish tradition that women should not stand out too much and should

restrain themselves. It is based on the Old and New Testaments, which say, "Man is not part of woman, but woman is part of man" and "man was not created for woman, but woman for man". That idea makes men think he is superior and far above women. Even others, such as Saint Thomas, agree that man is the head of woman, just as Christ is the head of man, fueling the stigma in society that women are destined to live under male authority and have no authority over themselves (Beauvoir, 2009).

This restriction on movement refers to a system known as the patriarchal system. System Patriarchy is oppression by a predominantly male culture in political, social, and economic life. It can happen because of the expectations between men and women in society, where men are described as masculine, assertive, have strong personalities and prioritize logic. It is in contrast to women who are feminine, gentle, obedient, sensitive, and prioritize feelings. It can create a stigma that becomes the belief that women are born to be homemakers who only dwell on the realm of family, such as cooking and caring for husbands and children (Dewi & Medina, 2020). These restrictions exclude women from public activities requiring intellectual, authority, and physical strength. That reinforces the idea that women have a position below men and must depend on men (Salvianny & Nurcahyani, 2020).

Apart from the exclusion of activities against women, it is also based on the patriarchal stigma, which considers that women are biological objects intended to marry and continue offspring (Sutrisno et al., 2023). Even since long ago, women were seen and interpreted as biological beings or biological objects only, such as

the view that women are womb, an ovary, or female where 'female' does not describe that they are women but sex or biological objects whose duty is to continue male offspring (Beauvoir, 2009). As evil as it may sound, in fact, in the 18th century, almost all American women believed that marital status was more important than work and education. Because they believe that marriage is one of the tools to improve the social class status of the woman and her family (Peterson, 1990).

Although marriage is considered to improve social class status, it does not improve the economic status of women themselves. It is because society believes that after marriage, the man has full rights and power over the household. At the same time, women and children are only tasked with granting orders and even performing services without pay. The tradition will continue for their children, where parents will bequeath all their wealth to their sons, usually in the form of farmland or family business (Ruggles, 2015).

These traditions and systems eventually lead women into prolonged poverty or what is called the feminization of poverty. Feminization of poverty is a condition where women have a higher and more severe poverty rate than men. In fact, in the history of the American economy, it is stated that women are one of the leading figures who participate in the country's economic development as workers and consumers (*Developing the American Economy*, n.d.). However, over time, the poverty and unemployment rate of women in America has increased. In addition to the patriarchal traditions held by most families in America, the condition is also based on two leading causes. According to some experts, the main causes of the

condition are (1) women continuing to bear significant responsibilities related to domestic services and child rearing and (2) women facing limitations on labour market opportunities (Peterson, 1990).

The conditions of poverty experienced by women are also reinforced in the book *The Second Sex* by Simone de Beauvoir. Simone explained that at that time, poverty among women did not only refer to the economic sector but also to other areas, including education. Simone explained that poverty in the economic and educational sectors is what increasingly makes women's conditions far below those of men (Beauvoir, 2009). This distant condition refers to differences in social class status which can lead in the assumption that women can be used as objects of exchange or property that can be freely used by men in household matters.

Although women should marry and take care of the household, few women continue working even though they are not equal to men. This inequality is conceptualized through the "dual labour market" theory. According to the theory, employment and industry are divided into primary and secondary sectors, where high salaries and benefits, job security, high trade unions, and conducive working conditions characterize the primary sector. In contrast, the secondary sector has low wages, is freelance primarily, and has no unions. In the 18th century, secondary sector jobs constituted most women's jobs because they were considered less strenuous and kept men's existence above women's (Peterson, 1990).

The number of cases and issues of women's oppression is what finally grabs the public's attention, one of which is many literary works that contain feminism-themed stories. One of the literary works with feminist themes that was very popular

in the 1860s was *Little Women*. *Little Women* is a novel by Louisa May Alcott. In this book, Louisa May Alcott also describes the life and conditions of American society at that time. This work eventually became an object of research for several researchers.

As in a 2019 study that used *Little Women* movie as the research object, this study focuses more on analyzing women's image using women's image theory. This study also discusses how women can break the stigma of patriarchy by becoming independent, like Jo March, the main character in *Little Women* (Simanungkalit et al., 2019). In addition, in 2020, *Little Women* was a research study projection. This study discusses various types of feminism that are reflected in *Little Women*. This study also states that feminist problems in the 19th century still have relevance to the modern era today, one of which is the main character, Jo March (Dewi & Medina, 2020).

Not only that, this literary work of *Little Women* was even made into a film by a well-known producer, Greta Gerwig. Greta Gerwig is one of the best actors and writers in America. Even through one of her works, *Lady Bird* (2017), she managed to enter and become the fifth woman nominated for an Oscar in the directing category in 2018. Greta is also famous as a producer who likes to insert feminism in every work she releases, one of which is stated in the *Little Women* movie, which aired in 2019. Although there are many opinions that when literary works or novels are made into a movie, there will be many plots cut because of duration, Greta Gerwig managed to break the stigma.

This is evidenced by Greta Gerwig's many awards in the movie, such as winning 78 awards and being included in 230 nominations at world film award events. One of them was the New York Critic Films Award in 2019. It even received an award in Indonesia at the Bandung Film Festival in the category of commendable imported films in 2020. In addition, Greta Gerwig is an actress and producer famous for her feminist works that can enter all levels of society (*Little Women 2019-Awards*, n.d.). The series of awards underlies researchers to choose the *Little Women* (2019) movie as the object of research in this study. In this study, researchers will also analyze patriarchal problems and economic regulations that encouraged the feminization of poverty at that time through *Little Women* (2019).

In analyzing the movie *Little Women* (2019), researchers use the concept of patriarchy from the book *The Second Sex* by Simone de Beauvoir (1949). Simone explains that patriarchy can arise from male biological privilege. Where women are defined as biological beings, such as the view that women are wombs, an ovary or even tools to continue male offspring only, this opinion is strengthened by Frazer's quote, which states that "it is the man who decides where the place for the woman is". According to Simone, these things make men feel superior to women (*De Beauvoir and The Origins of Patriarchy*, 2021). This assumption means that women receive many exceptions from social activities, even in the educational and economic realms. For example, women cannot be more educated than men, and women cannot have a higher job rank. This makes it difficult for women to get a decent life because when women do not have a good educational status and a good job, it will also be difficult for them to get a good economic life.

In the book *The Second Sex*, Simone also explains the impact of excluding women from various fields, causing many women to live in poverty. Simone also defines poverty as a condition where women cannot prosper and live within limitations such as limited work and educational opportunities. Poverty can occur due to threats in society such as unequal wages, opportunities and the burden of unpaid care responsibilities. Apart from that, poverty for women can also occur because there are few opportunities and opportunities for women to develop and realize their dreams, as well as the shadow of men who always bind women in various activities (Beauvoir, 2009).

In addition, in this study, the researcher also used Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) by Norman Fairclough (1996) to analyze *Little Women* (2019) movie as seen from language in the form of social relations and power structures. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a combination of knowledge from linguistics, sociology, and critical theory that examines the meaning of how human language can reflect or even reproduce social and ideological perceptions in societies as old as society. Fairclough also looks at language not only from the text or sentences but also from the background or who is speaking. Apart from that, Fairclough also looked at the ideological factors that were developing in society at the time the sentence was uttered (Fairclough, 1996). Therefore, researcher use this theory to analyze how each character reacted to the patriarchal system at that time through their language.

Therefore, with these theories, researchers aim to analyze What is the impact of the patriarchy towards feminization of poverty. Besides that, researchers will also

discuss How responses of female lead characters towards patriarchal system in *Little Women* (2019) movie. This research is expected to increase readers' insight into how the impact of the patriarchy towards women and feminization of poverty. This is in line with current conditions where there are still many women and even widows who live in poverty due to injustice regarding their property rights and assets when they separate (Ruggles, 2015).

B. Problem Formulation

In this study, researcher will have discussed about two important issues, namely:

1. What is the impact of the patriarchy towards feminization of poverty in *Little Women* (2019) movie?
2. How responses of female lead characters towards feminization of poverty in *Little Women* (2019) movie?

C. Objectives of the Study

The Objectives of this study are:

1. To analyze the impact of the patriarchy towards feminization of poverty in *Little Women* (2019) movie.
2. To analyze the responses of female lead characters towards feminization of poverty in *Little Women* (2019) movie.

D. Review of Related Studies

Based on the background and problem formulation above, researchers are looking for several scientific papers that are relevant or equally discuss patriarchy, feminization of poverty, and economics as well as papers that discuss the movie *Little Women* (2019) movie. In order to be still relevant to this research, researchers will also have scientific papers based on the year of publication, which is the last ten years.

Research in 2021 under the title Family and Patriarchy in Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* (1868) and Assia Djebar's *Nulle parts dans la maison de mon pere* (2007) written by Hakimi Ourdia and Kaid Kalida discussed about feminism seen from the actor and writer. This study also discusses patriarchy in the family through the synopsis of the two novels. The author looks through the theory developed by Simone de Beauvoir in the book *The Second Sex*. Researchers also concluded that patriarchy ultimately focused on male power or situations where men were superior in society. The purpose of this study is to show how the experience of patriarchal oppression plays a role in shaping the character of women's emancipation and liberation.

Then research in 2023 entitled an Analysis of How Women's Struggle Portrayed from The Main Character in the Movie "*Little Women* (2019)" written by Bejo Sutrisno, Nadya Putri Nurhasanah, and Budi Rachmawati discussed about Jo's struggle as a main character in the *Little Women* (2019) movie towards several problems. This research uses qualitative method by employing the content analysis method. Researchers classify these struggles in two ways, namely the problem of

the main character in dealing with gender stereotypes and problems in achieving his goals. One of the relevant things is how researchers reveal Jo March as a main character facing problems related to marriage standards for women. According to researchers, Jo has different traits and attitudes from her three siblings where she is reluctant to marry. In this study, researchers classified this into women's struggles because of stereotypes that marriage is an obligation and one of the duties of being a woman.

Also research in 2022 entitled *Representasi Pergolakan Batin Perempuan Dalam Film Little Women (Sara Mills Critical Discourse Analysis)* written by Ignasius Liliek Senaharjana, Sigit Surahman, and Shella Fendista discussed about discrimination and stereotypes experienced by women, as the cause of women's inner turmoil in the film *Little Women*. In this research, researchers used liberal feminist theory and critical discourse analysis by Sara Mills to analyze films based on subject, object and audience. This research also explains the position of women who are included in marginalized groups in society who are experiencing inner turmoil between following their desires or following society's rules. Even though there are similarities in the research subject and theory, in this study the researcher places more emphasis on the feminization of poverty or the injustice and stigma that exists in society which affects every figure in the society *Little Women* (2019) movie.

Apart from that, another research entitled *Analysis of Women in the Novel Little Women by "Louisa May Alcott"* by Afriani Rismauli Simanungkalit and Emil Eka Putra in 2019 discussed the depiction of women in the novel *Little Women*. In

this research the author raises problems in women's lives such as societal stigma against marriage, work and education. Researchers use a feminist approach through Showalter's theory. Apart from that, the researcher also analyzed feminism through the socio-political problems in the novel. And also in this research, the researcher used the main character as the object of discussion.

Even though the four studies above have similar discussions or even theories, in this research, the researcher will focus more on the impact of patriarchy concept towards feminization of poverty, as shown in the *Little Women* (2019) movie. Apart from that, the researcher will also discuss the reactions of each character in the film to the patriarchal system which is reviewed using the theory of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) by Norman Fairclough.

E. Research Methodology

In supporting the success of a research, some stages must be carried out as the initial framework for a research process. One of these stages is choosing a research method appropriate to the chosen research topic. Choosing a research method must be based on three main aspects: rational, empirical, and systematic. It means that determining the method must be reasonable or under human reason; during work and learning, all processes can be seen, felt, or observed by the human sense, and the steps in research must be logical or go through a structured process (Sugiyono, 2015).

In this research, researcher used narrative technique skills, therefore the methodology is qualitative methods. Qualitative methods are used to analyze or

research natural objects that are objects as they are and are not manipulated by the researcher's presence. In qualitative methods, data analysis is inductive or in the form of facts found in the field until they are constructed into hypotheses or theories (Sugiyono, 2015).

1. Data and Source Data

Data are crucial things which are needed in this study to get the information that will be used in the analysis process. In this research, researcher use two data, such as primary data and secondary data.

a. Primary Data

Primary data is the leading data obtained through mental evidence research movie *Little Women* (2019) movie. The data attached in the form of scenes, dialogues, and body language in accordance with the objectives of the study, in this study are the analysis patriarchy concept towards feminization of poverty and how responses of each main character towards patriarchal system in *Little Women* (2019) movie.

b. Secondary Data

Secondary data are the supporting data that functioned to support the primary data. In this study, researcher use scientific papers in the form of research, journals, and scientific articles, as well as official government websites that correlate with this research and published within the last ten years.

2. Method and Technique of Collecting Data

In this study, the researcher uses different techniques between primary and secondary data. For the primary data which is in this study researcher use *Little Women* (2019) movie, first watch the movie and then understand the content also topic of the story. After that, researcher will be sorting out the scene into the different topic, the sorted scene attached with the analysis discussion and detailed minutes.

After that, the researcher will process the results of collecting data by grouping them into two parts based on the theory of feminization of poverty and the theory of Critical Discourse Analysis, also use secondary data in the form of journal or other sources. After that the researcher will analyze the data collection and proceed to the next technique, namely the technique of analyzing data.

3. Method and Technique of Analyzing Data

Data analysis is a systematic and structured process for searching and compiling data from research materials. Data analysis aims to organize the data, then explain it into several parts, synthesize it, arrange it into patterns, sort out the essential parts, and then draw conclusions (Sugiyono, 2015).

In this research, researchers will analyze primary data, namely the *Little Women* (2019) movie, using two main theories as a reference. Researchers will analyze the scenes contain patterns or are included in the theory of feminization of poverty shown by the characters in the film. In this research, researcher using the theory of feminization of poverty, and will elaborate data based on the

theory of critical discourse analysis which includes dialogues in *Little Women* (2019) movie to achieve deeper analysis for the result.

This research used a qualitative method; therefore, researchers will use scientific papers such as research, journals, and articles relevant to the topic to analyze primary data and will be arranged in a distinctive and descriptive narrative form. Therefore, in the final stage to interpret the data obtained, the researcher will use scientific papers, journals, and articles related to theory to become the basis for the final results of data analysis in this research.

F. Presentation

This research is divided into four chapters. Chapter one is introduction which includes background of the study, problem formulation, objectives of the study, scope of the study, review of related studies, research methodology, theoretical approach, research plan, and presentation. Chapter two consist of several sub-chapters, such as the theoretical approach which consist of a sociological and law political approach. And then there is theoretical framework which is filled by women and patriarchy according to Simone de Beauvoir and feminization of poverty. Chapter three is analysis of the research questions, and the last chapter is the conclusion and recommendation.