

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

Gender inequality has been a major problem in many societies around the world for a long time (Kumar, 2024). In most places, women have not had the same rights, opportunities, or freedoms as men. For example, women have often been expected to stay at home and take care of the household and children, while men were allowed to work outside the home, earn money, and make important decisions that affected the family and society (Chaudhary & Pokhrel, 2024; Sudkämper et al., 2020). This difference in treatment has greatly impacted women's access to education, career opportunities, and even their ability to participate in politics and social life (Ezekwe, 2019; Rosa & Clavero, 2022). According to Ugwu (2021), these gender roles have been passed down from generation to generation and continue to affect how women are treated today. Despite progress in some areas, these traditional beliefs still influence many aspects of life, such as work, family roles, and politics.

According to Gamble (2006) and Tong & Botts (2018), As a response to gender inequality, feminism has emerged as a vital movement aimed at changing how women are treated and ensuring that they have equal rights, opportunities, and freedoms as men. Feminists argue that women should not be confined to traditional roles or subjected to unfair expectations simply because of their gender. Instead, they should have the freedom to make their own choices in life, whether in terms of career, relationships, or personal goals. In line with them, some researchers for instance Hazarika & Sarma (2020), Vivaldi & Sepúlveda (2021), and Silalahi

(2024) also support the argument that feminism seeks to challenge the systems and social norms that have historically placed limits on women's abilities to fully participate in society. By advocating for equal rights, feminism works to break down the barriers that prevent women from achieving their potential and to create a world where women are seen as equal to men in all aspects of life.

As Tong & Botts (2018) notes, over time, feminism has grown into different types or branches, each with its own approach to solving the problem of gender inequality, and one of them is radical-libertarian feminism. Radical-libertarian feminists believe that women cannot be truly free as long as there are systems of patriarchy over them, whether that comes from men or the government. They argue that to be truly equal, women need to be free from all forms of control that limit their choices and independence. This type of feminism pushes for a society where individuals have complete freedom to make their own decisions without being restricted by gender norms or state control. By focusing on individual freedom, radical-libertarian feminism offers a unique way of thinking about how gender equality can be achieved (Tong & Botts, 2018; Vukoičić, 2017).

To explore and understand feminist ideas, including those of radical-libertarian feminism, it is valuable to start at an early age through literature, especially children's literature (Langford, 2022; Rakhmawati et al., 2022). According to Politis (2022), all of the literature generally reflects the values and beliefs of its time, often show what people in that time believed and how they viewed the world. Thus, through children's literature, such as novels or plays, offers a unique opportunity to discuss how gender roles and freedom are represented in different cultures and societies to children. We can see how the narrative or characters represent feminism

idea. Children's literature is a crucial role in shaping young minds by encouraging critical thinking about gender, equality, and feminism idea, allowing them to question systems that limit women (Montz, 2020).

One of the famous children's literature that can be studied through this feminist lens is *The Chronicles of Narnia* series by C.S. Lewis. These books are widely read and studied, and they have been discussed in many ways such as moral value (Bastian et al., 2021; Fidinillah, 2024; Muliani, 2023; Suarniti, 2019; Tyagi & Bhatnagar, 2023) and characterization analysis (Putri et al., 2021; Charima, 2020; F. R. Dewi & Nurpitasari, 2021; Suwastini et al., 2020; Yanti, 2021). Several previous studies also have explored *The Chronicles of Narnia* from a feminist perspective, mostly focused on the representation of feminist ideologies through the series' heroines or main female protagonists. Tyas & Mustofa (2019) and Lou (2024) examined all seven books and found that female characters were usually given smaller, more passive roles, while male characters were shown as strong and brave leaders. Characters like Lucy and Susan were often portrayed as helpers rather than heroes in the war, and Susan's exclusion from "New Narnia" was seen as a punishment for showing interest in beauty and adult life. Lou (2024) also found that girls in the story were expected to be caring and stay safe, while boys were given weapons and more freedom. Even villain roles like witches were mostly female and negatively described. Other studies, such as by Andani and Hapsarani (2020), Schilling (2017), and Sandhiya & Banulakshmi (2019), focused more deeply on Susan Pevensie. These researchers analyzed how her character was represented and how feminist ideas appeared in her story, using a liberal feminist lens. Although the film adaptation gave Susan more active scenes, she was still

limited by male authority and gender expectations. Schilling (2017) argued that Susan's exclusion from Aslan's country was linked to her interest in appearance and social life, which reflected traditional views about femininity. Sandhiya and Banulakshmi (2019) also showed that Susan acted like a mother figure and struggled between societal expectations and personal freedom, concluding that feminine traits were undervalued in the story. Overall, previous research mainly focused on the heroines and mostly used liberal feminist views to show how female characters were either empowered or restricted, leaving space for further analysis of other female figures in the series.

However, while many previous studies have examined the feminist aspects of *The Chronicles of Narnia*, they mostly focused on the main female protagonists, particularly Susan Pevensie, and often used a liberal feminist perspective. These studies explored how heroines were empowered or restricted in the story, but paid little attention to other significant female figures, especially the antagonists. One character who has received very limited attention is the Lady of the Green Kirtle, the main female antagonist in *The Silver Chair* (1953), the sixth book in the series. As a powerful and manipulative character, she presents a complex image of femininity that contrasts with the more traditional portrayals seen in the earlier books.

This study aims to fill that gap by analyzing the Lady of the Green Kirtle through the lens of radical-libertarian feminism by Tong & Botts (2018). By doing so, the present research aims to analyze and examine how radical-libertarian feminism is portrayed in the characters of Lady of the Green Kirtle as the main antagonist. Preliminary research shows that the Lady of the Green Kirtle has

strategic, insidious, dominant, dangerous, beautiful, and temperamental characteristics, which make her an interesting subject for radical-libertarian feminist analysis. Through this approach, the study hopes to offer a new perspective on gender representation in *The Chronicles of Narnia* and contribute to a deeper understanding of feminist discourse in literary analysis.

## 1.2 Problem Identification

One social issue that is often debated is gender inequality, and within this issue, feminism plays a crucial role in supporting equality and women's rights. However, in many societies, there is still a lack of understanding about feminism and gender equality. As a result, the need to educate society, particularly younger generations, about feminism and gender equality becomes essential in breaking these systems. One way to address this issue is by using literature as a tool for education. Novels can serve as a way to teach about gender equality and how feminism are represented in the narrative. A suitable example is *The Silver Chair* by C.S. Lewis, a novel that not only focused on adventure and morality, but also features complex female characters like the Lady of the Green Kirtle. This antagonist character presents an opportunity to analyze how feminist themes, particularly those related to radical-libertarian feminism, are portrayed in literature. By examining this character's representation through a feminist lens, the study aims to offer insights into how literature can be used to reflect real life gender inequality.

## 1.3 Problem Limitation

Based on the problem identification above, previous research related to *The Chronicles of Narnia* by C.S. Lewis has largely concentrated on examining main female characters and how they relate to more conventional feminist views,

particularly liberal feminism. These studies often explore the character development and portrayal of heroines or protagonists through traits that align with conventional feminist thought. However, such research tends to overlook female antagonists, particularly in the sixth novel *The Silver Chair*, and its potential to reflect more radical feminist values. This study addresses that gap by focusing on the Lady of the Green Kirtle, the antagonist in *The Silver Chair*, and analyzing how her traits align with radical-libertarian feminism. By shifting the focus from heroine to villain, this research seeks to offer a deeper feminist reading of how power, gender, and identity are represented in children's fantasy literature.

#### 1.4 Research Question

Based on the scope of the problem limitation above, the following research questions are decided such as:

1. What are the characters of the Lady of the Green Kirtle in C.S. Lewis' *The Silver Chair*?
2. What radical-libertarian feminist traits are reflected in the character of the Lady of the Green Kirtle in C.S. Lewis' *The Silver Chair*?

#### 1.5 Research Purposes

Based on the research questions above, the purpose of the research are as the following:

1. To describe the characters of the Lady of the Green Kirtle in C.S. Lewis' *The Silver Chair*.
2. To interpret radical-libertarian feminism ideologies that represented in the character of the Lady of the Green Kirtle in C.S. Lewis' *The Silver Chair*.

## **1.6 Definition of Key Terms**

This subchapter provides the brief information of every part of the conceptual definition.

### **1.6.1 Feminism**

According to Tong & Botts (2018: 90), feminism is a movement to end sexism, sexual exploitation, and oppression of women. feminism isn't about being against men. Rather, it's about helping both men and women challenge and overcome the sexist beliefs they have been exposed to since childhood.

### **1.6.2 Radical-libertarian Feminism**

According to Tong & Botts (2018: 37), Radical-libertarian feminism is a branch of radical feminism that sees patriarchy as the root of women's oppression. Thus, that society must be entirely restructured to eliminate patriarchal systems by promoting androgyny, where women are encouraged to embrace both masculine and feminine traits. However, they often emphasize the adoption of masculine traits.

### **1.6.3 Character**

Kennedy and Gioia (1995: 67) define a character as a made-up person in a story who behaves in ways that feel believable or relatable to the reader. These characters usually act consistently and are given clear motivations for their actions in the narrative by the author.

### **1.6.4 Characterization**

According to Gill (1995: 127), Characterization is how an author shows and builds characters in a story. Gill explains that authors reveal a character's

personality in different ways, like through their actions, speech, thoughts, looks, and how they interact with others. This helps readers understand the character's moral, intellectual, and emotional qualities, making the story richer and more meaningful.

### 1.6.5 Novel

According to Kennedy & Gioia (1995: 3) fiction, derived from the Latin *fictio* meaning "a shaping" or "a counterfeiting," refers to stories that are not entirely factual but are partly or wholly imagined. While some forms of fiction, such as historical novels, may incorporate factual elements, the primary focus of fiction is not to record real events but to offer insight into human behavior and experience.

### 1.7 Research Significance

The significance of the present research lies in its potential to offer valuable contributions across both theoretical and practical aspect. Theoretically, the research enriches literature learning, English language teaching, and feminist theories. Practically, the findings serve as a reference for students, educators, parents, and further researchers in promoting gender perspective reading materials that encourage critical thinking and empower young readers, through relatable and strong female characters.

#### 1. Theoretical Significance

The present study is expected to provide the following contributions to multiple theories such as literature learning, feminist theories, and English language teaching.

##### a. Literature analysis

This study is expected to contribute to the field of literary analysis by demonstrating how character exploration and text interpretation can be guided through structured reading strategies. By offering insights gained from closely examining the text and analyzing its individual elements, this research supports a more effective application of structural theory in understanding literary works (Gilmanova & Melnikova, 2017).

b. Feminist theories

This study is expected to contribute to the development of feminist theory by analyzing the portrayal of a female character and providing a deeper understanding of how female character in literature can represent feminist thought and ideas. By analyzing the characterization of a female antagonist, the study provides insight into how women in literature can be portrayed not only as passive figures or victims but also as complex individuals who demonstrate control, influence, or resistance. This perspective supports the development of feminist theory by challenging traditional gender roles and offering a broader view of female representation in literary texts (Eagleton, 1996; Moi, 1988).

2. Practical Significance

The present study is expected to provide the following contributions to multiple practical aspect including students, educators, parents, and further researchers.

a. Students

The practical significance for students lies in helping them improve their ability to think critically and understand deeper meanings in literary texts. Besides that, the present study better understand feminist ideas by analyzing how gender, power, and identity are shown through literary characters. By learning to examine a female antagonist from a feminist point of view, students can develop critical thinking skills and become more aware of how women are represented in literature. This understanding can also help them recognize gender issues in real life, encouraging them to think more openly and fairly about equality and social roles. In this way, literature becomes a tool not only for language learning but also for character building and social awareness (Cabrera, 2022; Meng, 2010).

b. Teacher

This study is expected to support teachers by showing how literary works can be used as effective teaching media in English classes. By using texts that include female characters with strong or complex traits, teachers can introduce feminist perspectives and help students explore important topics such as gender, identity, and power. Literature as a teaching tool also encourages critical thinking, class discussion, and deeper understanding of social issues. This approach not only improves students' language skills but also supports character education and awareness of equality through meaningful classroom activities (Runo, 2013; Tarrayo et al., 2021).

c. Parents

This study can help parents understand the importance of supporting their children's reading of literary works that include female characters related to feminist perspective and meaningful social messages. By becoming aware of how literature can teach values related to gender equality and critical thinking, parents can encourage their children to discuss what they read and connect it to real-life experiences. This also allows parents to take part in their children's learning process, helping them grow into individuals who are open-minded, respectful, and aware of fairness in society (Earles, 2017).

d. Future researcher

This study can serve as a reference for future researchers who are interested in exploring feminist perspectives in literature, especially through the analysis of antagonist characters. It provides an example of how feminist theory can be used to examine character traits, power dynamics, and gender roles in literary texts. Future research can expand on this study by analyzing different genres, comparing multiple characters, or applying other feminist approaches. This research also opens opportunities for interdisciplinary studies that connect literature with education, gender studies, or social issues (Vahlne, 2018).