

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This section, it will provide the research background, problem identification, problem limitation, research questions, research objectives, definition of key terms, research significances, and practical significances.

1.1. Research Background

Gender inequality remains a significant challenge across various areas of society, affecting individuals' access to equal opportunities and rights, and it remains a major issue in areas such as society, organizations, business, and politics, although the nature of inequality and social conditions have changed (Gurieva et al., 2022). Gender inequality occurs because society shapes certain roles for each gender, which ultimately leads to unfair treatment (Cameron, 2023). Due to the long-standing influence of patriarchal culture, many people still consider women weaker than men, so they are often denied equal opportunities, even though human rights demand equality for all (Tantimin & Sinukaban, 2021). HAP (Human Rights Perspective – *Perspektif Hak Asasi Manusia*) states that every individual is born equal, free, and has equal rights, so any form of discrimination based on gender, race, sexual orientation, skin color, religion, or other factors cannot be justified (Panorama et al., 2022). Gender inequality will continue if men have more power or control than women in society (Panorama et al., 2022).

Because gender inequality still exists in the social environment, it can have an impact on gender stereotypes in the young generation. Family structure, parenting patterns, and relationships with siblings play a role in shaping children's

views on gender (Tran & Olshan, 2022). Thus, gender inequality will remain strong in society because the patriarchal system has not been broken since they were young. Gender inequality in Indonesia can be seen in many forms, such as discrimination, stereotypes, subordination, and marginalisation, which affect women (Ardiansya et al., 2022; Arief et al., 2024; Nurdin, 2024). This problem appears in the family, education, economy, work, and government, and is influenced by Indonesia's many cultures and ethnic groups that see gender roles differently (Ardiansya et al., 2022; Hayati et al., 2024; Nahdliyah & Robot, 2024; Noka Bilqista & Setijaningrum, 2025). Therefore, Indonesia needs continuous gender empowerment from one generation to the next to fight unfair systems and structures.

To fight the patriarchal system in society, which challenges women's rights, feminism is fundamental to solving this social issue. Feminism is a social and political movement that works to make men and women equal and fights against the unfair treatment of women (Fiss, 1994; Mardiyani & Tawami, 2022; Sangeetha et al., 2022). In line, feminism fights gender inequality caused by stereotypes and keeps changing over time without a single fixed idea (Rahmawati & Suyudi, 2023). Feminism began as a large movement led by women from all backgrounds with a common goal: to end the oppression of women by men in patriarchal societies (Mohajan, 2022). Feminism ensures that women's concerns are recognized in every aspect of social life (Mohajan, 2022). To fight against the patriarchal system in society, feminism is an important social and political movement to achieve gender equality by opposing gender inequality in society.

According to Tong and Botts (2018), feminism is a broad and varied movement that aims to analyze and address the oppression of women through multiple perspectives and approaches, one of which is Radical-libertarian feminism. Radical-libertarian feminism is one of the branches of radical feminism (Tong & Botts, 2018). Radical-libertarian feminist argues that to make women equal with men in society, we need to remove the patriarchal system in society (Tong & Botts, 2018). Radical-libertarian feminists argue that if women only hold on to their feminine gender identity, they will not be able to develop fully as individuals (Tong & Botts, 2018). Thus, Radical-libertarian feminists encourage women to adopt masculine traits, both positive and negative, according to their preferences (Tong & Botts, 2018).

Feminism and gender inequality deal with social issues, and literature can be a powerful way to talk about them by showing and challenging gender bias from a gender-based view (Akalya & Vimala, 2023). In literature, there is a kind of literature, namely children's literature, a form of writing made by adults to suit children's interests, needs, growth, and expectations (Şen, 2021). Children's literature plays an important role in shaping children's perceptions of gender, as through these stories, children gain an early understanding of gender roles in society, which can influence their attitudes and views towards men and women (M. Lestari & Yulindrasari, 2021). When children's literature is used as a medium for gender-related education, Ruterana (2017) found that children responded positively to the storyline and criticized stereotypical gender roles while supporting equal rights and opportunities for men and women, so they interpreted the story as a story

of liberation. This is supported by Moleegaard's statement that good children's literature can be linked to feminist theory, which addresses issues such as gender, gendered behavior, gender-based oppression, patriarchy, and sexual norms and identity (Santiago, 2020). Feminism came about as a response to gender inequality, with the aim of fighting for women's rights to be equal to men and ensuring human rights are equal for all (Rufaida & Sufyanto, 2024). In conclusion, children's literature can help challenge gender stereotypes and promote equal rights for all, encouraging a better understanding of gender roles and improving positive attitudes towards gender equality.

There are a lot of research about gender inequality in children's literature that can be a medium to state or introduce gender issues. For example, the story of Snow-White character reflects traditional traits of femininity, such as naive, submissive, and obedient (Arimbawa, 2023; Riris et al., 2023; Santiago, 2020). The story of Matilda by Roald Dahl also includes female characters' traits such as bravery, independence, and intelligence of Matilda (Shaw & Fard, 2018; Suwastini, Mahendrayani, et al., 2023), and the gender inequality in the story, as Mr. and Mrs. Wormwood's treatment of their children (Chaudhuri & Dey, 2024). Purnamisari et al. (2020) found that the children's fairytale *The Lazy Girl* reflects second and third-wave feminism through its brave and hardworking main character, showing that children's literature can be a medium to promote gender equality values to young readers. In addition, an anthology of Indonesian children's stories can shape children's views on gender roles by presenting strong female characters and male characters who challenge stereotypes, providing role models that influence how

children see themselves and others in real life (Ahmad, 2024; M. Lestari & Yulindrasari, 2021).

One of the popular children's literature is *The Chronicles of Narnia* by C.S. Lewis (1950). C.S. Lewis is a famous writer, radio broadcaster, teacher, speaker, and apologist, with his books selling over 250 million copies worldwide (Heck, 2019). Children mostly enjoy *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, with the latter winning the 1956 Carnegie Medal, and the entire series has sold over 100 million copies worldwide (Heck, 2019). The researchers found that this novel is effective in teaching children about moral values reflected in the characters, such as Lucy's character as an honest, caring girl and cheerful, who can be a role model for children (Suryadi & Dariyana, 2022; Suwastini, Widasuari, et al., 2020). In addition, the antagonist character, such as the White Witch with her harsh traits, can be a moral value for children as karma for bad traits (Azharinas et al., 2024). Muliani (2023) found that this novel includes 24 basic human values, such as such as self-control, pleasure, power, security, tradition, virtue, courage, achievement, conformity, and tolerance, depicting different aspects of life, such as creativity, success, and mutual respect.

The researchers also found that *The Chronicles of Narnia* novel by C.S. Lewis includes gender issues. In this novel, although the female characters are important, they are not directly involved in the battle, and there is sexism reflected by the author as well as the male characters (Lou, 2024; Tyas & Mustofa, 2019). In addition, Markkanen (2016) found that Aslan embodies feminine traits such as nurturing, kindness, love, care, and compassionate leadership that empowers others.

Senjuti (2022) analyzes *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* novel as a representation of patriarchal values, portraying the character of the White Witch as a strong female figure presented negatively. The study shows that female strength is seen as a threat in the world of Narnia, which only accepts women who conform to patriarchal norms. Narnia reinforces the patriarchal structure by limiting the roles of women and placing power and goodness in male characters. In line, Tso (2012) argued that the Witch in Lewis's novels represents the feminine stereotype, being dangerous, beautiful, and aggressive, which makes her an antagonist against patriarchal ideals.

Research with a feminist approach to the character of the White Witch in the novel *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis (1950) still needs improvement, as existing studies only focus on general patriarchal representation without deeply analyzing of her characterization through Radical-libertarian feminism ideology. Therefore, this study aims to describe the White Witch character as an antagonist and analyze her character in the novel *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis (1950) with a Radical-libertarian feminism approach. In Radical-libertarian feminism, women are recommended to adopt masculine traits, both positive and negative (Tong & Botts, 2018). Radical-libertarian encourages women to not stay with traditional femininity only, but to adopt masculinity, so that they are not seen as weak, and can be equal to men in a societal structure that prioritizes the status of men over women (Tong & Botts, 2018). This approach is important because it helps us understand better how female characters in children's literature are portrayed.

This study aims to fill this gap by looking at the White Witch through the lens of Radical-libertarian feminism, giving new views on how she can be seen not only as an antagonist but also as a woman who did not follow traditional ideas about gender due to the dominance of masculine traits. During the preliminary research, it was found that the White Witch showed the dominance of masculinity characteristics. She showed positive masculinity, such as being strong when leading a war, negative masculinity such as arrogance, cunning, and dominance as she wants all creatures to submit to her as the Queen of Narnia, but also has positive femininity as seen in her physical beauty described by the narrator, and negative femininity through her fear when escaping from Aslan. By applying Radical-libertarian feminist theory, the novelty of this study is that it offers a different perspective from previous studies that analyze the White Witch's character with only general sexism and gender stereotypes and makes a new contribution to the study of children's literature with the focus on her characters in the story and her traits with the lens of Radical-libertarian Feminism.

1.2. Problem Identification

Gender inequality is still present in today's social life. In Indonesia, gender inequality can be found in many forms such as discrimination, stereotypes, subordination, and marginalization, which give negative effects to women (Ardiansya et al., 2022; Arief et al., 2024; Nurdin, 2024). Feminism continues to fight for the same goal, which is to give women equal positions with men in a society that still follows patriarchal values. To support gender equality, it is important to use media that can raise awareness about gender inequality, and

literature is one of these media. Through literary elements such as characters, novels can show how women are portrayed from a feminist perspective. Literature is a powerful way to discuss social issues like feminism and gender equality because stories allow readers to learn important ideas and see different perspectives on society and gender roles. Gender analysis in children's literature is especially important since these stories influence how children understand gender and identity from a young age. Children's literature can either reinforce or challenge gender stereotypes, so studying gender representation helps us better understand equality and social roles through its elements, such as character. However, previous studies on the White Witch in C.S. Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* have mostly focused on general patriarchal ideas and have not examined her character deeply from a feminist perspective, especially in Radical-libertarian feminism. This study addresses that gap by analyzing the White Witch as a woman who displays both masculine traits, both negative and positive. While she mostly showed negative masculine traits that mark her as an antagonist, she also challenges the patriarchal stereotype of women as weak and passive. Using a Radical-libertarian feminist approach offers a deeper understanding of her character.

1.3. Problem Limitation

This study is limited to the analysis of the antagonist character, the White Witch, in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (1950) by C.S. Lewis. This study aims to explore how the values of Radical-libertarian feminism are reflected in the character of the White Witch in the story. The study examines various aspects, including character, characterization, and character revelation. Through this

analysis, the study aims to uncover the ideological side of the White Witch character as a representation of a woman who rejects patriarchal norms by adopting masculine and feminine traits. However, it is important to note that this study only focuses on a single character, the White Witch, which limits the scope of the research within the broader context of the novel.

1.4. Research Questions

Based on the background and problem limitation above, the research questions can be determined as follows:

1. What are the characters of the White Witch in C.S. Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* (1950)?
2. What Radical-libertarian feminist traits are reflected in the characters of the White Witch in C.S. Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* (1950)?

1.5. Research Objectives

Based on the research questions above, the objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To describe the characters of the White Witch in C.S. Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* (1950).
2. To elaborate Radical-libertarian feminism ideologies are represented in the characters of the White Witch in C.S. Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* (1950).

1.6. Definition of Key Terms

This part briefly describes each of the elements included in the conceptual definition. The key terms such as feminism, Radical-libertarian feminism,

character, and novel. These terms are explained to make the meaning clear and to avoid confusion in the discussion.

1.6.1. Feminism

Feminism is a broad and varied movement that aims to analyze and address the oppression of women to be equal in society with men through multiple perspectives and approaches include liberal feminism, radical feminism, Marxist/socialist feminism, women-of-color feminism, global feminism, postcolonial feminism, transnational feminism, psychoanalytic feminism, care-focused feminism, ecofeminism, existentialist feminism, poststructural feminism, postmodern feminism, third-wave feminism, and queer feminism (Tong & Botts, 2018).

1.6.2. Radical-libertarian Feminism

According to Tong and Botts (2018), Radical-libertarian feminist such as Firestone believe that encouraging women to have mostly masculine traits, either positive or negative, is that patriarchy is the root of women's oppression.

1.6.3. Novel and its Intrinsic Elements

The *Dictionary of Literature and Criticism* states that the term “novel” originates from the Italian word *novella*, which means news stories, and now refers to a wide range of narrative prose, which is long enough to be in one or more volumes and follows either fictional or real historical figures (Asmiati et al., 2023; Cudden, 2001: 272; Lukens, 2003). In a novel, there are several intrinsic elements that have important functions in the story, such as theme, plot, setting, character (including characterization), point of view, tone and style.

1.6.4. Children's Literature

Lukens (2003) states that children's literature includes short stories, folk tales, myths, legends, and novels. Each type helps children understand stories in different ways, from simple plots to lessons about culture and human experiences.

1.7. Research Significances

This study's significance focuses on describing the characterization of the White Witch in C.S. Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* through the point of view of Radical-libertarian feminism. It aims to offer both theoretical and practical contributions, helping readers gain a deeper understanding of the novel's portrayal of gender and its relevance to real-life issues. The significance of this research is divided into two parts: theoretical significance and practical significance.

1.7.1. Theoretical Significances

The theoretical significance of this research is to explore the character of the White Witch in Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* through the lens of Radical-libertarian feminism. This study adds to feminist literary criticism by showing how the female character challenges traditional gender roles in children's literature. It also supports learning in literature, language learning, and feminist theory.

1.7.2. Literature Learning

Literary work is popular for having a great benefit for readers. Many experts have explored how using literature can support English language teaching (Mardiani & Baharuddin, 2023). Literature can help students improve their

language skills, stay motivated in learning, and understand different cultures better (Mardiani & Baharuddin, 2023). Literary work serves as a way to understand political, social, and cultural aspects that exist in various countries, not only in England but also in a broader global context (Duhan, 2015). Reading various works of literature helps readers develop empathy and thinking skills, while also broadening their perspective on the diversity of other societies and cultures (Slamet, 2018). Reading literature can motivate and strengthen readers' cognitive development (Wulandari, 2015). It helps readers express their feelings, empathy, and recognize their self-worth and identity (Wulandari, 2015). As a result, readers can live well in society and demonstrate good behaviour (Wulandari, 2015). Therefore, this study contributes to literature learning by presenting character analysis in stories and gender representation in literary texts through the lens of Radical-libertarian feminism.

1.7.3. Language Learning

Researchers claim that literature can improve readers' or student language skills. According to Deepa and Ilankumaran (2018), here are some factors that explain why literature is suitable for language teaching such as supporting language instruction by enhancing language awareness through various examples, motivating students to speak by influencing their attitudes, emotions, and experiences, introducing cultural assumptions to students, providing insights into different societies and traditions, boosting students' self-confidence, and developing strong communication skills. Using literary works for language development is an effective approach, as literature not only contains moral values but also stimulates

imagination and improves language skills (Gultom & Setyami, 2022). Literature, such as stories, is essential for developing children's language skills by exposing them to familiar structures, and through storytelling, learners enhance their writing and speaking skills (Afash, 2024). Pulimeno et al. (2020) found that literature helps improve language skills, fosters a respectful and supportive classroom atmosphere, and carefully chosen storybooks increase learning. Therefore, this study contributes to language learning by analyzing the elements of the novel such as character.

1.7.4. Feminist Ideologies

This research is focused on the representation of Radical-libertarian feminism of the White Witch's character in C.S. Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* (1950). This study explores how the White Witch challenges traditional gender norms by combining both masculine and feminine traits, which represents Radical-libertarian feminism (Tong & Botts, 2018). This shows that the White Witch goes against the patriarchal view that expects women to be submissive, obedient, and motherly. This research helps to deepen the understanding of gender equality in children's literature, so that gender equality can continue to be promoted in educating children through children's literature, and the patriarchal system in traditional societies can be reduced, which is one of the goals of feminism.

1.8. Practical Significances

There are various practical significances of studying gender equality through literature, which can be categorized as for students, teachers, parents, society, and other researchers.

1.8.1. For Students

The novel *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* (1950) by C.S. Lewis has been analyzed using various approaches, including character analysis and religious themes. The antagonist of the novel, the White Witch, has been studied from a patriarchal perspective. Senjuti (2022) sees the White Witch as an antagonist because of her aggressive, cruel, powerful, and dominant nature. She was seen as evil in the story because society feels fear and discomfort toward dominant and strong women, who are viewed as a threat for not fitting the traditional female norms in a patriarchal society (Senjuti, 2022). Therefore, this study, which will analyse the White Witch in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis using a Radical-libertarian feminist approach, aims to give a new perspective on her character. This can also be used as a way to students learning about gender equality and feminism. When students are introduced to different kinds of female characters and stories that do not follow the traditional gender expectations, they become more confident to question gender bias and promote equality (Suwastini et al., 2020).

1.8.2. For Teachers

Teachers play an important role in improving students' awareness of gender equality through contextual and meaningful approaches, such as using novels in the learning process. Karim et al. (2024) stated that discussing gender equality in the classroom can help students develop critical thinking and empathy, so they can respect and support everyone's rights. Therefore, Irhaz (2019) say that teachers contribute to shaping a generation that understands the importance of gender

equality and helps build a more just society. Therefore, the role of teachers is essential in creating and educating children about feminism. By fostering these values, teachers can help students become more aware of social issues and take action to promote equality in society. As a future teacher, the researcher will use this study and my strong knowledge of feminism to introduce feminism through children's literature, such as novels, to introduce feminism through the story, so the teacher can give a new perspective and a small effect to support feminism and gender equality.

1.8.3. For Parents

This study is expected to show that reading novels is not only for educational purposes but also brings indirect benefits to children. Reading English stories by parents gives many benefits for ESL or EFL children. It helps them to learn life values such as honesty, kindness, and unity (Kottacheruvu, 2023). English stories also pass down cultural traditions, social issues, and give children a sense of belonging (Kottacheruvu, 2023). In addition, listening to stories can inspire children through good role models like heroes and legends. The previous researchers found that *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* novel by Lewis is effective in teaching children about moral values reflected in the characters, such as honest, caring and cheerful, who can be a role model for children (Suryadi & Dariyana, 2022; Suwastini, Widasuari, et al., 2020). Moreover, parents can use the novel to help children understand gender differences and learn to respect them.

1.8.4. For Society

Since this research discusses feminism as a social issue in society, it can contribute to making an impact on the community. The expected impact is that society will become more aware of gender equality and understand that gender inequality, which still exists, must be eradicated. Duhan (2015) states that literature can serve as a medium for readers to understand all aspects of life, including social issues. Therefore, through literature and this research, society can better understand social issues like feminism and gender inequality. Society should not view feminism as a negative concept, but recognize that feminism has the same goal: advocating for women's rights to be equal to men's in a society that still upholds male dominance (Tong & Botts, 2018). With a deeper understanding, it is hoped that society will reduce the negative stigma toward feminism and encourage more inclusive change. As a result, gender equality can be realized in a fairer and more equal social life.

1.8.5. For Other Researchers

This study also contributes to other researchers who are interested in examining female characters in children's literature and analysing her traits from a feminist perspective. By using Radical-libertarian feminism to analyze the character of the White Witch in Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* (1950), this research serves as an example of a character analysis approach that challenges traditional gender views. Future researchers may develop this study by analyzing other strong female characters in different genres or by comparing various types of feminism in literary works. These may include liberal, radical, or

other feminist approaches based on the theories of Tong and Botts (2018), Gamble (Gamble, 2006), Millett (2000), and others. In addition, this study can also be a useful reference for researchers conducting qualitative research based on literary texts.

