

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Mary Wollstonecraft, the first feminist, said that there is a duping of women due to societal traditions that make women subordinate beings (Andestend 2020). The feminist approach to literary studies is often known as feminist literary criticism. In a literary work, feminism focuses on women as the subject of study. There are two main reasons for the emergence of feminism in literary works. First, the desire to dismantle, revolt, and fight patriarchal culture. Second, the desire to show the existence of women in literary works. Feminism is divided into several streams, namely liberal feminism, radical feminism, Marxist feminism, and socialist feminism (Setiyono 2015). One type of feminism that will be used in this research is socialist feminism. Socialist feminism has the view that the condition of women can be determined by the structure of production, reproduction, sexuality, and the way they are socialized during childhood. If women want to rise from oppression, then low self-esteem must be transformed into an attitude of self-confidence (Hermindasari, Wardiani, and Munifah 2022). Several novels often raise stories about injustice against women, which are often marked by stereotypes against women. One of the novels that will be used in this research is the novel "The Best of Me" by Nicholas Sparks.

Nicholas Sparks is a famous American writer. He has written about twenty novels, some of which were adapted into films. One of his best-selling novels is “The Best of Me”, which was published in 2011. The Best of Me tells the story of a love affair that occurs between Dawson Cole (James Marsden) and Amanda Collier (Michelle Monaghan). The story begins when Sosol Dawson, a 41-year-old adult, works in an offshore oil mine. Hearing the news that his adoptive father and closest friend, Tuck Hostetler (Gerald McRaney), has died, Dawson returns to Tuck's house for the first time in twenty years. Dawson's goal is none other than to fulfill the last wish of his father, Tuck. Meanwhile, Amanda Collier, who is married and a housewife, heard the sad news. Her desire to attend Tuck's funeral was hindered by the selfishness and arrogance of her husband, who asked her to remain at home. However, his intentions and determination were unanimous. Amanda comes to Tuck's funeral and meets Dawson, who was none other than her ex-boyfriend in high school. That said, the end of Amanda and Dawson's relationship could not be separated from their differences in social status. Their relationship was opposed by Amanda's family because Dawson grew up in a broken family and was not as rich as them. It turned out that this left the feelings between the two unfinished. Until the conflict began to emerge both are trying to resolve what happened in the past and overcome what caused their separation.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher is interested in choosing the novel entitled “The Best of Me” by Nicholas Sparks as the object of this research because the novel tells about the character Amanda who

struggles for her life with the power of women. In addition, the romantic novel genre attracts many readers, making this novel become bestseller.

Literary work is said to be a tool intended by the author for expressing his ideas. Literary work is a form and result of creativity, essentially a medium that uses language to express ideas about human life. Literary works are divided into three types: poetry, prose, and drama. Prose also consists of two types, namely short stories and novels. A literary work, in this case the novel, is one of the literary works written by the author based on a true story or their imagination that has many benefits (Anggraini, 2018). The novel is also used as a conveyer of the author's ideology to the reader. The ideas outlined by the author are received by the reader (Shofiyah, 2019).

In my opinion, socialist feminism is a branch of feminism that originates from social construction so it can cause injustice to women. This socialist feminism leads to the view that women have two burdens, namely the domestic burden or the burden of taking care of the household and the burden of working to earn wages. Women's workload is considered heavier than that of men. This is due to the marking (stereotype) as domestic creatures. Socialist feminism considers that the oppression of women is caused by the ideology of capitalism and patriarchy.

This is supported by the results of a previous study conducted by Adentend (2020) entitled, *Socialist Feminism in the Novel Looking for Missing Women* by Imad Zaki which shows that socialist feminism in the

Novel *Looking for Missing Women* by Imad Zaki includes women wanting to get a higher education, women can work like men and not just in bed, kitchen and wells. In addition, the results of Octavia's research (2021) entitled *Discrimination against Women in the Novel Bride Order* by MYA YE: *Review of Socialist Feminism* shows that the results of discrimination against women occur because of the patriarchal system, the capitalist system, and the patriarchal-capitalism system in the domestic and public spheres (Octavia et al. 2021).

Based on the results of previous studies on socialist feminism in a novel, several discoveries have been made, including the depiction of a woman against patriarchy and capitalism, forms of gender injustice, and women's oppression from the perspective of socialist feminism. The research that will be conducted this time is distinct from previous studies that used a socialist feminism approach. The difference in this research lies in the novel that the researcher will study. In this study, the novel *"The Best of Me"* by Nicholas Sparks will be used because there has been no study of socialist feminism in the novel. In the novel, there is the character Amanda, who struggles to survive with the power of women. So the researcher decided to study the novel *"The Best of Me"* using a socialist feminism approach.

Feminism comes from the word "femme" (women), meaning women (singular) who struggle to fight for women's rights (plural) as a social class. The goal of feminism is to achieve gender equality. Feminism is a movement carried out by women to reject everything that is marginalized, subordinated,

and demeaned by the dominant culture, both at the political, economic, and other social levels. Essentially, the feminist movement arose from the desire to include rights between men and women, which had previously been denied to women in terms of taking opportunities and making life decisions (Syuropati and Soebachman, 2012: 115).

Social feminists emerged between the 19th and 20th centuries. Socialist feminism emerged as a critical attitude toward Marxist feminism. Socialist feminism believes that discrimination, marginalization, subordination, and oppression of women are more related to the complexity and relationship between capitalism and patriarchy. According to socialist feminism, gender inequality experienced by women is a product of political, social, and economic structures. Pressure on women occurs simultaneously in the form of capitalist and patriarchal ideologies. These two ideologies are the primary foundations for various forms of structural discrimination against women (Anwar, 2010: 131-132).

According to Atesenden (2020), the socialist feminist school considers social construction as a source of injustice against women. This includes stereotypes attached to women. Socialist feminism has the view that women are second-class citizens in a patriarchal and capitalist society. Women are exploited as a source of economic profit in opposition to society's patriarchal and capitalist structures. Therefore, men are considered to have special material interests in dominating women. Men have constructed various

institutional arrangements to perpetuate the dominance of women as a class that has the highest hierarchy (Susanto, 2015: 253-254).

Rokhmansyah (2016: 54) thinks that socialist feminism is a stream that agrees with marxist feminism that the oppression of women comes from capitalism. Apart from that, socialist feminism also agrees with radical feminism, which considers patriarchy as a source of oppression. In the view of socialist feminists, patriarchy and capitalism have a strong connection, so it can be said that patriarchy currently exists to serve capitalism (Jackson, 2009).

The term "patriarchal" refers to a power relationship in which women's interests are seen as subordinate to those of men. These power relations take many forms, from the division of jobs according to gender and empowerment in social organizations to the norms of femininity that are internalized in our lives. Patriarchal power rests on social meaning based on gender (Gamble, 2010: 3-4). Patriarchy has power because of men's greater access to and mediation of existing resources and rewards from authority structures inside and outside the home (Humm, 2002: 332). Patriarchy is classified into two groups, namely domestic and public; domestic patriarchy, as it is called, tends to refer to the area of oppression of women in the family, while public patriarchy leads to the oppression of women in the public sphere, for example at work (Walby, 2014: 34). According to Fasih (2013), the patriarchal system creates many gender gaps that harm women in various sectors.

In addition to implementing an exchange system, capitalism also adheres to a gender-based division of labor as a result of its dependence on a certain sex to benefit men. The history of capitalism has oppressed women because of the many advantages obtained by the superiors, including: exploitation, returning home by exploiting male laborers to be employed productively by capitalists, then when they returned home they were involved in a working relationship with their wives, the capitalist system's assumption that women can be reproduced at low wages, the capitalist system in advanced capitalist countries relies more on guarantees, Second, the position of women is considered beneficial to capitalism because women directly contribute to increasing labor reserves (Fakih, 2013: 87).

Women are considered to have been controlled and pressured by the capitalist system and the patriarchal system, making it difficult for women to fulfill their needs and potential to become independent women. The oppression of women makes socialist feminists aware that they need to evolve, not just carry out a biological revolution against the sexes, as radical feminism is fighting for (Janah & Septiana, 2021). The feminist approach to literary studies is often known as feminist literary criticism. Socialist feminist literary criticism is a study of female characters in social classes from a socialist perspective (Djajanegara, 2000:27-39).

1.2 Statement of the Problems

This research will investigate socialist feminism through the main character named Amanda Collier in terms of the acts of oppression and the struggle of main character against them.

1.3 Objective of the Research

The purpose of this research is to explain the socialist feminism that exists in the character Amanda in the novel, “The Best of Me” who struggle against patriarchal and capitalism system.

1.4 Scope of the Study

Based on the formulation of the problem above, the researcher considers the scope of the research. The scope of this research is the representation of socialist feminism in the character Amanda in the novel “The Best of Me”.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The results of this study are expected to be used as evaluation material both practically and theoretically. Practical benefits of this study:

1. For Readers, it is hoped that it will be useful for readers to understand the story of The Best of Me as a source of knowledge and to find out the form of feminism that affects women, which is also related and occurs in real life.

2. For next researchers, it is hoped that this can become a source of information and references regarding socialist feminism and can make it easier for future researchers to find sources of reference either on the same theme or problem.
3. Students are expected to be able to change their thinking about women who are not equal to men and want men to respect women in the way they respect each other because gender equality is very important.

1.6 Approach of the Study

The research method is a scientific method that is used to obtain data or information that is based on certain facts and objectives (Hardani et al. 2020). This study uses a qualitative approach method. This type of research uses literary methods to obtain information and a description of the main character Amanda as a woman in the novel "The Best of Me", which studies socialist feminism. According to Sugiono (2013), the data collection method is a method or method used by researchers to obtain correct and appropriate information .

The data collection method used in this research is reading and taking notes, where the researcher acts as the main instrument, supported by notes and tables. Miles and Huberman's data analysis technique is the analytical technique used in this study (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The three stages include the following. (1) Data reduction, in which the researcher identifies data regarding the form of socialist feminism in the character Amanda and the

patriarchal cultural rebellion in the novel, (2) Data presentation, in which the researcher records words, phrases, sentences, quotations in the form of narrative and dialogue which contains the form of patriarchal culture which is the background for the formation of the characters and the rebellion of the patriarchal culture in the novel, (3) Verification, namely the drawing of conclusions that refer to the overall data analysis. The technique used to test the validity of the data used in this study is triangulation. The way to do this technique is to check the results of the method used to see if it is running well (Moleong, 2021).

1.7 Organization of the Paper

- a. Chapter one discusses the introduction that consists of background of the study, the previous study, research questions, the objective of the research, scope of study, significance of study.
- b. Chapter two discusses synopsis and biography.
- c. Chapter three discusses review of related literature
- d. Chapter four discusses finding and discussion.
- e. Chapter five presents the conclusions and suggestions.