CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the writer discusses four critical points, the background of the study, problem statements, significance of the study, and operational definitions of key terms.

1.1   Background of the Study

Men and women are seen differently by society because their roles in everyday life are not the same. In most societies, men and women have different responsibilities, different activities, different decision-making opportunities, also different access to and control over resources. People often perceived women as figures who are fragile and beautiful, whereas men are often perceived as figures who are strong and manly. Men are also seen as more suitable for leadership and decision-maker positions than women because men use their brains, whereas women use their feelings. This demonstrates the idea than men are better suited to work in the public sphere, whereas women are better suited to stay at home. Women, in this case, are disadvantage because they are often perceived as figures incapable of leading, making decisions, and working in the public sphere. From here, gender roles issue raises in society. The gender roles issue will then lead to a second issue, patriarchy, which asserts that men have higher social status in society than women. As a result, it can be concluded that gender issues will always be closely related to one another.

Women are preferable to do domestic works, whereas men are expected to be responsible in the public sphere. Since boys are interested in repairing their trucks and girls are interested in caring their dolls, they have their image as a boy and a girl. Girls are expected to be gentle, graceful, and motherly, whereas boys are expected to be firm, strong, and masculine. This influences society's mindset about categorizing roles based on gender. Moreover, men and women's roles are related to their social image. Women are taught to be gentle and motherly, so it influences the idea that women should be the ones who cook and take care of their children at home. On the other hand, men are known as powerful and decisive figures, so it influences the idea that they are perfectly suited in the public sphere.

However, women deserve to have freedom and equality to do and to be whatever they want without any oppression from any parties. To achieve that, many feminist organizations have worked to change the gender roles' concept because they believe it is oppressive and inaccurate. Walby (1990, p. 23) claims that "The previously closed public sphere to women appears to be accessible. This access will provide women with more freedom, which is implied to equality". Freedom means equality, and everyone requires freedom to choose whatever they want to do and to be. Nonetheless, patriarchal society assigns some roles to women that limit their space in the public sphere. To put it another way, equal freedom to women in the public sphere indicates that they are free and equal in comparison to men, even though oppressive conditions can occur anywhere and at any time, even after gaining freedom to do everything outside the house. As Walby (1990, p. 157) puts

it, "Men's violence against women is seen as an important foundation for men's control over women, which is essentially the foundation of the patriarchal system".

Speaking about gender roles and patriarchal issues, these issues still exist today. Not only in everyday life but these issues are also often shown through literary works as a reflection of society. These issues are often shown through literary works, such as film, novels, poetry, and song. Of many types of literary works, the film plays a big role in representing these issues, especially the film that is set in the 1800s and 1900s era. Since the film has audio and visual elements, it will be easier for the writer to represent these issues to the audience. Moreover, aside being a medium for entertainment, the film is also often used as an object in literary study.

In this study, the writer analyzed *Dickinson*, an American comedy-drama television series, which Alena Smith created. In conducting this study, the writer focused on the patriarchal system's oppressive gender roles that are seen in the series. This series examines Emily Dickinson's depiction of gender roles in a patriarchal society. It has three seasons, but this study focused on the series' first season, which aired in 2019 through Apple TV+. The main reason why this series is chosen to be analyzed by the writer is that it demonstrates the idea that women should have the right to do whatever they want and to be the best they can. They have the right to fight for their dignity and courage in the face of oppression from their surroundings. This series also depicts the lives of a woman who want to change society's minds while dealing with various negative responses from her surroundings. Another reason is that Emily Dickinson, the female main character

of the series, is depicted as an independent and heroic figure who challenges her gender roles in a patriarchal society. So, for those reasons, the writer is interested in analyzing gender roles in a patriarchal society in the series, as seen through Emily Dickinson's point of view. Besides, the writer also believes that conducting this study will help readers to understand gender roles and patriarchal issues in literature, particularly in the form of a series with a patriarchal society that oppresses women.

1.2   Problem Statements

To follow up on the background of the study, this study aims to answer these questions:

1. What are the gender roles experienced by Emily Dickinson in the *Dickinson* series season one which aired in 2019?

2. How does Emily Dickinson's experiences with gender roles depict patriarchal issue in the *Dickinson* series season one which aired in 2019?

1.3   Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is divided into two categories, which are theoretical and practical. Theoretically, this study aims to contribute to the growth of a large body of knowledge, specifically literary study. It also aims to serve as a resource for understanding gender roles, specifically women's roles in society, and how those roles depict patriarchy in *Dickinson* series season one which aired in 2019. Practically, this study aims to serve as a reference for future researchers who

want to conduct similar studies. Moreover, this study also aims to be used as a supplementary source for teaching.

1.4   Operational Definition of Key Terms

This section provides the definition of the terms which are used as the keywords in this study. The keywords of this study are as follows.

1. Sex

    Based on the European Institute of Gender Equality (n.d.), "Sex refers to the biological and physiological characteristics that distinguish humans as female or male".

2. Gender

    Based on the European Institute of Gender Equality (n.d.), "Gender is the social characteristics and opportunities associated with being female and male, as well as the relationships between men and women".

3. Traditional Gender Roles

    According to Duvaux (2022), "Gender roles are social expectations about how men and women should act". It also can be defined as the sociocultural expectations that apply to individuals based on their gender classification, men or women.

4. Patriarchy

    According to Walby (1990, p. 20), "Patriarchy refers to a social structure and practice in which men dominate, oppress, and exploit women". In addition, it is also can be defined as a set of relationships, beliefs, and values

embedded in the political, social, and economic systems that structure male and female gender inequality.

5. Feminism

According to Day (2016), "Feminism is an interdisciplinary approach to gender, gender expression, gender identity, sex, and sexuality issues as understood through social theories and political activism". It is also can be defined as the belief that women should have the same rights, power, and opportunities as men and be treated equally.

6. *Dickinson* Series

According to Andreeva and Petski (2018), "*Dickinson* is a coming-of-age story about a woman's struggle to have her voice heard". It is set in the 19th century and mainly focuses on Emily Dickinson's life. It is depicted from Emily Dickinson's point of view as a young woman who wants her voice heard through the poems she wrote.