

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Research

Women are one of the important figures in literary work. They have a role as a mother, wife, daughter, and others. They are usually told to have motherly, feminine and obedient qualities to their husbands. In literary works, women are usually inseparable from the image because of the influence of patriarchal culture. Even though they are associated with being brave and rebellious like men, the inherent image cannot be easily removed. Based on this image, in literary works, there are many issues related to women. Two of them are women as sexual objects and the objectification of women. These are issues that have been around for a long time and are still ongoing. These issues can be shown directly or indirectly in literary works.

Many literary works have described women as sexual objects are often written by male writers, although some women writers do so. This is a reflection that occurs in real life that men see and treat women as their sexual objects. Those kind of writers usually describe women in terms of their beautiful and attractive physique. This physical attraction makes a woman to be an eye and sexual pleasure. They do not describe women as human beings who have the same feelings and intellect as men. Relationships between men and women are usually written based on physical attraction and do not describe the relationship of feelings between partner.

Therefore, in literary works, objectification of women often occurs. Women in literature are objectified when they are considered to have value if they have good looks and body shape and others easily exploit them. Most women fell this way when they are adult and their reproductive organs start working. Because they are considered to be able to satisfy the sexual appetite of men who create sexual objectification. Sexual objectification is done by men in a variety of ways that are not visible, that is looking at woman's body from head to toe and then the stage of sexual violence (Fredrickson & Roberts 1997).

The researcher selects a novel by J.M. Coetzee entitled *Disgrace* which relates to the issues to be researched. It tells a story a story of David Lurie, a middle-aged lecturer at Cape Technical University, South Africa. Lurie has affairs with women besides that he also hired prostitutes and then harassed his student. He also did the objectification gaze, he looks at women who he finds attractive and scanned their body thoroughly. Objectifying gaze is the way men look at women or their certain body parts sexually which is done in a way that cannot be detected and women do not have the power stop it (Fredrickson & Roberts 1997).

Disgrace is one of several works by J.M. Coetzee. Coetzee is a writer and lecturer from South Africa. He has written many novels and received many awards in the world of literature. He has written eight works of fiction, two works of non-fiction, and one memoir. His award-winning works are *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1980) getting the James Tait Black Memorial Prize and the Geoffrey Faber Memorial Prize and *Age of Iron* (1990) getting the Sunday Express Book of the Year award. Then, his novel entitled *In the Heart of the Country* (1977) won South

Africa's principal literary award and the CAN Prize. Several of his other works received attention and recognition in the world of literature (JM Coetzee Biographical). Also, he received the Booker Prize for *Life & Time of Michael K* (1983) and *Disgrace* (1999). Based on the award he got, Coetzee was the first person to get the Booker Prize twice in 31 years of its history. In 2003, he was awarded the Nobel Prize (Lyall 1999).

Disgrace was released in 1999 which that year was post-apartheid era. This novel described how the situation in South Africa at that time. Coetzee wrote the story from the perspective of a white who had difficulty adapting to the situation. Lurie, who is described as still having white supremacy, makes him look down on black people. This is very difficult for black women because they are seen worthless. Many blacks felt insulted by their portrayal in the story. This is possibly the reason Coetzee moved his citizenship to become an Australian.

White supremacy is what makes him have a character that likes to dominate women. He forces his will on women without giving them a choice. He also cannot accept the opinions of others if they do not match his. He sees himself as a leader in control and women are his followers who will obey his orders. According to Bennett and Royle, the stereotype of men and women in society makes a hierarchy that makes men more powerful than women. They took Thomas Wyatt's sonnet entitled *Whoso List to Hunt*, men are people who do all activities and women are people who are silent waiting to be pursued by men (Bennett & Royle 2004).

The interesting thing about this novel is the way Coetzee describes how well the image of a white man who usually has privileged because he is white then loses everything he has because of the changing era. The black people whom he looked down upon had power over him. Then the women he normally "leads" have the power to "rebel" against what he says. Coetzee showed this change as a real struggle. He pictured that a white man, without his privileged, they are nothing.

Therefore, the novel will be used as the research object. The reason is *Disgrace* is Coetzee's work that contains stories that are taboo to tell by people at that time. The affair, the relationship between college student and lecturer, gang rape, polygamy, and others are the attractions. More importantly, the problem of women as sexual objects in this novel is very clearly seen but written directly and indirectly, making the researcher chooses *Disgrace* to be analyzed. This research uses the theory of radical-cultural feminism by Rosemarie P. Tong and the theory of objectification by Martha C. Nussbaum.

1.2 Identification of the Problem

Disgrace shows that patriarchal culture in society makes men in power and shows the gap in relations between men and women. This novel shows that the power possessed by men, especially those who are white makes them act arbitrarily. This treatment takes the form of looking down on others, forcing of the will, and rape of women. Acts arbitrarily are considered appropriate for men because they act not according to the wishes of women. Therefore, this novel shows the problems that exist in this patriarchal culture.

This novel narrates the story of a white male lecturer named David Lurie who had so many relationships with women whether he was paid for or having an affair with his colleagues. He had a relationship with one of his student named Melanie Isaacs. He several times forced his will to have sex with her. The rape also occurred to Lurie's daughter, Lucy, who was raped case was a case planned by her gardener, Petrus, to get her land by offering her a marriage. This was opposed by Lurie because Petrus already had two wives and polygamy was not white culture.

In this novel, Lurie lost his power as a white man because he was forced to accept everything that went against his wishes. He accepted the marriage of Lucy and Petrus, had an affair with only one woman, and accepted the opinions of others. The women under Lurie's power made a revolt to be free from him. This novel not only showed the power of men over women but also how the relationships between them were depicted in the novel.

1.3 Review of Related Literature

This study has three related studies. The first one is Lianne Barnard's article entitled "*The Politics of Rape: Traces of Radical Feminism in Disgrace by J.M. Coetzee*" it was published in 2013. The second one is Linda Pettersson's article entitled "*A Gender Perspective on the Possession of Power in J.M. Coetzee's Disgrace*" it was published in 2014. The third one is Dip Das' article entitled "*Deciphering Sexual Politics in J.M. Coetzee's Disgrace*" it was published in 2018. I chose these three articles because they relate to this research but have a different focus so they can provide input that can support the opinion I want to express. The selection of these different articles illustrates how different from the following

years' people discussed this novel.

In "*The Politics of Rape: Traces of Radical Feminism in Disgrace by J.M. Coetzee (2013)*", Barnard discusses the rape that occurred in *Disgrace*. This article points out that prostitution is form of rape for some feminists and prostitution for David Lurie is to fulfill his fantasy about women who have the same desire as him. It is the comparison between Lucy's rape and Soraya's prostitution. Lucy a lesbian marries a man to get protection. While Soraya becomes a prostitute to get the protection that money could offer. Barnard exposes that both are the same case but only Lucy's case is questioned.

This article has good arguments, but there is one argument that Barnard does not develop, namely radical feminists related to its economic side. She mentioned that prostitution is part of the price of survival. The position between Soraya and Lucy is the same. Whereas the price for survival they fought for was clearly different. Soraya became a prostitute because she had to do this so that her family could eat while Lucy was willing to marry Petrus because she wanted his protection and did not want the rape to happen again. Even though Lucy knew that it was not only herself who was sacrificed but also her belongings that would be owned by Peter. I think this is the point Barnard missed to dig deeper into namely from the economic side because these women work hard to support themselves.

In "*A Gender perspective on the Possession of Power in J.M. Coetzee's Disgrace (2014)*", Petterson discusses the power that exists in *Disgrace* based on gender views. She focused on Lurie and Petrus who used their strength to make women weak and then controlled them easily. Petersson also pointed out that

women are helpless victims and are not given justice to them. She wrote about Petrus gained the power and wealth after the rape. She compared to Lurie's case, he got what he deserved but Petrus never get his. She claimed that Lurie had changed since losing power by putting down dogs in veterinary clinics. However, he never apologized personally to Soraya and Melanie who showed that there was still a sense of superiority left as a man.

Petterson makes good points in this article but there are confusing points she wrote down. She stated that Lurie at the end of the story realized that women are not the property of men and they have rights over themselves. The rape of Lucy was a turning point that made him realize this. However, Petterson also stated that Lurie's apology to Soraya and Melanie which was not given directly to them did not give the two women justice. In my opinion, Lurie's arrival at Melanie's residence intending to apologize could not be said to be an apology. He even accused Melanie of teasing him first to his father. Then, an indirect apology to Soraya was not an apology because it was Soraya who told Lurie to cut their contact. In my opinion, Lurie's apology was not a sincere apology. Petterson argues that he has acknowledged his mistakes, this cannot be said to be true. It is because an apology must be said or written directly to the wronged person. Lurie did not do such thing.

In "*Deciphering Sexual Politics in J.M. Coetzee's Disgrace (2018)*", Das discusses the patriarchal system that restrained women from doing things. This had some toxic ways to do so and one of them is rape. It was meant to tame women and makes them helpless. He took the case of Lucy who was taken advantage for men to reach their goals. She was part of Petrus' plan to take over her land by making

three men; one of them is his nephew, to rape her. He offered her a protection and for the exchange, her land became his. Das made a point here that rape is the easiest and quickest way to make Lucy willingly gave her land to him.

Das shows that it is true that Lucy was being used to serve the interest of David Lurie and Petrus. He showed that whatever choice Lucy would make, he would still be at a disadvantage. Therefore, Lucy preferred to accept Peter's offer. Das claims that Lucy was aware that the rape of her is a gender crime that could become a racial crime if seen on the other side. I figure that Das see this as revenge against whites. This was made easier by Lucy who was a woman and gave advantage the three rapists' easier access. Locking Lurie was also a desire to show him that he was helpless as a white man to protect his daughter from black rapists. The rape incident is always blamed the victims. This is what usually happens to the rape victims; they can only be quiet but can do nothing. In case the society knows that the victims are raped, they blame them and in some cases parents want them to marry the rapist. There is something that is somewhat unfortunate here, namely Das only focuses on Lucy's case. He can add Melanie case because it relate to Lurie who had power over Melanie. There was a power dynamic in their relationship. Then client and prostitute relationship between Lurie and Soraya which has the power of money in it.

In conducting this research, the researcher analyzes different problems from the three studies above because there are several issues that they have mentioned but do not develop it. The researcher will analyze the relationship between men and women; it includes marriage, affair, and interracial relationship. Also, the

researcher will analyze in terms of objectification of women in those relationships and what are the indications of objectification. The three studies above can be used as a reference for researcher to analyze this research.

1.4 Research Question

This research is conducted to answer the following questions:

1. What kinds of relationships between women and men shown in *Disgrace*?
2. What are the indications of objectification contained in *Disgrace*?

1.5 The Scope of the Research

This novel has several interesting issues. Some of them are race and love. The race shown here is how the transition from whites in power to blacks who have this power. This is indicated by the marriage offer proposed by Petrus. He gave him a choice that gave him an advantage and put Lucy and Lurie who was white under his control. Next is love that is one of the issues in this novel. Lurie felt he has more feelings for both Soraya and Melanie and he expected that feeling to be reciprocated. He was blinded by their companionship that filled his loneliness as a widower. Besides, the author described not only love between men and women, love between father and daughter was also shown here. Lurie loved Lucy even though the relationship between the two was not like a usual father and daughter relationship; he still cared and felt guilty when Lucy was raped.

This research limits to the relationships that occur between men and women contained in *Disgrace* such as marriage, affairs, and interracial relationships. In

these relationships, there was found objectification actions towards women by David Lurie and Petrus. These relationships and objectification actions gave a negative impact on the female characters in the novel namely physical and mental suffering.

1.6 The objective of the Research

This research aims to find out what are the relationships between women and men in this novel. The relationships referred to are marriage, affairs, and interracial relationships. The second, the writer wants to examine the indications of objectification contained in the novel. The indications referred to are instrumentality, denial of autonomy, inertness, fungibility, violability, ownership, and denial of subjectivity. Besides, it shows what efforts are made by women who are suppressed by male power over them. The choice of *Disgrace* by J.M. Coetzee is an appropriate portrait of the oppression of white and black women in the post-apartheid era in South Africa. Coetzee's novel has the perspective of a white man looking at and addressing the problems that occurred during the post-apartheid era.

