CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

In Social life, women are known as the inferior or the weak persons. It means that their position is under the men in many aspects. Basically, women and men have the equal right and obligation since they were born in this world. As human being they have the same opportunity to do anything. They will live together to cover and to support each other in order to achieve their life goal. Unfortunately, in the real life the society makes different paradigm about women and men in which men have more absolute authority over women. This fact makes up gender differentiation.

Actually gender differentiation is not a big problem as long as it does not make inequalities of gender. But, the fact is that gender differentiation causes many inequalities. This phenomenon causes many unfair treatments toward women, such as marginalization, subordination, violence, stereotype, negative judgment, economical property, etc. All these treatments sometimes make the women speculate that they are posted in misery. The problem of gender inequality is the problem of human right that appears in the surface in which women’s position is under the men. Here, men act as super ordinate while the women as subordinate. It is caused different treatment, opportunity, role, and right between men and women in social life. Women’s public decision making
has often dismissed as illogical, emotion, and subjective. On the other hand, men
have always been considered logical, rational, and objective.

Human being is created different and they also get different treatment in
society. Under patriarchal system, women are passive and obey to men. Male are
superior and female are inferior, this condition makes the one rules and the other
is ruled. They did not have opportunity to show their capability and ability in the
society. The patriarchal also gives second position to women; their task is just as
mother and wives.

One of women’s problems is how to get equal position, right, and respect
in the society. It means, to get a better life they need to struggle in order they can
get their position, right, and respect as well as the men. Women themselves
should show their capability to prove who they are and what role they play in
society. Women can take an active part in creating their own lives and exercise in
choosing their freedom (Anderson in Mandell, 1995:5)

_Dreams of Trespass_ is a great novel written by Fatima Mernissi in 1994.
Encompassing her personal and family life, experiences, and the culture of
Moroccan society. This novel talks about Mernissi’s confusion that she
experiences as a young girl in a harem against the backdrop of Moroccan
nationalism, Westernization, and the nascent women's rights movements.

This rich, magical and absorbing growing-up tale set in a little-known
culture reflects many universals about women. The setting is a "domestic harem"
in the 1940s city of Fez, where an extended family arrangement keeps the
women mostly apart from society, as opposed to the more stereotypical "imperial harem," which historically provided sex for sultans and other powerful court officials. Moroccan sociologist Mernissi (*Islam and Democracy*) charts the changing social and political frontiers and limns the personalities and quirks of her world. Here she tells of a grandmother who warns that the world is unfair to women, learns of the confusing WW II via radio news in Arabic and French, watches family members debate what children should hear, wonders why American soldiers' skin doesn't reflect Moroccan-style racial mixing and decides that sensuality must be a part of women's liberation. With much folk wisdom—happiness, the author's mother told her, "was when there was a balance between what you gave and what you took"—this book not only tells a winning personal story but also helps to feminize a much-stereotyped religion.

"Dreams of trespass" tells about women’s misery living in a harem and also their struggle to get out of it. Talking about the *hudud*, Mernissi did not know exactly what the meaning of the *hudud* is. Education is to know the *hudud*, the sacred frontiers. Aunt Habiba said that “Allah has sent the Northern armies to Morroco to punish the man for violating the *hudud* protecting women. When you hurt a woman, you are violating Allah’s sacred frontiers. To be a Muslim was to respect the *hudud*. And for a child, to respect the *hudud* was to obey”. In brief, the *hudud* was whatever the teacher forbade. But since then, looking for the frontiers has become her life’s occupation.
Mernissi’s childhood was happy because the frontier was crystal clear. The first frontier was the threshold separating her family’s salon from the main courtyard. She was not allowed to step out into that courtyard in the morning until her mother woke up, which meant that she had to amuse herself from 6 a.m. to 8 a.m. without making any noise. She could sit on the cold white marble threshold, but she had to refrain from joining with her older cousins at the play because her mother thought that she does not know how to defend herself yet and for her mother “playing is a kind of war”. In her own home she could play the seated promenade only. Just need three things to play. The first is to be stuck somewhere, the second is to have a place to sit, and the third is to be in a humble state of mind, so you can accept that your time is worth noting. The game consists in contemplating familiar grounds as if they were alien to you. Living in a harem is different from living in the house commonly. The couples live with a big responsibility. They had to obey all the roles in a harem. Her mother kept saying that she could rely on her cousin, Samir, to do all the rebelling for her because she has to learn to scream and protest, just the way she learned to walk and talk.

The harem makes impossible for men and women to see each other, so everybody proceeds with their duties. Mother Chama presented her theory about how the first harem got started. In her opinion, once upon a time, men fought each other constantly. Until to decide who would be the authority, they had to catch women, and the man who catches the most women will be appointed to be
“a sultan”, because they thought “the sultan must have something the others do not have”. And from here was the idea of building houses got started. Houses with gates and locks were needed to constraint the women. Life in harem seemed so hard. When the women wanted a freedom, when they wanted to be happy with their family without any rules, when they wanted to listen the radio after the men go out from harem, when they had to breakfast, lunch, and dinner in the same table and in the exact time, when the women cannot play together with the men, when they just stay inside a harem and when they could not go outside just for sightseeing. Of course it means that the women are the creatures which have to protect because of their weaknesses.

Mernissi’s harem in Fez was surrounded by high walls and with the exception of the little square chunk of sky that she could see from the courtyard below, nature did not exist. She could not open the shutter to look outside when she wanted to escape. All the windows opened onto the courtyard. There were none facing the street. Her house gate was a definite hudud, or frontier, because she needed permission to step in or out. Every move had to be justified and even getting to the gate was a procedure. Her harem was very different by grandmother Yasmina’s. Yasmina’s harem was so beautiful. The harem on the farm was ousted in a gigantic T-shaped one-story building surrounded by gardens and ponds. The right side of the house belonged to the women, the left to the men, and a delicate two-meter-high bamboo fence marked the hudud (frontier) between them.
When Mernissi and Samir were grown up, they could not play together anymore because of their culture which forbid the adults to play together. She was very sad to go to the hammam without Samir, especially since they could no longer play the games they had usually played during the three hours they spent there. Suddenly, she felt sad for no reason and Mina said that life was going to be tougher from now on for both her and Samir. Childhood is when the differences do not matter. Both men and women live miserable lies because of the separation. Separation creates an enormous gap in understanding. “Men do not understand women, and women do not understand men and it all starts when little girls are separated from little boys in the hammam. Then a cosmic frontier splits the planet in two halves. The frontier indicates the line of power because wherever there is a frontier, there are two kinds of creatures walking on Allah’s earth, the powerful on one side, and the powerless on the other”, said Mina. Then she asked Mina how she would know on which side she stood. Mina answered quickly, shortly, and very clearly, ”if you can’t get out, you are on the powerless side”.

_Dreams of trespass_ is a great novel especially in dealing with conducting feminism and good for women as a reference when they are in misery. There are three reasons why the researcher is interested to conduct the study about this novel. The first is _Dreams of trespass_ has the uncommon story; this is written according to the life of the writer. The researcher thinks that it is very great novel because it comes from the writer’s own experience living in a big building
covering her body from the society. This novel tells about the life of a woman in a harem; a woman here is Mernissi herself. Everyone wants to be free in their life. Living in a harem makes their attitude limited. They had to live with any rules because of the culture in their city. Life in a harem needs struggle to go outside, even every move had to be justified and even getting to the gate was a procedure and it is absolutely very different from our life which live happily, in freedom, and without any rules which separated us in difference, men from women, and vice versa. From this condition, Mernissi has intended to share her uncommon life in a harem to the reader to describe what life in a harem is like.

The second reason is from the diction used in this memoir. Each sentence written on the memoir is mostly understandable. It makes the reader catch the point easily what this memoir means in every sentence. It also uses the language which has deep motivation so that it can encourage women to cope with the misery.

The passions for humanity that reflect in this memoir become the last reason. *Dreams of trespass* has the magical words to encourage weak women to cope with the misery. To be free in life is everyone’s dream. To get the equal right in all aspects of society, to get the same treatment, opportunity, and role, no violence, and no subordination is the passion of women that have to face gender differentiation. Although the way to get out is very difficult to do, so many procedures, and must use logical reason why they want to go out, they try to go out as they can. For them, living in a harem is like living in a jail. Someone
cannot go out easily, although she just look around and looking for different situation outside the house.

Feminism has significant correlation with women’s lives in considering issues about women’s life. Feminists have revised some of these classical perspectives to explain better the position of women in society. Feminism goal is to change the traditional view of women so that women can realize that they are not a “significant other”, but that each woman is a valuable person possessing the privileges and rights as every man. Feminist declare that women must define themselves and assert their own voices in the areas of politic, society, education, and arts. Feminists hope to create a society where the male and female voices are equally valued. Feminism enables to answer the questions about women’s status and position in the society more accurately.

Based on the previous reasons, the writer will observe the *Dreams of Trespass* memoir by using feminist approach. So, the writer constructs the title **WOMEN’S STRUGGLE TO COPE WITH THE MISERY OF LIVING IN A HAREM IN FATIMA MERNISSI’S DREAMS OF TRESPASS, TALES OF A HAREM GIRLHOOD (1994): A FEMINIST APPROACH.**

### B. Literature Review

The first literature review is from MaileTou. According to Maile Tou on his review about *Dreams of Trespass*, posted in http://www.mtholyoke.edu/courses/mjijad/forum/messages/204.shtml, on
December 29, 2003 at 10:00:13, he discuss about “Defining the Frontier”. On his review, Mernissi wanted to know what the “hudud” or frontier is. Whereas, the truth is that the frontier is one of the main entities that shape someone’s life and being, but no one answers her question about it. It means, every person has a different frontier, all depending on the individual and what is important, sacred to that person. So, the frontier is indeed made up from different circumstances, identified by different individuals and administered by different powerhouses, but the main thread that runs through all of them is the distinctive oppression that divides everyone into strictly regulated categories.

The second review is from Karen Henry, posted in http://www.wrmea.com/backissues/1295/9512068.html. He is an Arab-American free-lance writer and lecturer from Michigan. In her review, she glimpses a world of Arab women struggling to maintain some aspects of tradition while emerging into a modern and freer world. As the women identify the nature and limitations of their power and the opportunities for change because of their oral tradition, a tradition that is very important to the Arabs, they do not abandon their dreams.

Actually, the writer is not the first person who takes research or review related to this novel. But, it does not mean that the writer is plagiarism. These all literature reviews have the same characteristic that all of them focus on women’s struggle living in a harem, but there are the differences between the writer’s research and both literature reviews above. The first is the writer takes more specific object that is women’s struggle to cope with the misery. The second is
the researcher uses the specific approach that is feminist approach. And the third is this study will also explain about women’s position based on feminist approach.

C. Problem Statement

Considering the idea that has been explained above, the major problem in this study is:

“How is women’s struggle to cope with the misery of living in a harem reflected on the major character in Fatima Mernissi’s *Dreams of Trespass*”?

D. Objective of The Study

The objectives of the study for this research paper are follows:

1. To analyze Fatima Mernissi’s *Dreams of Trespass* based on the structural elements of the memoir.

2. To analyze and to describe women’s struggle to cope with the misery in Fatima Mernissi’s *Dreams of Trespass* based on feminist approach.

E. Limitation of The Study

The researcher will focus on the major character’s (Mernissi) struggle in Fatima Mernissi’s *Dreams of Trespass*, viewed from the feminist perspective.
F. Benefit of The Study

There are two benefits expected of the study:

1. Theoretical Benefit

This study is expected to contribute to the large body of knowledge, particularly the literary studies in Fatima Mernisi’s *Dreams of Trespass*.

2. Practical Approach

The study is expected to enrich knowledge and experience of the writer and the other researcher who have interest with literary studies, especially about the feminist issues on the memoir “*Dreams of Trespass*” based on feminist approach.

G. Research Method

1. Type of the Study

In this research, the researcher uses descriptive qualitative method. Descriptive qualitative method is a research which employs the method of collecting, describing, classifying, and analyzing the data and then drawing conclusion.

2. Object of the Study

The object of the study is *Dreams of Trespass* memoir which consists of 242 pages. This memoir is directed by Fatima Mernissi and distributed by Basic books, New York in 1994.
3. **Type of the Data and Data Source**

The type of the data is the content of the memoir itself, entitled *Dreams of Trespass* directed by Fatima Mernissi. In this study, the researcher divides the data source into two categories: primary data source and secondary data source.

a. **Primary Data Source**

The primary data source of the study is *Dreams of Trespass* memoir that is directed by Fatima Mernissi, distributed by Basic Books, New York in 1994.

b. **Secondary Data Source**

The writer takes the secondary data source, including reference and material related to the study whether picking up from books or internet.

4. **Technique of the Data Collection**

The methods of collecting data are as follows:

a. Reading the memoir several times until the writer gets adequate information

b. Identifying the topic of the memoir

c. Determining the character that will be analyzed

d. Reading some related books to find out the theory, data, and information required
e. Making some notes of important parts in both primary data and secondary data
f. Classifying the data into some categories
g. Arranging and developing the selected data into a good unity towards the topic of the study
h. Drawing conclusion to get the final result

5. Technique of the Data Analysis

The method employed in analyzing the data is descriptive qualitative analysis. In which the data are collected, described, and then analyzed. It concerns with the relationship between the memoir and the feminist theory to show how women’s struggle to cope with the misery of living in a harem is reflected in the story.

H. Research Paper Organization

The writer makes an organization of this paper in order to make an easy understanding. There are six chapters in this research paper.


Chapter II is Underlying Theory. It deals with Notion of Feminism, Major Principles of Feminism, Structural Elements of the Novel, and Theoretical
Application. Chapter III deals with Social Historical Background of Morocco in the Twentieth Century which covers social aspect, political aspect, economic aspect, science and technology aspect, cultural aspect, religious aspect, and Moroccan Women’s Condition. Chapter IV is Structural Analysis of the novel, which involves Character and Characterization, Setting, Plot, Point of View, Style, and Theme. Chapter V is Feminist Analysis deals with the problems in the novel. And chapter VI contains Conclusion and Suggestion.