

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

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.

Fatima Mernissi, she was a Moroccan sociologist and writer. Born in Fez to a middle-class family, Mernissi studied at the Mohammed V University in Rabat and later went to Paris, where she worked briefly as a journalist. She pursued her graduate education in the United States and in 1973 obtained a PhD in sociology from Brandeis University. Returning to Morocco, she joined the sociology department at Mohammed V University, where she long lectured while also holding a research appointment at the Moroccan Institut Universitaire de Recherche Scientifique, also in Rabat. As one of the best known Arab-Muslim feminists, Mernissi's influence extends beyond a narrow circle of intellectuals. She is a recognized public figure in her own country and abroad, especially in France, where she is well known in feminist circles. Her major books have been translated into several languages, including English, German, Dutch, and Japanese. She writes regularly on women's issues in the popular press, participates in public debates promoting the cause of Muslim

women internationally, and has supervised the publication of a series of books on the legal status of women in Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia.

Mernissi's work explores the relationship between sexual ideology, gender identity, sociopolitical organization, and the status of women in Islam; her special focus, however, is Moroccan society and culture. As a feminist, her work represents an attempt to undermine the ideological and political systems that silence and oppress Muslim women. She does this in two ways: first, by challenging the dominant Muslim male discourse concerning women and their sexuality, and second, by providing the “silent” woman with a “voice” to tell her own story. Her book *Doing Daily Battle* (1988) is a collection of annotated interviews with Moroccan women who present a lucid account of the painful reality of their lives as they struggle against poverty, illiteracy, and sexual oppression. From the writing of her first book, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society* (1975), Mernissi has sought to reclaim the ideological discourse on women and sexuality from the stranglehold of patriarchy. She critically examines the classical corpus of religious-juristic texts, including the *adīth*, and reinterprets them from a feminist perspective. In her view, the Muslim ideal of the “silent, passive, obedient woman” has nothing to do with the authentic message of Islam. Rather, it is a construction of the ‘*ulamā*’, the male jurists-theologians who manipulated and distorted the religious texts in order to preserve the patriarchal system.

For Mernissi, Islamic sexual ideology is predicated on a belief that women's inherent sexual power, if left uncontrolled, would wreak havoc on

the male-defined social order; hence the necessity to control women's sexuality and to safeguard Muslim society through veiling, segregation, and the legal subordination of women. Mernissi's work explores the impact of this historically constituted ideological system on the construction of gender and the organization of domestic and political life in Muslim society today. One book, *The Veil and the Male Elite* (first published in French in 1987), critically examines the historical context of Muslim law and tradition and argues that the original message of the Prophet Muhammad, which called for equality between the sexes, has been misrepresented by later political leaders and religious scholars. Turning her attention to the Arab world today, Mernissi situates the woman question within a more inclusive framework that links it to problems of political legitimacy, social stagnation, and the absence of democracy. Another book, *Islam and Democracy: Fear of the Modern World* (1992), is an impassioned plea for Muslims to reclaim the best of their tradition and to cast off their fear of the West. This can be accomplished, she maintains, only through a radical overhaul of the political, ideological, and social structures that have for generations conspired to deny the majority of Muslims, men and women alike, the modern benefits of equality, democracy, literacy, and economic security.

In Fatima Mernissi's widely acclaimed book *Dreams of Trespass*, the storyline weaves around the tale of a young girl's life in a traditional Moroccan harem that is as much enchanting as it is disparaging. As we follow the young girl from day to day and experience all the little trivialities of her

life, we notice that she is quite a precocious little child. She is constantly questioning, in fact, her mother and aunts constantly tell her that she should stop asking questions all the time. At first glance, it seems as if her questions are of little or no importance and that they are merely things any young child would ask as they are stepping out into the real world. But upon closer examination, we can see that it is really the life in the harem that she is questioning. The truth is that the frontier is one of the main entities that shape her life and being: No one answered her questions. In a harem, you don't necessarily ask questions to get answers. You ask questions just to understand what is happening to you. It is because she sees how the frontier seems to be changing everything about her and her surroundings that Mernissi decides that she must figure out exactly how it works, before everything she knows slips under her feet. We will also see how the young Mernissi has an almost paradoxical relationship with the different frontiers. For her, it is both a source of happiness and a source of pain; it is mysterious to her but at the same time, she can feel how it smothers her and the other women. At the beginning, it is very obvious that she feels very overwhelmed by the frontier: But since then, looking for the frontier has become my life's occupation. Anxiety eats at me whenever I cannot situate the geometric line organizing my powerlessness. Eventually, she will discover the hard way, that the frontier is not so cut and dry and that there is an equilibrium that has lasted for generations, trying to define the frontier will make her journey of self-discovery one of tumultuous means. The most obvious frontier for Mernissi is that of the harem, this is the

same for most of the women in the novel too: Our house gate was a definite hudud, or frontier, because you needed permission to step in or out. Every move had to be justified and even getting to the gate was a procedure.

She slowly realizes that while she is off having fun with her cousins and Samir, the women of the harem are slowly choking in the stale air. Mernissi's mother is probably one of the most powerful women in the novel, who is constantly standing up to her father. One example of a way in which the harem is a restrictive frontier and thorn in Mernissi's mother's side is the fact that all these families have to live together, all struggling to gain their own individuality while constantly being suffocated by one another: Mother dreamed of living alone with Father and us kids. "Whoever heard of ten birds living together squashed into a single nest?" she would say. "It is not natural to live in a large group, unless your objective is to make people feel miserable". Another aspect of how the harem dictates how one lives is the eating ritual that exist within the walls: For one of the problems in the communal house was that you could not just open a refrigerator when you were hungry and grab something to eat. In the first place, there were no refrigerators back then. More importantly, the entire idea behind the harem was that you lived according to the group's rhythm. You could not just eat when you felt like it.

There are a multitude of other frontiers that exist in and outside of the harem, all entertaining their own respective areas. The sea between Christians and Muslims, the rules for women when it comes to dressing, the frontier

between children (which Mernissi has a very painful experience with) and finally there is even a frontier for listening to the radio. Even Yasmina who lives a relatively liberal and comfortable life experiences unhappiness and has her own definition of what it means to exist in a frontier: Sometimes, she said that to be stuck in a harem simply meant that a woman had lost her freedom of movement. Other times, she said that a harem meant misfortune because a woman had to share her husband with many others. Yasmina herself had to share Grandfather with eight co-wives, which meant that she had to sleep alone for eight nights before she could hug and snuggle with for one. “And hugging and snuggling your husband is wonderful,” she said. “I am so happy your generation will not have to share husbands anymore”. Yasmina is one of the best examples in the novel of how every person has a different frontier, all depending on the individual and what is important, sacred to that person. She also tries to explain to Mernissi what a harem really is and how those who live in it uphold it: The word “harem,” she said, was a slight variation of the word haram, the forbidden, the proscribed. It was the opposite of halal, the permissible. The harem was about private space and the rules regulating it. In addition, Yasmina said, it did not need walls. Once you knew what was forbidden, you carried the harem within. You had it in your head, “inscribed under your forehead and under your skin.” That idea of an invisible harem, a law tattooed in the mind, was frightfully unsettling to me.

An interesting aspect of the novel is how Mernissi and the women also see harems being created in the Western world. The basic implication here was that the “powerful” countries had a desire to create harems in order to secure their power: Christians, just like Muslims, fight each other all the time, and the Spanish and the French almost killed one another when they crossed our frontier. Then, when neither was able to exterminate the other, they decided to cut Morocco in half. They put soldiers near ‘Arbaoua and said from now on, to go North, you needed a pass because you were crossing into Spanish Morocco. To go South, you needed another pass, because you were crossing into French Morocco. If you did not go along with what they said, you got stuck at ‘Arbaoua, an arbitrary spot where they had built a huge gate and said it was a frontier...No one ever had heard of a frontier splitting the land in two before. The frontier was an invisible line in the mind of warriors...All you need is soldiers to force others to believe in it. In the landscape itself, nothing changes. The frontier is in the mind of the powerful. However, it would be wrong to say that only the powerful control the harem and frontiers. The truth is that often mothers will instruct children to follow the rules, even if they don’t agree with it. Hanan was hard to come by downstairs, especially among the mothers, who were too busy teaching you to respect the frontier to bother with tenderness. As one can see, there is a plethora of different individuals and entities that create and uphold the frontiers. One of the characters in the novel that uphold the harem with all her energy is Lalla Mani. Ultimately, she represents traditionalism in the novel and almost always sides with the men.

When she watching out for her loved ones, it is always under the pretense of making sure that they do not violate the hudud. There are many instances where she shows her disapproval for behavior that “violates” traditionalism. Then, she would preach repentance from sin, and predict hell for everyone forgetful of Allah’s commands in general, and for women who wanted to discard the veil, dance, sing, and have fun in particular.

There are four 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. This novel tells about life experience that is very educational for the readers because it can give the readers more experience and knowledge about the freedom, especially for women.

The second reason is from the diction used in this novel. Each sentence written on the novel is mostly understandable. It makes the reader catch the point easily what this novel means in every sentence.

The third reason that makes this novel interesting is important message inside its story. This novel not only tells about Fatima’s childhood, but it also tells the readers about the other attractive story, for example Scheherazade, The King, and The Words and also Princess Budur’s fate which include in A thousand and one nights. There are some important messages about real life, for example about the important of justice, brotherhood, loyalty, rigidity, and life struggle.

The last reason why the reader interest to study this novel because by reading this book, the reader can know about the tradition and culture in other world, especially Morocco at 1940s. It can easily make the reader differentiate the life style in Morocco when life at 1940s and life at this age.

Existentialist approach shows the rules of women to get a confession in their society. Not only a men but also a women wants to be exist and can show what they want.

Based on the previous reasons, the writer will observe the *Dreams of Trespass* novel by using Existentialist Approach. So, the writer constructs the title SEARCH FOR EXISTENCE IN FATIMA MERNISSI'S *DREAMS OF TRESPASS* NOVEL (1994): AN EXISTENTIALIST APPROACH.

B. Literature Review

The first research by Fitriyana, Melia (UMS, 2011) entitled THE CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN FATIMA MERNISSI'S *DREAMS OF TRESPASS* (1994): A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH. Her research focuses on a critical different perspectives on cultural aspects and the cultural aspect treatment of men and women in society. Because this title of the research is about culture, so the researcher using Sociological Approach to help the researcher analysed this novel. In this research, researcher found some differences in the cultural aspect for example men have special room but women not have room like men.

The Second research by Khasanah, Khikmahtun (UMS, 2011) entitled *DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN IN FATIMA MERNISSI'S DREAMS OF TRESPASS TALES OF A HAREM GIRLHOOD (1994): A FEMINIST APPROACH*. In this research, the researcher focus on discrimination against that happen of women life. Here, researcher show how women get treatment that not fair. Women activities very limited with rules. In this research, researcher want to show the power of women to against discrimination. Women try to live with herself rules and try to get freedom start from in home until out home. The researcher using feminist approach to analysis *Dreams of Trespass* novel and to support her title.

The third research by Laili, Najikhatul (UMS, 2011) entitled *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*. She describes about struggle of Mernissi to get freedom in Harem. In this research, the researcher show how Mernissi get the freedom in situation that not support women to get freedom like men. Here Mernissi try to cope the misery of living in a Harem that have many rules especially rules for women.

The fourth research by Restiwi, Siti (UMS, 2011) entitled *BETWEEN THE TRADITIONAL AND THE MODERN: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF FATIMA MERNISSI'S DREAMS OF TRESPASS TALES OF A HAREM GIRLHOOD (1994)*. This research focus on a critical discourse analysis between the traditional and the modern. In *Dreams of Trespass* novel

there are many differences between traditional and modern. What the habit of the traditional and the modern, how the position of women in traditional and modern. The researcher show the differences, the habit, and the position of women between traditional and modern.

The fifth research by Utomo, Wahyu (UMS, 2011) entitled GENDER INEQUALITY IN FATIMA MERNISSI'S NOVEL *DREAMS OF TRESPASS* (1994): A SOCIALIST FEMINIST APPROACH. In Utomo, Wahyu research he is focus on analysis gender inequality in *Dreams of Trespass* novel. Inequality between men and women exactly seen in this novel. The researcher show differences that happen with women in political, economic, cultural, religious, and social aspect. Beside that, the researcher show how the women perceive it. Socialist feminist approach used by the researcher to combined how the inequality happen and what the women do.

The difference between their research is in this research, researcher using Existentialist Approach to support her title, this research focus on how the women search the existence reflected in this novel.

C. Problem Statement

Based on the title and background above, the writer formulates the problem statement as follows: “How is search for existence reflected in Fatima Mernissi's *Dreams of Trespass* novel using Existentialist approach?”

D. Limitation of the Study

To carry out the study, the researcher needs to limit the study. The researcher is going to analyze women's searching for existence as the major character in *Dreams of Trespass* novel written by Fatima Mernissi based on an Existentialist Approach.

E. Objective of the Study

Dealing with the statement above, the objective of the study are:

1. To analyze the structural elements of *Dreams of Trespass* novel.
2. To analyze the novel based on Existentialist Approach that helps the writer to describe women's existence.

F. Benefit of the Study

The benefit expected from this study are as follows:

1. Theoretical Benefit

To give some contribution of the large body of knowledge, especially the literary study on *Dreams of Trespass* novel written by Fatima Mernissi using Existentialist Approach.

2. Practical Benefit

This study is expected to improve the researcher understanding especially on an Existentialist Approach in literature.

G. Research Method

In this research, the writer analyze the Search for Existence in *Dreams of Trespass* by using qualitative method. The study of search for existence in this research paper will cover:

1. Type of the Study

The type of this study is qualitative study in the form of library.

2. Object of the Study

The object of the study is *Dreams of Trespass* novel.

3. Type of the Data and the Data Source

In this study, there are two source of data namely primary data and secondary data source.

a. Primary Data

The primary data are taken from the book of *Dreams of Trespass* novel.

b. Secondary Data Source

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

4. Technique of the Data Collection

a. Reading the novel

b. Browsing to the internet to get some information, article that related to the research.

- c. Taking notes or information in both primary and the secondary data and finding out the important data.
- d. Arranging the data into several parts based on its classification.
- e. Developing data which are provided.

5. Techniques of the Data Analysis

The data are analyzed by using descriptive analysis. It concern with structural elements of the novel and Exsistentalist analysis.

H. Research Paper Organization

In order to give the guidance for the writer and the reader in reading the research paper the writer divides this research paper into five chapters. Chapter 1 is introduction that consist of Background of the study, literature review, problem statement, research limitation, research objective, research benefit, research methodology, research organization. Chapter II is Underlying theory. It presents the notion of Existentialist, major principles of Existentialist of literature, structural elements literary and theoretical application. Chapter III is Historical Background. It presents the Social historical background of Marocco in 1940 and Biography of Fatima Mernissi as the writer. Chapter VI is Structural analysis of the novel, which is consist of structural elements of character and characterization, setting, point of view, plot, style, theme, and discussion. Chapter V is consist of Existentialist analysis. The last chapter is Chapter IV is conclusion and suggestion.