

Superstition in G.R.R Martin's *Fire and Blood*

Miftahul Rizaldi

English Literature Study Program, Faculty of Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri Surabaya

e-mail: miftahulrizaldi.19046@mhs.unesa.ac.id

Abstrak

Tahayul adalah tentang pikiran dan perilaku manusia, berdasarkan berbagai alasan dan ditujukan untuk berbagai tujuan. Ini memiliki banyak bentuk, mulai dari keyakinan tentang peristiwa tertentu, pertanda, dan ritual, yang dapat ditemukan di setiap bagian dunia. Penelitian ini membahas studi tahayul dalam buku *Fire & Blood* (2018) oleh G.R.R Martin. Studi ini bertujuan untuk menggambarkan Superstition dan mengungkap dampak tahayul pada karakter Westeros dalam *Fire & Blood*. Buku ini merupakan sumber data utama dan mengumpulkan data, yang dalam hal ini akan membaca buku secara menyeluruh dan mencatat data. Setelah pengumpulan data, penelitian akan melanjutkan untuk menganalisis data dengan menggunakan konsep tahayul oleh Vyse (2013). Hasil studi menunjukkan bahwa tahayul didasarkan pada peristiwa dan atribut magis yang mengundang Targaryen dan Rakyat untuk jatuh ke dalam ketidakpastian, yang menyebabkan mereka mengadopsi keyakinan dan perilaku tahayul. Keyakinan tahayul berupa kisah rakyat, Kepercayaan pada Sihir, Doa Penyembuhan, mitos, ide palsu, dan mimpi. Untuk bentuk perilaku tahayul adalah tindakan atau ritual, adat perkawinan, tradisi meletakkan telur di buaian, dan tahayul pada binatang, di mana naga bertindak dan percaya secara tahayul. Dampak yang ditampilkan dalam buku ini adalah dua: sosial, di mana masyarakat terbagi oleh keyakinan mereka sendiri sambil menuduh keyakinan orang lain sebagai dosa, dan emosional, di mana orang gagal berpikir kritis, rentan terhadap ketidakpastian, dan bertindak berdasarkan keyakinan palsu mereka.

Kata Kunci: *Takhayul; Perilaku takhayul; Kepercayaan takhayul.*

Abstract

Superstition is about the human mind and behavior, based on different reasons and aimed at different purposes. It has many forms, from a belief about specific events, omen, and rituals, which can be found in every part of the world. This research discusses a study of the Superstition in the book *Fire & Blood* (2018) by G.R.R Martin. The study aims at describing the Superstition and unveiling the impact of Superstition on the characters of Westeros in *Fire & Blood*. The book is the primary source of data and collects the data, which, in this case, will be reading the book thoroughly and listing the data. After data collection, it will continue to analyze the data by using the Superstition concept by Vyse (2013). The study results indicate that Superstition is based on the magical events and attributes that invite Targaryen and the People to fall into uncertainty, which cause them to commit superstitious beliefs and behavior. Such belief is in the form of Folklore, Belief in Magic, Healing prayer, myth, false ideas, and dreams. The behavior is an action or ritual, a custom marriage, the tradition of putting an egg in a cradle, and animal superstition, where the dragon superstitiously acts and believes. The impact showcased in the book is two: social, which is where society is divided by their own belief while accusing the other's belief as a sin, and emotional, which is when people fail to think critically, prone to uncertainty, and act upon their false beliefs.

Keywords: *Superstition; Superstitious Behavior; Superstitious Belief.*

INTRODUCTION

Belief is something people have in common. Many forms can be taken according to the individual's background, environment, and even culture. Belief itself can be varied according to their fields with their differences and uniqueness. Some experts who excelled in

the field of Psychology stated that belief itself is a mental level or mental acknowledgment if something in this world is entirely true, without further requirements of proof, such as Sigmund Freud in his book *The Future of an Illusion* and William James in his book *The Will to Believe*. Belief itself varies; it cannot just form certainty in a person but also fuel their action. As Albert Bandura, who is a

Canadian psychologist, emphasized that belief strongly influences behavior to achieve the results and goal in any way: a motivation (1986).

In the area of psychology, beliefs on magic could be a symptom of irrational beliefs, and it is called as Superstition (Vyse, 2013). Superstition has been there for the next of human history and has existed in every culture and civilization on Earth. As this research will use superstition, we will explain it briefly here. Superstitions come from a lack of understanding or knowledge of the world and are amplified by the fear of the unknown. According to Vyse, superstition can be understood through a psychological lens. He argues that superstitions are often rooted in our natural tendency to seek patterns and meaning in the world around us, even in situations where there is no logical or causal relationship between events (Vyse, 2013).

The reason why the researcher is taking an interest in this topic is mainly due to the intriguing concept of Superstition, which is rarely discussed in literature. Studies are more likely to cover a topic that happens in real life, such as Sports Superstition or Luck Superstition. Researching literature using Superstition is an interesting experience as the limited previous studies on literary works, and the rarity of the research make it challenging for the researcher. By using superstition concept in literary studies, the researcher can understand why people being superstitious, how it depicted through the event and situation which occurred in the book, how does superstition affect their psychology and definitely this can be found on how they are think and act.

The importance of superstition in literary works or studies are to study deeper into the roots of culture, human psychology, beliefs that exist in society, and blurred lines between rational and irrationality. By using superstition, the studies can unveil the superstition which often times are rooted in cultures. The studies can spot the superstition in the storyline such as urban legends, myth, tale, or even magical things that the characters believed. Continuing about the importance of superstition, this concept can be used to unveil how the superstition brings an impact to a characters life. It can be analyzed on how the life of a character or multiple character become when they are avid superstitious person. From Social to Physical impact, studies can find these point and use it on a character and unveil the negative or positive impact of superstition in their life. By this, literary studies can find how superstition exist within a book or novel in a plain sight but hidden.

Choosing superstition as an approach to study this subject also because of reasons. *Fire & Blood* is a fictional historical book with magical element that can be seen plainly. Yet the reasons the researcher still keeping with the subject and topic even though the genre of the subject

is fictional and magic are anywhere in the book, are due to how the book provides the researcher many data that never been analyzed in literature by using superstition. Since mostly it is just stating about the superstition like ritual or lucky charm, by using Vyse's superstition the data can be revealed will be lot more vast and more detailed, as according to the Vyse's book Believing in Magic. Superstition can also come from the psychology of an individual and for this case, the characters in the book. It can give or provide more insight and finding such as which are the belief only superstition and which are superstitious belief and behavior, and with the impact that come from being a superstitious person or characters. Hence, superstition concept was chosen and used for this study. As the researcher wanted to analyze the characters in the book, as how they shows indication on superstitious belief and behavior. Researcher did also studied the impacts of superstition and how it lead the characters in the book and explain why they being superstitious.

This study will be supported by previous studies with the same Superstition related topic. The first previous study is "Cultural manifestation in superstition of Minangkabau society" written by Ridha Hasnul Ulya, Harris Effendi Thahar, Yasmin Asri, and Agustina (2018). According to researchers, Superstition is a belief that cannot be fathomized by rational or logical thoughts (Ulya et al., 2018). Their finding is that the Minangkabau Society has four types or patterns of Superstition: Negative, Positive, Prediction, and Witchcraft. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that there are four patterns of Superstition, namely negative, positive, prediction, and witchcraft. Superstition based on the study and findings can also develop ethical values for those who believe or act on it for some instance (Ulya et al., 2018).

Next, the previous study is titled "Impact and Consequence of Superstition on Society Especially in the Field of Living Context" by Bodising Narah & Ranjit Taku in 2020. Their finding is that society tends to fall to superstition because it is deeply rooted in cultures. Take an example: women are often being mistreated and sexually abused for the sake of superstitious ritual, and superstition slows the progress of development in a society due to their superstitious belief as people have more faith to witchcraft and lack rationality (Narah & Taku, 2020). Many individuals are even unaware if they are superstitious based on sociological terms. They find that superstition is always tied with fear of harm that befalls them if they do not or fail to do certain things (Narah & Taku, 2020).

The third study is "A Case study of the effects of Superstitions and Beliefs on Mali Socioeconomic Development," written by Yaya Dissa, Togo Adjouro, Aminata Traore, and Aly Yorote in 2017. In their study,

they found that Malian people still living in a world of illusion or archaic world blinded by a lack of education, fears, and inability to accept science, which in the end results in their lives being controlled by superstition that persist and unchallenged (Dissa et al., 2017).

The fourth previous study is Perceptions of Millennials on Filipino Superstitious Belief, written by Adonis S. Besa, Hassanal P. Abusama, Genebelee M. Lao, Elyza G. Abraham, Fareeda de la Cruz, Sheena L. Dulduelao, and Seth Nahzier S. Perocho in 2021. In the study, they find out further that millennials still believe in the power of superstitions according to their backgrounds, experiences, traditions, or even from their ancestors. Being superstitious can influence how people see things around them, impacting everything inside an individual's life, from decision-making to behavior (Besa et al., 2021).

The fifth previous study is titled The Magic That Binds Us: Stress And Superstition, written by Donald Thomas Markle in 2007. The collected data in the study then reveal that the performance of individuals or humans fails to be influenced when they are not in a state of deep anxiety when performing a task (Markle, 2007). Donald stated that the results are unexpected since the reason people believe in magical belief is utilized by an individual as one significant benefit, which is to moderate the anxiety. However, the researcher also stated that the study's results are consistent with the hypothesis, which is that individuals rely on magical thinking to moderate the stress and anxiety that they get while doing certain tasks.

Similarly, Amrina (2016) also examines the issue of superstition in Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. The author writes that there are only three types of superstition present in the book, and then the superstition is directed through characters and settings. Lastly, Mark Twain addresses superstition for the aim of helping the story progress and for entertainment purposes (Amrina, 2016).

What makes this research different from other studies is that people only use superstition concept mainly in the real world, as it is often used for psychological purposes in society. Ranging from experimenting a class of people to conducting a research on animals. Psychology or Expert mostly uses it to understand how human and animal start to believe in something that is so ambiguous and irrational and proceed to act on it to secure themselves from lack of control or deep anxiety feeling, that at one point proven to be effective for the superstitious person and at another point proven to be a disadvantage. There are previous studies about Superstition in literature, but the difference with the author's research is that the subject or the data source is different as the author uses *Fire & Blood* (2018) as a primary data source. Thus, the results and the data will differ.

As most superstitions are used in experiments and in the real world, like the previous study that uses literary works as data, here the researcher also uses it in literature works to analyze the Superstitions in the world of Westeros in *Fire & Blood*. As the world of Westeros is set in medieval times, similar to the real world, magic and myths are very rich in that environment, and the society of Westeros, which cannot think critically, makes superstition present plainly. The researcher will use the Superstition concept according to what experts have determined about Superstition itself. This study will give more examples of superstition that can also come in a form of misguided judgement, false idea, and irrational behavior of the characters in the book. It also gives more example of the impact of superstition on the characters in the book as how it shown in their life. Overall. This study will be different than the previous as it will give more newer data and explanation.

METHOD

The study will analyze the depiction of superstition in *Fire & Blood* and how it affects the kingdom and characters of Westeros. It will include their habits and the superstition of the Westeros and how it affects the kingdom. The study will only focus on superstition in the kingdom, ranging from belief and behavior and its impact on the book *Fire & Blood* (2018), and the impact is only limited to emotional and social impact.

The study focuses on the superstition in the book *Fire & Blood* (2018), which tells the history of Westeros before the Game of Thrones. The approach that will be used is superstition concept to break down the superstitious belief and behavior and the impact of that on the people of Westeros. According to Stuart Vyse, a professor of psychology, superstition is a type of magical thinking that involves "false correlations between events" (Vyse, 2013). This means that individuals with superstitious beliefs may believe that certain events or actions are connected, even if there is no logical or scientific explanation. According to the researcher, this framework is capable as it can utilize and effectively use the concept to complete its goal in this research.

This study uses G.R.R Martin's *Fire & Blood* (2018) as the primary data source for the research. The data are in the form of text from the book *Fire & Blood*. The researcher followed specific steps in the data collection process, including reading the book *Fire & Blood* and highlighting parts of the book that were relevant to the research topic, such as dialogue between characters in the book and the monologue that tells about an event or explanation about something. The researcher then made notes about the collected data for further analysis, taking them and analyzing them based on what it can relate about

to Superstition in *Fire & Blood* (2018). Then, the researcher do several steps to process the data analysis: (1) Data examination to reduce any unrequired data to make it relevant; (2) Divides the data according to the research question: the depiction of superstition and the impact of superstition; (3) Analyze the Superstition by using the data and using Superstition Concept; (4) Draw the conclusion based on the analysis.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This chapter will contain and reveal an analysis to only answer each one of the research questions in this study to make it more specific. First, the research question focuses on the portrayal of superstition to reveal what kind of superstitious belief or behavior exists in the book and how it works. The world of Westeros is nothing but a world full of unpredictability. Many believe in their deities, their culture, their differences, and a world of medieval that possesses so many magical and supernatural elements. Those will surely be made superstition exist anywhere in many forms. The second is how superstition impacted the Kingdom of Westeros.

Depiction of Superstition in *Fire & Blood*

1. Superstitious Belief

Superstitious belief is a belief that is not based on a reason or scientific evidence or knowledge but rather a connection between action, object, and people's belief in something. It has its roots far back in human history, having a place in civilization, cultures, and human minds. It becomes part of human life that often goes against logic and reasoning. It is a superstition of one individual that is based on uncertainty.

1.1 Dragon Dream

Dreams are superstition, as Stuart Vyse stated. In his book, he stated that dream itself is magical as it is a place where the limitations of physical waking life are stripped away and leaving only a world of pure imagination and wonder (Vyse, 2013). Dream is a form of uncertainty as it can be real or not. In the whole world, dreams are always interpreted as something or predicting the future, especially in Chinese Culture (Hong, 2022). In *Fire & Blood*, especially Valyrian or Targaryen, Dream is a prophecy and they hold a firm beliefs about that. The phenomenon is Dragons Dream, and few members of Targaryen are said to have them.

But Lord Aenar's maiden daughter Daenys, known forever afterward as Daenys the Dreamer, had foreseen the destruction of Valyria by fire. And when the Doom came twelve years later, the Targaryens were the only dragonlords to survive. (Martin, 2018: p. 9)

Daenys the Dreamer is a title for Daenys Targaryen, who is the daughter of Aenar Targaryen. the Dreamer implies that she has something to do about the dream, which is supported by the word had foreseen the destruction of Valyria. Chinese people are similar to any other civilizations in the world (Kessels, 1969), and classified dreams a long time ago in the way they were supposed to be interpreted (Hughes, 2000). If they dream about straight dreams, that means the dreams are prophetic; it predict the future reality in a straight way, like dreaming about a certain death of a person will mean the person will die in reality. The Valyrian or Targaryen hold the same principle, which if the dream is about the doom then they will surely believe that without requiring further evidence or logical reasoning. By the dream, the Targayens are able to evacuate themselves to the Dragonstone, a rocky island close to Westeros, preventing their house from becoming extinct with the rest of the other dragonlords. Dragon's dream is not common even in the Targaryens, as the recorded one was only Daenys itself in the book. Thus, Valyrian or Targaryen does possess Superstition about the Dragon Dream, which believed able to see future events, which is in line with Vyse's statement that dream is magical and magic can lead to superstitious belief (Vyse, 2013)

1.2 Believing in Lucky Charm

Lucky Charm can be varied from symbol, amulet, object, or even a piece of clothing. The use of amulets especially can be found from many civilizations across history. Clothes and jewelry are believed to grant the believer or the wearer a certain condition, which can be beneficial or harmful. According to Stuart Vyse, lucky charms create an illusion of control for an individual who believes in them (Vyse, 2013). An example of such Lucky Charm can be found in the book from the paragraph below:

Septon Moon never refused such offers, and after a time some of the hedge knights and men-at-arms amongst his rabble began to paint images of the "Cock o' the Moon" on their shields, and a brisk trade grew up in clubs, pendants, and staffs carved to resemble Moon's member. A touch with the head of these talismans was believed to bestow prosperity and good fortune. (Martin, 2018: p.117).

Septon Moon is one of the members of the faith militant during the military uprising when people are going against the custom of Targaryen's incest marriage. His follower, on the other hand, begins to paint the cock o' the Moon that resembles the Septon Moon genital as they believe it has some prowess. It then grew from pendant to staff, and when we look at the sentence, A touch with the

head of these talismans was believed to bestow prosperity and good fortune. It is evidence of a talisman or lucky charm in use or being believed its benefit by the superstitious people. The connection between touching the talisman's head and receiving good fortune or prosperity is two different things that do not relate at all. When one action is associated with another result or reason that has no causal relationship, it is a conditioning in superstition (Vyse, 2013) and superstition can arise from said conditioning as it is based on irrational belief without proven scientific evidence and empirical logic.

1.3 Folklore About Maegor's Death

In the society, folklore or urban legend is a form of superstition that has mystical attributes that are used to tell a story or warn people about something (Wang et al., 2012). Every community and civilization will have its own folklore as it is the form of superstition that mostly exists (Ulya et al., 2018) and folklore is a superstition and superstition itself is based on what people believe without further evidence and connected with the supernatural (Vyse, 2013). In the book, one of the most known tales or legends is the death of Maegor, the cruel.

Many to this day believe it was the Iron Throne itself that killed him. (Martin, 2018:p.109)

Maegor's death is also surrounded by mystery until the present day of Westeros, but the most known legend is that it was the Iron Throne itself that killed him. Superstition is around when logical reason and explanation fail or not being present (Vyse, 2013). This case of Maegor is an example of Superstitious Belief as the cause of his death is unknown, but people assume the Throne itself killed him as he was found impaled by the sword that was forged and placed there. Believing a certain object that is capable of causing something is a form of superstition as well, and meanwhile the Iron Throne is a symbol of authority in the Westeros, and people see it as sacred. Vyse (2013) statement is in line with this, as anything can be sacred and then believed to have magical attributes for those who believe. This myth is still present in the future of Westeros, even during Dance of the Dragons.

1.4 Egg Hatches After Event

Superstition is where people connect the dots between two things that have no causal connection and make a judgment based on the accidental contiguity (Vyse, 2013). In the book, people often take a mere sign that accidentally occurs and think it will mean something, which the dialogue below will show.

On his return to King's Landing, Prince Maegor was hailed as a hero. King Aenys embraced him before a cheering throng, and named him Hand of the King. And when two young dragons hatched amidst the firepits of Dragonstone at the end of that year, it was taken for a sign. (Martin, 2018:p.71).

Targaryen are always associated with their dragons, and when an egg hatches, it will be a memorable event in their history. Since the Dragon is a powerful creature and not only that, but also the symbol of the House of Targaryen. Anything related to Dragon is magic the line: And when two young dragons hatched amidst the firepits of Dragonstone at the end of that year, it was taken for a sign. Is where the superstition lies. People taking a sign of the egg hatches after Maegor becomes the Hand of the King at the end of that year hints that the next year or in the future, there will be a turn of events, which could be good or bad. Believing the egg that hatches as a sign after the return of Maegor illustrates a form of superstitious belief. The reason behind this is because since taking a sign does not rely on a rational way to interpret events. It solely relies on the individual's belief rather than scientific or empirical evidence because the egg hatching could mean anything other than omens, but people take the event as a sign based on their condition, view, and belief in magic, as sign or omens heavily relies on supernatural or mystical forces. This is in line with Vyse's statement that superstition is based on false belief and magic and not on logical and scientific evidence (Vyse, 2013).

1.5 Believing in Magic

Targaryen not only have an astounding visual that cannot be found again anywhere in the Known world or in Westeros, but they never get sick as well. In the book, it is written that even the deadliest disease known to man cannot touch the Targaryens. It can be seen in the data below:

There was fire in the blood of the dragon, it was reasoned, a purifying fire that burned out all such plagues. (Martin, 2018: p. 278-279).

The line, There was a fire in the blood of the dragon, it was reasoned. Hinting a belief about a fire that exists inside the blood of Targaryen, which said to have the blood of the Dragon as they associated with the Dragons, which are mystical and magical beings. A belief of fire exists in a blood of an individual is a superstitious belief. Without proven fact or based on what they only see or believe at that moment because Targaryen cannot get sick, and their affiliation with dragons gave birth to this belief. As they uncertain about why Targaryen cannot get

sick, and relying on false belief and magic is the only way to cope with uncertainty (Vyse, 2013).

1.6 The World is Flat

When an individual is uncertain about a certain event or condition, they will be prone to superstition (Vyse, 2013). The notion about the world's shape is unknown in the medieval era, especially in the world of Westeros, which has a setting similar to the medieval era. The data below will showcase the belief in flat Earth and how people connect it with a magical place.

Then as now, ignorant smallfolk and superstitious sailors clung to the belief that the world was flat and ended somewhere far to the west. Some spoke of walls of fire and boiling seas, some of black fogs that went on forever, some of the very gates of hell. (Martin, 2018:p.237).

The idea of something that does not have scientific proof is superstition and is based on Vyse's statement (Vyse, 2013) Similar to prayer, believing the Earth was flat is also a form of superstitious belief of reasoning error as people who in the book mostly ignorant smallfolk and superstitious sailors, took the belief of a flat world seriously as they feel that edge of the world could be walls of fire, or boiling seas, even the gates of hell. But there is no proof of the said end of the world or proven that flat world in science, as Vyse writes in his book that anything without scientific evidence or imbued with magic is a superstition at best (Vyse, 2013). The reason behind people's belief in such a thing is the lack of evidence about the world's shape, which people often believes in folklore or tale that relates to magic and the supernatural.

1.7 Believing in Sacred Things

Magic can be considered sacred (Vyse, 2013). Humans are weak creatures and require help from something stronger than themselves. With that and the sense of uncertainty, it then develops into a belief considered mystical and greater than human. As the belief grows strong, an action is done in the form of prayer or ritual. In conclusion, all ritual is done by human based on their belief (Fatkhullah, 2021). In the dialogue below is a form of superstition that occurs in Septon Barth, one of the characters that exist in the book.

Barth wrote, "It has been three days since the princess perished, and I have not slept. I do not know that I shall ever sleep again. The Mother is merciful, I have always believed, and the Father Above judges each man justly. (Martin, 2018:p.242).

Septon Barth lived during the reign of Jaehaerys Targaryen I and even became the Hand of the King. The line, The Mother is merciful, I have always believed, and the Father Above judges man justly., It is where Septon Barth shows his belief in his religion, mentioning two supernatural Forces, the Mother and The Father, those two deities are member of seven deities or supernatural forces from the Faith of the Seven. Septon Barth religion is Faith of the Seven and when he goes through the horrible death of princess Aerea Targaryen, he feels fear after witnessing the horrors and coping it with his belief in the Seven. Religion is formed by beliefs, an idea of nature, and its sacred things with its rules to respect them. Vyse (2013) explains further that anything can be sacred, ranging from rocks to trees and even words. Even Gods and Spirits are sacred things. This is in line with Vyse as anything related to magic or the supernatural is a Superstition; the same goes for religion, as people take a belief in supernatural forces that could help them (Vyse, 2013).

1.8 Folklore about Sunset Sea

Folklore is a type of superstition that quickly spread. From one mouth to another, people tend to believe a story that has no support or evidence. When uncertainty is present, people will become superstitious to cope with it (Vyse, 2013) and below showcasing the superstition about sunset sea and the uncertainty is its size.

Some believed the Sunset Sea to be so vast that no man could hope to cross it. Others argued it might be no wider than the Summer Sea where it stretched from the Arbor to Great Moraq; a tremendous distance, to be sure, but one that a bold captain might hope to navigate with the right ship. (Martin, 2018: p. 237).

There are differences in the people's belief in the data above; one is where they believe that the sunset sea is no wider than summer sea, and the other believes it is endless or vast. But those two remain the same, this tale is based solely on reliance on unproven claims, based on legends, and myths rather than geographical evidence or proven data or fact. Vyse's statement is in line with this that superstition is based on human uncertainty and seeks some way to cope with the fear, and unknown, and assert more control over certain events, situation, and conditions (2013).

1.9 Belief that Prayer Cure Sickness

Whenever a religious person is uncertain or requires some control, the first thing they will do is pray. Prayer in the world of Westeros that takes place in Fire & Blood is a common practice, especially by Septon Eustace. Those who pray will believe that a greater force or supernatural

force can change certain events, and it is a sign of superstition.

King Viserys did seem to recover some of his old vigor once the new Grand Maester arrived at court. Septon Eustace tells us that this was the result of prayer, but most believed that Orwyle's potions and tinctures were more efficacious than the leechings Mellos had preferred. (Martin, 2018: p. 379).

In the book, Septon Eustace tells us that this was the result of prayer. It indicates the belief about the effectiveness of prayer as a medium to cure illness, which is a superstitious belief since praying and wishing the illness to be cured without medical treatment is a form of believing in magic. Believing in magic means believing if certain belief or action could be controlled by supernatural powers (Evans-Pritchard & Gillies, 1976). Vyse writes that some people claim that intercessory prayer can heal diseases or illness but then argues that until the evidence is proven, such as faith healing and healing prayer are superstition as they are without scientific evidence and based on supernatural, which is a superstitious belief (Vyse, 2013). This implies that Septon Eustace has a superstition that prayer could cure illness.

1.10 Tale of Maegor is Cursed

Every civilization in the world has a belief about the curse. Folklore mostly tells about certain things to avoid in order to prevent an individual from being cursed. Curses can be placed on an individual or uttered for those who believe. Below is the belief of curse in the book that tells about Maegor.

Maegor was cursed, men said. He had slain his nephew, made war against the Faith and the High Septon, defied the gods, committed murder and incest, adultery and rape. His privy parts were poisoned, his seed full of worms, the gods would never grant him a living son. (Martin, 2018:p.104-105).

Curse is related to Magic, to which magic itself is one of the sole foundations of Superstition (Vyse, 2013). Curses are believed to inflict harm even punishment for an individual. In the case of Maegor, he is believed to be cursed by people as how his reigns are full of blood and evil deeds to which he cannot have a son as his seed and privy parts are cursed. This tale about the curse is a superstition, for it has no evidence factually and deeply related to magic and supernatural forces.

1.11 Belief That Dragons are Demons

False belief in superstition is where people believe in certain something without a factual foundation and spread

it in society from mouth to mouth. Often times, folklore is based on false belief as it usually contains a designed narrative for some certain goals based on uncertainty, related to magic, and also fear. The data below showcase false belief in people of Westeros, during the dance of dragons.

Dragons were unnatural creatures, the Shepherd declared, demons summoned from the pits of the seven hells by the fell sorceries of Valyria, "that vile cesspit where brother lay with sister and mother with son, where men rode demons into battle whilst their women spread their legs for dogs." (Martin, 2018: p.481)

During the Dance of the Dragons, people drown in terror. Since the townsfolk at King's Landing heard about the rumours of Slaughter of Tumbleton, they are mostly influenced by the so-called "Shepherd." But the Shepherd added some false belief of Him, which is a Superstitious Belief as he told people that Dragons are demons summoned from the pits of seven hells. The unrelated connection between Dragon and Demons and, without proven evidence is a superstition, which relates to their ignorance and irrational belief (Vyse, 2013).

1.12 Believing in Folklore

Folklore or folktales are common in society for generations. It works by spreading or passing it down orally; it features ranging from fairy tales, myths, fables, legends, even stories, customs to songs and proverbs (Dundes, 2007). Not all folklore is superstition, but it will be one when it is based on irrational belief, associated with magic, and not scientific evidence as based on Stuart Vyse (2013). Below is a tale known as the Septon Moon's Seed, where his seed is believed to be so strong that it could make any woman fertile and spread as a tale.

A creature of immense appetites, a glutton and a drunkard renowned for his lechery, Moon lay each night with a different woman, impregnating so many of them that his acolytes began to say that his seed could make a barren woman fertile. Such was the ignorance and folly of his followers that this tale became widely believed; husbands began to offer him their wives and mothers their daughters. (Martin, 2018:p.117)

Ignorant people believe this because of their strong belief in the Septon Moon, which affects their way of thinking, resulting in poor decision making. The data above showcase that women often become the subject of sexual or physical abuse for the sake of performing such superstitious rituals, it is one of the bad effects of superstition in society (Narah & Taku, 2020). The folktale of the Septon Moon's seed prowess that could make any woman fertile is a form of superstitious belief where

storytelling shapes the belief and imagination of an individual, even going as far as harmful belief. Despite the lack of its evidence and scientific base foundation, people choose to believe the tale and bring out their daughter, wife, and even their mother. This superstition is based on the ignorance of people, and they take the belief based on the words and not logical proof, which affecting their way of thinking that, results in harmful behavior where they offer their woman to be impregnated by Septon Moon. This aligns with Vyse's explanation about superstitious belief in superstition (Vyse, 2013).

2. Superstitious Behavior

Superstitious Behavior is a superstition that comes in the form of action or superstitious ritual in an attempt for the individual to gain something from the said action that is mostly related to myth, magic, cultural influence, and gaining luck or blessing when they feel uncertain or stress (Vyse, 2013). In the book, there are a few Superstitious behaviors found in certain characters in the book that happens to be Targaryen Family and another, a dragon.

2.1 Valyrian Custom

Folklore includes Customs, traditions, songs, dances and even stories (Dundes, 2007), which Targaryen's own custom since Valyrian times is an incestuous marriage that had been repeated, passed down from generation to generation.

"Had long been the custom amongst the dragonlords of Valyria to wed brother to sister, to keep the bloodlines pure, but Aegon took both his sisters to bride. By tradition he would have been expected to wed only his older sister, Visenya; the inclusion of Rhaenys as a second wife was unusual, though not without precedent. It was said by some that Aegon wed Visenya out of duty and Rhaenys out of desire. (Martin, 2018: p. 10)

"The blood of the dragon must remain pure, the wisdom went. Some of the sorcerer princes also took more than one wife when it pleased them, though this was less common than incestuous marriage." (Martin, 2018: p. 57)

Folklore and custom are considered superstition, as they are passed down for generations, and the true meaning has been changed and is unknown. By taking the superstitious ritual, which is incestuous marriage, the Targaryens are being superstitious as one: associating their marriage with the purity of blood is a conditioning in superstitious behavior (Vyse, 2013), and as it has been passed down through generations, the Targaryen believe that this works and brings them their desired result which

indicates their reinforcement in the ritual (Vyse, 2013). Their uncertainty is purity of blood and feeling lack of control to which resulted them to choose superstition which is their custom marriage to cope with the condition without scientific evidence that incest will keep the blood pure and not otherwise. Without a causal relationship and proven scientific data, the customs and the results is a superstition.

2.2 Putting Dragon's Egg in a Cradle

Superstitious behavior is when one does a certain ritual or action to gain something beneficial or secure control when the behavior and result do not relate (Vyse, 2013). Uncertainty will be the cause of Superstitious behavior as it will be used to cope by the said individual.

Not all of these eggs hatched, but many did, and it became customary for the fathers and mothers of newborn princelets to place a dragon's egg in their cradles, following a tradition that Princess Rhaena had begun many years before; the children so blessed invariably bonded with the hatchlings to become dragonriders. (Martin, 2018:p.345)

Custom or tradition is passed down from generation in a community or society from time to time, becoming the culture. Dances, rituals, or even habits can also be a form of superstition related to the supernatural, thus becoming superstitious, as based on Vyse (2013). In the book, it is written that Princess Rhaena began to place the dragon's egg in the cradle many years before, and the next generation learn about this and repeats what she's done. Vyse argues that superstition can be understood from social influence from people around us (Vyse, 2013) and by conditioning the results and response, which putting the egg and wish to be blessed by a bond with the hatchling, which they feel it works, will reinforce them to repeat the same ritual or custom to get the positive outcomes. This superstitious belief & behavior that formed by reinforcement and conditioning align with Vyse's statement (2013). This form of superstitious ritual have no causal relationship between the action and results (Womack, 1992), but the individual will do it otherwise to ensure control, erase uncertainty, and cope with fear and stress (Vyse, 2013).

2.3 Sheepstealer's Conditioning

Human is not the only one that could possess superstition, as an animal are also living beings that have way to think and perceive anything around them. Superstition in humans is in the form of believing in magic and irrational belief, while in animals, it comes in the form of conditioning and reinforcement (Vyse, 2013). It can be seen below:

In the end, the brown dragon was brought to heel by the cunning and persistence of a “small brown girl” of six-and-ten, who delivered him a freshly slaughtered sheep every morning, until Sheepstealer learned to accept and expect her. Munkun sets down the name unlikely dragonrider as Nettles. Mushroom tells us the girl was a bastard of uncertain birth called Netty, born to a dockside who. By any name she was black-haired, brown-eyed, brown-skinned, skinny, foul-mouthed, fearless... and the first and last rider of the dragon Sheepstealer. (Martin, 2018: p. 433)

The superstition conditioning in this part is where the Dragon learns to expect the girl, Sheepstealer learned to accept and expect her. From the text is the proof. The dragon believes it will give her food even though it is not proven that expecting will do so, as food is the stimulus, and the response is expecting the girl. When the dragon feels the positive results of food, she will reinforce herself to wait every morning for the girl from the line; Every morning. it is a reinforcement and conditioning in superstitious behavior (Vyse, 2013). This led the dragon to be superstitious about the occurrence, and it will persist for a long time, according to Vyse. This animal superstition is the same as Vyse's explanation (2013) from his study on Skinner's study (1948), where animals and humans can also be superstitious, when faced with the uncertain event and proceed to associate a behavior with results as the animal superstitiously believe it will work.

The Impacts of Superstition on the Characters in the Kingdom

In terms of Superstition, it is said to benefit an individual when time is uncertain, with fear and anxiety surrounding people's minds and hearts. One could use a ritual to trick themselves to perform better and repeat it in the future. Some use it to cope with stress, and even Superstition comes in the form of local wisdom in certain places (Ulya et al., 2018). But Stuart Vyse, in his book, writes after studying and taking notes from other studies, that Superstition can also be similar to alcohol and could be harmful for the individual. This part will analyze the impact of Superstition according to Stuart Vyse's concept.

1. The Social Impact

Some cultures have their own custom and beliefs, even habits, and most of them are connected to the divine, spirits and even magic, which is a superstition, and it is based on little to logical and scientific evidence and more on false belief and magic; it also can be a problem as it can affect an individual social life when the superstition is taken too far (Vyse, 2013). The custom itself is one of

many folklore, according to Alan Dundes (2007), and every society has their own custom.

The tradition amongst the Targaryens had always been to marry kin to kin. (Martin, 2018: p. 57).

The Targaryen Custom is the superstition of the Targaryen as by marrying kin to kin, they wish and believe that their blood will still be pure in an attempt to secure the control over the power of Dragon. But this superstition affects their social life as the social problem is not limited to family (Vyse, 2013), and the people of Westeros, who has difference in view, see this action or behavior as a mockery of God and a vile sin. Another data or monologue from the book supports the reason:

Incest was denounced as a vile sin, whether between father and daughter, mother and son, or brother and sister, and the fruits of such unions were considered abominations in the sight of gods and men. With hindsight, it can be seen that conflict between the Faith and House Targaryen was inevitable. (Martin, 2018: p. 57-58).

The Custom was unaccepted by the people of Westeros, mostly Religious people, who saw it as a vile sin. The Targaryen are given a stereotype by them, “an abomination” whether the child or adult, male or female, the Westeros now sees them as that. based on the data shown below:

“Any children born of such a union would be “abominations in the sight of gods and men,” the Father of the Faithful proclaimed, in a declaration that was read by ten thousand septons throughout the Seven Kingdoms. (Martin, 2018: p. 74).

The line, “Any children born of such a union would be “abominations in the sight of gods and men.” is a statement that came from The Father of Faithful, the religious leader of people in the world of Westeros. Their Superstitious Belief is that a Targaryen child or any child born from any incestuous marriage will be an Abomination in the eyes of the people of Westeros. The Father of the faithful spreads the message that the Targaryens are an abomination as they came from an incestuous union; his action is also Superstitious Behavior, according to Vyse, because the Father believes that the children born from the union automatically becomes an abomination, and he spread the message about this without concrete proof or scientific reason (Vyse, 2013). The line, “Any children born of such a union would be “abominations in the sight of gods and men.” is a statement that came from The Father of Faithful, the religious leader of people in the world of Westeros. Their Superstitious Belief is that a Targaryen child or any

child born from any incestuous marriage will be an Abomination in the eyes of the people of Westeros. The Father of the faithful spreads the message that the Targaryens are an abomination as they came from an incestuous union; his action is also Superstitious Behavior, according to Vyse, because the Father believes that the children born from the union automatically becomes an abomination, and he spread the message about this without concrete proof or scientific reason (Vyse, 2013).

2. The Emotional Impact

Superstition, on the other hand, really brings control or even a sense of security for those who practice or believe it. Still, sometimes superstition will only lead to more harmful actions that will affect the person itself and those around them. Another effect is emotional. As Vyse stated, superstition affects a person's way of thinking and affects their decision-making (Vyse, 2013). As an individual's belief in superstition is also an imposed self-belief which also irrational (Narah & Taku, 2020).

The Targaryens had escaped the Doom, fleeing across the seas to Dragonstone, but “the gods are not mocked,” and now a second doom was at hand. “The false king and the whore queen shall be cast down with all their works, and their demon beasts shall perish from the earth,” the Shepherd thundered. All those who stood with them would die as well. Only by cleansing King’s Landing of dragons and their masters could Westeros hope to avoid the fate of Valyria. (Martin, 2018: p. 481).

The emotional effect is the lack of critical thinking and proneness to false belief, and this one is one of them. The Shepherd, which is a mysterious figure in the Fire & Blood's Westeros, suddenly appears and provides a speech during the Dance of the Dragons. At that time, war was raging everywhere as two Targaryen factions, The Blacks and The Greens, fought each other over the Iron Throne. The Uncertainty is chaos as during that time, war and lack of resources forced people to have fear and anxiety, making them prone to irrational belief and thinking, which they connect it by a second Doom at the process. The Shepherd influences the people through the belief that by killing the dragons and the Targaryen, they will avoid the same fate. The word Cleansing is directly about killing, and it was aimed toward the Targaryen & Dragon.

The Shepherd associates the behavior with the result, which is to avoid the fate of Valyria. he says that by killing the said Targaryens and their dragons it will result to the fate of Valyria being avoided by them, which is a sign of conditioning in superstitious behavior to prevent bad luck or gaining good fortune by doing a behavior that could be associated with result, even could be repeated in the future

(Vyse, 2013). By believing that killing the Targaryen and the Dragon will prevent the fate of Valyria, which is also mean to increase the luck and gaining control over uncertain situation by a belief that has no basic scientific evidence, is a superstitious belief and behavior, which Vyse writes that superstition is when people need to have a control just to avoid or gain something from a certain event (Vyse, 2013).

Here is another negative effect of superstition is that people will become oblivious about rationality and choose emotion over thinking when deciding on something.

If you would cleanse yourself of sin, first must you bathe in dragon’s blood. For only blood can quench the fires of hell.” From ten thousand throats a cry went up. “Kill them! Kill them!” And like some vast beast with ten thousand legs, the lambs began to move, shoving and pushing, waving their torches, brandishing swords and knives and other, cruder weapons, walking and running through the streets and alleys toward the Dragonpit. (Martin, 2018: p. 500).

The shepherd desires is to influence the people by putting a prejudice about dragons during the Dance of the Dragons. What is called as The Dance of the Dragons in the book is an event where two Targaryen houses are fighting for the Iron Throne, the Greens and the Black.

The lamb or the smallfolk automatically believed about that belief, which is irrational as the uncertainty is really deep in the heart of the smallfolk as war and conflict arose around them. The conditioning here is bathing in a dragon's blood will cleanse the sin; it is two different things associated with each other, which is a form of conditioning in superstition (Vyse, 2013). That superstitious belief soon becomes superstitious behavior as The lambs began to move implies that they are taking the belief very seriously without second thoughts; it is supported by another word, brandishing sword and towards dragonpit.

This aligns with Vyse's belief that superstition also comes in the form of misguided judgment, which is common in Superstition (Vyse, 2013). The misguided judgment is that people really believe that bathing in a dragon's blood, which means by killing it, will cleanse their sins and quench the fires of hell. Their results are associated with magic, as Bathing in Blood of The Dragon and Cleanse the Sin are two things that have no causal relationship. The impact is that they are making a poor decision-making and errors in judgement, as they are influenced by the words of the shepherd and act upon it. Superstition itself can also come from the social influence around an individual, and the condition above is one of the examples (Vyse, 2013).

CLOSING

Conclusion

Based on the results, the depiction of Superstition in Fire & Blood is similar to the real-world counterpart; it can arise from uncertainty, and the said uncertainty can range from event, size, or condition. Superstition is then reinforced in the future as they condition a certain thing with certain results or changes, such as believing in magic, sacred things, supernatural, talismans, curses, myths, folklore, and even tradition. All results from an individual or people trying to assert control over uncertainty. To cope with fear anxiety, and to be in control over an event or something.

The impacts of the Superstition in the book is portrayed as social and emotional. The social part is where the customs of Valyrian, which is the Targaryen's Superstition, are seen as vile sin for the people who believed in The Faith of the Seven. Targaryen was seen as filthy as the religious group's leader denounced them as abominations in the sight of men and gods; this led to a military uprising, which Targaryen had a hard time handling. The second impact is emotional which Superstition affects people's way of thinking and leads to poor decision-making; this is during the Dance of The Dragons, where people believe the word of the Shepherd about bathing in dragon blood will cleanse the sin and killing the Targaryen and the dragon will avoid the fate of Valyria. Their lack of reasoning and deep uncertainty, fear, and lack of control force them to believe only belief that the dragon and Targaryen are the problem and that killing them will help everything also they also believe that bathing in the blood will cleanse the skin, which they prove by go to the dragon pit and kill the dragon with their own life as the price.

Suggestions

The researcher, after conducting this study finds the results of the study hold a significant meaning for future researches and researchers. Especially in the domain of superstition and literature. The findings can be used as a foundation for future researches as a previous studies that gives more information on how to analyze superstition in the literature. While the other researches only stated that superstition are ghost, rituals, lucky charm, and many other examples, this study will provide wider approach. As based on Vyse's book and study, which imply that superstition has many forms and sometimes it can be psychological factor and not all magic, such as misguided judgement and logical fallacy. This study also has many examples of superstitious belief and behavior, conditioning, and reinforcement that also can be used to unveil the superstition in any literary works. Hence, this

study have a possibility to be a great assistance in the future researcher.

REFERENCES

Amrina, N. W. U. (2015). *Superstitions In Mark Twain's Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884). Surakarta. Muhammadiyyah University of Surakarta.

Bandura, A. (1986). *Social Foundations of Thought and Action*. New Jersey. Prentice Hall. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446221129.n6>

Besa, A. S., Abusama, H. P., Lao, G. M., Abraham, E. G., Cruz, F. de la, Duldulao, S. L., & Perocho, S. N. S. (2021). Perceptions of Millennials on Filipino Superstitious Belie. *ASEAN Journal of Science and Engineering Education*, 1(2), 101–104. <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10>

Bonaccio, & Dalal. (2006). Advice taking and decision-making: An integrative literature review, and implications for the organizational sciences. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 101(2), 127–151. <https://doi.org/https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1016/j.o> bhdp.2006.07.001

Damisch, Stoberock, & Mussweiler. (2010). Keep your fingers crossed!: how superstition improves performance. *Psychological Science*, 21(7), 1014–1020. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797610372631>

Dissa, Y., Adjouro, T., Traore, A., & Yorote, A. (2017). A Case Study of the Effects of Superstitions and Beliefs on Mali Socioeconomic Development. *International Journal of African and Asian Studies*, 30(1), 71–80. <https://doi.org/2409-6938>

Douglas, M. (1966). *Purity and danger; an analysis of concepts of pollution and taboo* (First Edition). New York, Praeger. <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.1215/08992363-8090159>

Dundes, A. (2007). *Meaning of Folklore: The Analytical Essays of Alan Dundes* (First Edition). Utah. University Press Colorado. <https://www.jstor.org/publisher/upcolorado>. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt4cgrzn.1>

Evans-Pritchard, E. E., & Gillies, E. (1976). *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic Among the Azande*. Oxford. Clarendon Press.

Farley, A. A. (2015). *A Qualitative Analysis of Superstitious Behavior and Performance: How it Starts, Why it Works, and How it Works*. Washington. Western Washington University. <http://cedar.wwu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1409&context=wwuet>

Fatkhullah, M. (2021). Agama, Takhayul dan Kearifan Lokal dalam Upaya Pengembangan Masyarakat Berbasis Pariwisata. *Journal of Islamic Tourism, Halal Food, Islamic Traveling, and Creative Economy*, 1(1), 35–46. <https://doi.org/10.21274/ar-rehla.2021.1.1.35-46>

Freud, S. (1927). *The Future of an Illusion* (Translated Edition). New York. W.W. Norton Company.

Hong, Z. (2022). Dream Interpretation from a Cognitive and Cultural Evolutionary Perspective: The Case of Oneiromancy in Traditional China. *Cognitive Science*, 46(1), 1-30. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/cogs.13088>

Hughes, J. D. (2000). Dream interpretation in ancient civilizations. *Dreaming*, 10(1), 7–18. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1009447606158>

James, W. (2014). *The Will to Believe* (Updated Edition). Cambridge. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107360525>

Johnson, A. (2020). *Did Pope Gregory IX Order A Medieval Purge of Black Cats That Caused the Black Death?*. New York. Museum Hack. <https://museumhack.com/black-cats-black-death/>

Kessels, A. H. M. (1969). Ancient systems of dream-classification. *Mnemosyne*, 22(4), 389–424. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1163/156852569x00058>

Killeen, P. R. (1978). Superstition: a matter of bias, not detectability. *Science*, 199(4324), 88–90. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1126/science.199.4324.88>

Langer, E., & Roth, J. (1975). Heads I win, tails it's chance: The illusion of control as a function of the sequence of outcomes in a purely chance task. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 32(6), 951–955. <https://doi.org/https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/0022-3514.32.6.951>

Markle, D. T. (2007). *The Magic That Binds Us: Stress and Superstition*. Georgia. University of Georgia. getd.libs.uga.edu

Narah, B., & Taku, R. (2020). Impact and Consequence of Superstition on Society Especially in the Field of Living Context. *International Journal Of Creative Research Thoughts*, 8(11), 713–717. <https://doi.org/2320-2882>

Rosenthal, R., & Rubin, B. (1982). A simple, general purpose display of magnitude of experimental effect. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 74(2), 166–169. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1037/022-0663.74.2.166>

Skinner, B. F. (1948). "Superstition" in the pigeon. *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 38(2), 168–172. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.38.2.168>

<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1037/h0055873>

Tay, L., & Diener, E. (2011). Needs and subjective well-being around the world. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 101(2), 354–365. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1037/a0023779>

Ulya, R. H., Thahar, H. E., Asri, Y., & Agustina. (2018). Cultural manifestation in superstition of Minangkabau society. *International Conferences on Education, Social Sciences and Technology*, 1(1), 422–429. <https://doi.org/10.29210/2018160>

Vyse, S. (2013). *Believing In Magic: Psychology of Superstition* (Updated Edition). Oxford. Oxford University Press.

Wang, Y. J., Hernandez, M. D., Minor, M. S., & Wei, J. (2012). Superstitious beliefs in consumer evaluation of brand logos: Implications for corporate branding strategy. *European Journal of Marketing*, 46(5), 712–732. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1108/03090561211212485>

Willoughby, A. (1979). *The Alcohol Troubled Person: Known and Unknown* (First Edition). Boston. Nelson Hall.

Womack, M. (1992). Why athletes need ritual: A study of magic among professional athletes. . . *Sport and Religion*, 1(1), 191–202.

Zebb, B., & Moore, M. (2003). Superstitiousness and perceived anxiety control as predictors of psychological distress. *Journal of Anxiety Disorders*, 17(1), 115–130. [https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/S0887-6185\(02\)00176-7](https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/S0887-6185(02)00176-7)