

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, it is divided into five parts. There are the background of the study, the statement of the research question, the objective of the study, the significance of the study, and the scope and limitations of the study. The background of study described about what a purpose of this study. The statement of the research question showed about what the main issue of this study. The objective of the study is to answer the research question in this study. The significance of the study showed about the categorization of this study. The scope and limitation described about the scope that includes in this study and also the limitation.

1.1 Background of Study

Realizing one's own existence is very important for human life. This encourages people to understand what they want to do to enjoy life in an uncertain world like today. According to Jean-Paul Sartre, subjectivity must be our point of departure (2007, p. 20). It means that human should prioritize their existence to have a meaningful life. For the most part, people prefer to be what other people tell about them rather than listen to themselves. This condition is able to eliminate their existence as an individual. Unfortunately, it often happens to women.

The problems that women often experience, such as their opinions being often not heard, and not getting equality in their environment, make women even more distrustful of the importance of their own existence in their environment. This makes women have a high insecure nature. In other words, self-confidence has been lost because of the influence of the dominant environment on men and a social environment that already has a bad stigma on the things women do. Simone De Beauvoir claims that women do not feel proud of their creations (2013, p. 33). It means that women do not realize and understand that their existence is

important. In other words, they do not believe in themselves and it makes them dependent on other people, especially on men. Furthermore, feminists have revealed that women always experience oppression from various aspects, especially against men and their stigma in society.

In addition, experiencing oppression from various aspects is often not realized by some women. This is because they consider it a normal thing and eventually, it becomes a culture in their environment. For example, women are required to always stay at home and raise children. They can be able to work without forgetting their obligations. This is often experienced by many women. Those who accept this condition are covered with the assumption that earning a living is the duty of a man. It seems like Simone De Beauvoir's statement. She claims that women is not part of herself but as the relative of man (2013, p. 15). It means women are not able to separate from men because they are too weak to do something like working, doing something with their body, and thinking rationally. Another statement comes from Tyson, he said that men are superior (strong, rational, decisive, and protective), while women are inferior (irrational, weak, and emotional) (2006, p. 85). Thus, women cannot do anything. Those conditions make women unaware of their existence because it makes them feel unwanted and useless.

In addition, there is a concept that women are claimed to be *the other*. This concept depicts women only as objects and cannot be subjects. The concept is originated by Simone De Beauvoir. She bought her theory from one of the famous existentialists, Jean-Paul Sartre. Her concept is full about woman that should be aware of their existence of being a woman. According to her, a woman may fail to lay claim to the status of the subject because she lacks substantial resources and feels the necessary bond that ties her to a man regardless of reciprocity (Beauvoir, 2013, p. 20). This concept aims to encourage women to understand and be more aware of their existence in their life. Thus, they will be able to live in peace with their own choices.

In Simone De Beauvoir's book, *The Second Sex*, she begins her theory by explaining the aspects that make women considered *the other*. There are three perspectives that make a woman becomes the other. It includes biological perspective, psychological perspective, and material perspective. She elaborates on all those perspectives to prove the way of a woman forgets her existence. Fortunately, at the end of her book, she provides some strategies that women can use to reject otherness.

There are a lot of novels that tell the reader about woman's life. Most of them reveal how a woman suffers oppression, limitation, stigma, and unequal treatment in their life. One of the novels with a setting or plot with women's issues is a novel written by Jasmine Warga entitled *Other Words For Home*. This novel tells about a girl named Jude from Syria who faced a new life with her mother in the United States. Leaving the place that has accepted us since birth is not an easy thing. Jude also experienced this condition. Her move had to make her learn again how to be herself and accept new and unfamiliar things in a new society. Meanwhile, the tense condition of Syria which is caused by the war made Jude even more convinced that home is not just a matter of the country she lives in. For her, home is a place to feel safe. Those incidents lead her to stay true to herself, especially as a woman in a new place with different cultural and environmental aspects. She faced the things that made her realize that she wants to stay in this life. However, that was not an easy phase for her.

In addition, she tried to find herself as a woman in her life. She realized that being truly a woman is the key of being happy in this life. In addition, this novel won numerous awards such as the A 2020 John Newbery Honor Book, A 2020 Walter Awards, and A 2020 Lee Bennet Hopkins Poetry Prize Honor. This is kind of verse novel. Moreover, Jasmine Warga is a woman born in Cincinnati, Ohio. Based on her web, now, she is a teacher in the FA program at Vermont College of Fine Arts. Apart from this novel, she wrote young adult novels such as *My Heart and Other Black Holes* and *Here We Are No* which have been translated into several languages.

In this study, the writer discovers what the portrait the otherness of the main character is and how the main character refuses it in this novel by Jasmine Warga. This topic is very interesting to study because it will help women to understand and be more aware of their existence and how to accept all their shortcomings in their life. Simone De Beauvoir claims that if a woman seems to be the inessential which never becomes the essential, it is because she herself fails to bring about this change (2013, p. 18). It seems like all forms and changes in a woman's life are at her own choice. However, some women are able easily to feel insecure which leads women to become dependent. This condition also is influenced by their society. In other words, they are able to lose their existence because of the patriarchal society. This society has rules that are able to control women activity. They do not allow what women want to do.

The reason of the prohibition is because they are women. They think that women have limits on every action. That way, there is very little movement of women and there are many bad views when women do things that are not appropriate or are considered not for women. In fact, humans are free to do anything as long as they understand what the risks will be in each of their actions and are able to take responsibility for it. However, in reality, women do not have that right. Then, they will think that they could not be fully human being. In addition, women also often lose their dreams simply because they are trying to understand the people around them and the people they love. However, this condition cannot be an excuse because it is impossible for the person who loves us to get in the way, especially if it is a dream. Those problems have same ideas with the theory that is used in this study which is Simone De Beauvoir's theory. Simone De Beauvoir is a feminist figure in the second wave era. Simone De Beauvoir in her book, *The Second Sex*, has explained how a woman has many things to do without having to feel less or dependent on men. In her book, she also elaborates how the existence of a woman is considered different as a human. Simone De Beauvoir argues that woman is other (2013, p. 16). This theory also is appropriate for this study because the main character in the this inverse novel

experienced the same thing before and after moving to the United States. Jude's struggle to understand her existence fits the theory is introduced by Simone De Beauvoir.

In addition, there is a study that is conducted by Retno Yulianti. She focused on Jude and her mother as representation of unequal treatments in the system of patriarchy. She believes that Jude and her mother have suffered oppression toward their old environment, Syria and the new one, The United State. She also describes part of women empowerment in those characters. Hence, this study will be focused on how the main character faces herself as a woman and realize her existence for being woman in new environment.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the background of the study that is described above, the research questions are formulated:

1. What is the portrait of the otherness of Jude in *Other Words For Home* by Jasmine Warga?
2. How does Jude reject her otherness in *Other Words For Home* by Jasmine Warga?

1.3 Objective of The study

Based on the statement of research question above, the objective is appeared to elaborate in following:

1. To describe the portrait of the otherness of Jude in *Other Words For Home* by Jasmine Warga.
2. To describe Jude's rejection of her otherness in *Other Words For Home* by Jasmine Warga.

1.4 Significance of Study

In this study, the significance of the study includes theoretical and practical benefits. Theoretically, this study is expected to elaborate existentialist feminism's theory. In addition, practically, this study is expected to give more understanding about existentialist feminism which helps women to be herself and realist women. Hopefully, this study makes readers can be more aware about their existence, especially for being women. Furthermore, this study gives more understanding about how woman is able to be herself during their struggle with a new life. The writer hopes that this study can increase reader's knowledge about women struggle through life.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of Study

The scope of this study is the issues of woman who realizes her otherness and refuses it in novel *Other Words For Home* by Jasmine Warga using existentialist feminism by Simone De Beauvoir. The limitation of this study is about the data and the analysis which only focus on main character, Jude. This study discussed data in the form of character utterances, and form of author's narrative which describe how Jude realizes her existence of being woman in the new society and how she tries to survive this condition.