

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

This part introduces the research background, research question, research objective, research significance, research scope and limitation.

1.1 Background of the Study

Traditional gender roles are societal constructs that assign specific attributes, behaviors, and expectations to individuals based on their perceived biological sex. These roles often designate men as breadwinners and leaders, while women are expected to focus on caregiving, nurturing, and homemaking. According to Eagly and Wood (1999), traditional gender roles are shaped by historical divisions of labor and persist due to cultural reinforcement and systemic inequalities. While such roles provide clear social frameworks, they also impose limitations, particularly on women, by restricting opportunities and reinforcing stereotypes of weakness and dependency. Challenges to traditional gender roles arise as societies evolve and individuals advocate for broader, more inclusive definitions of gender that emphasize equality, diversity, and personal choice. Feminist theories, such as those of Beauvoir (1949), critique these roles as tools of patriarchal systems that inhibit the full realization of individual potential. The tension between societal expectations and personal aspirations creates a significant struggle for those seeking to challenge and redefine these roles.

Every woman and man should have freedom in their life without differences in all aspects, including differences of gender. Nevertheless, in reality, women are considered weak and women always judged that they relied on men. Beauvoir (1949, p. 161) states that the married woman is a slave who must be seated on a throne. Beauvoir's metaphor describes the married woman as outwardly revered yet inwardly oppressed, reflecting the contradiction between her societal status and lack of true autonomy and because of that, women lacked their freedom. Women, often referred to as the second gender, are rarely taught to express themselves. The struggle of women is related to the feminist movement that wants gender equality between women and men.

In the context of Veronica Roth's novel *Divergent*, the character of Beatrice Prior exemplifies the **intersectional** nature of women's experiences within a *dystopian* society. As Beatrice navigates the faction-based hierarchy of her world, her identity and opportunities are influenced by multiple intersecting factors, including her gender, faction affiliation, and individual traits in Roth (2024, May 22).

This study examines how Beatrice deals with all the struggles that intersect with other aspects of her identity, shaping her experiences, challenges, and opportunities within the narrative. Through this analysis, the study seeks to uncover the complexities of women's struggle for equality and intersecting forms of oppression to shape women's lives and activism.

Beauvoir (1949, p. 23) states that women's willingness and resolution make them fight the struggle until they attain the point of achievement. Women's struggle against the oppression experienced by women is an attempt to demand equal rights for men and women in all aspects of life.

According to Ritzer (2004, p. 448), feminism is a form of critical social theory that addresses social, political, economic, and historical injustices against women. It emerged to defend the rights and roles of women in society, particularly as cultural and social structures have increasingly differentiated and discriminated against women. This discrimination has led to harassment and other forms of injustice. The form of inequality can be seen in women's positions, rights, roles, and participation. In society, women stereotypes are often characterized as unemotional, strong, independent, active, and aggressive in Moore (1945, p. 579). They describe men as superior because they are more assertive, competitive, and dominant. Not only did Moore say that men are superior to women, but Brannon (2004, p. 164) also describes, "Boys and men are stoic, aggressive, dependable and not feminine.". The woman is always represented as weak, who can only cook in the kitchen, do the house duties, take care of their children, and can not work outside.

Welter (1978, p. 320) describes "the role of woman is as a daughter sister, but most of all as wife and mother, while men have the vital role, bold, and

more powerful than women". From here, we know that women always judged that they are inferior and can not be dominant and weaker than men. The perspective of women like this often happens in our society, especially in the old generation, which has no open minded.

In Veronica Roth's *Divergent*, the protagonist, Beatrice Prior, embodies women's struggle, challenging traditional gender norms within the faction-based society. Beatrice's journey highlights how gender stereotypes limit individual autonomy and constrain opportunities for self-expression, particularly within the rigid confines of faction expectations. Through an intersectionality analysis, the study can illuminate how the struggle for women's identities intersects with and reinforces gender stereotypes, shaping women's experiences and opportunities (Hooks, 1984, p. 5).

By applying a feminist approach, the study aims comprehensively understand women's struggle against gender stereotypes, recognizing the interconnected systems of oppression perpetuating them. Through this lens, the study seeks to contribute to broader discussions on gender equality and social justice, emphasizing the need to address the intersecting forms of discrimination that impact women's lives.

Judith Butler (1990, p. 25) challenges traditional notions of gender static, biological construct by arguing that gender is a performative act shaped by societal norms and expectations. This perspective invites us to explore the dynamic and fluid nature of gender identity. Crawford (2006, p. 3) acknowledges the social construction of gender, focusing on the collection of characteristics and attributes associated with men and women across cultures and over time.

Divergent is one of the novels in the main female character struggles to get her equity. *Divergent* is a science fiction novel by Veronica Roth that has received a lot of awards, such as New York Best Seller, Goodreads Choice Award Favorite Book, and ABC New Voice Pick. *Divergent* was written by Veronica Roth in 2011 in the United States of America.

Divergent is a novel set in a future society divided into five factions, each representing a different virtue: *Abnegation* (selflessness), *Amity* (peacefulness),

Candor (honesty), *Dauntless* (bravery), and *Erudite* (intelligence). All of the teenagers have to take an aptitude test to know which factions are suitable for them. Each faction has different rules, opinions, and goals, and once they become one of the faction members, they have to follow the rules; if they are not, they will be evicted by the faction members and become faction less. At the heart of the story is Beatrice "Tris" Prior, who discovers during a society-wide aptitude test that she is *Divergent*, meaning she does not fit neatly into any one faction. People who do not fit into any faction are "*Divergent* ." This revelation places her in a dangerous position as *Divergent* are considered a threat to the structured order of society in Roth (2024, May 22).

Divergent, written by Veronica Roth, is set in a dystopian future, the story takes place in a post-apocalyptic version of Chicago, where the city's iconic landmarks have been transformed to fit the needs of the faction system. The narrative unfolds through the eyes of Beatrice "Tris" Prior, who is diagnosed as a *Divergent*. This makes her "*Divergent*," a status that poses a threat to the controlled social order. As Tris navigates her way through the Dauntless initiation process, she uncovers deep political conspiracies and faces moral dilemmas that challenge her understanding of herself and her society.

The central themes of *Divergent* include identity, choice, and resistance against oppressive systems. Tris' journey is one of self-discovery and empowerment as she learns to embrace her Divergence and question the societal norms imposed on her. The novel explores the dangers of conformity and the importance of individual agency in the face of authoritarianism. Throughout the story, the harsh and often brutal setting of the Dauntless compound contrasts with the rigid, controlled environments of the other factions, highlighting the diverse ways in which different values shape people's lives. The novel's action-packed plot and complex character development make it a compelling exploration of what it means to be true to oneself in a divided world. This novel makes many writers interested in analyzing this novel from many aspects; in psychological, sociological and etc.

First, there is a thesis was published in Trunojoyo Madura University in 2016 by Oky Gresyaningrum, who uses psychology theory by Carl Jung entitled Tris' Attitude in Veronica Roth's *Divergent*. On the other hand, there is an article that analyzed insurgent as the second book in the same series written by Veronica Roth, published in Mulawarman University, 2019 by Siti Fatimah and Friends entitled The Masculinity and Femininity Traits of Female Character in Roth's Insurgent Novel, which is quite interesting too.

Then there is also article that published in 2024 by Senly Darryl and Siti Hanifa, who uses Naomi Wolf's concept of power feminism to analyze how Draupadi and Amba Fight for equality entitled Women's Struggle Reflected in Divakaruni's *The Palace of Illusions: A Feminist Approach*. In comparison, there is also article which published in 2023 by Suci Suryani et al, who uses bell hook's perspective, focusing on issues such as sexist oppression, women's solidarity and examines gender issues in *The Patience Stone* entitled Gender Pedagogy: A Feminist Approach to Teaching Sexist, Women Solidarity, and Power in the Patience Stone. Both of the studies explore themes related to gender equality and feminism.

Meanwhile, this study analyzes the primary character's utterances, Beatrice Prior or Tris, using sex and gender in *second sex* by Simone de Beauvoir. It describes how gender roles are socially constructed and argues for the deconstruction of these constructs to achieve true gender equality. Furthermore, the analysis finds woman struggle in society based on how Tris faced her struggle. The sources of data explain the struggle portrayed by the novel's main character using *the second sex*, Simone de Beauvoir.

Simone de Beauvoir's first idea about sex and gender appeared in 1949. She offers a profound exploration of gender equality and the construction of gender roles. She famously asserts, "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman," emphasizing that gender is not an innate quality but a social construct imposed on individuals by societal expectations and norms in Beauvoir (1949, p. 283).

Beauvoir critiques the way society systematically positions women as the "Other" in relation to men, who are considered the default or normative human

beings. This positioning subjects women to a range of limitations and expectations that reinforce their subordinate status. According to Beauvoir, these limitations are not natural or biologically determined but are the result of historical and social processes designed to maintain male dominance. She also discusses how women are confined to immanent roles, such as domestic duties and care giving, which restrict their potential for transcendence the ability to move beyond given circumstances and assert their freedom. In contrast, men are encouraged to engage in transcendent activities that affirm their autonomy and subjectivity.

Beauvoir (1949, p. 764) advocates for women's liberation from these imposed roles and argues for the necessity of achieving genuine equality between the sexes. This involves dismantling the societal structures and ideologies that perpetuate gender inequality and enabling women to define themselves and their paths free from patriarchal constraints.

1.2 Research Questions

In line with the background of the study, the problem of this study is formulated into two questions:

1. What traditional gender role does the women play in the *Divergent* novel?
2. How does the woman character struggle for her equality in *Divergent* Novel?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This study is intended to discover the role of woman and the female main character (Beatrice Prior) struggle for her equity in the *Divergent* novel written by Veronica Roth. The objectives of the study are to discover:

1. The traditional gender role of woman in the *Divergent* novel.
2. How the woman character challenge struggle for her equality in the *Divergent* novel.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The practical advantage of this study is to expand our understanding of gender representation in literature and traditional gender stereotypes, contribute to discussions surrounding gender, identity, and empowerment, to increase the reader's awareness of gender stereotypes phenomena that often appear in society and its potential to contribute to enrich various practical frameworks, advancing

our understanding of the complex interplay between literature, gender, and cultural dynamics.

The theoretical advantage of this study is to reinforce and expand upon existing theories in gender studies and feminist literature by analyzing Veronica Roth's *Divergent* through the lens of Simone de Beauvoir's framework. It examines the societal constraints faced by the protagonist, Tris Prior, as reflective of the feminist struggle for autonomy and self-determination. By bridging theoretical concepts with contemporary literature, the analysis demonstrates how literary works can challenge patriarchal norms and explore the complexities of gender identity. The findings highlight the relevance of feminist theory in understanding modern narratives and contribute to the broader academic discourse on gender dynamics.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The limitation of this study is focused on the utterances of one female character's Beatrice Prior in *Divergent* novel by Veronica Roth's. This study is focused woman's struggle by using Simone de Beauvoir's *Sex and Gender* in *The Second Sex* and other supporting theories.