

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

Literature has recorded the progress of human society as it progresses. How human society thrived and survived through all ages were all record within literature. Some of that records are shown through fiction works as how far human's mind can go. One for the most popular form of fiction is novel which is a narrative with certain length that carries a series of event.

The movement of empowering women in the act of pursuing gender equality has been going on from the 19th century up until today. Due to the oppression and discrimination experienced by women, they are taken as a second and less important gender in society. As the movement was popularized, there was an increase in literary works written by women for women. Many literary works was written with the purpose of highlighting the importance and the role of women in the society. As women's voice was starting to be heard, society started to pick up interest in literary works written by women such as fiction works, non-fiction works and many more.

Feminist is women who rebel against the rules of natural theory that are believed by society that women must show their female side as weak people who must submit to men are true women who oppose the oppression itself to escape from the rules that are believed (R. Tong, 2014). Feminism concerns with the idea of gender equality for women who has been oppressed and discriminated by men. In a similar opinion, women are able to break through oppression by trying to

improve themselves as a person despite the role society has put on women which limit women from doing as much as men. Beauvoir proposed her idea of existentialism feminism through her experience on the oppression as a woman herself. Beauvoir was aware of the society's point of view to women as being different from men physically which caused women to take the role of second sex to men and viewed as a weaker and passive. Despite the limitation, Beauvoir emphasized on the possibility for women to cease the second sex on which women must overcome the forces of circumstances in order to be at the standing as a man.

One of the novels with interesting feminism phenomena entitled "*Tess of the d'Urbervilles*" written by Thomas Hardy. The novel tells the story of Tess Durbeyfield who came from a poor family with a lazy father and ignorant mother. Tess' parents later sent her to a wealthy nearby family named d'Urbervilles where Tess was seduced by one of the sons named Alec d'Urbervilles and had a child who later died in infancy. Tess went on to work as a dairymaid and met a gentleman with the name of Angel Clare who rejected Tess after found out about her past on their wedding night. Struggling emotionally and financially, Tess almost gave in once again to d'Urbervilles but later killed Alec after Angel returned.

The novel was written by Thomas Hardy and published in the 1891. Hardy was a novelist and poet born in Dorset, England in 1840. Hardy's first poem collection was not published until the year of 1898 although he gained popularity over his novels, one of them was "Tess of the d'Urbervilles". His works carry the theme of tragic struggle due to passions and circumstances often set in the region of Wessex. Hardy died at the age of 87 on 11th of January, 1928 in Dorset, England.

In the novel, Tess was sent to the d'Urbervilles by her parents to work for the noble family. Seduced by Alec d'Urberville and eventually gave birth of a child which later died not long after. Tess then left d'Urberville and returned to her home before finding work at the dairy house. "Remember, my lady, I was your master once! I will be your master again. If you are any man's wife you are mine!" (Hardy, 1891, p. 485) In the following, Alec forced Tess to come back to him despite Tess had previously showed her refusal because of all the terrible things done to her by Alec. Not being able to accept that Tess has moved on, Alec went to find Tess and forced her to be his wife, leaving Tess helpless in a struggling position whether financially or emotionally. This refers to Young's five kinds of oppression, one of the oppressions is powerless which relates to Tess' being, which does not have the power compared to Alec and Tess is being dominated and oppressed by the status and power Alec has in order to make Tess come back to him.

In the novel, after the death of Sorrow who was Tess' child with Alec, Tess spent a year at home miserably because of what happened to her from being taken advantage of to the death of her child. Tess agreed to accept a job as a dairymaid in Talbothays Dairy upon receiving a letter from an acquaintance. This refers to Beauvoir's existentialist feminism where having work as a woman provides them with more opportunity to stand up for themselves. After struggling with the d'Urbervilles, Tess decided to accept the work in the dairy house as an escape for herself but at the same time to still provide herself and her family with financial support.

Beauvoir's existentialist feminism has been used in literary analysis in order to understand characters who struggle because of their gender and the effects gender inequality brings. In conduction of this research, the researcher took some previous researches as a comparison and reference. Bere and Arianto (2020) investigated about the affirmation found in women-existence from the novel titled "*Lady of Scandal*" written by Tina Gabrielle. The study found that there are two points which made women fighting against patriarchy. The first point is how women is seen as a second less important sex who are oppressed by men based on the patriarchal culture from the values or norms set in society. The second point is women's awareness of patriarchal society reflects on women's existence.

Next, Hidayat, Anoeграjekti, and Mariati (2013) described women's representation in the novel "*Supernova-Petir*" written by Dewi Lestari. The study used Beauvoir's existentialist feminism to analyze the female character in the novel. The study covers topics such as the power relations of men and women, the existence of female characters and their representation, women's figure who experienced gender injustice, and also women who take second position and satisfaction has always been the object of men.

Based on the phenomena above, the researcher is interested in conducting the research on the novel by using existentialist feminism approach by Simone de Beauvoir which takes the title as follows: "*Women's Oppressions reflected in Thomas Hardy's 'Tess of the d'Urbervilles' Novel; Feminist Approach*"

1.2 Identification of the Problem

1. Social gap difference between men and women in “Tess of the d'Urbervilles” novel by Thomas Hardy.
2. Sexual assault done by the male character in “Tess of the d'Urbervilles” novel by Thomas Hardy
3. Double standard in job between men and women in “Tess of the d'Urbervilles” novel by Thomas Hardy.
4. Women oppressions reflected in “Tess of the d'Urbervilles” by Thomas Hardy.
5. Struggles of women against oppression reflected in “Tess of the d'Urbervilles” by Thomas Hardy.

1.3 Limitation of the Problem

1. Women oppressions reflected in “Tess of the d'Urbervilles” by Thomas Hardy.
2. Struggles of women against oppression reflected in “Tess of the d'Urbervilles” by Thomas Hardy.

1.4 Formulation of the Problem

1. What are the women oppressions reflected in “Tess of the d'Urbervilles” by Thomas Hardy?
2. What are the struggles of women against oppression reflected in “Tess of the d'Urbervilles” by Thomas Hardy?

1.5 Objective of the Research

1. To describe women oppressions reflected in “Tess of the d’Urbervilles” by Thomas Hardy.
2. To analyze the struggles of women against oppression reflected in “Tess of the d’Urbervilles” by Thomas Hardy.

1.6 Significance of the Research

1. Theoretically

This research has some purposes. First, this research is made to give information about oppressions against women. This research is dedicated as a reference for the development of literary studies in the study of feminism approach among the students of Putera Batam University.

2. Practically

This research may enhance knowledge about the feminism and oppression experienced by women. In other way, also helps the reader to discover about forms of oppressions and struggles experienced by women. This research is hoped to give insight from fictional characters regarding oppressions and struggles which might happen in reality to women in society.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

Existentialism : a philosophical movement that stresses the individual's unique position as a self-determining agent responsible for making meaningful, authentic

choices in a universe seen as purposeless or irrational.

Feminist Approach : Range of socio-political movements and ideologies that aim to define and establish the political, economic, personal, and social equality of the sexes. Efforts to change that include fighting against gender stereotypes and establishing educational, professional, and interpersonal opportunities and outcomes for women that are equal to those for men.

Struggles : a violent effort or exertion; an act of strongly motivated striving. To proceed with difficulty or with great effort and to experience difficulty and make a very great effort in order to do something. An energetic attempt to achieve something. Strenuous effort.