

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of The Study

Women, tracing their histories as gendered human beings, have been distinguished and treated differently with men as their binary opposition. Women always receive not only different, but also injustice treatments due to the ideology of patriarchy. Patriarchy is a culture based on a gender binary and hierarchy, that leads people to see human capacities as either 'masculine' or 'feminine', and eventually to privilege the masculine. This notion attempts to elevate some men over other men, and all men over women. As a culture, patriarchy exists as a set of rules and values that specify how men and women should act and be in the world. The idea of women as lesser than men then, creates unfair treatments for women, and privileges for men. Due to the power held by men, women often oppressed by the values enforced by the system of patriarchy (Gilligan and Snider, 2018, p.13-14).

Due to patriarchy, which is defined by Walby (1990, p.20) as a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress, and exploit women, women must struggle in every walks of their lives. Women often receive mistreatments wherever they exist, as Walby (1990) contends that male domination in patriarchy is embedded both in public and private spheres. While public patriarchy is based in public sites such as employment and the state, which takes form in collective appropriation, private patriarchy is based upon household production as the main site of oppressions against women (p.21, 24). Aligned to

this idea, Sultana (2010) adds that women or girls could be kept subordinate in number of ways within patriarchal family. In the forms of discrimination such as son preference, burden of household, lack of educational opportunity, and lack of freedom and mobility (p.7-8). Also, the lack of freedom mainly lies in the form of silencing, which affected learned passivity within women and girls (Beard, 2017, p.1; David, 2013, p.202).

Due to the oppression perceived by women, it is crucial for women to be empowered (Collins, 2000, p.100). Sharaunga et al. (2019, p.18) define women's empowerment as the multidimensional process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions or outcomes. Meanwhile, Collins (2000) argues that through self-definition, women's empowerment could be advanced. Self-definition is important to reject controlling image by others and to create and choose one own concept and perception, so those others could not take advantage of that person (p.15, 101). Women's empowerment is also necessary to liberate themselves from the intersecting oppressions due to women's overlapping identities they inherit as individuals, such as intersection within gender, age, class, ethnicity, religion, and others (Collins, 2016, p.135). Practically, by being consciousness of what women need and how women's intersecting oppression shaped, they help empowering these women and stimulating resistance (Collins, 2000, p.32).

Women could be oppressed because of their age and social class. In patriarchal society, girls are doubly oppressed. Girls experience oppressions because of their statuses both as females and as children. Because children lack

power due to their age, size, and resources, therefore they are easy targets for adult oppression (Hewitt, 2003, p.170). Meanwhile, in capitalist society, though women are still dominated by men, women's social class determines to which extent women may feel oppressed (Barret, 2014, p.65,70). Ramazanoglu (2003, p.99) points out that in 19th century, while bourgeois women were still controlled by their male relatives, working-class women were forced out to work with or without children, while also being controlled.

Other than age and class, religion and ethnicity are also considered as major markers of intersecting oppression (Collins, 2016, p.135), particularly in the US where beliefs and ethnicities are diverse. The fact that there are many belief-related incidents, such as 9/11 attacks, and the hatred ensues makes many people regard Muslims as the new Jews (Dabashi, 2011, p.32). In line with that, a study in 2010 found that Islam is one of few religions within the lower stratum in the US, which makes Muslims experience discrimination and have lesser access to resources (Davidson and Pyle, 2015, p.9). However, it gets worse when it is experienced by women. Due to their headscarves, Muslim women are marked as representatives of 'suspicious, inherently violent, and 'The Terrorist other'' (Aziz, 2012, p.192). These Muslim stereotypes often influence the ethnicity, whose country consists major Islam believers. For example, Middle Eastern immigrants and their descendants in the United States often receive harsh treatments. However, women from these groups suffer twice, not only because of their headscarves, but they are also seen as weak and shy women with little power in families and marriages (Salari, 2002, p.581).

The issue of women's empowerment can be found in Jasmine Warga's children book *Other Words for Home*. This book was published in 2019 by HaperCollins Publisher and received John Newbery Honor award in 2020. This book occurred both in Syria and United States. Set in early 2011 when the Syrian Civil War exploded, the book depicted the struggles of Syrian refugee mother and daughter who fled their country to find protection in a relative's house in Cincinnati, United States. However, Jude, a Syrian refugee girl found it harder since her cousin, Sarah did not like her. It was not until Jude found Layla, a second-generation Middle Eastern immigrant whom became her best friend. When everything started to settle down, a bombing happened, and Jude was confronted by islamophobia. However, she resolved her problems by trusting herself and believing that she could be seen and be heard wherever she chose to stand.

Jasmine Warga is a second generation of Jordanian-American author who was born on April 24th, 1988 and spent her childhood life in her birthplace, Cincinnati, Ohio. *Other Words for Home* is her debut book for middle grades she wrote as reminiscent of her childhood who was a dedicated reader. Jasmine told *PW* (2019) that her inspiration for *Other Words for Home* came from her family's friends' experiences who were mostly arrived from Middle Eastern fleeing from war zone. Jude, her protagonist, also inherited Jasmine's taste of a woman character who dared to break the standard imposed by society. Through this book, Jasmine hoped that Jude's story would provide an emphatic window for people to humanize these children that people sometimes become numb to because of what they read about them in mass media.

The issue of women's empowerment in this novel could be analysed by deploying Patricia Hill Collins' black feminist thought, the concept of intersectionality and matrix of domination to identify the oppression towards the characters. Collins (2000) refers intersectionality as particular forms of intersecting oppression which are shaped not only by gender, but also by social class, age, religion, ethnicity and others. Collins states that the paradigms of intersectionality pinpoints that it is not possible for oppression to be reduced into one fundamental type, and that oppressions work together in producing injustice. Meanwhile, the matrix of domination refers to the way these intersecting oppressions are organized. Regardless of certain intersections involved, the power domains of structural, disciplinary, hegemonic, and interpersonal reappear across different types of oppression (p.18). Despite Collins refers her frameworks to African-American women experiences, her theories are versatile to be applied to any racial groups, genders and other markers (Harnois, 2010, p.68).

Collins (2000) states that structural domain of power embraces how social constitutions are organized to reproduce subordination over time. This domain is 'large-scale and systemwide' via interconnected social institutions. Structural domain of power also deals with policies and procedures of the constitution's legal system which designed to control the subordinates (p.277). In Syria, particularly during mass protests prior to the Civil War, the interconnected military institutions of President Bashar Al Assad have implemented its power to oppress the citizens by issuing arrest order to the protesters who asked for their rights. This power not only control the protesters but also ordinary people, including women and children.

Disciplinary domain of power is defined as a way of ruling that relies on bureaucratic hierarchies and technique of surveillance. Even though the laws have changed, that does not make a rapid change inside the institutions. Instead, this makes it an opportunity to regulate the subordinates from within and keeping them under continuous monitoring (Collins, 2000, p.280). The writer applies this concept in order to analyse Sarah's hostile behaviours towards Jude, whom Sarah thinks does not deserve to live together with Sarah's family in the house. This also works to analyse the hyper-surveillance towards Jude due to her being Muslim and Arab.

Collins (2000) explains hegemonic domain of power as oppression which deals with ideology, culture, and consciousness. By manipulating ideologies, the hegemonic domain acts as catalyst between oppression practices in previous domains and justifies them. However, hegemonic domain occupies large space and hard to break since it uses the power of common sense (p.283-284). Through this concept, it would be effective to analyse the negative ideologies disseminated by Western mass medias regarding Syrian refugees, Arab women, and Muslims. It can also be deployed to analyse the silencing culture towards women.

Interpersonal domain of power is domination from within subordinate selves which has been internalized. Thus, the oppression is dependent on how they think or act. However, many oppressed subordinates have less difficulty when identifying their oppressions but fail to realize that their thoughts and actions can hold up the others' subordination (Collins, 2000, p.287). The writer applies this concept in order to analyse how several oppressed characters see and act upon the oppressions imposed by the oppressors towards the other subordinates.

In order to complement the oppressions towards the characters through the concept of matrix of domination, the writer employs self-definition. Collins (2000) contends how the idea of self-definitions empower women to reconstruct their conceptions of self and community. These self-definitions function to resist ‘the negative controlling images’ and the discriminatory practices resonated by this controlling. Thus, the realization of their own importance helps women liberate from the oppressions (p.10, 98). The writer will apply this concept into Jude who has received multiple intersecting oppressions both in Syria and in the United States due to her gender, age, class, religion and ethnicity, and how Jude liberates her mind and empower her surrounding to free themselves from their fogged mind regarding the oppressions they do or receive.

There have been several studies discussing similar issue on women’s empowerment. Brieger, Steven A. et. all. (2019) in their study “Empowering Women: The Role of Emancipative Forces in Board Gender Diversity” analysed the effect of country-level emancipative forces on corporate gender diversity around the world by applying Welzel’s (Freedom Rising: human empowerment and the quest for emancipation) theory of emancipation. The study also developed an emancipatory framework of board gender diversity that explained how 1) action resources, 2) emancipative values, and 3) civic entitlements, motivated and encouraged women to take leadership roles on corporate boards. Using a sample of 6390 firms operating in 30 countries around the world, this study found that women’s capabilities, emancipative values and civic entitlements were significantly and positively related to female board participation.

Meanwhile, Lindemann, Danielle J. and Boyer, Teresa M. (2019) in her research entitled “Desperate Fortunes: Latina Warehouse Workers in the ‘Matrix of Domination’” explored Latina workers experiences in contingent employment. Deploying Intersectionality and the Matrix of Dominations concepts, this research analysed the data obtained from focus groups with about 40 immigrants of Latina ‘perma-temp’ warehouse workers. It found that the structural organization of perma-temping served as an instrument of domination and is crucial to the respondents’ experiences of work. However, the instability of these women’s contingent jobs entwined complexly with, and was compounded by, the subordination and decreased agency attached to their other minority statuses.

Wallace, Heather J. et. all (2019) in their research “Who Decides to Have Sex? Exploring The Perceptions of Timorese Women and Men through a Reproductive Justice Lens” analysed Timorese perceptions about decisions to have sex and the intersecting systems of oppression impacting these decisions using the Matrix of Domination. This study also adopted a critical medical anthropological approach using ethnographic methods. In conducting this research, group discussions with 80 men and 17 individual reproductive history interviews with women, were held in 4 of Timor-Leste’s 13 municipalities in October 2015. This research found that decisions to have sex are determined by wishes and rights. However, it was men’s wishes that were prioritized and men who made these decisions. Violence and unwanted pregnancies were linked to decisions about sex, and identified as potential consequences for women, impacting on women’s health and sexual rights.

Differing from the previous related studies, the writer determines to analyse women's empowerment in children book *Other Words for Home* by Jasmine Warga. This study employs two feminist concepts by Patricia Hill Collins, which are four domains of power in matrix of domination, including structural, disciplinary, hegemonic, and interpersonal in order to analyse the oppressions imposed by family, government, and others towards Jude and other characters. Meanwhile, the self-definition concept is applied in order to analyse Jude and other characters' empowerment to help resisting these oppressions.

1.2. Research Question

How does the women's empowerment as a form of resistance against oppressions in Jasmine Warga's *Other Words for Home* portrayed?

1.3. Purpose of The Study

This study aims to examine the matrix of domination where the intersecting oppressions against women shaped and to understand how self-definition would help fostering women's empowerment in resisting these oppressions in Jasmine Warga's *Other Words for Home*.

1.4. Scope of The Study

This study focuses on narrations that indicate how women's empowerment as a form of resistance against oppressions are portrayed. Deploying Patricia Hill Collins' feminist concepts of matrix of domination and self-definition in order to analyse the oppression through the matrix of domination and the resistance against the oppression through self-definition.

1.5. Significance of The Study

The result of this study is expected to give deeper understanding about Patricia Hill Collins' feminist concepts of matrix of domination and self-definition and their applicability across other distinctive markers, such as gender, age, class, religion, and ethnicity. For researchers, this study could be a reference source if the researcher wishes to conduct another further study about women's empowerment.

