

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Reason for Choosing The Topic**

*Vox* is a popular novel, published on August 15, 2018, by an American novelist Christina Dalcher. *Vox* has been translated into 20 languages and this novel takes 3rd place in the Goodreads Choice Awards Science Fiction 2018. This novel tells about women in the United States, women are no longer allowed to speak more than 100 words per day and half the women population has been silenced. This story began when the president decides where women are only allowed to speak 100 words per day, not allowed to work and have no passports, no proper education, and are spied on with cameras everywhere.

There is a movement that pro with a presidential decree, it is called pure movement. Pure movement is a fundamentalist Christian political movement. This movement is the background for the formation of that decision. In religious protection, the pure movement wants women to get back to cooking, cleaning, popping out babies and never having their own opinions. Pure Movement installs CCTV cameras in every corner of the house, in every street corner, in supermarkets, schools, hair salons and even in restaurants to monitor how women communicate, and even body language is not allowed. All the women and girls have been fitted with a metal bracelet that delivers an electric shock if they go over their limit of 100 spoken words a day.

The women oppression shown by the main character in this novel, namely, Dr. Jean McClellan is an American linguistic scientist. She lost her job, she could only speak 100 words a day. Jean's daughter also got the impact of the presidential decision, she lose the freedom to learn common things in school and just received school lessons in sewing, cooking, counting. Jean found a unique way to get her life back as usual by getting her job back despite being a scientist who found a cure for brain trauma for the president's brother, who had a skiing accident and then he suffered a head injury it's called Wernicke's aphasia (a type of aphasia in which individuals have difficulty understanding written and spoken language). There is underground resistance, the resistance against the government, and also the pure movement. The underground group was spearheaded by people who disagreed with this decision. One of Jean's friends named Sharon, she is a member of the underground group that uses a fake bracelet to deceive the government and pure movement. The others resistance is Demonstration. This demonstration aims to speak out for freedom for women, although this method does not work because people from the pure movement know this movement.

The significance of this research is the story of women who lose their rights, such as not allowed to work, no passports and no proper education, do not have their opinion, women only work at home (cooking, popping out babies) and also restrictions on the words they use per day. This story is set in the United States. In the United States, there are still many women who experience inequality and restrictions on their rights, and also men are more dominant than women. The writer

chooses to analyze the novel by using feminism theory. Therefore, the authors consider the women oppression and women resistance to be important to study.

### **1.2 The Objective and The Scope of Study**

The object of the analysis is a novel entitled *Vox* written by Christina Dalcher. In this study, the writer takes the data women oppression experienced by three characters and the women resistance experienced by several character. In this novel, there are several male characters, but the author takes three influential character. This novel is set in Washington, D.C. a city of government in the United States. The purpose of this research is to analyze the women oppression and the resistance of women toward oppression in this novel. Although this novel can be discussed from other perspectives, the writer decides to only focus on women resistance and the women resistance toward the women oppression in *Vox* by Christina Dalcher

### **1.3 Formulation of The Problem**

Based on the objective and scope of the study, the writer finds two research questions to help the writer making analysis of the data. There are:

1. How are the women oppression reflected in *Vox*?
2. How are the women resistance toward the women oppression reflected in *Vox*?

## **1.4 Review of Related Literature**

Review of related literature is description of the previous study and theoretical framework as reference to serve as basis for researcher activities. The discussion as follows:

### **1.4.1. Previous Study**

This novel has not been discussed by previous researcher with this theory and there are no previous studies about novel *Vox* by Christina Dalcher. By looking at this reason, the writer decides to analyze the data from this novel *Vox* in Feminism.

This novel has been reviewed by novel critics, and one of them is Nicole Flattery from The Irish Times, she stated “In *Vox*, however, words matter and none can be wasted. Set in a present just like our own, with a president who enjoys being on television, women have been reduced to speaking just 100 words a day. They are kept in check by bracelets that deliver electric shocks if they step out of line, a nightmare dystopia for any woman who’s ever been told to not get lippy by a man.”

Kathryn Poe from Medium stated *Vox* is a retelling of Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood with a twist Dr. Jean McClellan who lives in a quiet modern world. But not after America was taken over by the "Pure Movement" fundamentalist Christian political movement, women only allowed to speak 100 words a day. When Dr. McClellan needed to save the president's brother who had an accident, she was given freedom to enforce household chores. The slow movement of "Pure Movement" was annoying and it wasn't as surprising as

expected. However, the story depicted in *Vox* has nothing "new" to say about the world.

Another novel critics, *The Ella at Lewes* from *Waterstones* stated *Vox* is a depiction of a world with a far-right and religion extreme ruling, where women rights and freedoms are virtually non-existent: no passports, no bank accounts, no job opportunities, and almost no voice. Men who pay attention and women who speak more than a word a day will receive electric shocks. *Vox* shares similarities with *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood and *The Power* by Naomi Alderman with speculative fiction at its frightening, timely best. *Vox* is very interesting and worth investing in, and it makes us think hard about the times we are living in right now.

#### **1.4.2. Theoretical Framework**

In doing the literary research, the writer needs the theory to analyze the literary work. The theory of the research has the function as help the writer to understand the problem of the research and the writer can formulate the research question. Based on the title of this research, the writer choose feminism theory to analyze *Vox*.

##### **1.4.2.1. Feminism**

Guerin (1999) stated that feminist theory is the theory of literary work involved with women's marginalization with their being relegated to the secondary position by patriarchal culture.

Feminism is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression. The movement is triggered by the awareness that the women have equal right with men. (Hooks, 2000)

Delmar (1986) stated feminism is a desire to change a woman's social status. Based on this understanding, a feminist has a duty to be responsible for enduring the suffering of discrimination by society and men because of their gender. Women have to find their needs through transformational changes or even revolutions in social, economic and political conditions.

According to Agger (2005), “feminism is women movement to refuse anything shape of marginalization, subordination and women oppression within inequality in political, social and economically. So, it is condition when the women are considered in under class which the women have limi characteristic and the men hold important duties because of their role. The men underestimate anything shape of oppression to women in the market, politics and culture because of the men look at the women.”

#### **1.4.2.2. Women Oppression**

Frye (1983) stated the oppression on women can be seen in many aspects, because the women oppression occurs due to several aspects. She described the oppression of women as bird in the cage. Women can be trapped in somewhere, no matter what they think, do or talk about, there are always difficulties in the way. Overall, the women oppression that occurs is only benefit to men.

Lerner (1986) stated that the term oppression is a forceful subordination used to describe the subject-matter of individuals and groups as class oppression or racial oppression. As a result, it can be concluded that, the women oppression is a mental burden or injustice by men to women, and that women lack of freedom, and under pressure.

#### **1.4.2.3. Women Resistance**

People who are oppressed and dominated will likely perform the act of resistance for they think and feel that the particular condition is not fair to them. From here, the intention of doing resistance and shall the resistance be visible and recognized marks the discussion span of resistance. Resistance's recognition depends on the goal of the resisters. Some do it to get recognition, while other conceal it intentionally (Hollander & Einwohner, 2004).

Women do not merely accept the condition of domination of men. women try to resist. In doing resistance, Prashad (2009) writes, "we can recreate our bonds and we can fight, ceaselessly, for what we deem to be our rights and for what we envision".

### **1.5 Method of Research**

This research focuses on women oppression and the women resistance toward women oppression in the Feminism approach. The women oppression that occurs because of a regulation from the government that is prejudice to women, that there is a limit in the words that women must use and do, lose their jobs, and are only allowed to be housewives. The resistance of women to try to escape the

unpleasant treatment given by men. To do the research, the writer applied the interpretation and close reading method.

According to Jacobus (1996), interpretation is the exploration of those meanings and responding to a work of literature, people draw on their own understanding, background, and observation. The interpretation can help the writer to discover what they missed and what they do not understand.

For the research, the writer has chosen a close reading method to understand the text. According to Jacobus (1996), close reading is the observation of detail, special use of language, and patterns of repetition not only begins the process but is the basis of interpretation and specific use of language, such as imagery, symbols, repeated terms, patterns of expression, the tone of the speaker, and the main ideas of the writer.

According to Rief (2012), “close reading is a very interactive process that may involve a variety of strategies, such as discussion with partners or groups; circling unfamiliar words; highlighting important information; and jotting down thoughts, questions, reactions, and connections on sticky notes or in the margins.”

In analyzing this novel, the writer processes it with reading and re-reading the text of the novel. To find the text meaning to answer the research by way of examining special words, phrases, taking note of allusion, and sentences related to the research problem. The writer also underlined and makes an important list of the data. After finding the text about the theory of image of women and women resistance, the

author developed and questioned the data using silent observation techniques so that the theory text could be easily and quickly understood.

The details about the research problem are examined based on feminism theory. In Feminism, the women oppression is injustice, discrimination perpetrated by men and accepted by women. The women oppression that can be seen in this novel are women has limit in the words that women must use, lose their jobs, and are only allowed to be housewives. It signifies every attempt done by the women to break the domination. Data related to women oppression and the women resistance toward the women oppression in the novel are found out through words, phrases, and sentences.