

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of The Study

Anxiety is a normal human experience. Anxiety "is characterized by a diffuse, unpleasant, vague sense of apprehension, often accompanied by autonomic symptoms, such as headache, perspiration, palpitations, tightness in the chest, and mild stomach discomfort". In psychology, a feeling of dread, fear, or apprehension, often with no clear justification. Anxiety differs from true fear it is typically the product of subjective, internal emotional states rather than a response to a clear and actual danger. It is marked by physiological signs such as sweating, tension, and increased pulse, by doubt concerning the reality and nature of the perceived threat, and by self-doubt about one's capacity to cope with it. Some anxiety inevitably arises in the course of daily life and is normal; but persistent, intense, chronic, or recurring anxiety not justified by real-life stresses is usually regarded as a sign of an emotional disorder.

To exist in reality is demonstrated in experience. Existence is a conditional notion, therefore existence is not self-subsisting. However, if god exists, and he is infinitely eternal, and we exist before being transmigrated into bodily vessels, thus prior being in a state of "forms" as Plato has it, it follows to reason alas we always existed as well with god. Point being existence communicates regression is progression, to go back

to our original position with god as "forms" knowing all things as he does, being as him, eternal thus us eternal; hence.

The Bell Jar is American writer and poet Sylvia Plath's only novel, which was originally published under the pseudonym "Victoria Lucas" in 1963. The novel is semi-autobiographical with the names of places and people changed. The book is often regarded as a roman à clef, with the protagonist's descent into mental illness paralleling Plath's own experiences with what may have been clinical depression. Plath committed suicide a month after its first UK publication. The novel was published under Plath's name for the first time in 1966 and was not published in the United States until 1971, pursuant to the wishes of Plath's mother and her husband Ted Hughes. The novel has been translated into nearly a dozen languages. The Novel has 135 pages in English.

The novel is written using series of flashbacks that show up parts of Esther's past. The flashbacks primarily deal with Esther's relationship with Buddy Willard. The reader also learns more about her early college years.

The Bell Jar addresses the question of socially acceptable identity. It examines Esther's "quest to forge her own identity, to be herself rather than what others expect her to be". Esther is expected to become a housewife, and a self-sufficient woman, without the options to achieve independence. Esther feels she is a prisoner to domestic duties and she fears the loss of her inner self. *The Bell Jar* sets out to highlight the problems

with oppressive patriarchal society in mid-20th Century America. The men in Esther's life are all oppressive, whether it is in a physical manner or an emotional one.

The *Bell Jar* is the story of 19-year-old Esther Greenwood, the breakdown she experiences, and the beginnings of her recovery.

The year is 1953 and Esther Greenwood, having finished college for the academic year, has won a one-month paid internship at *Ladies Day* magazine in New York City. She and eleven other college students, also contest winners, are set up in the Amazon Hotel and juggle work with the scheduled events the magazine has created for them. Esther's manager at *Ladies Day*, Jay Cee, is a hardworking, hard-hitting, homely professional who expects much of Esther. Esther's primary friend during this month is Doreen, a glamorous platinum-blond student who chain-smokes, dresses provocatively, and does not take her work seriously.

The reader learns early on about the struggles in Esther's life. Her father died when she was nine; while Esther wants to be a poet, her mother wants her to learn shorthand so that she will have a vocation to fall back on. She has been dating Buddy Willard, a Yale medical student who bores her and minimizes those things she holds dear: poetry, literature, and creation. Buddy has asked her to marry him, but she told him she never plans to marry. During this summer, Buddy is in a sanitarium recovering from tuberculosis.

One evening at the beginning of the novel, Esther and Doreen head out in a cab, only half-intending to go to the event scheduled for the contest winners. They end up in a traffic jam, and are approached by Lenny Shepherd, a local DJ, and his friend Frankie. Lenny latches onto Doreen and Frankie makes his excuses and leaves. Esther, Doreen, and Lenny end up back at Lenny's lush apartment, with Esther watching as Lenny and Doreen get drunker and more intimate. She eventually walks back to the hotel, leaving Doreen with Lenny. In the middle of the night, Doreen is brought to Esther's hotel room door, vomiting and drunk, and Esther leaves her in the hallway, deciding she will distance herself from Doreen.

Esther decides on another day that she will ignore several *Ladies Day*-scheduled functions in order to lounge in bed and later spend time in Central Park. Jay Cee, however, calls and asks Esther to come to the office, where she talks very frankly with her about preparations she'll need to make if she wants to become a New York editor. Esther spends the rest of the morning reading manuscripts at the office, and then catches up with the other contest winners for a banquet. At the banquet, she gorges on caviar, followed by crabmeat salad. At a movie premier later in the afternoon, she begins feeling ill and catches a cab home with Betsy, another contest winner who is as wholesome as Doreen is audacious. Back at the Amazon, she is deathly ill and learns later that all of the contest winners at the banquet ended up with grave food poisoning from the crabmeat salad.

As she is recovering from the food poisoning, she gets a call from Constantin, a UN simultaneous interpreter who is acquainted with Mrs. Willard, Buddy Willard's mother. Esther goes out with Constantin to an ethnic restaurant and meets other fascinating people, who by their accomplishments make her feel her own inadequacy. She plans to seduce Constantin, reveling in the thought of losing her virginity to an acquaintance of Buddy Willard's mother, but they end up merely sleeping next to each other in his apartment.

As the internship ends, Esther is feeling more and more disjointed and unable to enjoy her experiences in New York. During a photo shoot for the magazine, she is unable to hold her artificial smile, and begins weeping openly. Her final night in the city, she goes on a date with Marco, a woman-hater who begins the evening by giving her a diamond stickpin, and later assaults her. He demands she return his diamond, which was in her handbag; the handbag flew out of her hands and landed somewhere in the mud during the assault. She leaves Marco on his hands and knees in the mud, looking for his diamond. She returns to her hotel room and, one by one, drops her clothes and undergarments out of the window of her room.

The next day Esther trades Betsy her bathrobe for a skirt and blouse, and makes the trip home to New England. Her mother picks her up and immediately tells Esther that she did not get accepted into a writing program she'd applied to; Esther feels hopeless as she looks at spending the rest of the summer in her mother's house.

Over the next several weeks, Esther is able to do little and slides into depression. She continues to wear the blouse and skirt she bartered for with Betsy and refuses to bathe or wash her hair. She tries to write, but finds she is unable to read, write, or sleep. When she asks the family doctor for more sleeping pills, after having received a prescription the previous week, the doctor refers her to Dr. Gordon, a psychiatrist.

Esther dislikes Dr. Gordon, a young, successful man with what appears to be a perfect family. When she isn't cooperative with Dr. Gordon, he suggests to her mother that Esther would benefit from electro-shock therapy. Esther undergoes one treatment, a harrowing, painful experience that leaves her terrified of the procedure. At this point, Esther's reasoning becomes more scattered and she becomes obsessed with suicide. After several unsuccessful or aborted attempts — slitting wrists, hanging, drowning — she wedges herself into the crawlspace of her house and takes dozens of sleeping pills. She is missing for several days and wakes up in a hospital. Later, she is moved to a state mental hospital.

With the financial help of novelist Philomena Guinea, who funds Esther's college scholarship and who was once herself committed to an asylum, Esther is moved to a private hospital that is much more comfortable and humane than the state hospital. Esther meets many of the patients, including Joan, another student from Esther's college and a one-time romantic interest of Buddy Willard. Esther also meets Dr. Nolan, a female psychiatrist who understands Esther far better than Dr. Gordon did.

Dr. Nolan isn't scandalized when Esther admits that she hates her mother, and the doctor also limits all visitors to Esther — a gesture Esther is grateful for. Dr. Nolan is aware of Esther's terror of electro-shock treatments, and later when these treatments are administered to Esther, they are a much less harrowing experience, both physically and emotionally, because of Dr. Nolan's care.

Esther continues to have contact with Joan, who she interrupts in a lesbian embrace with another patient. Joan eventually moves into an apartment, becoming roommates with a nurse from the hospital. Esther agrees to come visit Joan in the new apartment, although has no intention of following through. With Dr. Nolan's help, Esther purchases a diaphragm, which frees her from the fear of pregnancy should she decide to lose her virginity. That day, she meets a man named Irwin, a bookish 26-year-old math professor; they end up at Irwin's home, where they make love. Following intercourse, Esther finds she is hemorrhaging heavily. She asks Irwin to drop her off at Joan's apartment, and Joan takes her to the emergency room where she is treated.

Joan soon moves out of her apartment and returns to the hospital. One morning, Joan's psychiatrist comes to see Esther to tell her that Joan has not returned from the previous evening; Esther is asked if she has any idea where Joan might be. Esther doesn't. Later, Joan's body is found in the woods; she has hanged herself. Buddy Willard comes to the hospital to visit Esther, and asks whether there is something about him that drives

women crazy, as both Esther and Joan ended up in a mental hospital after being with him.

The novel ends somewhat openly, with Esther stepping into a room in the hospital where she will be interviewed to determine whether she can leave the hospital and return to college.

Sylvia Plath was a twentieth century American poet and novelist whose vivid imagery, searing tone, and intimate topics cemented her place among the pantheon of great poets. Best known for *The Bell Jar* and her second volume of poetry *Ariel*, Plath's reputation has only grown since her death in 1963. She has been placed in the confessional movement in poetry led by Robert Lowell, but her work transcends this label and speaks to more universal truths. Although the sensational nature of her death by suicide has led some critics and readers to conflate her life and art absolutely, Sylvia Plath's poetry demonstrates an astonishing capacity to engage with the *art* of poetry; many of her words and images have become fully entrenched in the literary consciousness.

According to her husband, Plath began writing the novel in 1961, after publishing her first collection of poetry, *The Colossus*. After she separated from Hughes, Plath moved to a smaller apartment in London, "giving her time and place to work uninterruptedly. Then at top speed and with very little revision from start to finish she wrote *The Bell Jar*".

There are four points that make the writer be interested in analyzing this novel. The first point is about the characteristics and the

characterizations in that novel. The novelist has major characters to keep the story of life and interesting. The characterization of that novel may give a potrait the unknown disaffection. One thing that is also interesting in characterization is about the novelist that uses aEstheras the major characters.

The second point is *The Bell Jar* novel is not only well made, but also inspirational. For education, the novel gives a message that we have to brave to choose of what we are going to be. It gives inspirations to the audiences that bad girl can be a good girl, even more so human beings.

The third point is that novel can take some messages and something to learn about the influence of enemy, friendship and love on someone personality. Besides they can also take some experiences and moral values, then they can apply them in daily life for a better future.

Finally, the last reason is to supply theoretical framework in the research of literature in the English Department, it can be useful for other students, particularly students of English Department in Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta (UMS) or another universities in Surakarta as a reference for the research needs that have the same theory with the theory used in this research is Psychological Approach. So it can be used to be the previous study in their research.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher is interested in analyzing **Anxiety and Existence in Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar*(1966) Novel: An Existentialist Approach.**

B. Literature Review

In this research, the writer is not the first person who analysis about *The Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath, but it does mean that the writer only plagiarizer the other research. The novel of *The Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath is an interesting. As for as the writer concerns, the research on the novel of *The Bell Jar* has been conducted by ten students.

The research that relates to the writers study has been done by Caroline J. Smith (College Literature, 2010) entitled “*The Feeding of Young Women: Sylvia Plath's The Bell Jar, Mademoiselle Magazine, and the Domestic Ideal*” on her research. This article examines the way in which Sylvia Plath's novel, *The Bell Jar*, interacts with and is informed by 1950s magazines, focusing on 1953 issues of *Mademoiselle* magazine, the year in which Plath's novel takes place. "The Feeding of Young Women" considers the way in which Plath uses significant moments of eating throughout her novel to underscore the intense hold that *Mademoiselle's* domestic, behavioral models have on Esther's sense of self. Reading both articles and advertisements in 1953 editions of *Mademoiselle* and looking specifically at passages in *The Bell Jar* that deal with Esther's eating and housekeeping habits, this article asserts that 1950s consumer a culture that encouraged women to navigate beyond the private sphere of the home while limiting those options by simultaneously discouraging that navigation contributes to Esther's metaphorical starvation.

Darby Dyer (College of Art and Science, 2007) entitled “*Mental Illness in Literature: Case Studies of Sylvia Plath and Charlotte Perkins Gillman*”. This study examines mental illness in literature, with a focus on Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s “The Yellow Wallpaper” and Sylvia Plath’s *The Bell Jar*, the primary texts of the research, and develops similarities and personal connections between the authors and their mentally unstable main characters. The study investigates the biographical aspects and mental health of the deceased women and thoroughly analyzes the time period of each author to demonstrate whether or not social status disparities could have been a reason for their deteriorating mental health. Both women committed suicide, though their literary accomplishments and societal effects allow them to live on.

Mohd.Yasin Sharif (IIU STUDIES, 2006) entitled “*Ambivalence: The Divided Self in Sylvia Plath’s Poetry*”. Ambivalence, mixed good and bad feelings about particular entity, individual or circumstance, became a ruling passion in Sylvia Plath’s life. These ambivalence and breakdown are closely dealt with in her poems. Confessional poets usually reveal their own personal experiences without straining excruciating sentiment. Sylvia Plath, one of the 1960s most influential confessional poets used the same resentment and anguish that developed from her personal grief as the subject of many of her poems. Sylvia Plath is well known among the celebrities for her ambivalence schizophrenic, schizoid and paranoid nature. As an obsessive-compulsive neurotic, ambivalence dominated both her works as well as her life. This ambivalent personality of Sylvia Plath made her and her works obscure and bizarre to the readers. Many of her poems bear the evidence of narcissism,

self-hatred, deep attachment and simultaneously deep hatred towards her dear and near ones. The present study is an endeavor to interpret this complex ambivalent personality of SP in light of her poems, her journals and her letters where she clearly confesses all her neurotic obsessed activities directly, honestly and sincerely without any hesitation. The study will also dug out the true logical reasons that lead to the suicide of a blooming star in her make up.

Rosi Smith (America, 2008) entitled “*Seeing Through the Bell Jar: Distorted Female Identity in Cold War America*”. Through the character of Esther in Sylvia Plath’s *The Bell Jar*, this essay investigates the struggle of middle-class white women coming of age in 1950s America to achieve personalized identities. It argues that the Cold War era led to the creation of an ideology of cultural containment, enforcing prescriptive roles on women within an American suburban, conservative, and conformist setting. Investigated here are methods by which this model of domesticity was promoted. Also, examined here is the fracturing of identity those methods caused in women, who were unable to fully assimilate themselves into this role. Butler’s theory of per formative is employed to assess strategies of female identity formation. Furthermore, it indicates how functionalist approaches arising from popular Freudianism defined gender roles as principally biologically determined and saw differing models of sexuality and female dissatisfaction as illnesses treatable by psychology. In this context, Esther’s search for a self with whom she can identify becomes the novel’s

principal quest and is, by drawing on the concept of hyper-realism, explored through the processes of observation, reflection, and image reproduction.

Joel Christensen (New York, 2003) entitled "*A study of the Bell Jar by Sylvia Plath and a description of the three stages of her "spiraling insanity"*". Its title, the bell jar, is a metaphorical explanation for what Esther's insanity felt like. It is suffocating; it closes her off from the world. When it descends, she cannot see or hear clearly and she is trapped alone. Through the course of the novel Esther Greenwood goes through three stages, Pre-Treatment, Treatment, and Post-Treatment for her insanity. Before her treatment Esther works in New York, becomes bitterly depressed, and finally attempts suicide. During her treatment, Esther can feel the bell jar descending as she struggles with her insanity. After her treatment, Esther is sexually frustrated and emotionally drained.

Hamilton Ontario (McMaster University, 1974) entitled "*A Developmental Study of the Art of Sylvia Plath*". This thesis examines the writings of Sylvia Plath from the point of view of a "schizoid diagnosis". The theories of three British ego-psychologists, W.R.D. Fairbairn, D.W. Winnicott, and H. Guntrip, provide the psychoanalytic framework. Working within the theory of object relations and by focusing attention on early childhood ego development, they have contributed many valuable insights into the 'natives' behind human activity. The only collection published during the poet's lifetime. It includes the poem "The Colossus"; the three postures "Vultures", "Crossing the Water", "Winter Trees" and "Ariel"; and the autobiographical novel, "The Bell Jar,"

are examined chronologically to reveal the clear development of a schizoid perspective in Sylvia Plath's art.

Kashiwara Yukiko (Ritsumeikan University, 2009) *Exploring Psychic Reality through Poetry Analysis: Sylvia Plath's "Fever 103"* ", This study shows the inner dynamism through the analysis of a poem, "Fever 103" written by the America poet, Sylvia Plath (1932-1963). This poem was already studied from a biographical standpoint. However, there are problems with the previous studies. 1: The strong tendency to understand her poem from standpoint of her biography seems to limit the possibilities for interpreting this poem. As long as we read this poem in this way, we will do no more than understand the historical facts of her life. 2: There is little consideration of the title, "Fever 103". To address these problems, the poem can be analyzed as Plath's Psychic reality as well as her dream. Exploring the poem with a view open to absence is one way to analyze a dream in psychotherapy.

William Freedman (New York,2003) in his essay entitled "*Sylvia Plath's Mirrors Reflecting Various Guises of Self* Dr.Neslihan. *The Monster in Plath's Mirror*" evaluates Sylvia Plath's frequent use of the mirror as a symbol of female passivity and subjugation, reflecting Plath's own conflicted self-identity in its difficulty to reconcile the competing obligations of her artistic life in contrast to her domestic life. In her poem "Mirror", Plath regards life from the perspective of the mirror on the wall, personified in the use of first person pronoun "I" but only reflecting a view which is full of objectivity and indifference.

T.G.R. Bower (Harvard University, 1967) “*The development of object-permanence: Some studies of existence constancy*”. Object permanence or existence constancy was one of the phenomena which greatly exercised the philosophical fathers of experimental psychology. The topic has been little studied since. Michotte has described the psychophysics of existence constancy, while Piaget has studied its development. Michotte’s work was restricted to adults while Piaget’s notably lacked careful psychophysical control. The aim of the present study was to bridge the gap between the two, to study the psychophysics of existence constancy in infants. Results showed that there is remarkably little difference between infant and adult as far as psychophysical control is concerned.

Xie Ping Ding (China, 1998) “*The Study of Existence of Equilibrium for Generalized Games without Lower Semi continuity in Locally Topological Vector Spaces*”. The aim of this paper is to establish general existence results of maximal elements for \mathcal{F} -memorized mappings, which are, in turn, used to establish the general existence theorems of equilibrium for generalized games (resp., abstract economics) without lower semi continuity for both constraint and preference mappings (correspondences) and in which strategic (resp., commodity) spaces may not be compact, the set of players (resp., agents) may not be countable, and underlying spaces are either finite or infinite dimensional locally topological vector spaces. Our results unify or improve corresponding results in the literature.

Different from that previous study, this research focuses on an existentialist approach about how anxiety and existence represented in *The Bell Jar* Novel.

C. Problem Statement

The major problem of this study is “how is Esther’s anxiety and existence in *The Bell Jar* Novel by Sylvia Plath’s?”

D. Limitation of the Study

In this research, the researcher focuses on the analysis of the anxiety and existence occurred on the major character in *The Bell Jar* novel, Sylvia Plath, especially viewed by Existentialist Approach.

E. Objective of the Study

The objectives of the study are the following:

1. To analyze the novel based on the structural elements by finding characters and characterizations, setting, point of view, plot, and theme.
2. To analyze Esther’s anxiety and existence in *The Bell Jar* novel (1966) based on Sartre’s principles of existentialist.

F. Benefit of the Study

The benefits expected from this research are as follows:

1. Theoretical Benefit

The research is projected to give novel contribution and information to the larger body of knowledge, particularly in the literary studies on *The Bell Jar* novel.

2. Practical Benefit

The research is expected to enrich the knowledge and experience of the writer and other students at UMS or other universities interested in literary studies.

G. Research Method

1. Type of the Study

In this research, the writer applies qualitative research. The data sources are library and literary data. Its purpose is to analyze the novel using existentialist approach. The steps to conduct the research are as follow: (1) determining the type of the study, (2) determining the object of the study, (3) determining data and data source, (4) determining technique of data collection, and finally, (5) determining technique of data analysis.

2. Object of the Study

The object of the study is *The Bell Jar* novel by Sylvia Plath, to discuss the anxiety and existence that are reflected in the main character's personality.

3. Type of Data and Data Research

There are two types of data, namely primary and secondary data, as follows:

a. Primary Data

The primary data source is *The Bell Jar* novel by Sylvia Plath.

b. Secondary Data

The secondary data sources are books or any information related to the practice of anxiety and existence that support the existentialist approach.

4. Technique of the Collecting Data

The technique of data collecting are as follows:

- a. Reading the novel comprehensively.
- b. Identifying the topic of the novel.
- c. Determining the major character that will be analyzed.
- d. Reading some related books to find out theory, data, and information required.
- e. Taking notes of information in both primary data and secondary data source.
- f. Arranging the data into several parts based on classification.
- g. Analyzing the data of research on Sartre theory of Existentialist *Being Nothingness*.
- h. Drawing conclusion based on the analyzed data.

5. Technique of Analyzing Data

In analyzing the data, the writer uses an existentialist approach and applies it by using the descriptive approach. The steps taken by the writer in analyzing the data are as follows: the first is analyzing the data based on its structural elements. Focus will be paid on the structural analysis of the novel. The second step is analyzing the data

based on existentialist approach. Focus will be paid on the meaning of anxiety and existence.

H. Research Paper Organization

This research paper is divided into five chapters. The first chapter is introduction, which consists of the background of the study, literature review, problem statement, limitation of the study, objectives of the study, benefits of the study, research method, and paper organization. The second chapter deals with review of underlying theory involving the theory of existentialist that will used to analyze the data. Third chapter is a structural analysis. In this chapter, the writer explains the structural elements of the novel and discussion. Fourth chapter is a existentialist analysis. And the last chapter is conclusion and suggestion.