

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION

This final chapter concludes my research on Kristin Hannah's novel *The Women* (2024), using Simone de Beauvoir's Existentialist Feminism as a guiding theoretical framework. The primary aim of this study was to explore how existentialist feminism is depicted through the novel's characterization, setting, plot, and themes. Additionally, the research examined how de Beauvoir's concept oppression and objectification, freedom and choice, self-creation, and existence precedes essence are utilized to analyze the protagonist, Frances "Frankie" McGrath. A key focus was also placed on how the solidarity among women veterans aligns with existentialist feminist principles.

To address these questions, this research adopted both intrinsic and extrinsic approaches. For the intrinsic analysis, the study drew on the framework proposed by Pickering and Hoeper (1981), which examines elements such as characterization, plot structure, and setting. Through characterization, the novel's first-person point of view allows readers to engage directly with the character's experiences, inner conflicts, and personal growth, as conveyed through dialogue and authorial depiction. The plot analysis focused on core elements exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution while also incorporating an inciting incident, a pivotal narrative moment that drives the protagonist's purpose and goal. According to Jenkins (2024), the inciting incident serves to capture the reader's attention by compelling the main character to pursue their mission, thereby sustaining interest in the narrative's progression.

The novel's setting was analyzed in three dimensions: physical, temporal, and cultural. The physical setting shapes the mood, tone, and atmosphere while reflecting the emotional or psychological states of the characters. The temporal setting situates the narrative within its historical, social, and cultural context, while the social setting highlights the interactions among characters and the conflicts they face. Together, these elements enable readers to immerse themselves in the storyline and uncover the themes that the author intended to convey.

The Women (2024) aligns its core themes closely with existentialist feminism. Frankie, the central character, is a combat nurse and retired veteran who struggles to reintegrate into civilian life. As a representative of women veterans, she faces societal rejection, familial alienation, and emotional trauma stemming from her wartime experiences. Upon her return to America, Frankie is haunted by the horrors of Vietnam, yet she receives little to no support from institutions like the VA, her community, or even her own family. This neglect reflects a broader societal failure to recognize the sacrifices made by women in the Vietnam War. Dr. Benner, a figure emblematic of societal attitudes, dismisses the contributions of women like Frankie, perpetuating the notion that only male soldiers deserve honor and respect. Frankie's own parents reinforce this marginalization; her mother silences her by discouraging any discussion of Vietnam, while her father feels ashamed of her choice to serve, as women in the 1960s were expected to do a domestic role.

Frankie's journey toward self-discovery and a redefined identity is emotionally and physically draining. Her struggle illustrates the core tenets of existentialist feminism, particularly the rejection of patriarchal norms and societal expectations. Through her resistance to imposed labels and assumptions, Frankie exemplifies women's capacity to assert their individuality and agency.

The novel also portrays how other women veterans share in Frankie's challenges. Her friends and colleagues within the nursing profession advocate for the recognition of women's contributions during the Vietnam War. This advocacy serves as a powerful act of resistance against societal oppression and the patriarchal structures that undermine women's agency.

This research contributes to the understanding of sociological literature, particularly existentialist feminism as articulated by Simone de Beauvoir. It is hoped that this study will assist readers and scholars in appreciating Kristin Hannah's *The Women* (2024) and its profound exploration of women's experiences in war. By doing so, the research highlights the narrative's broader message about the resilience, solidarity, and agency of women veterans, as well as the importance of challenging the patriarchal systems that have historically silenced their stories.