

# THE WOMAN'S EXISTENCE IN WALTER TEVIS'S THE QUEEN'S GAMBIT

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## Abstract

This study examines the existence of women from the main character in novel using the feminism theory from Simone de Beauvoir. This study aims to identify the depiction of the main character and analyze the existence of women in the novel *The Queen's Gambit* by Walter Tevis. The data used is documentation using note-taking techniques and content analysis. The results of this study: (1) Women's representation in chess was often underestimated in the 1950-1960s era. (2) Discrimination against women cannot be avoided so that they do not get equal opportunities in the world of sports. (3) Beth, as the main character, is one of the pioneers in rejecting discriminatory treatment in sports, especially chess. (4) The main character describes women's existence through tenacity, belief, intelligence, attitude, and expressions of their defense. This research suggests that the existence of women can be fought for in sports, especially chess.

**Keywords:** Feminism, Novel, *The Queen's Gambit*, Woman's Existence

## INTRODUCTION

Issues related to women, such as injustice and inequality in terms of gender, appear in various aspects and fields of life, such as social, economic, cultural, environmental, political, and so on. In the social and cultural context related to the field or world of sports, inequalities of rights, opportunities, and even discrimination are still clearly visible. Based on the various issues and problems of women related to gender inequality, the feminist movement emerged. Through the existence of gender ideology and the fact that sport has been created from men's experiences and values, real gender equality relies on transformation from the definitions of masculinity-femininity and societal views on sport (Rubinfeld, 2002).

The cause of discrimination against women is the division of the domestic sector which results in limited space for women to move. According to Bemmelen, the problems of gender inequality experienced by women include limited access to education, values held by society, values and gender roles that are known to society in general, and internalized values and policies that are gender-biased (Fitrianti & Habibullah, 2012). Ihromi said that discrimination is a form of attitude and behaviour that violates human rights (Unsriana, 2014). Thus far, discrimination against women is still happening, one of



which is in the field of sports, in the form of a stigma about the position of women as athletes that have not disappeared.

Therefore, literary feminism is associated with the existence of women in literary works that fight for women's rights in social class. Therefore, the awareness that women are a social group vulnerable to discrimination due to social construction formed based on the masculinity paradigm needs to be introduced in more detail to the community. Fortunately, more and more novels are now appearing with female leads that tell stories from a female perspective, such as *The Queen's Gambit*. This novel seems to portray feminism in the field of sports, which is reflected in a woman who takes part in chess which men usually dominate in terms of attitudes, behaviour, actions, gestures, perspectives, and so on. This shows that women can compete with men.

*The Queen's Gambit* tells the story of the life of an orphaned female chess player, Elizabeth Harmon or commonly called Beth, in her quest to become the greatest chess player in the world. On the other hand, she also struggles with tranquilizers, alcohol addiction, and emotional problems. The title of this novel refers to the chess opening. The story's time setting begins in the mid-1950s and continues into the 1960s. This novel begins in Lexington, Kentucky, and tells the story of nine-year-old Beth after losing her mother in a car accident and being taken to an orphanage. Beth met Mr. Shaibel at the orphanage, who works as a janitor. Beth, interested in the chess game, then asks Mr. Shaibel to teach it, but he refuses because Beth is a stranger. The next day, Beth Harmon returned to Mr. Shaibel and said that she was not a stranger because she lived in the orphanage and showed Mr. Shaibel that she already knew a little about how to play the chess pieces from watching. Mr. Shaibel was still not attracted to Beth until he said that girls do not play chess. Moreover, it was common for orphanages to give daily tranquilizers to make children more obedient that year. Beth had visualization skills which she improved with tranquilizers at night before bed, which eventually led to her becoming addicted.

A few years later, Alma Wheatley and her husband from Lexington adopted Beth. After Beth adapts to her new home, she decides to enter a chess tournament and win it. She had previously never participated in a chess championship and had no rank. The committee could not believe that Beth would enter the tournament against the male-dominated champions. Even though she said she was sure, Beth Harmon was still offered to enter the beginner category. The tournament committee also predicted that Beth Harmon would soon be defeated, especially by Harry Beltik, the defending champion of Kentucky. However, it turned out that Beth was able to beat Harry Beltik and has the ambition to become the world champion and beat the defending champion from Russia, Vasily Borgov.

Based on the opinion above, in this study, the researcher will analyze a novel entitled *The Queen's Gambit* by Walter Tevis, focusing on the woman's existence. In this study, the researcher used a feminist approach. Ritzer and Goodman say that gender inequality influences the patriarchal pattern of the division of labor and sexism. This gender equality

can be achieved by changing the division of labor through certain institutions such as work, law, media, education, family, and so on (Ritzer, 2012).

The researcher analyzed this novel because *The Queen's Gambit* has a unique story, phenomenon, and extraordinary representation of women compared to other literary works. In addition, this novel also represents feminism from a different side, namely feminism in sports, which provides moral values and a good view of the strength and persistence of women. Walter Tevis can visualize the story and behaviour of Elizabeth Harmon so that he can convey various messages to the readers. The message is represented through the woman's existence played by the main character, Elizabeth Harmon.

Based on the explanation the researcher has conveyed above, the researcher chooses the title "The Woman's Existence in Walter Tevis's *The Queen's Gambit*" as the research that will be analyzed. In this study, the researcher will analyze the woman's existence in the Novel *The Queen's Gambit* from the main character, Elizabeth Harmon.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Women are not born as women but are born as women. Beauvoir writes down the characteristics of existentialist feminism, which is of course what distinguishes her thinking from other philosophers. The first is regarding *The Others*, it means that women have awareness of themselves as others. In this concept Simone De Beauvoir argued that there is a subject or object conflict in the relationship between men and women. Men consider themselves subjects and women are considered objects. The second is freedom. Woman has autonomous freedom such as other human beings. Furthermore, women can create freedom, design and determine their way of life when they begin to exist, including making decisions (De Beauvoir, 2014). Moreover, Beauvoir used the term transcendence to align her understanding with Sartre who pioneered the existentialism flow. Transcendence comes from a Latin term which means *beyond*, is a strategy used by women to be free or get out of patriarchal culture which has condemned and confined women's Freedom, through transcendence women can express their Freedom (Heraty, 2019).

Beauvoir introduces existentialist feminism to achieve its goals through the concept of transcendence. There are four transcendence ideas that can be implemented. The first is that women can work, even though the process is very tiring and has many obstacles. Second, women can become intellectuals, meaning that not only men can become intellectuals but women also have the same opportunity. Third, women can work to achieve socialist transformation. Society believes that the key to women's freedom is economic power or financial independence. This means that if a woman can be financially independent then she will have self-confidence. Furthermore, this keeps women from becoming dependent beings and at the same time can help other women's economic recovery. Fourth, women can reject their otherness by identifying themselves through the views of the dominant group in society. The only way for women to be themselves in

society is to free themselves from their bodies. One form is by refusing to beautify oneself just to satisfy men. Women should be able to make changes in liberation from the shackles of patriarchal culture. Women are not just women who are born but have been women all along. Therefore, the aim of existentialist feminism is to awaken women to determine their existence as authentic individuals. In addition, women must also realize that they are the same as men, women are subjects not objects, and women exist within themselves. Therefore, women are free or have the freedom to take advantage of opportunities to achieve their goals, not only men. Women's opportunities and rights cannot be decided by men. The following is the discovery of feminist values from the novel *The Queen's Gambit*.

### 1. Work

According to Beauvoir, there are several strategies that women can use when they reject their *otherness*. First women can work. Beauvoir is certainly aware that working in patriarchal capitalism is oppressive and exploitative. Moreover, their jobs require women to work in several shifts, for example one shift at an office or factory, and another shift at home. However, Beauvoir emphasized that women still have various possibilities, chances and opportunities, even though the work is hard and tiring.

Work is one thing that supports women to be said as someone who exists. This happens because working women can prove themselves capable of being independent. They do not expect help from other people to finance their lives and will indirectly be able to determine the future. In the novel *The Queen's Gambit*, the main character Beth makes herself one of the women in America who doesn't just stay at home and becomes a student but she shows her existence to others by becoming a chess athlete. This makes Beth different from other women who only stay home and study at school. As Beauvoir said, women who work outside the home with men can concretely strengthen their status as someone who actively determines the direction of their destiny.

*"I'd like to get a job for after school." Mrs. Wheatley blinked at her. "A job?" "Maybe I could work in a store, or wash dishes somewhere." Mrs. Wheatley stared at her for a long time before speaking. "At thirteen years of age?" she said finally. She blew her nose quietly on a tissue and folded it. "I should think you are well provided for." "I'd like to make some money." (Tevis, 1983: 55)*

In the modern world, some women think that domestic work is only boring because it is routine, so women want to develop themselves, especially those with potential. This is because they want to get added value by looking for activities outside the home for self-existence that can have economic value by having a career in the public sphere. Beth Harmon and Mrs. Wheatley was having a conversation in the kitchen. She expressed her desire to find a side job and participate in chess tournament to earn money and support the family needs because at that time Mr. Wheatley is still out of town and not sent any money back. Unfortunately, Mrs. Wheatley rejected Beth's ideas. This

represents discriminatory treatment that occurs within the family environment. Mrs. Wheatley had the notion that women working Beth's age were only dark-skinned women. Colored is a word often used to refer to people with race and skin darker than Caucasians or white people. Mrs. Wheatley in this case represents two kinds of discrimination against women. Racist and restrictions in achieving goals. Even though Beth had planned to take part in a chess match to win the prize which could then be used to finance the family's needs. Beth is optimistic to take part in the Kentucky State Championship because chess is her passion and skill. But Mrs. Wheatley even opposed it because she thought that working at a young age was only for races other than white people and did not support Beth in a sport that women rarely played at that time.

*“Back at school afterward things seemed more and more drab. Some of the other students talked about going to college after high school, and some had professions in mind. Two girls she knew wanted to be nurses. Beth never participated in these conversations; she already was what she wanted to be. But she talked to no one about her traveling or about the reputation she was building in tournament chess.” (Tevis, 1983: 92)*

Beauvoir (2014) revealed that women who are aware of their freedom will be able to determine their way of life freely, so according to Beauvoir women can go to work and actualize themselves to the fullest, women can be intellectuals and do not have to worry about their abilities. Humans have indeed been given the Freedom to choose their way of life since birth, they are given the Freedom to organize themselves, which will then determine their existence in this world. Humans who exist are humans who can prove that they can be a being for themselves, especially after being faced with an important situation. From the point of view of feminism, it is seen that women have always been objects, especially in a world that is very patriarchal in nature, therefore one of the figures of existentialist feminism, Simone de Beauvoir, said that the world of women will always be included in the world of men as proof of men's mastery over women. By the time Beth's highschool peers began planning their further studies or a future career, Beth already had a career and reputation of her own in the world of chess. Beth has found her own purpose in life, namely to become an athlete and has a strong desire to become a world champion one day. Beth tried hard to make her dream come true. But besides that, Beth also attended a Russian language class at a university as a special student. This was done by Beth so that she could understand Russian, where the country is a repository for strong chess grandmasters and Beth wants to conquer. This also proves that Beth can balance her studies and career.

## **2. Intellectual**

The other form of the woman's existence is that women can become intellectuals and group members who will build change for women. Intellectual activity is activity when someone thinks, sees and defines. Not an activity when a person becomes the object

of thought, observation and definition. Beauvoir even encourages women to study writers such as Virginia Woolf, Emily Bronte, and Katherine Mansfield who truly value themselves as writers by exploring issues of life, suffering, and death. (Tong, 2009). Intellectuals make everyone's desire to actualize each individual's ideas. Intellectuality cannot actually be measured in terms of value, but can be measured through everyday life, both in career and in solving problems.

Women who become intellectuals can show their existence through intellectual activities that make them think, see and define. Women who have intelligence and the ability to express opinions are those who are able to determine the direction of their future well and are also respected by society. In this case it is illustrated that Beth's character is included in intellectual figures because she is able to carry out activities of thinking, expressing opinions, having a career and others. Beth is one of the smartest students at Methuen Home. This can be proven when Beth always does math problems earlier than her other friends. Apart from mathematics, Beth is also good at reading, arithmetic, science, and geography. She always did well in her schoolwork and also served as Miss Lonsdale's assistant in the chapel for several years. According to Mrs. Deardorff, Beth is the model Methuen girl.

*"Every Tuesday, Miss Graham sent Beth down after Arithmetic to do the erasers. It was considered a privilege, and Beth was the best student in the class, even though she was the youngest." (Tevis, 1983: 6)*

Since childhood, Beth has enjoyed reading books, both school textbooks and books on chess tactics. Beth likes to read anywhere, both inside and outside the classroom. From there Beth's intelligence began to be honed and increased because reading books can positively impact children so that later she will grow up. By reading books, Beth can also broaden her horizons and develop her potential and imagination, especially in playing chess.

*"This week," Mrs. MacArthur said, "we will begin to study the binomial theorem. Does anyone know what a binomial is?" From the back row Beth put up her hand. It was the first time she had done this. "Yes?" Mrs. MacArthur said. Beth stood, feeling suddenly awkward. "A binomial is a mathematical expression containing two terms." They had studied this last year at Methuen. "X plus Y is a binomial." "Very good," Mrs. MacArthur said." (Tevis, 1983: 52)*

Beth's intelligence did not just stop when she was at Methuen Home, after being adopted and studying at Fairfield High School in Lexington, Kentucky Beth also showed her intelligence in mathematics. The proof is that when a math teacher asked students about binomials, Beth could answer them well. Although her classmates still looked down on Beth who was a freshman at Fairfield High School at the time. Beth's reading interest

did not stop when she was at Methuen Home. When adopted by Mr. and Mrs. Wheatley and also attending Fairfield High School, Beth still loves to read. So from that she visited the Fairfield High School library and looked for the book she wanted to read. As well as textbooks, books on chess tactics and Grandmaster is Beth's favorite book. Grandmaster is the highest title awarded by the international chess organization, Fédération Internationale des Échecs (FIDE), a chess player can achieve. Apart from the title "World Champion", Grandmaster is the highest title that can be achieved by a chess player.

*"She waited for several minutes. Her voice almost broke with the effort of her words, but she pushed them out, anyway: "I want to learn to play chess." Mr. Shaibel reached out a fat hand to one of the larger black pieces, picked it up deftly by its head and set it down on a square at the other side of the board. He brought the hand back and folded his arms across his chest. He still did not look at Beth. "I don't play strangers." (Tevis, 1983: 7)*

Beth Harmon who accidentally sees Mr. Shaibel (the caretaker of the orphanage) playing chess in the basement. Beth looked very curious about what Mr. Shaibel was playing until finally she ventured up to Mr. Shaibel and asked what he was playing. Mr. Shaibel with a stern face replied that the game he was playing is chess. Beth who is interested in the game of chess then asks Mr. Shaibel to teach it but he refuses because Beth is a stranger to him. The next day, Beth Harmon went back to Mr. Shaibel and said that she was not a stranger because she did live in the orphanage and showed Mr. Shaibel that she already knew a little about how to play the chess pieces from watching.

*"The flat voice had the effect of a slap in the face. Beth turned and left, walking upstairs with the bad taste in her mouth. "I'm not a stranger," she said to him two days later. "I live here." Behind her head a small moth circled the bare bulb, and its pale shadow crossed the board at regular intervals. "You can teach me. I already know some of it, from watching." "Girls don't play chess." Mr. Shaibel's voice was flat." (Tevis, 1983: 7)*

Mr. Shaibel refuses Beth to play chess on the grounds that she is a girl. He thinks that women cannot play chess. The subordination of women is the starting point for gender inequality (William-de Vries & Sutarti, 2006). This happens because everything is seen from the male point of view. Women are considered weak, unable to lead, and so on. Beth at that time trying to proved herself that she knew how to play chess by just watching the chess game played by Mr. Shaibel. She explains one by one how the pawns move. But unfortunately Mr. Shaibel does not even look at Beth's face and only focuses on the chess game in front of him. This shows his disinterest in Beth, who is a little girl.

Women are considered not as smart as men. Based on these quotations, it can be seen that Mr. Shaibel thinks that women will not be able to play chess as well as men. It seems that Mr. Shaibel thinks that chess requires focus and strategy, so women are

unlikely to be able to do that because they are irrational creatures whose emotions can be tricked while playing chess. Even though there are no rules that prohibit women from playing chess. Chess is a game that can be played by anyone and does not depend on gender. However, in every society there is a set of rules regarding appropriate activities for men and women, but these rules are highly dependent on culture and cannot be generalized through the influence of biological factors on human behavior (Dewi, 2019). In fact, there are many women who are smart and even some whose intelligence can exceed that of men. However, the opportunity to prove this is still low because since they were young, women have experienced discrimination in terms of intelligence and expertise

### 3. Work to achieve social transformation of society

Women can work to achieve the socialist transformation of society. Beauvoir has the hope of ending the subject-object conflict, the Self-Other between humans in general, and between men and women in particular. One of the keys to liberation for women is economic power. Beauvoir reminds women that the environment and the amount of money they have in the bank will limit them from defining themselves. In addition, the process of transforming knowledge and ideas into society is not an easy thing to do and requires certain skills, especially language skills in the process of transforming knowledge and ideas. The expected transformation, the knowledge and ideas possessed by the transformers are the same as the ideas held by the masses. If so, the masses will be easy to control because they are already within the limits of the same ideas and movements. In the novel *The Queen's Gambit*, Beth's character is described as a character who is able to become a transformer in society.

*"I want her out of here. I'm selling the house." Beth looked at him for a moment before speaking. "Then sell it to me," she said. "What are you talking about?" Wheatley said. "I'll buy it. I'll pay you whatever your equity is." "It's worth more than that now." "How much more?" "I'd need seven thousand." She knew his equity was less than five. "All right," she said. "You have that much?" "Yes," she said. "But I'm subtracting what I paid for burying my mother. I'll show you the receipts." (Tevis, 1983: 180)*

Beauvoir (1956) believes that economic power is one of the keys to women's liberation. This is emphasized in her discussion of independent women. Beauvoir warns that the environment will inevitably limit women's efforts to define themselves. Beth did not accept the action from Mr. Wheatley and points out that she can buy the house with her savings winning a chess tournaments. Beth has become an independent woman because she was able to save up and buy the house even if it was a sudden and unplanned situation. Independence is an individual attitude that is obtained gradually in its development. The individual will continue to learn to be independent in dealing with various situations in his environment. This is done so that he is able to think and act independently. Furthermore, independence is the ability of individuals to make a decision



with or without the help of other relevant people, but not depend on others, take the initiative to overcome the problems faced, confident in dealing with tasks, and be responsible for what has been done. Beth does not rely on others and prepares herself for unexpected events. In addition, Beth can also manage her own finances without depending on anyone. Beth insisted on getting the house because she felt it held a lot of memories, especially with her adoptive mother Mrs. Wheatley who had died.

Women can refuse to internalize into their other to go beyond its boundaries. The way is to identify himself through the views of the dominant group in society. According to Beauvoir, accepting the role of The Other means accepting the status of an object and rejecting the creative Self-Subject. It also means having some autonomy over oneself as well as taking the risk of going mad as a result of engaging in constant lying (Tong, 2009). Beth is a strong woman and rarely shows her emotions. Orphaned since childhood, she tries to live independently without bothering others too much and tries to show herself to the world. Independence is one of the characteristics of maturity that allows individuals to function autonomously and strive towards personal achievement and goal achievement.

*"We don't have a woman's section," he said. She just stared at him. "I'll put you in Beginners," he said. "No," Beth said, "I'm not a beginner." The other young man had been watching them. "If you're an unrated player, you go in Beginners with the people under sixteen hundred," he said. Beth had paid little attention to ratings in Chess Review, but she knew that masters had at least 2200. "What's the prize for Beginners?" she said. "Twenty." "What about the other section?" "First prize in the Open is one hundred." "Is it against any rule for me to be in the Open?" He shook his head. "Not a rule, exactly, but—" "Then put me in it." (Tevis, 1983: 60)*

*The Queen's Gambit* novel shows the belittling treatment of women in the world of chess. Beth Harmon, who took part in a chess tournament at the 1963 Kentucky State Championship event, received inappropriate treatment from the time she registered until the tournament was over. The committee gave a cynical look and explained the match in an unfavorable way. Beth who came to play a friendly chess match, was considered inappropriate according to the situation at that time, where almost all chess players were men. Even during the match, Beth was underestimated by male chess players by speaking harshly, not playing seriously, and even combing their hair and doing other activities during the tournament. In more detail, the quotation from *The Queen's Gambit* shows a woman who is considered unfit to play chess, because chess is a complicated game and is identical to men. Moreover, the chess tournament does not provide a women's section, which means they assume that women will not participate in the tournament. Beth felt humiliated because the chess tournament committee would put her in the beginner category, even though Beth believed that her skills were enough to compete with the men, so she convinced the tournament committee to put her in the Open category where she

could compete with boys who already had ratings or had good abilities.

In this novel, a woman has her own challenges because women in several parts of the world still often get unfair treatment from various parties, especially men. This is none other than because of the perception and development of a culture that believes that women's power is still below men's. This view was absorbed, grew, and spread to become a cultural element which glorifies men in various aspects. This culture is known as patriarchal culture. Communities that adhere to a social system with patriarchal perceptions often assume that men have a major role in uplifting women (Apriliandra & Krisnani, 2021). It is through this cultural understanding that discrimination against women finally occurs and not only limited in the public sphere, such as education, politics and social affairs. Even in sports such as the game of chess, discrimination against women often occurs. The impact of this view gave rise to a sexist division of labor based on gender. Where men are in the public area while women are in the domestic area. Men have a wider space to work than women. It is this division of roles that gives rise to discriminatory attitudes towards women. The position of women experiences injustice in several forms. Gender differences then perpetuate violence against women both physically and mentally.

*“She was not an important player by their standards; the only unusual thing about her was her sex, and even that wasn't unique in Russia.”*

This situation illustrates the marginalization of women. Neglect of rights that should be obtained by marginalized parties or can be called marginalization. Those rights are neglected with many reasons just for a purpos (Murniati, 2004). Based on the situation experienced by Beth Harmon, this marginalization is in the form of a process of impoverishing women, so that women cannot act and express themselves because the role of women is shifted to the periphery (Derana, 2016). The rights that should be obtained by Beth are in the form of playing chess, participating in tournaments, expressing their opinions without being marginalized by those who are more dominant.

A long with time, the man who had beaten by Beth at chess turned to be her friend. All these men come together to help her defeat her Russian opponent and make Beth the world champion. *The Queen's Gambit* novel even closes with a mob of anonymous Russian men gathering around Beth, admiring her talent. So it is clear that the character of Beth was created with little regard for the obvious reactions women have when men are surprised by her skills or talents. Even though at that time, almost all chess grandmasters were men, there had never been a world champion, and women chess players who had high ratings were very low. It is safe to say that women who excel in chess, like in other competitive sectors dominated by men, often take their breath away. *The Queen's Gambit* portrays an open-minded and emotionally caring man. To change society's stereotypes, women need to prove their talent in a particular sector.

*"The man she was playing now in her first game, a middle-aged master named Phillip Resnais, was on the cover of the current issue. There were fourteen players, many of them grandmasters. She was the only woman."* (Tevis, 1983: 148)

Beth has extraordinary abilities with maximum hard work. Among the fourteen chess players who are mostly grandmasters in the Ohio U.S. Championship tournament, Beth is the only woman among them. Beth shows equality where women can also compete with men and the game of chess is a sport that everyone can play regardless of gender, race, age, and so on. According to Beauvoir, women's liberation should not be an individual choice, but by changing complex social processes, which are expected to change women's situations to a point where women as free providers can participate in authentic life again. What is expected is to do something about their situation by dismantling the prison that holds them back so that their way of Freedom is opened again and they can assume transformative projects for themselves. In other words, Beauvoir wants to say that women's freedom must be supported by all parties and enable them to be themselves and choose and determine attitudes.

*"The U.S. Championship would be in three weeks; it was time it was won by a woman. It was time she won it."* (Tevis, 1983: 146)

Beth proves that she can be a U.S. Championship after beating Benny watts even though she is a woman. This title was previously owned several years by Benny who is one of the strongest chess players in America. This fact did not make Beth feel afraid and inferior, instead Beth was increasingly challenged to take part in bigger tournaments and had the ambition to beat Borgov who had become an International Grandmaster for eleven years and World Champion for five.

*"She was not pushing him so much as pressing gently. And gradually he began to yield, trying to look unconcerned about it. But he must have been astonished. Russian grandmasters were not supposed to have this done to them by American girls."* (Tevis, 1983: 218)

In another quotation, Beth is underestimated because of her gender in the male domination, fights in a chess game against a Russian grandmaster named Laev. Beth attacks Laev with her chess pieces until Laev is on the defensive. After that, Beth continued with her plan without hesitation until Laev was defeated. Laev and the audience were certainly surprised that a Russian grandmaster who was famous for his strength in playing chess could be defeated by an American woman. The tension between Russia and America is also inseparable from the setting of the story in this novel, namely the time when the cold war occurred between the two superpowers. The cold war was an ideological competition that occurred between the United States (America) and the

Soviet Union (Russia) in fighting over the influence of other countries. The event began after the success of the Allies defeated Nazi Germany in World War II. After that, there were only two superpowers in the world with major economic, ideological and military differences, namely the United States and the Soviet Union.

*"It's your game." He pushed back his chair, stood up, and then reached down and picked up his king. Instead of setting it on its side he held it across the board to her. She stared at it. "Take it," he said. The applause began. She took the black king in her hand and turned to face the auditorium, letting the whole massive weight of the ovation wash over her."*

Beth showed herself to be able to beat the reigning world champion Borgov with her incredible potential and hard work even though she is a girl. In fact, the subordination of gender views can actually lead to the assumption that women are emotional so they cannot appear to lead and result in attitudes that place women in an unimportant position. Beth is a woman who maintains her ambition who has the belief that she is able to show her existence to society that she can become a world champion in the field of chess. Beth discovers that being a woman is not a limitation.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of the main character in *The Queen's Gambit* novel based on the feminist theory by Simone de Beauvoir, it can be concluded that this novel provides various representations of women especially in the world of chess. In the era of 1950-1960s not many women dared to play chess, and they did not even get the chance to do so. Beth was a woman who was taken for granted and faced male domination in the values of a patriarchal society, which later turned into a woman who tried to fight against the concept of domination. Beth shows her efforts in winning various chess tournaments which men dominate. The woman's existence in the novel *The Queen's Gambit* is that Beth wants to get equal treatment in the field of chess by showing her abilities in chess tournaments in various countries and becoming a world champion. This novel shows how the situation in an era of 1950-1960s where patriarchy is still very strong and belittling women is still considered normal, such as in the sport of chess. This situation is related to the second wave of feminism or the second wave of women's liberation movements in the United States. This term refers to the feminist period of the early 1960s with various discussions on issues such as injustice in law, sexuality, family, workplace, and so on.

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