

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This part consists of five subchapters. Those are the background of the study, statement of the research problem, objectives of the study, significances of the study, scope, and limitation of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Manufacturing is a branch of industry that is related to the processing of raw materials into finished goods that have a high value to fulfill the market and global demand. “Manufacturing sector has a greater income elasticity of demand than agriculture and services” (Castillo & Martins Neto, 2016, p. 11). Initially, this activity mostly needs human power to operate the tools and control all of the production processes. It also empowers social economic and societal productivity. Therefore, the existence of labor and industry are equally important.

However, the phenomenon of deindustrialization that happen in some countries such as U.S, changed most of the structure and history of U.S. The term deindustrialization is a natural outflow of technical development towards automation and innovation (Przywara, 2017, p. 460), but it could be brought to economic stagnation for some regions that cannot be adapted and mostly affects the workers’ life. The phenomenon of deindustrialization is a serious socio-economic problem that rising income inequality and unemployment (Kollmeyer, 2009, p. 1645). Therefore, this phenomenon attracted some society’s intention, including an artist who was interested to create a literary work that related to the social phenomenon or issues.

One famous American artist or playwright who is interested in some social issues is Lynn Nottage, her contemporary drama entitled “*Sweat*” (Nottage, 2017) which won The Pulitzer Prize in 2017 as the source of data for this study. According to (Cromton, n.d.) in *The Guardian News & Media*, 2018 “her work

frequently draws inspiration from research and covers a wide range of topics related to discarded, disadvantaged people”.

This drama depicts the condition of deindustrialized town Reading, Pennsylvania. At first Reading was the industrial heart of America and was a place of various races and gender, but it was damaged by crime and unemployment which make some people decided to leave and move to another town to get work and continue their life. Pennsylvania is identified as the Rust Belt region which represents an area that has experienced deindustrialization and significant economic decline. According to (Fox, n.d.) *Philadelphia Magazine 2018* “It’s a particularly depicted American, that often sad story- a depressed industry, the global economic crisis, and NAFTA create a perfect storm that make many of people out of work”.

Lynn spent her time in Pennsylvania for two and half years in 2012 to gain some inspiration for her work *Sweat*. She interviewed the workers to hear the voices, narrative, experiences, and their struggles to survive in decayed and declared as the poorest town in America. According to Nottage in (Pavia, n.d.) *The Times News 2019*, they talking about feeling marginalized, feeling invisible, feeling unheard, which is familiar for her.

This drama is not only depicted how the deindustrialization happened at that time, but Nottage also put the hidden narrative and untold voices of steelworkers as marginalized people about how they tried to survive and face the transition life in complex town, faced injustice policies, modern capitalism, racial issues, and other bad experiences which rarely covered in mainstream media or familiar history. Some mainstream media were only hectic debating whether the impact of deindustrialization is good or not for the economic sector and tended to ignore the personal histories of the workers.

The writer fascinated to conduct this study because Nottage emerged the personal side of the history of the workers’ histories behind the phenomenon of deindustrialization. She also situated the dialogue in a bar, which serves as a

gathering place for individuals of all ages, genders, and races. A bar is also a place which a lot of people unwind and candidly tell the truth. Therefore, the bar is a tradition in literature and commonly used in a lot of American Plays. This work reflected literature and history merger equally. Considering its background, New Historicism is an appropriate theory to explore this study.

New historicism emerged in the late 1970s. Literary texts are cultural artifacts that can enlighten something about the interplay of discourse in which the text was written (Tyson, 2006, p. 291). For new historicism, history is a representation through human experience at a given time and place. History is also seen as a text that is interpreted by different cultures. The text (The literary work) and the context (the historical condition that produces it) are mutually constitutive. Hence, literary texts shape and are shaped by their historical context (Tyson, 2006, p. 292). Greenblatt stated that New Historicism is a practice rather than a doctrine (Greenblatt, 1987:3) which means that his concept is constructed the historical narrative which occurs in the literature by interpretation.

The suppressed historical narratives of oppressed groups, including women, people of color, the poor, the working class, gay men and lesbians, prisoners, and others, were the emphasis of new historicism. (Tyson, 2006, p. 287). Related with Nottage's work *Sweat*, which tells the untold voices and movements of how the steelworkers survive and facing the deindustrialization decade and racial issues in slumped towns that are rarely told in history or mainstream media. New Historicism tries to encourage the development of and gain attention for histories of marginalized people (Tyson, 2006, p. 288).

The writer uses contemporary drama as a source of data and utterances as the primary data. The purpose of this study is to reveal how Nottage presents the untold voices behind the phenomenon of deindustrialization that happened in Pennsylvania, especially the histories and the dark experiences of steelworkers as marginalized peoples, the cultural movement about how they struggle to survive and continuing life in the slumped town by New historicism perspective.

The previous study Citra Ardila and Desvalimi Anwar (2019) entitled *Restraints of The Labor's Welfare in Lynn Nottage's Drama Sweat (2015)*, using the concept of alienation by Karl Marx, which concerns how a factory in Reading, Pennsylvania controlling and stopping the labor's welfare to get much profit. In addition, the other previous study conducted by Marwa Ghazi Mohammed (2020), *The Landscape of the Invisibles in Lynn Nottage's Sweat*, tried to explain the impact of poverty and unemployment that experienced by the workers brought racial prejudice, envy, and hostility. The writer also uses the term 'invisible' to portrays the workers as poor people that used to be disregarded by the government or authoritarian. The last previous study was conducted by Emine Fisek (2019) from Pamukkale University, entitled *The Deindustrial Generation: Memory, Biography, and the Body in Lynn Nottage Sweat*. The study sees the work as deindustrialization literature, which is marked with the intergenerational transmission and sees the whole aspects of drama such the memory, history, and biography. However, the previous study does not carry out the theory of literature to analyze the study, therefore the present study expands the concept by adding a theory of literature, which is a new historicism study.

1.2 Statement of Research Questions

Considering the context of the aforementioned study, the writer tries to interpret the workers' hidden narratives about their dark experiences, movements, and struggles to survive, facing racial issues in slumped towns that are rarely told in mainstream media. The research questions which are proposed in this study are as follows:

1. How does the text shows the powerful of capitalist practice?
2. What are the hidden narrative and untold voices of workers as marginalized people found in the drama?

1.3 Objective of the Study

In light of the problem description above, the goals of this study are to find out:

1. The main discourse of the powerful and the capitalist practice
2. The hidden narrative and untold voices of workers face the deindustrialization in the drama

1.4 Significances of the Study

Theoretically and practically, this study is anticipated to be significant.

1. Theoretically, this study is to support the existence of New Historicism theory.
2. Practically, this study is expected to provide a better understanding of history as an equal representation of historical accounts from all communities. Besides, this study is expected to explain how contemporary drama interprets history through New Historicism Perspective. History is a matter of interpretation interpreted by different cultures. This study is anticipated to serve as a reference for The English Study Program's next student who want to use New Historicism in their analysis.

1.5 Scope and Limitations

The writer of this study limits the analysis based on the interpretation of the text and context delivered through the characters' utterances of the drama to keep the analysis in the expected field. The limitation of this study is focused on the characters' experiences and movements face the phenomenon of deindustrialization that is rarely told in history. New Historicism by Stephen Greenblatt is considered an appropriate theory to support this study. This study has some weaknesses. Hence, the next study that wants to analyze this drama should be expanded to a New Historicism perspective with different sights or explore with other appropriate theories such as Marxism, Deconstructive

criticism, African-American criticism, and so on. In the successive study, hopefully, it will be compared with analyzing the other aspects such as the character, plot, staging, or setting in the drama *Sweat* by Nottage.