

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of five subchapters that will present the background of the study, statement of the research problem, objectives of the study, significances of the study, and the scope and limitation.

1.1 Background of the Study

Gender role is one of the problems in society. This problem happens in society's life. The society believes that a man is superior and woman is inferior in every scope. The patriarchal system is unbeneficial in so many aspects in women's life. In this patriarchy culture, the position of men is seen higher compared to women. It portrays women as weak figure and requires protection of man. The role of women is to serve their family at home all day therefore they cannot get the other job outside their home. Consequently, women get the effect of patriarchy system in the society and it makes women inferior in many aspects such as economy and politic aspect. This case does not only exist in a real life, but also happen in a story of literary work.

By the time, women's awareness of equality arises especially through literary works. The women movement that supports gender equality is called feminism. They struggle to make women equal to men and achieve higher position in society. In the past, women stayed inside their house yet men can have more opportunities to do their activities outside. At this time, women position is developed and they can get available space to contend each other. It also happens

in literary work where male writers dominate female writers in the past. Most of the authors who write literary works are male writers while female writers decrease and don't get enough space to achieve good career in literature. However the movement of feminist makes female writers rise to be equal with male writers. It means that female writers can explore their skill in writing and make their own literary work.

Suzan-Lori Parks was born in Fort Knox, Kentucky, America. She is an American playwright, screenwriter, musician and novelist. She is female writer who gets a success of her career as the author and she gets award for winning the Pulitzer Prize for her works like *Venus*. She is becoming the first African American women writer to achieve the award in 2002 for *Topdog/Underdog*. She creates her own literary work, a drama entitled *Venus* (1995). The story of *Venus* is inspired by the true life story of Sarah Saartjie Baartman. The story of the *Venus* tells about South African khoikhoi women who has large buttocks and exhibited as freak show attractions in 19th Century Europe.

Based on the explanation above, this study will analyze Suzan-Lori Parks's as a female writer who creates literary works about women. The analysis used the theory from feminist criticism in term of Gynocriticism to identify the specialty of women writing by Suzan- Lori Parks. The analysis will be broken down into four aspects in gynocriticism which are biological, linguistic, psyche and biological. Then this study also analyses how Suzan-Lori Parks portrays women characters in the drama. The purpose of this study is to develop the

specialty of women writing done by Suzan-Lori Parks as female writer and women portrayal which is created in the *Venus* (1995).

The writer chooses *Venus* as a source of data in this study because the writer of the drama is inspiring. Suzan Lori Parks as the writer is the first African America women writer who got a chance to achieve award in 2002. She is also multitalented. She can be writer in every aspect such as drama, novel and screenwriter. Then the way of her writing will be the focus of the analysis in this study.

The interesting part in *Venus* is the story which is based on the experience of Suzan Lori Parks. Her creativity by creating her playwright should be appreciated, because every writer has their own characteristic and uniqueness to create a literary work. She wants to emphasize that black women can be discriminated and exploited by western people.

When discussing about the black women in *Venus*, feminism theory is appropriate with the discussion. Feminism does not only discuss about women's struggle to the gender quality, but also the women's creativity writing. It means that female writer have chance to express their skill in writing and produce literary work.

Feminist Criticism is a theory that involves women as writers who write about women in literature. Feminist Criticism is the theory which focuses and discusses the problem in gender equality, sex, and women oppression. Judith Lorber describes the point of feminist criticism in his writing

“The main point feminists have stressed about gender inequality is that is not an individual matter, but is deeply ingrained in the structure of societies.” (Lorber, 1995, p. 8).

The statement above explains feminist connected with some aspects such as economic, politic, religion and culture. In addition, feminist reflects some theories to the gendered social order. Therefore, feminist criticism is one the reflection that states gynocriticism theory which is declared by Elaine Showalter. The theory is identifying the specialty of women’s writing in the literary work.

Elaine Showalter declared Gynocriticism or *La gynocritique* in 1969 – 1977. She focuses on female writers that analyze women’s writing or women’s work in literature and it is also concerned with women history. Elaine Showalter gives her statement about gynocriticism in her book entitled *Toward a Feminist Poetics* that states “The term ‘gynocriticism’ for scholarship concerned with women as the producer of textual meaning; with the history, themes, genres, and structure of literature by women” (Showalter, 1986:29).

By the statement above, it means that female writers have their own skill in writing literary work based on their creativity, style and also their life experiences. There are three aspects in gynocriticism that are used in this study to identify the women’s writing. The first is women’s writing and women’s body which discusses about the biological by female writer. The second is women’s writing and women’s language which discusses about the usage of language. The third is women’s writing and women’s psyche which analyses the author’s psyche through their work and the last is women’s writing and women’s culture which focuses on the cultural existed toward women.

To begin with, a drama entitled *The Venus* that was written by Suzan Lori Parks is interesting to be a part of this study. Due to some consideration that the writer intends to conduct this analysis is that the drama has won the Topdog/Underdog in 2002 and the story also fits with the gynocriticism theory perfectly. Gynocriticism is the study of women's writing. It is told very clearly and obviously in "*Venus*" by Suzan Lori Parks. The drama has represented the quality of African - American writer.

The *Venus* by Suzan Lori Parks tells about life of Sarah Saartjie Baartman. She is from South Africa in khoi khoi village. She is a young black woman that becomes an attraction in a freak show. It is called Venus Hottentot. The owner of the freak show is The Mother Showman. The freak show is travelling the town in England by The Mother Showman. After that, The Baron Docteur is interested in Venus Hottentot and he buys her from the Mother Showman. He takes her go to Paris and become the experiment. One day, Venus Hottentot is dead and her death is mysterious because the cause is unknown clearly.

The interesting part in *Venus* is the story which is has a lot of aspects of problem. Her creativity by creating her playwright should be appreciated, because every writer has their own characteristic and uniqueness to create a literary work. She wants to emphasize that black women can be discriminated and exploited. Gynocriticism theory as to what the writer will explain in the next chapter of study. Based in that point, the writer decides to analyze the drama using Gynocriticism theory as the main focus of this research.

1.2 Statement of The Research Problems

Based on the background of the study, there are two questions will be foregrounded as follows:

1. How are four aspects in gynocriticism presented by Suzan Lori Parks in the *The Venus*?
2. How does Suzan Lori Parks portray the women character in *The Venus*?

1.3 The Objectives of The Study

The objective of the research is to identify and describe the uniqueness of Suzan Lori Parks' writing and to analyze through Gynocritic terms as reflected in *Venus*. In addition, this research will try to explore more about women's character in *Venus*.

1.4 The significances of The study

These studies focus on two conspicuous objectives. The first objective is the theoretical objective and the second is a practical objective.

1. Theoretically, this study is expected to give significant distribution to the development of science especially in the literary research field. Through the analysis of gynocriticism under the umbrella of feminist criticism theory which is proposed by Elaine Showalter. Gynocriticism contains four aspects such as biological, linguistic, psychological and culture. Hopefully, this study will give a valuable knowledge.

2. Practically, this study can extend and develop to the previous research and become the groundwork to the following researcher about gynocriticism. Further, this study can give a better understanding to the readers and the other researchers especially, the students of English Study Program of Trunojoyo Madura University who takes literature as their concentration.

1.5 The Scope and Limitation

This scope of this study will use feminist criticism which focuses on gynocriticism. The theory is used to analyze the creativity of women's writing in literature which is presented in *Venus* by Suzan Lori Parks. In order to get a better focus, this study limits on the character's utterances, the narrator's narration and the dialogues which relates to the gynocriticism which is elaborated and carried out in *The Venus*.