

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents some points of the study, they are background of the study, research problem, objectives of the study, significances of the study, and scope and limitation of the study.

1.1 Background of The Study

People experience many developments either in technology, the environment, and many aspects of life in this world. As they experience those many things, their minds also develop following the development around them. They begin to have an open-minded way of thinking. It makes them to be more critical towards phenomena that happen around them. One of the movements that make a differences in the way people act, think, and live is a feminist movement. Feminist movement is a series of political, ideological, and social movements that aimed to explain, develop, and achieve equality from various aspects including political, economic, personal, social gender, educational and professional opportunities, and the equal opportunities for women and men. According to Hannam, "Feminism is understood as the arises when women demanded to get the equal rights as men"(2007:6). The right to know themselves and to be free of all things, equality, freedom and self-discovery is a right that is shared by every human being in this world.

Feminist also applied in creating a literary work. Many authors write their work depicts feminism theory, for example Caryl Churchill's drama. As one of the most contemporary writers, Caryl Churchill received admiration not only

from the British audience but also from theatre critics from Europe. It was said in the book "*Classic Play by Women*" edited and introduced by Susan Croft, Churchill served as a resident dramatist at the Royal Court Theater from 1974-1975. Her first work in the theater, "*Owners*" (1972) was the first drama produced in London. Many plays were developed through workshops with feminist company Monstrous Regiments, such as *Vinegar Tom* (1976) and a collection of new writings, the Joint Stock Theater Company. Some of his plays were written as part of the company's design process, such as *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire* (1976); *Cloud Nine* (1979); *Fen* (1983), worked with director Max Stafford-Clark.

Churchill's work includes collaborations with opera and dance companies like Second Stride, such as *Lives of the Great Poisoners* (1991). Churchill won the Obie Award for Songwriting for *Top Girls* in 1982 and in 1983, *Top Girls* was the runner-up for the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize.

"Next, Churchill launched this manuscript coincides with the tragedy of the decade's political events, Margaret Thatcher's election as Britain's first female Prime Minister and *Top Girls* against Thatcherism, marking a new phase in the socialist-feminist political theater, about the beginnings of the struggle of women against the patriarchal system under Thatcher's government in the 1970s. (*Classic Play by Women from 1600-2000*).

Top Girls is a drama which is written by Caryl Churchill, firstly performed at the Royal Court Theater, London on August 28, 1982. This drama discusses precisely in the aspect of liberal feminism and portrays the social problems occur

in the various era. The problem portrays in this drama is a patriarchal society which affects women's life. The female characters struggle against the oppression they experience due to the patrilineal system where they live. Through the background of the characters, they try to get the same rights and positions as men.”

The story in the drama is about Marlene as the main character, Marlene is a modern woman who has a good career after passing her dark situation past, she is success in her work as a managing director at Top Girls Employment Agency, then Merlene celebrates her success by gather her friends for dinner, those friends are Victoria Isabella Bird, Pope Joan, Nijo and others. The women eat, drink and talk about success. They also discuss the disappointments and pains that had shaped their life, told their life stories about how they there in their own world.

All stories relate to men's influence, and how they depend on men to achieve what they want, either by controlling them or being controlled by them. In other words, they have lived in various forms of patriarchal system, and those who have successfully" be like humans" have proven to be the most successful. Marlene's success in the world of work, Joan in learning and teaching, while Isabella and the others did not fully achieve their success. The scene at the dinner party was dramatically and politically uplifting, with energy that arises from the difficulties that were overcome. In everyday life at the Top Girls Office where Marlene works, she and her friends talk about success. In this study only focus on the character who have a liberal feminism values. The three characters namely Marlene, Joan and Win.

From the explanation above, it can be seen that this *Top Girls* drama is full of interesting aspects or problems of community life that can be analyzed using feminist movements against society and the patriarchal of life. There are no previous studies that use *Top Girls* drama which discusses the struggles of female characters, focuses on the three characters and analyzes using liberal feminism values.

“However, there are previous studies that supports this study. First undergraduate thesis by Muhammad Arif Jauhari entitled "The portrayal of liberal feminism depicted by Mae Holland and Annie" (2015). Second is journals written by Georgiana Vasile entitled "*The Female Voices In Caryl Churchill's Top Girls (1982): Sisters or Foes*", the third by Jenny M. Djundjung entitled "*Feminist Perspective of Cross-Gender Power Relations in Caryl Churchill's Top Girls*", and in Journal of international social research entitled "*Dialectics of Sex in Caryl Churchill's Top Girls (2012)*". The last is from journal written by Rebecca Cameron entitled "*From Great Women to Top Girls: Pageants of Sisterhood in British Feminist Theater*"(2009).

“The story in *Top Girls* can inspire everyone. From this drama, people think that women can be independent when they have the chance. The values of liberal feminism analyzed in this study can be seen through the female characters in this drama.”

Top Girls is seen to be interesting to be a part of this analysis because this drama has become emblematic of contemporary woman's ongoing struggles with such issues. The 1982 staging at the Royal Court Theatre, directed by Max

Stafford-Clark, was a landmark production. The play's succesful transferral to New York confirmed Churchill's relevance on both sides of the Atlantic, and its widespread success helped forge a path for future women playwrights and the play was nominated for the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize was the recipient of multiple Obie Awards. Caryl Churchill is widely considered to be one of the most innovative playwrights to have emerged in post-war British theatre. (Modern Theatre Guides, 2008).

Top Girls is the drama on which various feminisms are performed interestingly. Therefore, this study analyzes liberal feminism actualized in it. Furthermore, this study analyzes the characters' utterances based on feminist criticism so that liberal feminism easily to be explain.

1.2 Research Problems

“Related to the background of the study above, the problem of this study is formulated into the questions below:”

1. Why do the female characters struggle in Caryl Churchill *Top Girls*?
2. How do the female characters struggle depict liberal feminism values in Caryl Churchill *Top Girls*?

1.3 Objectives of The Research

“The objectives of the study are to explore why the female characters struggle and how the female characters struggle depict liberal feminism values in Caryl Churchill's *Top Girls*.

1.4 Significances of The Research

1. Theoretically, this study is expected to give understanding about feminist criticism that is focused on liberal feminism.”
2. Practically, this study enrichs the student's knowledge and give an explanation about the theory of feminism. This study can give a better understanding to the readers and the other researchers but also give inspiration to the next writers who are going to analyze different literary work analyzed based on the same theory as well.”

1.5 Scope and Limitation

“The scope of this study is liberal feminism and feminist thought which is portrayed by female characters in *Top Girls* drama. In order to help this study to successfully achieve the objectives of the study, this study limits on the character's utterances and the narrator's narration which relates to liberal feminism which is elaborated in Caryl Churchill’s *Top Girls*.”