

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents some subchapters, namely background of the study, statement of the problems, objectives of the study, significances of the study, scopes and limitations of the study. Those subchapters are explained because they describe this study.

1.1. Background of The Study

Drama as a literary genre is realized in performance, which is why Robert Di Yanni (quoted in Dukore) describes it as “staged art” (867). Drama is an adaptation, recreation and reflection of reality on stage. Drama is an imitation of life (Iwuchukwu, 2008:3). From this quotation, reality of life is reflected in a drama. The reader is able to see imitation of life which occurs in this world by exploring a drama. That is why, it is interesting to read drama.

Drama is written in various senses and themes. It sometimes tells about the reflection of social condition in a particular time and place in which contains the dramatist thoughts, human’s problem, conflict and way of life. Drama also depicts the historical period in which the work is written. It means that drama is created to express the dramatist’s idea about conflict of social, political, and cultural agendas of the time and place in which they occurred. Those can be based on dramatist’s experiences or people’s experiences. In reality, social and political conflict can be found in a particular time and place when the fact occurred. It becomes history that would be interpreted. It is related to how discourse shaped and was shaped by the culture that represented it. Somehow, it is very interesting to reveal the discourses

which circulate in a particular time and place. In relation to the previous discussion, drama as one of literary works can be used to interpret a history or discourse that occurred in a particular time and place. The interpretation can be revealed by using new historical criticism.

For new historical literary critics, then, the literary text, through its representation of human experience at a given time and place, is an interpretation of history. As such, the literary text maps the discourses circulating at the time it was written and is, itself, one of those discourses. That is, the literary text shaped and was shaped by the discourses circulating in the culture in which it was produced (Tyson, 1999: 292).

From this statement, literary text can be regarded as an interpretation of history at the past time. For new historical literary critics, social background, ideas circulating at the time, and the cultural milieu are needed to be understood. Therefore, to interpret history of social condition in a certain time reflected in a literary work, new historicism is used.

For new historicism considers history a text that can be interpreted the same way literary critics interpret literary texts, and conversely, it considers literary texts cultural artifacts that can tell us something about the interplay of discourses, the web of social meanings, operating in the time and place in which those texts were written (Tyson, 1999:283).

The quotation explains that from this new historicism, the meaning of text can be found and interpreted. In a literary work, it tells about one of the dominant discourse of a period in which the work is written. Therefore, literary work reflects a history in a past time that is related to the story in it. This kind of discussion can also be applied in a Howard Brenton's drama, *Weapons of Happiness*.

Weapons of Happiness was the first play to be performed at the Lyttleton Theatre space at the National Theatre in 1976 and won the Evening Standard Best Play award. Playwright Howard Brenton has written or co-written more than 40 plays including most recently *In Extremis at Shakespeare's Globe*, and *Paul* which caused a furore at the National Theatre. He is currently working on a television drama for BBC2 and a new play for the National Theatre. *Weapons of Happiness* fuses two different but interconnected stories, ambitiously connecting social issues in Britain and the wider history of the European Left. (<http://www.offwestend.com>). *Weapons of Happiness* is chosen as the source of data because the drama tells about the impact of the Stalin's Regime on the society in which it circulates in 1940-1950's in Russia. It is reflected on Howard Brenton's *Weapons of Happiness*.

Howard Brenton's *Weapons of Happiness* tells about a strike in a London crisp factory. The workers of a London factory occupy the building in a bid to save their jobs and stall the threatened closure by the factory's owners. Their struggle to save their livelihoods is complicated by the presence of Czech ex-Communist Joseph Frank and Victor Clementis. They are still deeply traumatised by the regime of Stalin. The main character in this drama is Joseph Frank. He is a Czech communist cabinet minister and also an emigre veteran of the Czech Communist party. He is exiled into London. The dramatist is inspired by the real Joseph Frank. The real Joseph Frank is one of victims of Stalin's Regime cruelty. The real Joseph Frank is hanged in Prague on the third of December 1952

(Brenton, 1976: 6). The dramatist then, in this drama, describes him through presenting Joseph Frank who is also one of victims of Stalin's regime influence.

Moreover, the main plot of this drama tells about Frank who is haunted by his own memories and by involving some figures from the past that he imagines that they exist in the events of the present. From Frank's memories, it can be known about history of impact of Stalin's Regime on Soviet society in 1940-1950's that is reflected in the drama.

Joseph Stalin was general secretary of the Communist Party of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) from 1922 to 1953 (www.pbs.org). It shows that Stalin's influence still existed until 1950's as elaborated in the drama.

Shortly before, during and immediately after World War II, Stalin conducted a series of deportations on a huge scale, which profoundly affected the ethnic map of the Soviet Union. It is estimated that between 1941 and 1949 nearly 3.3 million people were deported to Siberia and the Central Asian republics. By some estimates up to 43% of the resettled population died of diseases and malnutrition (<http://russiapedia.rt.com>).

The above quotation strengthens that Stalin's influence still effects on society until by 1950's through his cruelty and deportations. Based on the fact above, new historicism is an appropriate theory to be used to analyze the drama in this study to evaluate how the drama reflects the history that occurred in the past time and by the time when the work is created.

Based on the previous explanation, this study is going to analyze Howard Brenton's *Weapons of Happiness* under the title **The Impact of the Stalin's Regime on Society in Howard Brenton's *Weapons of Happiness*** by applying new historicism theory.

There are some researchers who use new historicism theory in analyzing some different source of data. The first researcher is Lois Tyson (1999) who analyzes F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* in his book *Critical Theory Today*. The second researcher is Doktora Tezi (2007), the thesis writer of *A Study on Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness, Lord Jim and Nostromo in a New Historicist Perspective*. Those researchers use same theory to analyze a history in a certain period experienced by the characters in each literary work. Meanwhile, this study is going to analyze the impact of Stalin's regime on their society experienced by the characters in Howard Brenton's *Weapons of Happiness*.

1.2. The Statement of Problems

Based on the previous elaboration, this study analyzes history reflected on Howard Brenton's *Weapons of Happiness*. The problems to be solved in this study are:

1. How are great terror of Stalin's regime experienced by the characters in the drama?
2. How are the effects of great terror of Stalin's regime experienced by the characters in the drama?

1.3. The Objectives of the Study

Based on the statement of problems above, this study is intended:

1. To elaborate how the great terror of Stalin's regime experienced by the characters in the drama.
2. To elaborate how the effects of great terror of Stalin's regime experienced by the characters in the drama.

1.4. The Significances of the Study

This study is expected to provide theoretical and practical benefits. Theoretically, the results of this study can provide a better understanding on the theory of new historical criticism. Meanwhile practically, the result of this study hopefully can inspire the other writers to write about new historical criticism by using other sources of data and add the knowledge of the readers especially to the Student of English Study Program of University of Trunojoyo Madura.

1.5. The Scope and Limitation

The scope of this study is new historicism theory that focuses on how history occurred in a particular time and place reflected in a drama. Meanwhile, this study limits the analysis on primary text (character's utterances) and secondary text (author's narration and author's description) that are related to the great terrors of Stalin's regime and the effects of the great terror experienced by the characters in the drama.