

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Study Background

Literary works are a means of expressing one's thoughts which are expressed in the form of literary works, whether used as expressions, with the aim of criticizing something or as self-disclosure of a reality that is arranged in the form of a series of storytelling words. Literary works have never occupied an established position throughout the ages. Along with the times, with the spread of new media in the midst of the population, literary works have become increasingly meaningful and provide thousands of meanings in them, especially in reviewing the life of social reality. Social reality is not always able to be spoken verbally or with a rhetorical approach, but efforts to disclose social reality are also expressed in the form of literary works as a form of interpersonal "talking" media by prioritizing one-way communication.

The literary works as social reflection of society that presents various problems that occur in the live. Literature is a place where problems of discrimination against women are raised, developed, and normalized in society.. One of the sexist ideas in the literature is feminism. Wigginton & Lafrance (2019) stated that feminism is a struggle to correct the laws and practices in everyday life that prevent women from being equal with men in domestic life and society in general. The toughest struggle is against the mentality that supports such laws and practices. Ravari & Naidu (2018) stated that the feminist movement includes

gender, behaviour, cultural recognition, and the equality system for women and men, gender, descriptive measures, biological variables that are used to distinguish the roles of women and men, and culturally the formation of a more desirable pattern of daily life for the roles of men and women.

The literature that contain the woman role or feminism includes of Mary Wollstonecraft (1792) with *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, Olive Schreiner with *Women and Labour* (1911); Virginia Woolf with *A Room of One's Own* (1929), which openly describes the discrimination experienced by women in pursuing education or marrying and having children; and Simone de Beauvoir with *The Second Sex* (1949). Male contributions to the feminism writing such as John Stuart Mill with *The Subjection of Woman* (1869) and Friedrich Engels (1884) with *The Origin of the Family*.

The women's movement that occurred in the 1960s was a change from the old thoughts and behaviours contained in classical literature regarding the inequality experienced by women in achieving positions in society. In addition, the women's movement is also trying to start to find solutions to fight injustice experienced by women. The women's movement in the 1960s has given rise to feminist literary criticism of classical works. The beginning of the movement began through writing various types of literature about the stories of injustice felt by women and the spread of this literature has encouraged the emergence of resistance to discrimination. Feminist literary criticism is the best way to influence discriminatory behavior in everyday life. The appearance of women in a literary work is a form of promotion that spreads the fastest because of the possibility of

highlighting the role of feminism in literature that can be accepted and legitimized by society. Feminist literature is a representation of women in society. Feminist literature is also able to influence its readers as well as offer solutions through the author's mind. So through literature, the goals of the feminist movement can be achieved. Meanwhile, feminist literary criticism is used to see the image of women and their efforts to achieve existence in a literary perspective. Feminist literary criticism is also an approach to literary studies that applies feminist thought to analyse literary texts (Barry, 2002).

Literary works about feminism that exist today are a continuation of the women's movement in 1960. From the beginning it was realized the importance of literary works to voice the image of women which was disseminated through literary works. Literary works are seen as an important part of struggle for women's rights and questioning women's authority and coherence. The women's movement and feminism always need literary works, so that literary works and criticism of feminism must be seen as an inseparable unit. Literature is the easiest way to affect behaviour and attitudes in everyday life. The representation of women in literary works can be interpreted as one of the most important means of 'socialization' because it provides a perspective on the role that women want in the feminist movement (Barry, 2002).

One of the literatures that contain the women struggle is *Top Girls* drama. The Churchill's *Top Girls* drama by raised the issue of feminism in particular, which can be criticized through the lens of existence women. *Top Girls* drama presented the struggle of a women in achieved a good carrier position in the mid of

discrimination in the workplace. This drama given fact that feminism movement an appearing to solved many problems related to the man domination and discrimination to the women right. *Top Girls* emerged when the second wave of feminism had reached its peak. Feminism is a movement based on intellectual development and political movement to find justice and equality for women and stop all forms of discrimination.. Therefore, the topics of feminism occur throughout *Top Girls* in which injustice is faced for women in social life. Since there are no male characters in the play, *Top Girls* focuses solely on female experiences and their sexual roles in society. In this context, *Top Girls* also described the working conditions of women, their memories, their mentalities, their mothers' status and their effects on children.

The *Top Girls* drama chosen in this research because *Top Girls* containing about a woman's struggle to pursued her career in the midst of male domination and there are forms of discrimination in the workplace. The content of this drama is in accordance with the phenomenon of the rise of the spirit of feminism to break the domination of men in everyday life. The phenomenon of feminism in the Cary Churchill's *Top Girls* viewed from main figure in this Drama. Marlene is the main character of *Top Girls* drama in the mid of 1980s and the stories in the drama are a reflection of her lifestyle. In a male-dominated work environment, she was able to achieve tremendous success in her career even though she was a female and was able to become a manager in the *Top Girls* job agency (Bastan, 2018).

The other feminism phenomenon that appears in the drama *Top Girls* is discrimination in the workplace. The characters that appear in *Top Girls* include

Marlene who is opposed to Joyce and Angie. Marlene is a high-class career woman who holds the position of chief executive, which does not give Joyce and Angie the opportunity and consideration as workers to move up the ranks in the company. However, many women suffer from having to play the role of a “super” woman. Research related to the role of women in the workplace provides a very worrying reality. Most women earn lower salaries and less chance of getting promotions. Vasile (2010) stated that:

Figure of Marlene is one example of a ‘top girl’ who is able to achieve success. She was able to create a new kind of woman in the mid-1980s. In conditions of a society full of capitalist pressure, Marlene managed to get out of the working class and climb the corporate ladder well despite having to hand over her daughter to her sister. Marlene is ‘lucky’ person who was born after the emergence of consumerism culture, Marlene was preferred her career than her mother role. Marlene managed to break the stereotype of feminism and achieved success her job. As an upper-class woman at the top of the company’s ranks, Marlene gave dominance to other women who were below her class.

In addition to the phenomenon of feminism and the content of the *Top Girls* Drama which is in accordance with the realities of life, this research is also based on several studies that have been carried out previously. The first, Yang (2019) examined the feminism construction to examine the trend of postmodernism in British drama based on contemporary culture. She used descriptive-qualitative methods to describe the feminism constructs in four factors, such as, feminist figures do not give appreciation to other feminist characters, feminist figures give up their role as mothers and feminist identity, the success of feminist figures at different time and places can be interpreted as their suffering, and drama without male figure but full of male domination. Yang (2019) at the end draws the

conclusion that Churchill has an important role because he has broad thoughts about changing social systems and opposing the capitalist system. Churchill reconstructs the thought of feminism into drama, reconstructs the identity of the role of the character of the feminists in a society that still adheres to a patriarchal system and opposes the power system that grows and develops in the contemporary society system..

The second journal is Ravari & Naidu (2018) that focused their research on the conflict between class, gender, capitalism, and the patriarchal system which is intended to form a patriarchal-capitalist ideology. The study purposes showed problems of discrimination and inequality experienced by women, discrimination in the social class system of society and the domination of capitalists against marginalized groups of society. Ravari & Naidu (2018) concluded that *Top Girls* is a drama that presents stories about class differences of women in society and how oppression is felt by working class women by middle class women. The drama tells of a group of women from the working class who face economic difficulties where the upper strata of society oppress the lower class in the patriarchal system and the practice of capitalism. The drama also showed that the discrimination to the women's groups begins with the fact that life exists in certain class hierarchies. So the group of women who achieve success in their careers have to sacrifice their gender roles. The existing class hierarchy affected social relations for women. Although the class hierarchy provided wealth and dominates women in society, it

also destroys family relationships because the upper class does not care about the lower class.

The third journal is Zhang (2017) that used the *Top Girls* drama as the study object. She used descriptive method to explain the deconstructed feminism in the *Top Girls* drama. She concluded that Churchill had a serious interest in changing the capitalist social system. Churchill expected women who play the role of working women and at the same time play the role of housewives must get a higher respect than what happened in the past. She described through the figure in the story and reminds the audience to find solutions to these problems. Churchill deconstructed feminism through a drama, deconstructed the identity and personal of feminist figures in a patriarchal capitalist society and blamed the power system in society.

The fourth journal is Bastan (2018) that described the memory and life of the female character in the drama of *Top Girls*. She concluded that Churchill is a contemporary playwright who is considered one of the playwrights who wrote about feminism. This drama also showed the complex reality of the marginalized of women rights and the success achievement that must be accompanied by sacrificing family relationships. Based on this, the gap between men and women becomes the framework for the story of *Top Girls* which is presented through the female characters in Churchill's drama.

Some of the previous studies above examined the phenomenon of feminism in the *Top Girls* drama. The whole research describes the *Top Girls* drama directly

without comparing it with the existing feminism theory so that the results obtained are only about the practice of feminism in the drama without being based on a particular theory. Meanwhile, the research that will be carried out seeks to describe the phenomenon of a woman's struggle to get out of male domination and examine it with the feminism theory of Beauvoir (1956). Beauvoir's theory was chosen because views in *Top Girl* are very close to the concept of feminism (existentialism) and are a practical form of Beauvoir's feminism concept in *Second Sex*.

Beauvoir (1956) stated that the process of feminism begins with the existence of biological facts, including of imbalanced hormones, reproductive roles, and weak female organs, combined with the application of a patriarchal system where in the end women only play reproductive and domestic roles. Women often experience marginalization and subordination when it comes to gender construction. Beauvoir (1956) expressed the opinion that the form of subordination experienced by women is that men are prioritized in various ways. Rohmawati & Pandin (2021) stated that women's efforts to fight the women marginalization can be done by rejecting the negative image that has been attached to women. In other words, the effort is rejected women as objects. Thus, women can be kept away from every form of discrimination and marginalization that causes women to act as "others".

Based on the phenomenon of feminism that exists in *Top Girls*, further strengthening the feminism spirit in everyday life, and results of research on *Top Girls* that have been carried out previously, the writer is interested in examining the

role of women in the context of feminism in the Drama of *Top Girls*, which studied based on the theory of feminism from Beauvoir (1956).

1.2 Problem Identification

The drama *Top Girls* depicts issues related to feminism issues related to equal rights between men and women. The problems identification is follows:

1. The drama of *Top Girls* was reflected the social problematic issue focused in Marline career among patriarchal system.
2. The existance of strong women in male domination was found in *Top Girls* by drama.
3. The effort of the main character against male domination in *Top Girls* by drama.
4. Obstacle of the women chracter found in *Top Girls* by drama.

1.3 Problem Limitation

Problem limitation was done to select the important problems discussed in the study. Problem limitation is useful to provide limitation on the research problem in question. Limitation of these problems includes:

1. The representations of strong women among male domination in Churchill's *Top Girls* drama (1982).
2. The obstacles were gotten by the main character to be a strong women in drama *Top Girls* By Cryl Churchill (1982)

1.4 Problem Formulation

The research problems were formulated in the questions form. It is necessary to make questions that are in accordance with the research objectives so

that the questions and answers in this study are linear. The formulation of research problems include:

1. How are the representations of strong women among male domination reflected in Churchill's *Top Girls* drama (1982)?
2. What are the obstacles gotten by the main character to be a strong woman in drama *Top Girls* by Caryl Churchill (1982)?

1.5 Research Objectives

The research objectives obtained from the problems formulation that mentioned above. So that the research objectives are:

1. Describe the phenomenon of strong women in male domination reflected in drama *Top Girls* by Caryl Churchill (1982).
2. Describe the obstacles gotten by the main character to be a strong woman in drama *Top Girls* by Caryl Churchill (1982).

1.6 Research Significance

1. Theoretical Significance

The research hopes this study give contribution to knowledge and theory as follows:

- a. Additional knowledge concerning the existence of women.
- b. This study is expected to strengthen materials science study knowledge, experience, understanding, and application, particularly in the field of existence of women in male domination.
- c. This study will serve as a reference point for future study.
- d. This study enriches the discourse analysis of literary works from a feminist view.

2. Practical Significance

This research has practical benefits for students, researchers, and readers. These benefits are presented in the following points:

1. This study adds to English language and literature students' feminist knowledge, notably in the domain of women's existence.
2. This study supposed to provide the studier with a more practical contribution in describing the phenomenon of existantion women in the drama *Top Girls*.
3. This study expected to be an example of the application of literary research steps from the feminism view.

1.7 Key terms definition

- Feminist : Sociological thinking about the unequal relations between the roles of men, women and children and adults to fight discriminatory and violent behavior.
- Obstacle : The problem sustained cruel or unjust treatment control of women in variety of areas, including domestic problems can arise from a variety of souches. Problems that occur inside and outside family life can come from anywhere, including school and work..
- Strong women : The strong women in here means the women's effort to put intense effort against opposition, which refers to other competitor's desire to win and demonostrate their supporiority.