

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Oppression toward women is an action performed by a person or group of people by oppressing or committing a violent act. Oppression toward women is the oppression that occurs in women who are oppressed by men. Women oppression can happen anywhere. For example, women oppression can occur within the family, school, work, and others. The oppression can take the form of physical, verbal, and mind.

Oppression can be in physical form, that is, by physically harming a person. For example: hitting using sharp object like a stick. It can also oppress by raping. Beside that oppression can be in verbal form. Verbal oppression is executed with sentences, statements, nicknames, and psychological impulses that are painful or degrading. Verbal oppression is demeaning a person through words. Verbal oppression is like a bullying. And people who are mocked will feel hurt and degrading.

Some opinions state that rape is caused by the women. According to men, woman is a weak person and one who can arouse a man's lust. The dominance of a patriarchal culture that places women as subordinate to men is a major factor in rape. In the patriarchal culture the status of women is considered lower because the role of domestic space is not rewarded at all (materially). As a woman must

also be able to accept the stigma that they are the weak and obedient while men are strong, powerful, and tough, this mindset makes women think right that women do not have the strength to fight men. In general, a man also has a higher authority than a woman. One of the causes of verbal oppression comes from person who does not like us. Verbal oppression occurs mostly in women or women who have verbal oppression. For example in a couple, verbal oppression occurs to a wife belittled by a husband.

The topic of oppression toward women can be found in literary works. One of literary works that presents the oppression is a drama entitled "*The Conduct of Life*". *The Conduct of Life* was written in 1985 by Maria Irene Fornes. It is one of Maria Irene Fornes's most critically acclaimed plays. This work brings together issues of politics, gender, and sexuality to show how forms of national and domestic violence often exist in direct relationship to one another. There are several settings of place that occur in drama *The Conduct of Life*, including living room, dining room, cellar, adjacent warehouse, and hallways. *The Conduct of Life* tells about a young, beautiful, innocent, hopeless and weak girl. It seems that she has all categories to become victim of sexual desire of man domination which defines woman as the object of men. The oppression gained by a young girl or underage girl is sex abuse or sexual harassment. She was raped by a man that she did not know who he is. Then *The Conduct of Life* also tells about a married woman. She married with a man ten younger. She never gets attention from her husband and he always ignores her. It seems that she feels oppressed and in her marriage she feels hurt.

In the drama of *The Conduct of Life* a young girl does not have enough energy or strength to fight a man. If she fights the man she will get more cruel treatment. In general or in society, a woman also does not have the strength or energy (power) of a man who is born to be strong and has great energy (power) and a woman is born as a meek person. Then, she is a poor girl or she comes from the lower class. She only lives alone, she has no parents and she only has a grandfather but her grandfather is gone or does not know where he goes (he goes from home and not come back). And she is also an underage girl. Then, the impact of sexual harassment experienced by the character of underage girl or young girl is she feels depressed. Her feelings, physical, and inner were hurt because she has been treated badly being raped by a man. A young girl should not be subjected to violence such as rape. Underage girl should be treated well not as a sex slave. So, a woman also has the right to be able to live in safe and comfortable but in reality a woman is always used as a sex slave by men. Based on patriarchal point of view, the women are weak and satisfy the lust of the men.

In the drama of *The Conduct of Life* there is another woman character, she is a wife of lieutenant. She never gets attention from her husband. The impact of oppression experienced by the married female character is she feels hurt. As a wife, she should get the love and attention of her husband. But in the drama *The Conduct of Life* a wife does not get affection, love, and attention from a husband. Then in the end of the story, the wife killed the man (her husband).

## **1.2 Statement of the Study**

In this thesis, the focus of the study deals with the following problems:

1. What kind of oppression do the female characters in drama *The Conduct of Life* receive?
2. Why do the female characters get oppression?

## **1.3 Objective of the Study**

According to the statement of the problem above, the main objectives in this research as follows:

1. To find out kind of oppression the female characters get.
2. To find out the cause of oppression toward the female characters.

## **1.4 Scope of the Study**

To limit the study so that it will not be broad, the study **focused** on the oppression that the two female characters experience in Maria Irene Fornes's "*The Conduct of Life*".

## **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The purpose of this final project or study is to analyze women oppression in female characters in drama "*The Conduct of Life*" and the researcher use

feminism theory by Kate Millet. Then this study is to give more understanding about women oppression and feminism theory found in literary work. Researcher hopes, with this study or through this study the readers will know about women oppression and the theory of feminism, especially feminism theory by Kate Millet.

## **1.6 Approach to the Study**

In analyzing this study, the researcher used a qualitative approach and library research. This study applied the theory of feminism. The theory of feminism applied in this final project is the feminism theory by Kate Millet. The object used in this study is a drama script entitled *The Conduct of Life (1985)* by Maria Irene Fornes. In conducting this study, the researcher did some procedures. First, the researcher read drama "*The Conduct of Life*" by Maria Irene Fornes as the main source. Second, the researcher took some notes and underline important words and sentences in the dialogue that related to the topic. After that, the researcher identified the utterances (dialogue) representing oppression and the cause. Finally, the researcher analyzes the findings.

## **1.7 Organization of the Study**

The researcher here writes the report into five chapters. There are introductions, biography of Fornes and synopsis of *The Conduct of Life*, review of related literature, analysis, and conclusion.

Chapter I is Introduction, it consists of background of the study, statement of the problem, objective of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study, approach to the study, and organization of the research report.

Chapter II explains about biography of Maria Irene Fornes as playwright or writer of the drama "*The Conduct of Life*" and the synopsis of "*The Conduct of Life*" drama.

Chapter III consists of review of related literature which explains and discusses about the theory that the researcher applied in this final project. The theory is feminism theory by Kate Millet.

Chapter IV is about analysis. In this chapter the researcher will answer and explain statement of the problem in Chapter I.

Chapter V contains the conclusion and suggestion.