

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

When the other women (white) were oppressed, they did not oppress like Black women. White women were oppressed because of their gender, while Black women were oppressed because of their gender and color. Black women suffer the oppression even more than white women and black men that can also oppress black women even though the same race. Black people were considered as the minority, subordinate and as the term suggested by Beauvoir as the “other”.

In *A Raisin in the Sun*, discrimination, poverty, and oppression became the important issues in that play. *A Raisin in the Sun* has themes and conflicts that displayed Black family realistically and naturally on the American stage. In an article written by Frank Rich (1983) entitled *Theater: 'Raisin In Sun, Anniversary In Chicago* stated that Black woman from this city changed American theater forever with her first produced play (New York Times, 1983). *A Raisin in the Sun* can be considered a turning point of art in United States of America because it brought many important issues in 1950s such as racial discrimination in Chicago, poverty, dream, and the family's relation of Black people.

*A Raisin in the Sun* is considered as a risky investment by a theater producer, Philip Rose, because almost the character are Black people and it took a

year for him to raise enough money to show this play. The premiered of *A Raisin in the Sun* was on Broadway at the Ethel Barrymore Theater on March 11<sup>th</sup> 1959, directed by Lloyd Richards. *A Raisin in the Sun* was the first play written by a black woman to be produced on Broadway, as well as the first with a black director, Lloyd Richards. On October 19th, 1959, *A Raisin in the Sun* moved to the Belasco Theater after performed 530 performances for almost a year.

*A Raisin in the Sun's* writer, Lorraine Hansberry, was a writer who always brought important issues to her work and wanted to write a work based on her personal experience. Hansberry noted that her play introduced details of Black life to the overwhelmingly white Broadway audiences, while director Richards observed that it was the first play to which large numbers of black people were drawn. *A Raisin in the Sun* received four nominations for the Tony Award as Best Play, Best Actor in Play, Best actress in a Play, and Best Direction of a Play. Afterwards, this play won many awards in various versions such as Film on 1961, a musical version of the play on 1973, TV film on 1989, Broadway revival on 2004, the TV film on 2008, and Broadway revival on 2014.

Martin Luther King's stated that Ms. Hansberry's commitment of spirit, her creative ability and her profound grasp of the deep social issues confronting the world today will remain an inspiration to generations yet unborn (as cited in Lauren, 2013, p.13). Lorraine Hansberry always brought important issues to her work and wanted to write a work based on personal experience.

This study focuses on the oppression which is experienced by three women main characters in *A Raisin in the Sun*. The three main characters of women in *A Raisin in the Sun* such as Lena Younger, Beneatha Younger, and Ruth Younger, each of the characters are experience different oppression. Lena or Mama, as the head of the family, is oppressed by his son, Walter Lee, about the distribution of insurance money from her husband's death and also oppressed by their neighbor. Beneatha, Walter Lee's sister, is also experience the oppression from Walter Lee because her dream to be a doctor. He said that woman did not need education because it will useless in her future. She is also oppressed by Lena because her lack of faith to the god and her African culture by George. And Ruth is oppressed by her husband, Walter. The domination of Walter to Ruth in their relationship is called Patriarchy. Patriarchy is a system where the system of practices and social structure under the control of men, men can press and abusing women (Walby, 1990, p. 20). Patriarchy is commonly happen to women, especially married women. A system where men superior to women, women are expected to be silent, obedient and passive. While men can freely control women according to his will.

Oppression, gender inequality, and discrimination have become the main focuses of feminist movement. Feminist ideas of the past 35 years changed as the limitations of one set of ideas were critiqued and addressed by what was felt to be a better set of ideas about why women and men were so unequal (Judith, 2001, p. 7). In this research, the issues in *A Raisin in the Sun* categorized as the second-wave feminism. Unlike the first-wave which focused on women's right to vote,

the second-wave feminist movement focused on issues like sexuality, family, reproductive rights, and oppression to women.

Crenshaw (1989) stated that she used the concept of intersectionality to denote the various ways in which race and gender interact to shape the multiple dimensions of black women experiences. Intersectionality theory could be used in order to find the intersected multiple oppression of black women's experiences. To analyze the oppression which happened to women main characters in *A Raisin in the Sun*, the researcher used intersectionality theory from Kimberle Crenshaw. Intersectionality theory is particularly concerned with the formation of social identities. At its most basic form, intersectionality theory examines the ways of social identities are oppressed on simultaneous levels at the same time and creates inequality.

There are some previous researches which already discussed related to this study. A *skripsi* entitled "Women's Oppression in Indian Culture by Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*" conducted by Aticha Astarly from State University of Jakarta in 2014. This study found that the woman main character in the novel, Ammu, experienced the oppression of gender, class, and caste and she disobeyed and fight against the social norms that constitute in Syrian Christian community in Kerala. While this research focuses to find the oppression that is experienced by black women in United States of America like the origin of intersectionality that is created because of black women which are marginalized in America.

Another previous study conducted by Hana' Khalief Ghani entitled "I was Born Black and Female: A Womanist Reading of Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*". In this research, the writer found that Hansberry as a womanist cared about are racism, sexism, class and gender oppression, female representation in public and private life, and sterilization. This research focuses on the intersected multiple oppression that are experienced by the three women main characters.

## **1.2 Research Question**

How are the three women main characters in Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun* oppressed?

## **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

Based on research question above, the purpose of this study is to show how the three women main characters are oppressed in Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun* play.

## **1.4 Scope of the Study**

The researcher focuses on the narrations in order to identify the oppression experienced by women main characters in Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun* play.

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The researcher hopes this research could enhance the knowledge of both writer and readers about the oppression of women and how the oppression happens in social life. In addition, the researcher hopes this research will be also give beneficial, especially for the students of English Department who interested in women oppression issue in further research.