

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Polygamy has been practiced for many centuries from all over the world. Polygamy means multiple spouses, where a man can have many wives. In other cases, wealthy men accumulated many wives to produce more sons. It was very common for kings and other royalties to have many wives, both as a way to make alliances with other states or noble families and to ensure that they would have plenty of heirs (Coontz 1). Plural marriage has been found in many countries, such as East Africa, North Vietnam, North America, and also happened in Islamic culture. There are some explanation about the polygamy system that is allowed in some countries, even under its civil law and part of the religion or culture;

Tanzania is one of the few countries where polygamy is still widely practiced. Although Tanzanians may receive full legal recognition for a polygamous marriage through the Law of Marriage Act (LMA), polygamy is being transformed to include other, unofficial relationships, whereby men marry one woman by legal law and also form extra-legal domestic and sexual unions with other women. The existence of polygamy also has been practiced in East Africa. East Africa has an agricultural way of life and many wives are

suggested to increase social standing and there will be more children who can be used for labor. (Howland and Koenen 38).

The next country is Vietnam. Vietnam is different with the other countries. Women do polyandry. Polyandry means that a woman can marry with more than a man. In the Vietnam War, many men from North Vietnam lost their lives and these women decided to enter plural marriages in order to be able to have children (39).

Polygamy is also happened in middle east countries. A man is allowed to have up to four wives, but each wife must get equal rights from the others. Polygamy is only allowed in Islamic cultures if the first wife get ill or many men die and the population will be decreased. For a man who is not be able to treat each wife equally, he is not be able to do this then he is allowed only to have one wife (39)

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, polygamy was legal law in ancient China. It was believed that dying without leaving an heir was a mortal sin. A man would marry many wives if the first wife is died, he would replace her with another wife (40).

Polygamy has existed in the United States for almost two centuries and has often been associated with the Mormon religion. Polygamy did not become a part of the Mormon religion until 1843, when Joseph Smith, the founder of the Mormon religion, wrote the “Revelation on Celestial Marriage” which stated that polygamy was a holy principle of the faith (Castrillo 3).

The controversial polygamy happened in Salt Lake City, Utah. The Mormons are an exceptional case of polygamy being adopted in an industrializing society. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) began in 1830 with a revelation about the role of Jesus in the New World. The Early Mormons condemned much of nineteenth century Christianity as a corruption of the true church, and sought to return to a purer faith, one which harkened back to God's ancient law. (Journal of Mormon, 2).

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the LDS Church or, informally, the Mormon Church) is headquartered in Salt Lake City, Utah. Polygamy (more specifically, polygyny, called plural marriage by Mormons in the 19th century or the Principle by modern fundamentalist practitioners of polygamy) was taught by leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS Church), Joseph Smith, and then his position was replaced by Brigham Young, for more than half of the 19th century and practiced publicly from 1852 to 1890 by between 20 and 30 percent of Latter-day Saint families (3). The researcher will focus on Ann Eliza's struggle on Mormon Church law and become the focus on this study because there are so many movements happened that led by Ann.

Literature has a relation with human life. It has values that concern with society. Literary texts are assumed to be ideological in the sense that they cannot give us knowledge of the social formation but they give us imaginary representation of real relations. The reader then reads the work,

bringing to bear on it ways of thinking learned through education to be appropriate to the reading of a novel (Carter 18). Every person has imaginative thought in their minds. It can give the depth inspiration about what that we have known in this world (Borges 18). So, literature can give inspiration and meaningful for every person that write or read the literary works.

Nonfiction and fiction are genre on literary works. Nonfiction works are written form that relates data and factual. It really happens and does not relate to the imagination of the author. It consists of journals, biography, scientific articles, etc. Fiction works are written from imagination, invention, something unreal of the author. Novel, short story, poem, drama, fairytale, etc. (Gutkind 8).

One of literary works is novel. It is fictional prose narrative and having plot that is extended by the characters, speech, and action. The genre of novel are horror, adventure, romantic, tragedy, historical, etc. (Eagleton 52). By reading novel, the readers can enjoy and also fulfill their emotional needs.

The autobiography of polygamy in English literature was written by Ann Eliza in her first published autobiography entitled *Wife No. 19*. She wrote the autobiography on Summer 1874. She spoke out and wrote her experience about plural marriage (Ebershoff 5). The story of a life in bondage, being a complete expose of Mormonism, and revealing the sorrows,

sacrifices and sufferings of women in polygamy, by Brigham Young's apostate wife. Her autobiography can be reflection on society. Therefore, literary works represent real life of it. There are many authors who cover their conditional surroundings into their works. So, it has very close relation between one literary works and the era when it is made (Eagleton 329).

The 19th Wife is written by David Ebershoff. Ebershoff exposes women's factual experience throughout Ann Eliza's movement in nineteenth century and also the adventure of Jordan Scott to reveal that her mother who is accused killing her husband. David wrote the *The 19th Wife* novel and published the novel in 2008. The novel tells about the women's right to speak up and get freedom from polygamy.

The polygamy system discussed in the novel happened in Mormon Church. It was led by Joseph Smith. The Mormon secretly introduced the practice in 1841. The Mormon Church has own Prophet. His name is Joseph Smith. One of his vision that he claimed polygamy vision directly from God. He had many wives. They must have more than one wife. For man who did monogamy, he must get punishment from Joseph and claimed that he obstructed the message from God (Ebershoff 48) . Joseph Smith Jr. died on 1844, June 27 . He was shot with a gun when he went to Carthage. Then, Brigham Young replaced his place for the Prophet. Brigham Young continued polygamy system that declared from Joseph Smith Jr. era. He did polygamy too.

The most conservative estimate of Brigham's total number of wives at the time of his death (August 29, 1877) is nineteen. His last wife is Ann Eliza. There were many speculation that Joseph Smith and Brigham Young had sex with some women that were not his legal wife. The distinction between wife and lover, a lover is the one that have relationship without legal commitment and the wife is the one had every legal right to her legal husband; happiness, property, wealth, etc that everything from her husband (80).

Ann Eliza did not want to marry with the polygamy-man. She had such a traumatic about polygamy when her ex husband tried to marry with the other women. She promised not to get marry with polygamy-man again. But her brother, Gilbert, had debt to Brigham. He could not payback his debt because his income is low. Brigham offered option to him. He would be free from his debt if he persuaded Ann to marry him. Ann could not reject Gilbert's offering because she wanted to help out him. The rebellion began after she got married with him (286)

1.2. Statement of the Problems

Based on the background of the study explained above, the researcher is interested in analyzing the problems, which are formulated as follows;

1. How is Ann Eliza's characterization?
2. What is the motive of Ann Eliza to lead the rebellion of polygamy in Mormon Church?
3. How does Ann Eliza fight against the polygamy suppression from her husband?

1.3. Objective of the Study

Reffering to the previous problems statements, the objective of the study are formulated as follows;

1. To describe the characterization of Ann Eliza
2. To find out the motive that lead Ann Eliza to fight the polygamy law in Mormon Church.
3. To describe the fight of Ann Eliza as the-nineteenth-wife against the suppression.

1.4. Significance of the Study

This study aims that it enriches the readers development of knowledge about literature field, especially related to the feminist literary criticism.

Feminism as one of literary criticism that have reflection in life. Hopefully,

the readers are expected to comprehend about feminism, especially for the readers who know more about the study of woman throughout literature. For the readers, with reading this further research, they can take the advantages applied for their real life, how the way Ann Eliza gives her reaction and her rebellion toward polygamy system that happened in Mormon Church and the readers can take the reflection of movement by Ann Eliza to solve her problems. Furthermore, the writer hopes that this research can be a helpful reference for the others especially for English Literature student who wants to read or for the further research.

1.5. Scope and Limitation

This research aims to analysis the novel *The 19th Wife* by David Ebershoff. The researcher focuses on main female character, Ann Eliza, who is one of victims of polygamy, she is the nineteenth wife of Brigham Young, and after that she spoke up against her husband and the system that make women get suppression from law of Mormon Church. Also, the writer focuses for Ann Eliza's struggle to get freedom.

1.6. Method of the Study

This research is library based. Therefore the researcher makes good use of some books including the novel itself as the primary source, articles, journals, and online resources. In presenting the analysis, the researcher

mainly uses descriptive-analytical method. The researcher collects data through following steps;

1. Reading the novel to get the data
2. Selecting and collecting the data in form of narration and conversation from the novel related to the issue
3. The collected data is being analyzed based on the statement problems and then each point is analyzed using Liberal Feminism and New Criticism theory
4. Making conclusion based on the result of data analysis.

1.7. Definition of Key Terms

Rebellion : Resistance to or defiance of any authority, control, or tradition.

Polygamy : The practice of taking more than one spouse. Men accumulated many wives to produce more sons.

System : A set of interacting or interdependent component parts forming a complex or intricate whole.

Barbarism : A barbarous act; something belonging to or befitting a barbarous condition. An idea, act, or expression that in form or use offends against contemporary standards of good taste or acceptability.

