

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter discusses the background of the study, statements of the problems, objectives of the study, significance of the study and scope and limitation.

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Human beings ever experience a commodification in themselves. Commodification can happen to people because of having ambition for money and position that make people admire and honor all of their assets. All people have urged for doing anything to get a luxury in themselves, but people are unaware with their position as commodity. The high position exactly gives someone desire for commodification. Moreover, almost all people in the world always think that doing commodification is the most important thing for getting happiness and prosperity. So that, the commodification becomes aspect which make influence commodity like exchanging value, money and labor form. Marx views,

"value," "labor," "money," and "commodity" as fundamental abstractions that are vital for understanding the historical specificity of capitalist production; and neoclassical economics sees "tastes," "technology," "resources," and the "market" as fundamental abstractions that are useful in understanding resource allocation in any human society (1986:16).

The commodity is identified as the forms of exchanging value like labor and money which are done by people to improve a socioeconomic society. Actually, the exchange value as like money and labor does only for promoting a social status of society. Marx says,

Marx's theory as follows: There are special laws that arise in societies in which production is organized through exchange. These laws pertain to the dual nature of exchanged products (or commodities), which have both a use-value, like all useful products in any human society, and a value (or power to be exchanged with other commodities), which is a characteristic unique to commodity production. Value is created by labor and shows itself in the form of money, which is just value separated from any particular commodity (in Foley 1986: 27).

Commodification has a commodity process that forms an exchange of products or commodities which created value as the form of money for getting power in human society. Unique characteristic from commodity resides in laws of society with producing by labor for getting a money in which it forces people to do exchange value. According to Tyson (2006: 62), "Commodification is the act of relating to objects or persons in terms of their exchange value or sign exchange value". It means that commodification happens to objects or persons because each person has purpose for changing historical status, from lower to upper class. A person exchanges value for urging desire on themselves. Actually, commodification always becomes a choice for having ambitions, because by doing commodification, people can get anything they want.

Commodification is done in society when people appreciate something seen from the power and position for getting a luxurious life. If everyone has power and high position, people will do anything to get things (such as money and position) from the commodifier. The commodified does commodification to commodifier only for wishing a wealth. Commodifier is person who has power and high position that will make commodified submissive and honor with anything that commodifier says, whereas the commodified is person who must obedient with anything that commodifier says. So that, commodification happens

to people who need something for promoting a social class then doing commodified to commodifier. It can be said commodification if there are commodifier and commodified. In *Commodified vs Commoditized*, Rushkoff says,

Commodification" is a somewhat Marxist idea, referring to the way that market values can replace other social values, or the way a market can replace a communal system. "Our parties become commodified as Tupperware moves in to turn them into buying opportunities." or "The techniques for proper breast feeding used to be passed down from mother to daughter, but now there is a market for lactation consultants. As a result, one of the most intimate human functions has become commodified (2005).

Commodification means that the transformation about market value that can change human function become object or thing. For example, in "The Proposal" play, Lomov wants to marry Natalya only for taking a land from her family and Natalya has willing to marry Lomov because Natalya wants to be landowner from Lomov's family. Therefore, the commodification happens in "The Proposal" play because Marriage as object which is used for exchanging value with a land (as commodity). The commodification is not only in the forms of social value but also the relationship between commodified to commodifier.

The researcher will analyze commodification which can be seen in "Fourteen" and "Overtones" plays. In "Fourteen", it tells about Mrs. Pringle as the hostess wants to invite all of great bachelors in town and introduce her debutante daughter to all of them especially to Mr. Fransworth. Mr. Pringle hopes her daughter marry Mr. Fransworth because Mrs. Pringle wishes her social position increase. Mrs. Pringle invites fourteen guests because she will show her glamorous and elegant life. Unfortunately, the weather makes her guests cannot

come and Mrs. Pringle's most wanted person, especially Mr. Fransworth to dinner party.

Meanwhile, "Overtones" tells about Harriet (cultured woman) who invites an acquaintance for drinking a tea, her name is Margaret. Margaret is John's wife who makes Hetty (Primitive self) hateful with her because she thinks that Margaret just arrogates John from her. Harriet as Hetty's counterpart gives suggestion that John is poor man and unable to do anything in painting. Finally, Hetty accepts Harriet's Suggestion and Hetty is married to Charles only for his money and position. Hetty and Harriet are Charles Goodrich's wife, but Harriet never admits Hetty as Charles's wife. Actually, Hetty still loves John who is Margaret's husband. In reality, Hetty regrets her decision to marry Charles only for money and position. Now, John is one of famous people in Europe after he returns from his eight years in Paris. And then, Hetty feels guilty because she just hears Harriet's suggestion. So that, she refused John only for money and position. Finally, she wants to rebuilt the relationship with John who still loves her until now.

Actually, "Fourteen" and "Overtones" have the different purpose for doing commodification. Both of them have a reason why Mrs. Pringle in "Fourteen" and Harriet and Hetty in "Overtones" do commodification in their lives. The researcher focuses on two characters are Mrs. Pringle in "Fourteen" and Harriet in "Overtones".

"Fourteen" and "Overtones" are some of Alice Gerstenberg's work plays. "Fourteen" was originally published in February 1920 and then "Overtones" was originally published in November 1921. Greasley states, "Alice Gerstenberg is

one of famous playwrights in this world. She was born on 2nd August, 1885 in Chicago and she has passed away in 1972. She was the only child of Julia (Wieschendorff) and Erich Gerstenberg. she was educated at Kirkland School and then attendend Bryan Mawr, a college known for providing education to many high society women. During this time, Alice began writing plays and performing in college theatrical productions. Alice has so many works, like “Beyond”, “Overtones”, “Alice in Wonderland”, “He Said and She Said”, “Fourteen”, “The Unseen” and so on (2001: 218)”.

So, “Fourteen” and “Overtones” can be concluded that the stories tell about the commodification of Mrs. Pringle in “Fourteen”, and Harriet and Hetty in “Overtones”. The researcher chooses “Fourteen” and “Overtones” because those plays have never been analyzed in the form of thesis, dissertation, paper, essay and other forms, especially the issue of commodification. The researcher analyzes commodification because those drama talk about get a money and position after the main characters do commodified to commodifier for having high position in themselves. So that, this study focuses on commodification of the Mrs. Pringle in “Fourteen”, and Harriet and Hetty in “Overtones” by Alice Gerstenberg.

## **1.2 Statements of the Problems**

Based on the background of the problem above, the researcher finds out the problems of the research as follows:

- 1.2.1 How is commodification depicted by Mrs. Pringle in Alice Gerstenberg “Fourteen”?
- 1.2.2 How is commodification depicted by Harriet and Hetty in Alice Gerstenberg “Overtones”?

- 1.2.3 What are the reason of the Mrs. Pringle in “Fourteen”, and Harriet and Hetty in “Overtones” do commodification?

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

Based on the statements of the problems above, there are some points of the research’s objectives:

- 1.3.1 To analyze commodification depicted by Mrs. Pringle in Alice Gerstenberg “Fourteen”
- 1.3.2 To analyze commodification depicted by Harriet and Hetty in Alice Gerstenberg “Overtones”
- 1.3.3 Identify the commodification of the Mrs. Pringle in “Fourteen”, and Harriet and Hetty in “Overtones”.

### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

The significance of the research in this thesis, the researcher hopes that the study gives inspiration and knowledge for the readers and the students of English Department to understand these drama scripts: “Fourteen” and “Overtones” by Alice Gerstenberg. The researcher hopes can useful and give information by reader for understanding a commodification in “Fourteen” and “Overtones” by Alice Gerstenberg.

### **1.5 Scope and Limitation**

In this research, the scope of the study are discussion in Alice Gerstenberg’s “Fourteen” and “Overtones” draws up Marxist issue briefly. So, the researcher chooses “Fourteen” and “Overtones” plays as the scope of the study

The thesis’ limitation is just focused on commodification issue which happens of Mrs. Pringle, Harriet and Hetty’s experience. The researcher only

explained Mrs. Pringle, Harriet and Hetty's problems and commodification theory.