

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Martin Esslin in *The Theatre of the Absurd* stated that absurd plays have no story or plot to speak of, often have neither a beginning nor an end, seems often to be reflections of dreams and nightmares (Esslin, 1961: vxii-vxiii). Both authors Eugene Ionesco and Edward Albee, and their works, *Amedee* and *The American Dream*, can be categorized into Theatre of the Absurd.

Eugene Ionesco is a playwright from Eastern Europe who has been called the father of the theater of the Absurd and he often uses exaggeration as his characteristic in his play. He also combines dream or nightmare atmosphere with grotesque, bizarre and whimsical humor. Whereas Edward Albee's contribution in the literary world is that his works can be categorized into Theater of the Absurd but unlike Theater of the Absurd circularity (there is no beginning or the end) or open-endedness (there is no definite resolution), he makes his ending move toward resolution, denouement, and completion.

There are three reasons why I choose these plays. Firstly, because I am interested on how the two playwrights convey their message to the

audiences which are different from other playwrights in their days. Secondly, both women in the plays are major characters and on top of the men. And thirdly, I am also interested how the two playwrights portray the dominant woman in different ways.

I am going to discuss the role of women who are more dominant than their husbands in both plays. Relating to the American society in 1960s and European society in 1950s the time both plays are published, society always sees that men should have a more dominant role than the women; men should make the decision, men should tell women what to do and demand that the women do what the men ask them to do. <www.marxist.com/marxism-feminism-emancipation-women080300-2.htm>; but both playwrights reverse the role which is absurdity in itself. Not only do I want to discuss about this reverse role, but I also want to discuss how both playwrights differ in portraying the women domination, and to what purpose both playwrights portray such women.

To reveal the purpose of each playwright, I will use additional information. To know about Ionesco's purpose, I will use info about the reality of life when the play, *Amedee*, was published, and Ionesco's literary records. For revealing Albee's purpose, I will use his biographical data and historical data especially about feminism. Both playwrights' purpose will be discussed further in the thesis.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

1. How do the playwrights portray the dominant women in both plays?
2. What is the playwrights' purpose of portraying women domination?

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

1. To show how the playwrights portray the dominant women in both plays
2. To show the playwrights' purpose of portraying the women domination

1.4 METHOD OF RESEARCH

In writing this thesis, I used library research. First, I read two primary texts, Edward Albee's *The American Dream* and Eugene Ionesco's *Amedee*. Then I search the internet for additional information about the two primary texts. From the additional information, I make analysis for the two primary texts and draw conclusion.

1.5 THE ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

I divide this thesis into four chapters. First chapter is Introduction which contains Background of the Study, Statement of the Problem, Purpose of the Study, Method of Research, and the Organization of the Thesis. Second chapter is Analysis of Eugene Ionesco's *Amedee*. Third chapter contains Analysis of Edward Albee's *The American Dream*. Fourth chapter is Conclusion.