

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Literature is part of lessons that are taught to the students of English Department of Widya Mandala University. By studying literature students do not only develop their knowledge but also study about life which is in line with university's motto "Non Scholae Sed Vitae Discimus." Students explore values of life such as faithfulness, fairness, love, compassion, etc. However, this exploration is an interesting journey since students feel as if they become the characters so that they are involved emotionally in the story.

The great eighteenth –century English critic Dr. Samuel Johnson, once said that literature is like a light. Everyone knows what light is but few can define or even describe it (Bromwich, Home, and Hollander 1979:1). It means that students may know what literature is, but only some who really understand literature. That's why students may find it "boring" when they first read a literary work, especially when it is too long, difficult to understand, and a little bit useless. Those, who don't really understand what literature is, may find that it is only a text that tells a story using difficult words to understand. Students need to read it few times to really understand it. It is what students usually think when they are reading literature. However, literature as light also gives students a bright side when they read or see drama as a whole. They would feel as a part of the characters in the drama, and that makes students understand easily.

"Literature is a kind of art, usually, written that offers pleasure and illumination." (Kennedy, 1979: v). The word "pleasure" here shows the interesting

part of literature, and it needs a deeper understanding because maybe when students read it more carefully, they may find something interesting. Literature gives students a new experience of human life through the author's writing, for instance: moral values, which may enhance students with new thought, ideas, and perspectives or even they'll get the hidden messages in it. Literature works contain problems that characters face, conflicts and difficult choices in life. Then, the problems drive the character to the sadness or happiness.

There are several forms of literary works, such as: short story, poetry, poem, novel, and drama. Drama is rather different from other kinds of literary works, since in drama the interaction of the characters is presented in form of dialogues, and it can be performed in stage. Furthermore drama in modern era is not only on stage performing, but also it can be performed in television in a simple and understandable form like movies or other kinds of motion pictures.

The writer here chooses drama as his thesis study because drama contains conflict and usually it is based on real situation. It also reflects the reality of human life. Here the writer chooses Henrik Ibsen's plays because the writer thinks that Ibsen is a very prominent and qualified dramatist or playwright to be his thesis.

Henrik Johan Ibsen (March 20th, 1828- May 23rd, 1906) is a major Norwegian playwright. He is often referred to as "Father of modern drama" (Goodman, 1971:19). Ibsen is regarded to be the greatest of Norwegian authors, as he is anointed as a national symbol by Norwegians and one of the world most important playwrights of all time. Ibsen's plays were often considered controversial to many people in his era, Victorian era. Ibsen's realism works often invited criticisms and his readers were shocked by his courageous works.

He made many good dramas. Some of his dramas became frequently performed on stage, to honor his existence in literature world such as: A Doll's House

(1879), *Ghosts* (1881), *An Enemy of The People* (1882), *The Wild Duck* (1884), *The Wild Duck* (1884), **Hedda Gabler** (1890), and *The Master Builder* (1892).

The writer here choose Hedda Gabler because it is probably the most performed play, with the title that reflects the main character's life, and it is also a drama that becomes the beginning of modern drama. *Hedda Gabler* was the last of Ibsen's plays to be published while he was living abroad. The script of Hedda Gabler was written in Munich in 1890.

Randolph Goodman (1971:25) in his book "From Script to Stage" said that "Hedda Gabler is Ibsen at the height of his creative power. It is drama that depicts a type of neurotic personality that has become more universally recognized in our day than it was the turn of the century. Hedda, in effect, represents Ibsen's conception of the new woman in an individualistic and competitive society." However, Hedda Gabler's characterization was really controversial at that time, and that made many of Ibsen's admirers were disappointed to this drama. At that time, many critics said that Hedda Gabler was an abnormal woman or perverted woman. In the newspaper *Morgenbladet*, Alfred Sinding-Larsen wrote: "All in all, Hedda Gabler can hardly be called anything but a sinister creature of the imagination, the author's own creation of a monster in the shape of a woman, without any corresponding model in the real world." (Mcfarlane, James, 1985: xi)".

In a letter dated on December 4th 1890 to Moritz Prozor, who translated the play into French, Ibsen explained the reason why he had chosen "Gabler" instead of "Tesman": he said that, "In that way, I want to indicate Hedda as a personality. Therefore, she is regarded more as her father's daughter than her husband's wife". In other words, even though she is married to Tesman, she still doesn't want to be more mature in married life but still want to live in her childish life as a maiden of General Gabler. Furthermore, Ibsen wrote in his letter: "In this play I have not really tried to

deal with so-called problems. My main purpose has been to describe human beings, human moods and human fates on the basis of certain conditions and views prevalent in society”(Sanders, 2008:1).

The entire drama takes place in a villa Christiania (now Oslo), at Tesman’s living room and in a smaller room to its side. Hedda Gabler is General Gabler’s daughter. She is married with George Tesman, a researcher in cultural history that she never really loves. The reappearance of Hedda’s former lover, Eilert Lovborg, makes the story more interesting. Lovborg is considered as a competitor for Tesman’s university professorship. Hedda seems jealous with Mrs. Elvested, who leaves her husband to stay with Lovborg and helps him to do the manuscript. Eilert Lovborg’s great work apparently has lost because of being drunk and it is found by Tesman, who later tells about the manuscript to Hedda. Instead of telling that she has found Lovborg’s manuscript, she encourages him to commit suicide with her father’s pistol. Then, she burns the manuscript and tells her husband that she has destroyed the manuscript in order to secure their future. When the news comes that Lovborg has killed himself, Tesman and Mrs. Elvested try to reconstruct Lovborg’s book that they have known. Judge Brack privately tells Hedda that Lovborg does not kill himself, but either the result of an accident or someone else's fire. Brack tells Hedda that he knows the pistol belongs to her, so he threatens her to do whatever he tells her to. Realizing that she is now in Brack's power, Hedda goes into the next room and shoots herself.

“Motivation” is the key word of this study. The writer finds that it is very interesting on knowing how and why Hedda commits suicide and he thinks that suicide is a shocking value of this drama. Hedda Gabler is an interesting person. She is brave enough to defend her right as a woman, where at that time, Victorian Era, women’s rights were restricted. Hedda’s action is also shocking because she has a

great courage of committing suicide, to defend her status. That's why the writer is interested in studying her motivation of committing suicide.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

This study is intended to study the motivation of Hedda Gabler in committing suicide and the statement of the problem is:

- What are the motivations that lead to committing suicide in Ibsen's Hedda Gabler?

1.3 The Objective of the Study

Based on the statement of the problem, the objective of the study is to find the motivations of the main character, "Hedda Gabler" in committing suicide.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to contribute to the study of literature in English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University. The writer expects that the students will be more interested in reading and analyzing literature, which usually presents human values.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

In this study, the writer only takes the motivations that cause suicide of the main character based on conflicts that happened. Therefore, he only analyzes the problems and reasons of the character to find the motivations that cause committing suicide based on the literary studying.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

It is important for students to know several terms that are used in this study to avoid misunderstanding:

1. Drama : Literary compositions which are involving conflict, action, crisis, and atmosphere are designed to be acted by players on a stage before an audience.

(<http://www.lifestreamcenter.net/DrB/Lessons/Drama.htm>).

2. Motivation : a word used to refer to the reason or reasons for engaging in a particular behavior as studied in psychology and neuropsychology. (<http://www.wikipedia.com/motivation>)

3. Suicide : the act or an instance of intentionally killing oneself. (www.freedictionary.com)

1.7 Organization of The Study

This study consists of five chapters. The first chapter is introduction, and it presents: background of the study, statement of the problem, objective of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation, definition of key terms, and organization of the study. The second chapter contains review of related literature consisting of language function and speech act theory. The third chapter deals with research methodology. The fourth chapter discusses about Hedda Gabler's motivations that lead into suicide. The fifth chapter contains conclusion and suggestions.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE