

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Basically, analysing literature is not a simple task for the students because studying literature needs more comprehension to understand it. It might be caused by the language of literature itself which is full of complexity. Iqoz (1992:11) in his article entitled "The Teaching of Literature" says that literature involves more than language that its meaning goes beyond the language. Therefore, based on this statement, the objective of studying literature is not only improving the students' vocabulary building and grammar, but also enlarging their humanistic world view by making them more sensitive to human values.

The writer herself is interested in studying literature because, firstly, literature is interesting to be studied as literature is a verbal artifact that offers experience and entertainment. Kennedy (1991:xxxix) states that literature serves pleasure and illumination. He says pleasure because a study of literature involves the

students' imagination and feeling so that they feel as though they become the part of literary text they read. It is supported by Books, Purser, and Warren (1946:1) who state that there is enjoyment - the enjoyment that there are certain pleasure to be had from reading literature which may be obtained in no other way, pleasure which the person who does not know literature will simply have to do without.

Secondly, the writer has her own opinion that through literature one can enrich his life by taking advantage of the values derived from literary works. It is because literature is the reflection of human life which is expressed by using short story, novel, poem and so on. This opinion is aspirated by Brooks, Purser, and Warren who say that literature, in general, contains much information especially much historical information; and it is possible to derive from it a great many facts dealing with customs, beliefs, or event of the past. In other way Scholes (1978:xxv) says that literature enriches our lives because it increases our capacities for understanding and communication. It helps us to find meaning in our world and to express it and share it with others. And this is the most humane activity of our existence.

The last reason is due to the fact that literature is a classic work. Little (1966:2) in his book entitled "An Approach to Literature" says that a good literature should include two major points. First, literature says something worth saying. This means that a good literature can improve our understanding about life in the world around us. Literature also embodies our thoughts and feelings as a whole, such as love, hatred, survival, etc. The second point is that literature is something that is well said. This means something which is expressed beautifully. Again, the aesthetic elements are something subjective. However, we can objectively say that a careful planning in arrangement of ideas, the use of language and imagination devices from the beginning to the end are the elements of beauty. These features make literature classic.

There are three main forms of literature, namely drama, poetry, and prose (Bently, 1962:1). Drama is actually a work of fiction which is considered as the fact with possible or probable events and presented in their meaningful implications (Scheineder, 1967:415). However real, it did not happen in the sense that something yesterday happened, but it might happen in the way the author has shown it on stage, and the viewer of

the drama, may become emotionally and intellectually involved in it. The writer chooses drama as the subject of her study because it is very different from other fictions, such as novels or short stories. Scheineder (1967:416) claims that a play differs from a short story and novel primarily in that it is written to be seen, not read. This means that its words and ideas are here one moment and gone to the next. The listener, therefore, has no chance to go back and review what has just been said. In drama, the events are brought to life by presenting them on stage. The dramatist sets the characters in motion through dialogues, gestures, and actions, instead of describing them as a writer of other fiction does. Characters, in short, are brought to life through everything they say and do.

Another reason for choosing drama is that it offers a sense of immediacy. Dietrich (1969:3) claims that a drama exists, even in the written form, in the present tense. The action is always happening "now". No matter how well we know a drama, no matter how many times we have seen or read it before, its action always pulls us forward, commanding our active attention. This leads to the addition that we experience drama by seeing a number of characters react to a problem in different ways, each

illuminating one aspect of the problem rather than having the author tell us "the whole truth". Therefore, we share the lives of those people, and as we become involved with them, the drama becomes a real, exciting experience (Picozzi, 1970:1). In this study, the writer chooses one of American famous playwrights, that is Eugene O'Neill who develops the American Drama into a form of literature (High, 1986:224). Through his many plays he brings a wide range of new themes and styles to the stage. As he begins to write, the theatre is dominated by a superficial realism and he demonstrated decisively that drama can be an art. Admittedly he is not alone in this, however, among innovative dramatists in the country, O'Neill is clearly the leader insisting on both his successes and his failure that his work be considered as an art (Bogart, 1972:xiv). By his imagination and boldness and by his uncompromising sense of the value of his writing, he plays a major role in bringing that theatre into existence.

O'Neill's work is excellent from the beginning. However, after he becomes a heavy-drinking sailor for a number of years, his experiences teach him much about the ugly underside of society. Therefore, this becomes his first material to write plays. The moods of the plays is

usually dark and heavy. "The Hiry Ape" is one example of the plays and this is the play that is going to be analyzed in this study. The choosing of this play is in connection that after he concerns his work greatly with social condition, the play becomes the most explicit work of social criticism. Finally, "The Hairy Ape" is considered to be a drama of a private quest for "belonging" (Bogard, 1967:xvii). In the more detailed sense, "The Hairy Ape" tells about a man who can not be accepted either by his human or animal society. Yank, the main character, is at first powerful and full of self confidence, because he thinks that he is the strongest and biggest person on the ship. However, when Mildred, the woman character, despises him by calling him "filthy beast", he gradually loses his self confidence. He then, decides to take revenge, but he is shocked by the situation and condition in the city which are completely different from those on the ship. He is ignored by others and being put into prison because of hurting a man. As a result, he tries to be something by trying to find a certain place or society where he can identify himself with others. However, he is once again rejected due to his primitive thinking. Finally, Yank has completely become a confused and hopeless person. From this feature,

the writer is interested in making a study about what Yank has been doing to make certain that he is also a part of his society.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

This study is intended to evaluate O'Neill's play entitled "The Hairy Ape". In this study, the writer intends to analyze the main character's search for his identity. However, the problems discussed are concerned with the following questions:

- What attempts does the main character, Yank, make to place himself in a certain society ?
- Why is he not accepted by other people ?

1.3. Objective of the Study

In line with the statement of the problem, the purpose of this study is analysing O'Neill's play, "The Hairy Ape". She analyses Yank's search for his identity. Furthermore, this study is done to find out the attempts Yank makes to place himself in a certain society, and to find out the reason why Yank is not accepted by other people.

1.4. Definition of Key Term

Before starting to the further discussion about this study, it would be better if the writer presents the word that may give the readers a misunderstanding. In this study, the writer often uses the term "primitive thinking" or "primitive mentality". According to Lucien Levy - Bruhl (Corsini, 1984 : 70), primitive thinking or primitive mentality is that the way of thinking in a manner not just quantitatively but qualitatively different from the thinking of individuals in civilized societies. It means that the thoughts of a primitive individual is more out of fashion than a civilized individual.

1.5. Significance of the Study

This study is expected to give some contributions to Widya Mandala Catholic University students in understanding literary work. The writer of this study hopes that the findings of this study and the way the study is conducted will make the students able to understand how to analyze literary works, especially characters in drama.

1.6. Scope and And Limitation

In this study, the writer focuses her study on character based on the reason that characters always become the centre of attention in every literary work. Related to this idea, McMahan (1986:599) states that drama provides us with carefully drawn examples of human speech and behavior. Thus, the characters are at the heart of the play. The discussion of this study is only focussed on Yank, as the main character, who plays an important role and influences the whole story of the play.

1.7. The Organization of the Thesis

This study consists of five chapters. Chapter I deals with the introduction including background of the study, statement of the problem, objective of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation and organization of the thesis. Chapter II concerns with the review of related literature. Chapter III is dealing with the methodology that the writer uses to analyze the play. Chapter IV contains the discussion and the findings, and chapter V, the last chapter, is the conclusion.