

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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1.1 Background of the Study.

The first question to ask about reading literary work is, why bother to read them ? With books of information, instructions and discussions waiting to be read, why should we spend our precious time on reading literary works ? The answer to this question is simple, for enjoyment and understanding.

There are many forms of literary works. Little (1966 : 67) states that literary forms are an established type or kind of composition such as novel, play, or poetry. One of the literary works that the writer chose to be analyzed is novel. It is an interesting subject to be analyzed as novel contains of imaginary characters and situations, people are taken to the imaginary world. In the imaginary world, the readers can visualize what is described and also see what is pointed out.

Literary work is produced as the result of a thinking process about human experience expressed through creative writings. From analyzing literary work, the reader will know the human values, conflicts, the culture, the moral life, the social life, or the background of a certain society. However, analyzing literary work is not easy for it involves not only the ability to understand the language but also the ability to interpret. Therefore, understanding the meaning of the words or

sentences does not guarantee that someone may comprehend the work as a whole. It requires imagination, intelligence and sensitivity to understand literary works. Simon and Schuster (1966 : 7) state, “ By analyzing literature, the readers not only develop their intellectual and emotional skills but are also aware of many things that go on in the fiction”. In a simple way, we can say that literature contains the record of peoples’ values, their thoughts, their problems and conflicts.

Perrine (1966 : 4) classified fiction into two broad categories, escape literature and interpretive literature. Escape literature is that written purely for entertainment, to help us pass the time agreeably. Interpretive literature is written to broaden, deepen, and sharpen our awareness of life. Escape literature takes us away from the real world and it enables us temporarily to forget our problems. On the other hand, interpretive literature takes us through the imagination, deeper into the real world and it enables us to understand our problems. Escape literature has its only object pleasure, while interpretive literature has its object pleasure plus understanding. Having a clear distinction, we know that escape and interpretive literature are opposite in the world of fiction. The difference between them does not lie in the absence or presence of a moral, facts, or fantasy. The difference between the two kinds of literature is deeper and more subtle than any of these distinctions.

A story becomes interpretive as it illuminates some aspects of human life or behavior. An interpretive story presents us with an insight into the nature and conditions of our existence. It gives us an awareness of what it is to be a human being in a universe, sometimes friendly, sometimes hostile. It helps us to understand our world, our neighbors and ourselves. *Jane Eyre* is categorized into this part because the story gives us an emotional apprehension of experience that enriches our understanding about love and life.

The writer has two reasons that make her choose to write this thesis. First, studying literature can develop her mature sensibility and it helps her to understand more about what life is all about. Reading literature involves emotions and it reveals human's interest, concern, excitement, tension, fear, hope, regret, laughter and joy. Second, literature gives her knowledge and perception needed to be independent. It gives her description about the world with its good and bad things. Besides, reading novel can enrich her vocabulary and certain terms that are used in English and improve her reading ability. After doing some difficult selections, the writer finally decides to choose Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*. Charlotte Bronte is chosen in this study because she is not only a great novelist but a great poet as well. Furthermore, E.C Gaskell, who was a famous novelist and a friend of Charlotte Bronte claims, "The pursuit of the vision she had, inspired all her life, all her poems, all those parts of *Jane Eyre* which bear a stamp of genius". At different points in her novel, she shows female character as

frail in comparison to the male ones. The main characters do faint, cry and turn pale, but on the other hand, they also strive to overcome their fragility.

The writer takes *Jane Eyre* in her study because she is interested in Charlotte Brontë's way of presenting the main character who struggles for the cruel life she lived in. It concentrates on the character's development from early youth to maturity. Besides, *Jane Eyre* helps her to overcome her problems in real life as an orphan. Humanity, pride, love and family are all presented through *Jane Eyre*. Brontë's *Jane Eyre* exhibits great strength in the midst of suffering when she recounts the pain of being homeless and starving. Even though the character of Jane seemed frail, Brontë fought that image within her own mind as well as in the mind of the readers.

Theme is the soul of a novel or in other words, it is the central idea in a literary work. By understanding the theme, we can understand the details, problems, messages that emerge from the novel. Theme is considered to be significant because without a specific theme, the author will not be able to present his work successfully and will not be able to reveal the purpose of his writing either. Theme cannot stand by itself for theme is developed through characters, plot and setting. Based on those reasons, the writer decides to analyze the theme of Charlotte Brontë's novel *Jane Eyre* through its characters, plot and setting.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

As stated in the background of the study, the research question that guides this study is formulated as follow :

- What is the theme of this novel ?

1.3 Objective of the Study

In line with the statement of the problem, this study is intended to find the theme of this novel through characters, plot and setting.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The writer hopes that through her study, people may know more about Charlotte Bronte as a great novelist. Another importance, if there are people who are interested in doing a study through literary works, this thesis will be useful for them because it provides some insight for their further study in the same area.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

This study concentrates on the discussion of theme in Jane Eyre. The writer analyzes the theme in this novel through its characters, plot and setting for the theme is developed through them. In relation with the characters, not all characters in the novel are discussed. The writer limits her study on discussing some characters who play an important role that influence the development of the

theme. The setting concerns with time and place, but the writer emphasized the study on place in which the action occurs in the novel. Since there are many kinds of conflicts, the writer only discusses the conflict between man against man and man against himself because they are necessary to get a better understanding to the theme.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

In this study, the writer uses practical criticism as the analytical method as introduced by Little (1966 :10). Practical criticism has two branches, intrinsic and extrinsic. Everything that people may find in the text such as characters, plot, theme, structure and atmosphere are considered as the intrinsic practical criticism. While the extrinsic one is everything found outside the text such as historical biographical and moral philosophical consideration. The practical criticism is based on the theories of drama and characterization (Abrams, 1958 : 20-21).

Simon and Schuster (1966 : 23) clearly state that this approach is used to understand and to know about the clear figure of a human being by observing the events that happened in his surroundings.

1.7 The Research Method

This study is a qualitative study in nature so the writer herself functions as the key instrument. The writer collected the data from the references in some libraries and also contributed her own opinion in this subjective analysis of the study. The source of the data of this study is one of Charlotte Bronte's novels entitled *Jane Eyre*. Any other information to support the analysis are collected from any source available. The method in collecting and analyzing the data of the study consists of some steps. First of all, the writer read the novel several times to get a better understanding of the novel. As the writer had completed the reading, she had to find the relation of one character with the others, which might give an impact for the development of the main character. Then, the writer collected the data by quoting some important sentences in order to support the analysis. After collecting the data, the writer began with sorting and classifying the data into three sections : analysis of the theme through characters, analysis of the theme through plot, analysis of the theme through setting. The next step is the writer had to find sub themes of each sections. Finally, the writer had to combine those sub themes based on Little's theory and her subjective opinion to get the main theme of the novel.

1.8 Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misinterpretation in understanding this thesis writing, the writer decides to define some key terms :

- Character is a person in a literary works who generally refers to his whole nature, such as his personality, his attitudes towards life, his spiritual qualities, as well as his moral attitudes. (Potter, 1967 : 3)
- Plot is the sequence of incidents or events of which a story is composed. (Brooks, 1964 : 27)
- Conflict is a clash of actions, desires, ideas, or goals in the plot of a story. Conflict may exist between the main character and some other persons (man against man), between the main character and some external force – physical nature, society or fate (man against environment), or between the main character and some destructive element in his own nature (man against himself). (Hawthorn, 1986 : 27)
- Setting is the time, location, and general environment in which a piece of fiction occurs. (Scott, 1957 :536)
- Theme is the underlying idea of general truth about life expressed in literary work. (Robert, 1977 : 63)
- Practical criticism is the criticism that deals with the discussion of particular works and writers. (Abrams, 1957 : 36-37)

1.9 Organization of The Thesis.

This thesis starts with Introduction (Chapter I), revealing the background of the study, statement of the problem, objective of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation, theoretical framework, the research method, definition of key terms. Chapter II (The Review of Related Literature) consists of the review of related theories and related studies. The review of related theories are divided into the nature of the novel, types of novel and elements of a novel. Chapter III (The analysis) has four sections : analysis of the theme through characters, analysis of the theme through plot, analysis of the theme through setting, analysis of the theme in *Jane Eyre*. The last chapter (Chapter IV) consists of conclusion and suggestion. As an addition, the appendix is also available after chapter IV.