

# **CHAPTER I**

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### 1.1 Background of the Study

Literature, according to Roberts and Jacobs (1989: 1), broadly defined, can refer to just about everything written, from a grocery list to a Sheakspearean sonnet. However, later, when the word literature is used, the things like grocery lists are excluded, and we confine our selves to imaginative literature (Roberts and Jacobs, 1989: 1). It is clear that Roberts and Jacobs implicitly want to say that it is too broad and too narrow to define that literature is anything written (Barnet, et al, 1961: 1). According to them, it is too broad since it means that it may include any writing such as grocery lists. Moreover, it is too narrow to say that literature must be written or printed because it means that oral literature such as ballads that are sung and stories that are recited are not included in literature.

By realizing that literature cannot be defined as anything written, Barnet, et al (1961: 1) state that: "We can begin by saying that literature is (to quote Robert Frost) a 'performance in words'." Literature can provide one with pleasure. In literature, there is an element of entertaining display. Literature may absorb one's interest and may make one detached from his real condition in life. For a while he may forget about what is going on in his real life and he may forget about his problems or anything happen in his real life.

Literature may also extend personal experience, through reading about the experience of others. It allows one to experience the thoughts and the feeling of

other people, including people who have already died. Roberts and Jacobs (1989: 2) support those statements by saying: "Literature enables us to recognize human dreams and struggles in different places and times that we would never otherwise know." Therefore, literature may offer insights into past and present culture and society, so that one critical thinking about these things can be developed in order to create a better future. Moreover, literature also creates a possibility for one to compare aspects of his own culture with another culture. It gives him chance to have ideas for thinking about individual and social behavior. As can be seen above, knowledge about the nature of reality may be found in literature. This idea is supported by Barnett, et al (1961: 4) who say that: "... we do not learn from literature how to act in particular situation (we will probably never get the chance to be Roman tyrants or assassins), but we do learn something about life in general." Literature helps a lot in a process of self- discovery and personal development.

From another point of view, literature is simply the expression of emotion. Since now emotion is the point, there is no true or false in literature. The emotion simply exists when one literature was made. Literature helps one to see beauty in the world around him and it exercises his emotions through interest, concern, tension, excitement, hope, fear, regret, laughter, and sympathy (Roberts and Jacobs, 1989: 2). They also claim that it may affect someone to be a sensitive person and to be a morally better person. It unconsciously develops mature sensibility and compassion for the condition of all living things.

Roberts and Jacobs (1982: 2) note that: "Literature enables us to develop a perspective on the events that occur around us and in the world at large, and thereby it enables us to gain understanding and control. It is one of the shaping influences of life. It helps to make us human." Literature offers a lot of value to increase one's quality of life, and for this reason the writer chooses literature as her subject of her thesis. She hopes to be able to increase her quality of life.

Literature is usually classified into the following genres or classes: (1) prose fiction, (2) poetry, and (3) drama (Roberts and Jacobs, 1989: 2). However, the writer only focuses on poetry as one of the genres of literature. Annas et al (1990: 1414) claim that: "Poetry is melodic and rhythmic. It attempts to achieve beauty." In the same line, Sanders (1945: 4) says that: "Poetry is emotionalized experience. It is universal truth in thought or feeling, transmuted by the imagination into fitting images, and expressed in beautiful, and usually patterned, language." It is clear that poetry offers beauty, and the beauty of the language may give some pleasure to the readers. The writer also feels the beauty and the pleasure of poetry. That is why she decides to analyze poetry.

Furthermore, Annas, et al (1990: 1414) shares that: "Poetry is often build around images, representations of sensory experience." Still according to them, poetry is an interesting object to be analyzed because it concerns with ideas and insights, but it usually expresses these through sense-oriented language. The language used in a poem may lead the readers to other deeper meaning inside it. The language used in poetry consists of much more than simply a message or the dictionary definitions of its words (Kennedy, 1971: 2). Perrine (1969: 64), in

addition, states (to quote Robert Frost): "Poetry provides the one permissible way of saying one thing and meaning another." Therefore, in a poem, the readers may see the surface meaning and the deeper meaning inside it. The surface meaning of a poem is called as literal meaning; meanwhile, the deeper meaning inside it is called as figurative meaning. However, since poems are the direct spontaneous expression of the poets, not all poems have figurative meaning. It is possible for the poets to state what they exactly mean, without using any imagery and figures of speech. To catch the idea of a poem that contains both literal and figurative meaning, the readers should not only understand the literal meaning, but also the figurative one. To understand the literal meaning may be easy, but it is not easy to get the figurative meaning. For this reason, analyzing the imagery and the figures of speech is one of the steps to comprehend the content of a poem since they cannot be interpreted literally. The writer feels challenged to comprehend poetry, that is why she then decides to analyze imagery and figures of speech.

The world has a lot of great poets who have created hundreds of qualified poems. Among them all, there is Robert Frost, one of American great poets. The writer selects his poems as her study of work because he tells simple things but his poetry contains a lot of value of life. He brings those values through a simple, beautiful and understandable language. He sometimes criticizes what is going on in the society. Louis Untermeyer said that: "His (Robert frost's) is a poetry which contemplates and sometimes criticizes the world but regards everything about it with love, occasional wisdom." Robert Frost sends those messages through imagery and figures of speech, so that his poems contain a lot of figures of speech

to be analyzed. Those images and figures of speech convey rich meaning that interests the writer to study them.

### **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

As the writer focuses her study to analyze the literal meaning and the figurative meaning in poetry, she states the problems as follows:

1. What is the literal meaning identified in each of selected Robert Frost's poetry?
2. What is the figurative meaning identified in each of selected Robert Frost's poetry?

### **1.3 Objective of the Study**

In line with the problem stated above, this study is intended to:

1. Identify the literal meaning in each of selected Robert Frost's poetry.
2. Identify the figurative meaning in each of selected Robert Frost's poetry.

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

In reading the poems, to enable the readers enjoying them, it is a must for the readers to understand the meaning of them. The writer hopes this study can contribute something to help fellow students of Catholic University of Widya Mandala, who want to understand more the poems they read, in comprehending the literal and figurative meaning of the poems. This study will show how the

make the readers easier to find the figurative meaning easier. Moreover this study also wants to present a great poet who is worth to be admired.

### **1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study**

Study of poetry may cover many aspects, such as the study of rhythm, rhyme, imagery, figure, symbol alliteration, and meter. Robert Frost delivers his idea using simple and beautiful language that make those studies possible to do. However, the writer focuses her study to find the literal and figurative meaning of his poems through the study of imagery and figures of speech.

Robert Frost has hundreds of poems. The writer should select some of them to be used in her study, as the representative of the rest. Many of Robert Frost's poems are united and edited by Edward Connery Lathem, then published as one complete book titled 'The Poetry of Robert Frost'. After skimming this book, the writer is interested in some poems of him. They are "After Apple-Picking", "A Peck of Gold", "Come In", "Departmental", "Fire and Ice", "Mending Wall", "Stopping by Woods on Snowy Evening", "The Armful", "The Lockless Door", and "The Road Not Taken". They offer very deep human values, besides they have both literal and figurative meaning. Moreover, the writer is interested in the way Robert Frost uses imageries and figures of speech to deliver his ideas.

## 1.6 Definition of Key Terms

The writer assumes that it is important to define some key terms used in this study. She wants to assure that the readers will have a clear view of what she tries to present in this study. There are some terms to be further explained in order to avoid misunderstanding:

1. **Poems** might be defined as a kind of language that says more and says it more intensely than does ordinary language (Perrine, 1969: 3).
2. **Literal meaning** means concerned with the basic or usual meaning of word or phrase (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English, 1995: 687).
3. **Figurative meaning** is non-literally meaning, the meaning which departs from the usual denotation of words (Kennedy, 1971:85).
4. **Imagery** generally means a word or sequence of words that refers to any sensory experience (Kennedy, 1971: 75).
5. **Figures of speech** are expression of comparison, personification, or association that are used to intensive statement or to make them more expressive and vivid, usually by shifting from the ordinary uses and meaning of words (Perrine, et al, 1975: 344).

## 1.7 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters. At the first chapter, the writer speaks about the background of the study, the statements of the problem, the objectives of the study, the significance of the study, the scope and limitation of the study, the



definition of key terms, the theoretical framework, and organization of the thesis. Chapter II deals the review of related literature. Chapter III describes about the research methodology. Chapter IV is the analysis of the data. At last, chapter V consists of summary, conclusion, and suggestion.