

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

This chapter presents background of the research problems, the statement of the problems, research objectives, theoretical framework, significance of the study, scope and limitation, definition/clarification of the key terms, and organization of the thesis.

I. 1 Background of the Research Problems

The writer decided to select Literature as her subject matter in conducting this study because she is interested in learning Literature as she enrolled Contemporary Literature class. She likes reading a story, which is about values and morality. Moreover, students at English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya are allowed to conduct a thesis related to Literature. Meanwhile, Literature is considered as one of important subjects in learning a language especially English. Therefore, it is included in curriculum at English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya. Unfortunately, according to the writer's observation many students are still not interested in literature as a means of learning and entertainment. They need to be aware of many benefits they get by studying literature. The following section is aimed at discussing what literature is and how it benefits students.

There are some opinions about what exactly literature is. If it is viewed from its meaning, according to Widowson (1999) Oxford English Dictionary

presents literature as (1) The body of books and writings that treat of a particular subjects and (2) Literary productions as a whole; the body of writings produced in a particular country or period or in the world in general. Now, also in a more restricted sense, it is writing which involves beauty and emotional effect (p.6). Widdowson also argues two different conceptions of literature. First, Literature is literary writing, which has been ascribed, as masterpiece of unification between beauty and art, and it is a kind of formal and ethical models for humankind (as cited in “Matthew Arnold”, 1971). Second conception of literature is it is an art. Art means creating something beautiful and a work of art is resulted by the reaction of artist’s thought and emotion. In making literary works, a primary function of the writer of literary works is to make himself be understood. Therefore, he attempts to communicate his ideas and to express his emotions and situations whether real or imaginary and recall the things that have come near into his life and shaped his personality through his writings. To achieve those, the writer of literary works must have a kind of interaction between his mind and mood. Thought and emotion are inspiration to create beautiful things which refer to the literary works. When the literary works were created, they emerge satisfaction for the writers (Widdowson, 1999). From the statements above, it can be concluded that literature is considered as creative writings, which in the making process are influenced, much by the writer’s feeling and thought. What he puts in the writings is most commonly about humankind whether real or imaginary. He has set a certain purpose in making the writings, he may be not concerned only to say things but to say those well and memorably for the readers.

Literature is available in written forms such as poem, play, short story and novel. They have common elements such as theme, setting, character and plot. Those elements have essential role in determining the ideas which lie on the literary works. A deep explanation about those elements will be presented in chapter II, Review of Related Literature.

Literature provides some benefits for the students in learning English. The first benefit is that students can learn culture through literature. In fact, literature is an effective vehicle of cultural learning (Sage, 1987, p. 1). Literary works are set in various different places and times that sometimes have relation to certain cultures. Thus, it influences the students consciously to learn these cultures as well. It is useful for students to comprehend various different cultural backgrounds outside their culture. In addition to that, the second benefit is that students may get insights about values and morality. It is due to literary works address certain problems and conflicts. Most of the problems and conflicts can be recognized by the students. Eventhough they may never experience them, but consciously or unconsciously they bring out the action or feeling which is common to many students. Therefore the students can analyze how the people in literary works confronting the conflicts and solving the problems. They may get valuable lessons from the literary works.

As the writer has argued above that literature could give good model of values and morality and the writer is interested in learning literary works, which are tightly correlated with values and morality. This made the writer encounter the works of Nathaniel Hawthorne. Nathaniel Hawthorne was a writer who was a direct descendent of Puritans (Wikimedia Foundation, Inc, 2008). According to Bode

(1986) “in both Hawthorne’s novels and short stories, he wrote essentially as a moralist. He was interested in what happened in the minds and hearts of men and women when they knew that they had done wrong. He focused his exam on the moral and psychological consequences that inflicts them confronting their vanity, their hatred, their egotism, their ambition and their pride. He was intrigued by the way they felt and acted when they knew they had done wrong” (p.44). Those and his Puritan family background influenced him a lot in writing the novel,”The Scarlet Letter”. The novel tells about a woman named Hester Prynne who was married to Roger Chillingworth committing adultery with the minister of the Puritan community, Arthur Dimmesdale. As a result of their affair, she gave birth to a daughter named Pearl.

The novel is interesting because the issues of faith, guilt, and love in context of Puritans’ life are explored. The writer believes those are good issues to build critical thinking of the students in analyzing the novel. Besides, the author set the novel in the seventeenth century so the students can improve their knowledge about history and culture of Puritans at that time while they read the novel.

A major character of the novel, Arthur Dimmesdale, interests the writer to do more research. Arthur Dimmesdale knows he is guilty and agonized. He wants God’s forgiveness and he realizes that only public confession can save him. And yet, this is not easy for him being the spiritual leader of a congregation. It would be very ironical. This increases his agony or spiritual suffering. Further, his spiritual suffering causes his physical sufferings. He appoints Roger Chillingworth to be his physician to cure his physical sufferings. This occasion proves Chillingworth’s

suspicion, Dimmesdale is Pearl father. Therefore, he takes a revenge on Dimmesdale.

Concerning what has been discussed above, the writer is going to emphasize the study on Arthur Dimmesdale's guilt and public confession. It is expected that by analyzing the major character, the students can understand and get valuable lesson from the story specifically related to values and morality. The novel itself may help students to analyze the character because it has complexity of plot development and it does not only focus on a particular episode or situation but chain events (Hawthorn, 1987, p.23). These give advantages for students because they may get much information about the characters.

I.2 Statements of the Problem

This study is intended to analyze guilt and public confession in "The Scarlet Letter", they are formulated in the following questions:

1. How does Arthur Dimmesdale's guilt torture him physically and mentally?
2. How does Arthur Dimmesdale's guilt lead him to revealing his secret through public confession?

I.3 Research Objectives

Related to the problem mentioned, the purpose of this thesis is to analyze Arthur Dimmesdale's guilt and public confession in "The Scarlet Letter" in detail involving how Arthur Dimmesdale's guilt tortures him physically and mentally and how Arthur Dimmesdale's guilt leads him to revealing his secret through public confession.

I.4 Theoretical Framework

The theories, which are functioned as framework of this thesis, are literary appreciation concerning elements of novel: character, plot, setting, and theme, Guilt, Puritan, and Confession. These will be explained more deeply in chapter II, Review of Related Literature.

I.5 Significance of the Study

The writer expects that this thesis will be valuable contributions to English Department in Widya Mandala Surabaya Catholic University. Besides this study can be an example of analyzing the major character in a novel, it can be functioned as a learning material of life for all occupants including the writer at English Department in Widya Mandala Surabaya Catholic University. They can understand the concept of feeling guilty and they are able to confront guilt well if they deal with it.

I.6 Scope and Limitation

Considering the major character as a substantial element in a novel that has important role and affects the whole story of the novel, the writer will focus the study of literary work on analyzing Arthur Dimmesdale's guilt and public confession in "The Scarlet Letter".

I.7 Definition/Clarification of the Key Terms

1) Novel

It is one of literary work. It is factious prose narrative in which characters and actions representative of the real life of past or presents times are portrayed in a plot. A plot of novel is more complex (Hawthorn, 1987).

Furthermore, it is a book-length story in prose, whose author tries to create the sense that, while the readers read, they experience actual life (Kennedy, 1983).

2) Character

- A character is an imagined person who inhabits a story (Kennedy, 1983).
- It is a brief description of a person who represents some specific traits in a story (McKenzie, 1978).

3) Guilt

- Guilt is the criminality and consequent exposure to punishment resulting from willful disobedience of law or from morally wrong action.
- It is the state of one who has broken a moral or political law; crime; offense against right. (Zimmerman, 1999)

4) Public confession

Public confession is an act of admitting one's sin to God especially in public worship. (Wiley, 2005)

5) *The Scarlet Letter*

Nathaniel Hawthorne wrote *The Scarlet Letter* in 1850. It tells about a sinful act done by a minister, Arthur Dimmesdale with a married woman, Hester Prynne in context of Puritan. The novel, which is studied, published in Penguin English Library in 1970 and it was made and printed by Richard Clay (the Chaucer Press).

I.8 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter I deals with the background of the research problems, statement of the problems, research objectives, theoretical framework, significance of the study, scope and limitation, definition/clarification of the key terms, and organization of the thesis. Chapter II contains review of related literature. Chapter III contains research design, source of data, instrument, procedure of data collection, and data analysis technique. Chapter IV contains analysis and findings of the study. Chapter V contains conclusion and suggestion.

CHAPTER II

Review of Related Literature

In this chapter, the writer discusses review of related literature. It deals with the theoretical framework, which will be used to analyze the novel that the writer discusses. In the discussion, the writer reviews literary appreciation theory concerning (1) Elements of novel; a. character, b. plot, c. setting, and d. theme, (2) Guilt, (3) Puritan, and (4) Confession.