

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I.1. Background of The Study

Many people are interested in reading literature because it gives enjoyment as well as information about human life. Through his imagination an author creates a story which is composed by fine words. We are satisfied after reading a novel as the author tells the story perfectly. He never lacks words to explain his idea. In a good literary work the author always presents meaningful words in order to make it effectively. Literature is recognized also as the imitation of life. The author tries to reflect what he sees and feels about life. Graham Little states in his book Approach To Literature (1966):

Each generation naturally feels impelled, in its turn, to express its own thought. How pitiable it is when a man has ideas which comes to nothing because he cannot effectively express them to others! To help people towards effective expression, there is no better way than the study of literature, for when we see how others have achieved something, we are in much better position to achieve something ourselves.

In studying Literature, then, we explore "the best" in writing and, in doing so, learn to think, speak and write more effectively ourselves.

The writer wants to analyse Herman Melville's Moby Dick, because it tells the story very emotively with

poetic words. Herman Melville's Moby Dick is considered as one of the greatest novels in the world. It was published in 1851, in London and New York. As an American author, Herman Melville tells about American whaling, an interesting job but also a dangerous one for man, which was popular in America in the 1840's. In the Encyclopedia Americana, it is stated that the work of Moby Dick is really made up of three elements. One of these is a fairly full and accurate account of American whaling customs in the 1840's and the natural history of the sperm whale. The second is an exciting narrative depicting the hunt for a particular white whale, Moby Dick, by mad Captain Ahab, who has previously lost one leg to its ferocious jaws. The third element is a philosophical commentary upon human life and fate.

The writer is interested in the second element of those statements. It will be discussed in this thesis, which is about Ahab who took revenge on the white whale, Moby Dick. Ahab lost his leg because of the white whale, then by his sorrow of pains he has a strong desire to kill that animal. From the characterization of Ahab, the writer finds a reflection of existentialism, which she wants to analyse. Through the

existentialism on Ahab, it will explain the mystery of life and human nature.

I.2. Statement of The Problem

Since the writer wants to know about the revelation of existentialism on the character of Ahab, she will try to answer the following problems.

1. What is the meaning behind Ahab's unconquerable pride?
2. Why can nobody change Ahab's decision?
3. Why does it seem that Ahab wants to challenge nature?

I.3. Objective of The Study

The objectives of this study are to find out the meaning behind Ahab's unconquerable pride, the reason why nobody can change Ahab's decision and the reason why Ahab wants to challenge nature.

I.4. Significance of The Study

From the study on the work of Moby Dick, the writer expects that this thesis will provide some knowledge about American Literature, especially the works of Herman Melville. And also from the illustra-

tion on Ahab's character in this thesis, it is expected to give a deep understanding of existentialism.

I.5. Scope and Limitation

In order to focus the study of existentialism on Ahab, this thesis is limited on the character of Captain Ahab. It is narrowed into Captain Ahab's behaviour, the fear of the crew of the Pequod when they faced Moby Dick, the white whale, and the challenge of nature.

I.6. Theoretical Background

Due to the need of analysing existentialism on the character of Ahab, theory of existentialism and the approach of Hugh Holman and William Harmon's existentialism are applied in this thesis. Then, to support it, objective theory and intrinsic approach are used. The assumption of it is to view the work as an individual entity, existing on its page which is intelligible in its own value, without necessarily involving the life of its author, or its possible effect on the readers.

I.7. Methodology

In the first step, the writer gets the data from the work of Herman Melville's Moby Dick. Then she collects some references dealing with the author, the work of Moby Dick and existentialism, to support the discussion and analysis. Finally, in doing the analysis the writer uses descriptive method. The writer takes some data from the work then the analysis is described systematically. Especially in analysing the setting, the writer uses interpretative method. Both methods within this thesis lie their points on Ahab's existentialism which is manifested in plot, characterization and setting.

1.8. Definition of Key Terms

In the analysis there are terms which probably can bring misunderstanding, therefore the writer gives the definitions.

- Existentialism : a term applied to a group of attitudes current in philosophical, religious, and artistic thought, which emphasizes existence rather than essence.

(H. Holman and W. Harmon, 1986)

- revenge (v.t.) : do something to get satisfaction for (an offence, etc., to oneself or another).
- revenge (n.) : deliberate infliction of injury upon the person (s) from whom injury has been received.
(The Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English, 1973).
- Moby Dick : the title of the novel.
- Moby Dick : the name of the white whale.

I.9. Organization of The Paper

This paper consists of four chapters. Chapter one is the introduction of this thesis, which is divided into nine points. The first point is background of the study that tells the reasons of the writer's choice to a certain literary work. The second point is statement of the problem that contains questions which will be discussed. The third point is objective of the study which presents the expectations as the result of this study in connection with the problems. The fourth point is significance of the study that gives information about the purpose of the writer's writing. The fifth

point is scope and limitation which explains the boundary of the analysis of this thesis. The sixth point is theoretical background which contains the approach and the theory applied in this study. The seventh point is methodology which explains the way to make this study. The eighth point is definition of key terms that consists of a list of difficult terms used in the analysis. And the ninth point is organization of the paper that shows how the paper is organized.

Chapter II is the theoretical framework. It explains a detailed description about the related theory and the approach which is probably applied in this thesis.

Chapter III is the analysis, it is the analysis process to find the answer of the problem. In this chapter we can get the explanation of the solution of the study.

Chapter IV is the conclusion of the study. It contains the answer of the problem. After that, there are still a bibliography and an appendix. This bibliography is needed to know the books used in this study, while in the appendix the writer puts the synopsis of Herman Melville's Moby Dick.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND