

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I.1. Background of the Study

People are always communicating. They do so because they need to express themselves. They have been drawing, painting, carving, and sculpturing to express their emotions, feelings, thoughts, dreams, and experiences. Yet, people do much better in expressing themselves through their writings than any other forms. Surely, by painting or sculpturing they can also do such things, but still not very detail. Otherwise, by writing they can express all of these freely. With the language as the medium they can tell others whatever they want to tell in a very detail way. It is not surprising, therefore, that people understand much easier written materials than painting or sculpture. And literary work is for sure become the utmost record of human life that reflect and portray some aspects of activities and experiences human being deals with. This is showing how important it is to study and appreciate literary works.

W. W. Robson, in his book *The Definition of Literature* (1982: 18), defines literature as:

I have suggested practical arguments against the descriptive kind of definition of literature, as not useful for critical purposes, and argued in favour of the honorific kind, which commits its user to decision about value and quality; and, within that kind, for the type of definition which picks out transcendence of originating context as a central characteristic of literature; and within that type, for definition which turn on ideas of 'textuality' - linguistic adequacy, propriety, and excellence. This recommendation may be criticized on the ground that it is too formalistic, too neglectful of subject-matter. But it does have advantage that it is equally compatible with a 'high', a 'middling', and a 'low' view of the subject-matter of literature. It is compatible with the high view, which sees literature as the pre-eminent means for giving form and outline to what Sartre (1979) has called the most important questions: what is man? what does he want? what does he expect? It is compatible with the middling view, which sees literature as an open forum for the free exchange of thoughts, the 'current of ideas' so much long for, in closed societies, by the authors and consumers of samizdat. And it is compatible with low view, which finds the value of literature in its contribution to happiness, in its capacities as entertainment or pastime or anodyne, and judges it according to how far it promotes or prevents human cheerfulness and contentment.

Thus, according to the definition we apparently can conclude that literature has a role as a means of an author to express or deliver his ideas. By writing he communicates his ideas and hopes that people learn something from them. Also, by writing he can reflect

religious devotion, glorify a nation or hero, or advocate a particular point of view.

Drama is a work of literature or a composition which delineates life and human activity by means of presenting various action of - and dialogues between - a group of characters (Christopher Russel Reaske, 1966: 5). Homer A. Watt and James B. Munn in their book *Ideas and Forms in English and American Literature* (Vol. II, 1932: 1) comment as follows about 'drama':

Of all literary types the most direct and the most vivid is acted drama. The reader of a novel, short story, or narrative poem, must reconstruct in his own mind the background, the characters, the plot, as these are suggested to his imagination by the symbol on the printed page. The spectator at a play, however, sees a section of life moving in lively action before him. Even a drama which is read and not seen except in the mind's eye is more vivid, if properly understood, than any other forms of story because the dialogue makes it easy for the reader to imagine characters talking as in life and going through real actions. It is not surprising, therefore, that drama made an early appearance among all peoples, barbarian and civilized alike, and that in the literature of cultured nations it has become varied in form and complex in its technique and its purpose.

The writer agrees on the comment as she finds herself fond of drama for the same reason.

Of all dramatists, George Bernard Shaw is a distinct character. Once he proclaimed that he had at least fifteen

different reputations. It shows us how special he is but also how hard it is to describe as well as to understand him properly. Though none of the labels is satisfactory, the fifteen different reputations suggest some that are partially appropriate. G. B. Harrison in his book *Major British Writers* (1959: 681) explains those fifteen different reputations as follows:

... a socialist and propagandist for the socialist cause; a journalist-critic of music, fine arts, and drama; a novelist, a dramatist, and a director of plays; an astute manager of his own financial interests; an enormously successful lecturer; a reformer concerned with social problems (such as housing, women's right, prison reform, and prostitution); a propounder of scientific theories and a critic of science, a philosopher, a preacher of a peculiar evolutionary religion and of socialist Christianity; an antivivisectionist, a vegetarian, and an advocate of spelling reform.

The list although far from complete suggest in its universality and freakishness the quality of Shaw's mind.

For the writer herself, Shaw is attractive as he often employs things which smelled Christian in almost every play he writes. These 'Christian things' sometimes are only discussed in passing but sometimes they are discussed as the main topic. In one work Shaw may employ them only as an accessory but in others he uses them as an important part that needs further discussion. Yet, the very thing which rises many questions is the way Shaw talks about

them. The tone is unpleasant. It sounds like he is mocking Christianity. In *The Devil's Disciple*, for instance, he makes the parson like a fool when the parson has to face the gallows and he, denying all what he has preached, runs away and lets an innocent man take his place. Another example is in *Major Barbara*. Here the main topic discussed by Shaw is poverty. He can really use the capitalism point of view to deliver his ideas. Yet, he prefers using the Christian point of view (which is Barbara's) to deliver his ideas. And, again, the tone is unpleasant. Let me take what Barbara's father said to her about the way he had helped the poor as an example:

Barbara. And will he be the better for that?
Undershaft. You know he will. Dont be a hypocrite, Barbara. He will be better fed, better housed, better clothed, better behaved; and his children will be pounds heavier and bigger. That will be better than an American cloth mattress in a shelter, chopping firewood, eating bread and treacle, and being forced to kneel down from time to time to thank heaven for it; knee drill, I think you call it. It is a cheap work, converting starving men with a Bible in one hand and a slice of bread in the other. I will undertake to convert West Ham to Mahometanism on the same terms.

(Ruth Adam, 1966: 49)

The writer believes that this interesting phenomenon demands an explanation. As it is not only the matter of an author who is the master of mixing the elements to build a good story. The writer is sure that Shaw intends to do

more than that. He has his own reason by doing such thing and that needs to be made clear. Furthermore, if one is interested in studying Shaw's plays he has to have a right understanding on Shaw, in this case, the reason behind the employment of Christianity in his plays. Because by understanding this matter one will keep oneself objective during the appreciation process and by then will get also a better understanding on Shaw's plays. Due to all those matters this comparative study is made.

Yet, the writer considers that studying all Shaw's plays to find the answer is unefficient. Besides that it will be a very difficult job, the possibility of a scope extension will also be bigger. Therefore, to be focused, the writer chooses only four plays to be studied. Those four plays are *The Devil's Disciple*, *The Shewing-Up of Blanco Posnet*, *Saint Joan*, and *Androcles and the Lion*. Of all his plays these four are the ones which mostly talks about Christianity. *The Devil's Disciple* is about a man who has turned his back on God because he was brought up under the tyranny of the old tribal idol Jehovah. *The Shewing-Up of Blanco Posnet* talks about a horse-thief named Blanco, who stayed to save a child's life when he could get away, knows that he has been driven to it by God, but not, he persists, by the kind of God he was taught about in Sunday-school. *Saint Joan* describes the clash between a

saint and mystic who sees further than the conventional religious authority, and the authority which is obliged to destroy her because she is such a threat to the established faith. *Androcles and the Lion* is a story of the conventional Christian martyrs who were persecuted because they were so unconventional and would not subscribe to the established traditional religion of their time.

Besides the reason that these four plays are the ones which mostly talk about Christianity, the writer has also chosen these four plays under the consideration of their uniqueness. Each play has its own uniqueness. *The Devil's Disciple* and *The Shewing-Up of Blanco Posnet* mostly talk about the God of the Christians. *Saint Joan* and *Androcles and the Lion* talk about Christianity as an established religion. *The Devil's Disciple* and *The Shewing-Up of Blanco Posnet* both talk about Christianity in its later development. In this time, Christianity which has been an established religion for centuries is considered fail in answering the arising questions caused by the changes in society. People begin to question the truth of Christian faith. Furthermore, they even begin to search a new faith or religion. *Saint Joan* which sets in earlier times than the two plays talks most about The Church's attitude toward new faith or new ideas on religion. *Androcles and*

the Lion describes Christianity in its earliest development. In Shaw's preface to this play he writes that this play is actually a description of the real meaning of the word 'persecution'. What happen to Saint Joan and the early Christians are just the same. Persecution is persecution, there is no excuse that can make it different. Thus, actually Shaw want to talk about The Church's attitude toward new faith or new ideas in this play.

At last, it must be a big question for the readers of this thesis of why the writer should analyze Shaw's plays - instead of reading his biography - to find the answer of why Shaw employs Christianity almost in all his plays. For this question the writer prefers quoting Shaw's own statement:

"Things have not happened to me; on the contrary it is I who have happened to them: and all my happenings have taken the form of books and plays. Read them or spectate them and you have my whole story."

(Adam, 1966: 20)

The writer is sure that the quotation has answered the question at best. And the writer really hopes that the result of this study will do much help for other further studies on Shaw's.

I.2. Statement of the Problem

Based on what have been discussed in I.1. the writer formulates her problems as follows:

I.2.1. What is Shaw's opinion on Christianity?

I.2.2. Why does Shaw employ Christianity in his plays?

I.3. Objective of the Study

I.3.1. To get a right understanding in what Shaw really thinks of Christianity.

I.3.2. To find the answer why Shaw employs Christianity in his plays.

I.4. Significance of the Study

I.4.1. The result of this study will help the readers to know Shaw's reason in employing Christianity in his plays.

I.4.2. Knowing the reason will help the readers to be objective in appreciating Shaw's plays because they have known with what kind of author they deal with.

I.5. Scope and Limitation

The goal of the study is to find the reason why Shaw

should employ Christianity in his plays, especially these four ones. The goal is achieved by analyzing Shaw's ideas in these plays. The problem is Shaw doesn't write an essay to deliver his ideas. Otherwise, he writes a play. Therefore, the ideas won't be found that easily like if we read an essay. For this reason, the writer has to make a very close examination on these plays to find the real data. Yet, it is not easy to analyze all of the elements of these plays. Thus, to achieve the best result the writer decides to concentrate her analysis only on two elements - characterization and setting - of each play.

Characterization, plot, and setting are the basic elements which build up a story or, in this case, a play. Yet, in the case of these four plays, the most prominent element is characterization. Therefore, the writer decides to focus the analysis on the characters of the plays. Everybody knows that characters in a play are the best way to deliver ideas. Because they speak, think, and feel. What the writer should do is analyzing the most important characters of each plays to find the ideas.

As in real life one cannot be separated from his environment, so do the characterization and setting elements cannot be discussed separately. For this reason, the writer will also make a brief analysis on the setting

of each play to help her understand every character better.

I.6. Theoretical Background

From the problem stated in I.2., it is clear that this is a study on Shaw's personality. The writer tries to understand why Shaw employs Christianity in his plays. To find the answer the writer applies Expressive Theory. This theory treats a literary work as a reflection of an author. In it an author expresses his feelings, and his thoughts. Of this theory M. H. Abrams in his book *The Mirror and the Lamp* (1971: 22) said:

Poetry is the overflow, utterance, or projection of the thought and feelings of the poet; or else (in the chief variant formulation) poetry is defined in terms of the imaginative process which modifies and synthesizes the images, thoughts, and feelings of the poet. This way of thinking, in which the artist himself becomes the major element generating both the artistic product and the criteria by which it is to be judged, I shall call the expressive theory of art.

By this theory the writer tries to track the relation between Shaw and his particular four plays.

The first step taken to find the answer of the problems stated in I.2. is to examine carefully the ideas that Shaw delivers in these plays. To do this job the writer applies Philosophical Approach which is based on the Hermeneutic

Theory which was proposed by Schleiermacher. This approach will help the writer to recognize Shaw's ideas on Christianity so that she can understand and interpret them properly. To achieve the best result the writer also applies Biographical Approach which was proposed by Wellek and Warren to back up the first approach.

As the writer tries to find the answer of the problem of the study by analyzing the main characters and setting of each play, she, then, applies Abrams' Objective Theory to guide her studying the two elements. Concerning this theory Abrams wrote like follows:

... the 'objective orientation', which on principle regards the work of art in isolation from all these external points of reference, analyzes it as a self-sufficient entity constituted by its parts in their internal relations, and sets out to judge it solely by criteria intrinsic to its own mode of being.
(1971: 26)

The writer also applies Objective Approach which is based on this theory yet, which stresses itself only on the elements of setting and characterization to help her achieving the best result in analyzing the two elements.

I.7. Method of the Study

The goal of the study is to find the reason why Shaw employs Christianity in his plays, especially this four ones. To achieve the goal the writer chooses to analyze

the main characters and setting of each play. The writer analyze the main characters by describing them so that she can find out their thoughts. On this behalf, the writer applies Descriptive Analysis method to this study.

Yet, the writer thinks that descriptive method is not enough to achieve the best result. Because, the data resulted from either characters or setting analysis still have to be interpreted properly to get the real meaning. Therefore besides Descriptive Analysis method, the writer will also apply Interpretative Analysis method based on Schleiermacher's Hermeneutics which he said as the science of interpretation (G.M. Newton, 1989: 103).

I.8. Definition of Key Terms

- I.8.1. Comparative Study : a kind of study which is done by comparing some literary works.
- I.8.2. Employ (to) : to put on things on purpose.
- I.8.3. Established religion : is a faith or religion which has become entrenched in a society.
- I.8.4. Absurd : unreasonable, not sensible, foolish, ridiculous (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 1989: 5).

I.9. Organization of the Paper

This thesis is divided into four chapters. The first chapter is introductory chapter. In this chapter the writer explains the background of the study, problems, objective and significance of the study, scope and limitation, theoretical background, methods, and also the definition of key terms.

The second chapter is entitled Theoretical Framework. It explains related theories used in the analysis and how they work. Also here, the writer includes the sketch of the author to back up the whole analysis.

The third chapter is the chapter of analysis. And the last chapter is the chapter of conclusion. Here are the conclusions of all the problems in this study.

In addition to all of these chapters, there will also be additional pages of bibliography and synopsis of each play.

CAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK