

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I.1. Background of the Study

Literature, a form of art which has language as its medium, may be defined as the medium of an author to express and communicates his thoughts, feelings, and attitudes towards life (R.J. Rees, 1973:3). From this general statement, the writer of this thesis assumes that literature is always connected with ideas and concerns of universal, the aspects of human life. As far as we know, human life with all of its aspects is complicated. Man and woman as the actors in this life are typically involved, which makes life richer with its complexity. Literature depicts that complexity, which shows the author's sensitivity to life. The genius work of an author sometimes makes his readers get more understanding about life. That is why it can be said that studying literature is undeniable studying some aspects of human life. These are the main reason for the writer of this thesis to be interested in literature. Another reason is that literature gives moral teaching, something to be put as a lesson for the reader of the literary works. Indeed, literature has been found over the centuries to have certain important kinds of value for human being. Taking woman concerns, one of the aspects in life, as an

instance; we can also learn about them through literary works. The many literary works describing about woman gives us more knowledge and lesson about them if we study them. For example, we can draw the value of love, existence, or struggle from the works depicting about woman.

There are many forms of literary works, and the writer of this thesis has specifically selected poetry as the object of analysis since poetry has more criteria compared to other literary forms. In a sense, poetry does all that a prose can do, in developing its theme in a carefully-ordered sequence of statements. But, poetry displays the almost undefinable quality of the emotional and imaginative impact (Little, 1966:162). That quality makes understanding poetry needs a deep comprehension, not just translation. For instance, if we take Eliot's *Portrait of a Lady*, we will find this poem is produced through beautiful, elevated, imaginative, and profound thoughts, and to understand this poem we cannot just translate it entirely by its literal meaning. Deep comprehension is a special attitude needed in reading the poem if we want to know what the poem is really about. That is why the writer of this thesis consider poetry is interesting and special, as the other way of using language and as the most intensely emotive of literary forms.

Just like prose and drama, poetry also develops until the modern times and this present time, and it always will be in the future times. In the era of modern literature, there are three famous names, i.e. Thomas Stearns Eliot, Ezra Pound, and William Carlos Williams. They are all American modern poets, who were connected to one another, and sometimes one gave encouragement to the others. All of them produce many good and famous poems, some of them describing about woman. One similarity shared by them is each poet wrote a poem entitled *Potrait of a Lady*, except Pound's title is in French, i.e. *Potrait d'une Femme*, but the meaning is the same with the other two. Those three poems are similar in the subject matter, i.e. woman.

T.S. Eliot was the most modern and the most traditional, the most influential and the most influenced, of poets. He is famous for his intellectual poems, ones that make their readers think hard to understand them. The French poet, Jules Laforgue, was the chief influence on Eliot's early poems. During 1910-1911, Eliot developed the Laforguean style more independently and ambitiously, especially in *Potrait of a Lady* and in the famous work *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*. The Laforguean characteristics in the poem of this period are the conventional style and the abrupt alternation between sharp lyricism and cynical wittiness.

In Eliot's subsequent poems there is a blended echoing

and quoting from various sources, a practice that came from Eliot's own inclination as well as from the example of Ezra Pound's *Cantos*. Pound and Eliot were interested in producing literary representations of the mind itself, the processes of memory and of association, and the various levels of consciousness.

Related to these subjects are Eliot's major theme: the individual's isolation from his world and the problems of personal identity with relation to time and to intimations of timelessness, with characteristic complexity, these themes are related to sex and the course of history, in *Gerontion* (1919) and *The Waste Land* (1922).

What makes *Potrait of a Lady* more special than *The Waste Land* or *The Love Song of J. Alfred Pufrock* for the writer of this thesis is its Laforguean style. *Potrait of a Lady*'s form is almost the same as *The Waste Land*, i.e. divided into fragments. The other same characteristics shared by Eliot's *Potrait of a Lady* and his other famous poems are the innovations for old-fashioned poetry. So, there is no single Eliot's poem is unqualified to be studied for.

Eliot owes a lot to Ezra Pound, who was the most controversial literary giant of the twentieth century. Ezra Pound, more than anyone else, defined and determined the direction it was to take, largely through the force of his own personality. There is scarcely a significant

literary movement that did not feel his effect and there was scarcely a major writer he did not befriend and encourage when few others would. He was helpful to T.S. Eliot, H.D., James Joyce, William Carlos Williams, Robert Frost, and Ernest Hemingway, to name just a few.

Ambitious for himself, poetry, and western civilization, Ezra Pound followed a path that led to exile, well-founded charges of treason, a diagnosis of insanity, and a long imprisonment. To defend and appreciate his poetry, critics try to separate it from his life. Yet Pound himself insisted that his work, life, and ideas were all of a piece. His poetry is always interesting and its experiments were highly influential on others; some of it is superb by any poetic measure, but even at its best it hints of unrealized abilities, and at its worst it is ranting and crude.

Pound wrote his famous *Personae* in 1910, a volume of collected poems. One of the poem in *Personae* is *Potrait d'une Femme* (1912), a French title means potrait of a lady. Just like Eliot's, *Potrait d'une Femme* also describes the poet's feeling towards a woman. Of course this poem differs with Eliot's *Potrait of a Lady* in the sphere of its form and content. And the writer of this thesis intentionally takes them to be compared to, with the addition of William Carlos Williams' work on the same title.

William Carlos Williams is a modernist known for his disagreement with all the other modernists. He thought of himself the most underrated poets of his generation. His reputation has risen dramatically since World War II as a younger generations of poets testified to the influence of his work on their idea of what poetry should be. One thing that makes the writer of this thesis interested to him is the simplicity of his verse forms, the matter-of-factness of both his subject matter and his means of describing it, seemed to bring poetry into natural relation with everyday life. He is now judged to be among the best and most important poets writing between the wars. His career continued into 1960s, taking new directions as he produced, along with shorter lyrics, his epic five-part poem *Paterson*.

The mode in *Paterson* is like ones of Eliot's *Waste Land* and Pound's *Cantos*, i.e. an accumulation of fragments. Coincidentally, they all talk about the decline of Western civilization. That is why the writer of this thesis also takes William Carlos Williams to be compared to Eliot and Pound, for he could be said to be equally qualified with them. Moreover, Williams also wrote a poem entitled *Potrait of a Lady* in 1915, which also shows his image about woman.

As has been stated in the previous explanation, T.S.

Eliot's *Potrait of a Lady*, Ezra Pound's *Potrait d'une Femme*, and William Carlos Williams' *Potrait of a Lady* are of the same subject matter, i.e. woman. Here, the writer of this thesis sees that those three poems try to depict a woman according to each poet's point of view and philosophy. Therefore, each poem has its own characteristics reflecting the way of thinking and the style of the poet.

Throughout his *Potrait of a Lady*, William Carlos Williams implies that the figure of woman is one drawn from her physical beauty, which men are naturally interested in. This view perhaps originates from his direct impression of this sensuous world. Meanwhile, Ezra Pound tries to figure out a woman in his *Potrait d'une Femme* through his strength of his love to language. He shows his admiration to woman with full respect. He saw woman as a figure of great intelligence in the way of melodious, high-flown in versification and diction, and world-weary in tone. It is almost the same with Eliot's, with the difference that Eliot depicted woman in his *Potrait of a Lady* as his friend, a companion to talk in a warm conversation. Woman is someone who understands him, convinces him that he is invulnerable and encourage him to gain a new progress.

The similarity in the subject matter of the three poems is the main reason of the writer of this thesis to

take them as the object of analysis. The philosophy of woman of each poet, which is surely different to one another, makes the writer interested to compare them to one another. After analysing and interpreting the poems, it is hoped that a lesson or teaching value can be drawn by the writer of this thesis.

I.2. Statement of the Problem

Regarding the title of this thesis, i.e. *The Profile of Woman in T.S. Eliot's Potrait of a Lady, Ezra Pound's Potrait d'une Femme, and William Carlos Williams' Potrait of a Lady : A Comparative Study*, the writer of this thesis wants to discuss :

- what is the theme of each poems?
- what is each poet's philosophy about woman according to the content of each poem?
- how do their philosophy differ from one another?

I.3. Objective of the Study

Relating with the statement of the problem, the purpose of this study is to analyze and interpret the content of the three poems to get each poet's view and philosophy about woman.

I.4. Significance of the Study

In general, hopefully this study will give

contribution to the study of literature, especially poetry. And this model of analysing a poem is surely expected to enlarge our knowledge and appreciation to poetry, especially to Eliot's. Pound's, and Williams' works.

Furthermore, hopefully this study will increase our understanding about life, with woman as the part of its concerns. Just like wise man says, the more understanding about woman will leads to the more esteem and appreciation to her. And this is the prominent sense of this study.

I.5. Scope and Limitation

This comparative analysis of finding the theme of Eliot's *Potrait of a Lady*, Pound's *Potrait d'une Femme*, and Williams' *Potrait of a Lady* is limited only according to the content of the poem, regardless other aspects of the poem, such as the background of writing, and so on. In other words, the stressing of this study is the textual analysis.

I.6. Theoretical Background

Since this thesis concerns with thematic analysis, the writer of this thesis uses intrinsic approach as the main instrument to analyze the three poems. Intrinsic approach is very efficient to explore and interpret the poems, so that the theme of them can be drawn by the writer in a

systematic way.

The theory used in the literary approach is Semiotics, which means the systematic study of signs. The classification in Semiotics is needed to distinguish between denotation and connotation in the poem.

Supporting the intrinsic approach, the writer uses philosophical approach to explain and judge the values in the theme of each poem. The philosophical approach used in this study is one of Western philosophy, ranged from the many philosophical concepts and opinions related to this study by western philosophers. By the help of this approach, it is hoped that the figure of woman of each poet will be clearly understood by all readers of this thesis.

I.7. Method of the Study

This study is a library research, in which the writer uses reference books as the main source to solve the problem of discussion.

The procedure of how to work out this study systematically is descriptive-interpretative method, which will be ended by a comparative method. Descriptive method is one to describe and identify the poem systematically in a factual way. The interpretative one is to explain what inside the poem that is not immediately plain or explicit. It is a general truth that understanding a poem is not a matter of description and translation, but it also needs

interpretation . It is used to give the meaning to the poem. The taking of this interpretative method is based on some assumptions stated by Atmazaki on the next quotations:

1. Sajak membawa pandangan dunia atau ideologi tertentu.
2. Sajak memberi inspirasi dan pemikiran baru.
3. Sajak selalu ambigius, mempunyai banyak makna tanpa dapat dipastikan mana yang paling benar.
(Atmazaki, 1993:123)

The quotation means a poem brings a certain view and ideology , gives a new inspiration and idea, and is always ambiguous. These characteristics need a special attitude, that is interpretation, so that we can think of what its content infers and refers to.

After knowing the poems and their themes, the writer takes comparative method to make comparison of each poet's view about woman, contrast them in such a way that we will know the difference of each and how they differ from one to another.

I.8. Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding in studying this analysis, there are several terms which need to be further explained. They are :

Theme is the central and dominating idea in a literary work. It can be the message or moral implicit in

any work of art. (Harry Shaw, 1972:387)

Lady is a woman of good family or social position. It also a polite term for any woman. (The New Lexicon Webster International Dictionary of the English Language, 1977:534)

Woman is the female of human race, an adult or grownup female as distinguished from a man. (The Lexicon Webster Dictionary, 1977:1144)

Profile is a dramatic, short, and vivid outline of the most outstanding characteristics of a person.

Potrait is a real illustration anyone could see and perceive without a single thing to hide.

Potrait of a Lady is an illustration and depiction of a woman that someone respects or admires. It is also the title of T.S. Eliot's poem or William Carlos Williams's, and the translation of French phrase *Potrait d'une Femme*.

I.9. Organization of the Paper

This thesis is divided into four chapters. Chapter one is the introduction, which consists of nine sub-chapters. The first sub-chapter is background of the study, which gives the explanation of choosing the literary work and a particular object of analysis. The second is statement of the problem, which is continued with the third, objective

of the study that tell the aim of analysis. Sub-chapter four, significance of the study, is about the advantage we could take from this study and its contribution to science. The next, scope and limitation, is the restriction of analysis so that the discussion will not go beyond the topic. The sixth is theoretical background, in which the writer establishes the theories and the approach of analysis. Method of the study, then, can be found on the seventh sub-chapter, and definition of key terms on the eighth sub-chapter. The last one is the organization of the paper.

Chapter two is the theoretical framework, in which the writer of this thesis elaborate the approaches and theories that has been mentioned in the theoretical background on Chapter One.

Chapter three is the analysis. In this chapter, the writer tries to answer the problem by analysing the poems and making comparison of their themes.

Chapter four will give the conclusion of the study. This chapter tells about the solution and summary of the analysis.

This thesis is also supplied with bibliography, which informs the reference books used to support the analysis, and the appendix of the three poems.

