

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I.1 Background of the Study

Literature concerns with human's feelings, thoughts, and activities. Literature may be described as the record in words what people have thought and felt from the ancient past to the present day. More precisely, literature is good writings that help us to understand that human beings in all times and places have much in common. All these things come to us in form of oral tradition such as folktales, ballads, and nursery and in written form such as manuscript and the printed page (Cayne, 1987 : 310).

It can be said that literature is the reflection of human expression of life in the world of writing since it records human's feeling, thought and activities. Literary work is not merely the reflection of real life but the combination of imagination, creativity, and thinking towards the object which is observed.

The study deals with one kind of literary work called poetry. Poetry is one of the three major literary genres. It is another form of literary

expression and another vehicle of human thought and feeling. "From Greek word 'poein' means 'to make' poetry means writing that gives concentrated imaginative utterance to experience in word so chosen and arranged that they create an intense emotional response, through the union of theme, language, sound and rhythm" (Encyclopedia Americana Vol 16, 1089 : 277). It is also the misunderstood of the genres because of its difficulties in understanding it. It is not an acting out of events to be observed. Then it is not primarily a telling about events. Yet it is something to be experienced itself in order to catch the main ideas or meanings in a poem or poems. Those are the main reason why the writer takes the poem as the subject that will be discussed in this thesis.

The poem discussed in this thesis entitled The Rime of the Ancient Mariner is written by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, a great English poet, philosopher, and critics. Coleridge is recognized as one of the English romantic poets that greatly influenced such contemporary romantics as Wordsworth, Byron, Keats, and Shelley.

Romantic period is a great period of lyric and individualism in which Coleridge and wordsworth wrote their volume Lyrical Ballads (1798) as the first

movement of English romanticism. The poets were free to develop many themes. "They had been expressed, with varying emphasis, the love of nature, in the love of mankind and of country; the yearning for the remote in space and time, with particular reference to the medieval and the primitive; the passionate experience of the poet's own in most thought and feeling restless, unsatisfied, ever changing; the contemplation of death and the awesome terror inspired by the thought of eventual dissolution, complicated by the revival of the age-old interest in the supernatural" (Woods, 1936 : 9).

From so many poets found in this period, the writer feels that Coleridge was the most favourite poet compared to the others. [He had the power to evoke an atmosphere of mystery, wonder and pathos that seems at once strange, yet true. His imagination is the most extraordinary that ever applied itself to English poetry. It is perhaps excusable in his characteristic. In mode and technique, Coleridge's poetry exhibits an astonishing variety and inventiveness. It is typical that each of his three finest poems, The Ancient Mariner, Christabel, and Kubla Khan, is a different technical experiment, the supranatural settings and actions. The reason why Coleridge uses

supernatural method instead of other things which is closer to ordinary experience is :

"what touch Coleridge's genius to its finest issues was his sense of mystery at unknown forces at work in life, and to keep this mystery intact he needed some subjects which was in itself mysterious. He saw strange powers behind the visible world, and we believed that men were moved and directed by them.(Bowra, 1980 : 73).

Coleridge speaks the realm of supernatural with the voice of beauty wedded to imagination; no other poet has so thoroughly imbued his work with the spirit of mystery.]

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner is composed during the autumn and winter of 1797 - 1798. For this, his famous poem, he drew upon the ballad form. It appeared for the first time in Lyrical Ballad published by both Wordsworth and Coleridge. Lyrical Ballad is one of the most important landmark in history of English literature. Coleridge contribution was the supernatural imaginative literary values, notable for its weird, unearthly atmosphere.]

The poem tells how a sailor who has committed a crime against the principle of life by slaying an albatross, suffers from torments, physical and mental. After the death of his shipmates, alone, he is in a hell created by the absence of any link of life. He,

unconsciously blesses the watersnakes, this moment cause his redemption. Restored to his vatie land, he remains haunted by what he has experienced, and he should do penance, to tell the truth to anyone he meets.

The main reason why the writer chooses this poem that will be studied in this thesis is because of the presence of the series of incredible events through a method of narration which make them not only convincing and exciting but in some senses a criticism of life.

Indeed, the writer in this thesis will discuss the theme of the poem by analyzing the gothic elements which emphasize on the enigmatic and sinister mystery, vice, darkness, and death that are found in the poem, some truth of human being's life.

Actually the term 'gothic' itself has been known since the late 18 century and early 19 century in form of gothic novel, a melodramatic mode of English fiction. Coleridge owes something to the gothic novel and the German tale terrors in processing the poem. The principal aim of gothic was to evoke chilling terror by exploiting mystery, cruelty, and a variety of horrors.

Coleridge, in The Rime of the Ancient Mariner is

emphasizing that the poem is related to life and to living experience. However unnatural may be his events, they are formed from natural elements. Each action and each situation is presented in concrete form in which the details are selected for their appeal to common experience. The second passage in Lyrical Ballad said :

'the principal object, then, proposed in these poems was to choose incidents and situations from common life, and to relate and describe them throughout, as was possible, in a selection of language really used by men, and, at the same time, to throw over them, a certain coloring of the imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspects; and further, and above all, to make these incidents and situations interesting by tracing them, truly though not ostentatiously, the primary laws of our nature.'
(Woods, 1936 : 11)

He also reveals that the crime that the mariner has done, killing albatross, has destroyed himself. This is in some senses is a criticism of life that the crime actions always followed with an inexorable fatality.

I.2 Statement of the Problems

In discussing this literary work, there are some problems proposed as below :

- How do gothic elements portray some truths in human being's life ?

- What is the relations of the mariner and the voyage to the ordinary human being's life ?

I.3 Objective of the Study

This study is meant to give an analysis on the theme which is discussed by using gothic elements as the medium to portray some truths in human being's life. Furthermore, it will explore the relations of the mariner and the voyage to the ordinary human life.

I.4 Significance of the Study

The result of this study is expected to give some inputs for other further studies of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's works, especially The Rime of the Ancient Mariner. Also it will hopefully be useful for those who have interest on literary works, especially poetry.

I.5 Scope and Limitation

The writer concentrates on gothic elements in studying the theme of the poem. She, then, discusses the supernatural actions and settings which are assumed as gothic elements. The symbols and figure of speech found in the poem are also needed to discuss

since they play an important role in building the theme.

The writer also pays her attention to the mariner whose experience has a close relationship to the ordinary human beings.

I.6 Theoretical Background

As stated in the background of the study the writer will study some truths in human being's life by analyzing gothic elements that hold the most dominant part in the poem. Regarding to the topic, the writer will apply the mimetic approach and the literary theory proposed by Rene Welleck and Austin Warren.

Coleridge, in the poem, represents the experience in life that combined together with his imagination, thought, and feeling,. Due to the reason, the writer applies the mimetic theory, that is "the mimetic orientation, the explanation of art as essentially an imitation of the aspects of the universe" (Abram, 1976 : 8). The significance of the use of this theory is to understand how Coleridge reflects the experience people undergo in life, including their feelings, problems, and thoughts that he has implied in the theme of the poem.

Since the study discusses the gothic elements

that mostly appear in the setting, and the theme that closely related to the human life, the writer also applies another theory, namely the Literary theory. As stated in *Theory of Literature* : "Literary theory as the study of the principle and criteria of literature" (Wellek, 1956: 39).

Literary theory regards literature in its connection with its intrinsic and extrinsic elements. Indeed the writer in her analysis will pay attention on the images, symbols, metaphores, and truth, as one of themes of this poem. Then, through this theory the writer will be able to analyze gothic elements of the poems.

I.7 Method of the Study

The method used in this analysis is the hermeneutics method. The essence of this method is mainly the interpretation. Newton said in The Twentieth Century Literary Theory : Hermeneutics, the science of interpretation ... (Newton, 1988 : 103).

Hermeneutics in its most general sense, any theory of interpretation. Originally the term was limited to Biblical exegesis, but since 19th Century it has been extended to any theory or procedure in interpreting literary, legal, or social science text (Beckson,

1989:106).

Since the method used in this thesis is Hermeneutics method, then automatically the technique in doing the analysis is interpretation. To interpret the work of literature is to clarify the meaning of its language by means of analysis, paraphrase and commentary (Abram, 1971 :84). Then to interpret is to make clear the meaning of total literary work of which language is the medium. Chatman stated in his book, *An Introduction of the Language of Poetry* " We should make as rich an interpretation as possible : every detail of meaning, every conotation, every inference that adds in the whole poem should be considered (Chatman, 1968:83). But in interpreting poem, we don't do something new for everything has come before. Then the significance of using an interpretation technique is to grasp the meaning of the poem as closest as what the poet means.

In composing this thesis, the writer collects some data taken from books, articles, and other printed material that relates to the problem. The data cover the theories, method and particularly the subject matter that is going to be discussed, gothic elements.

1.8 Definition of Key Terms

In this thesis, the important terms which are to be noted will be given as follows :

- Albatross : a bird of good omen, also a bird of good luck for the sailor.
- Gothic : the term gothic is derived from people of the Goths, a people of ancient conquerors that acquired the name of barbarians through their vandalism on the battle field. The term gothic has also been extended to denote a type of fiction which were macabre, fantastic and supernatural (Grower, 1990:180).
- Imagery : the forming of mental images, figure, or likeness of things : the use of language to represent actions, person, object and ideas descriptively (Shaw, 1972:119).
- Myth : in classical Greek, 'mythos' signified any story or plot whether true or false. In its central modern significance, a myth is one story in a mythology - a system of hereditary stories which were once believed to be true by

a particular cultural group, and which served to explain (in terms of the intentions and actions of supernatural beings) why the world is as it is and things happen as they do, and to establish the rationale for social customs and the sanction for the rules by which men conduct their lives (Beckson, 1989:102).

-Supernatural: attribute to the actions or presence of ghost, spirit, or other invisible agent (Webster Dictionary, 1986:2295).

-Truth : as correspondence to life is the basis of theory of imitation, persistent from the earliest times. It is the body of things, events, and facts that make up the universe (Shipley, 1962:226). Universal truth includes Nature, life, death, and God. Truth the writer means in this case is dealing with and as a criticism of life.

(P = Part, S = Stanza)

I.9 Organization of the Paper

This thesis is divided into five chapters which relates to one another. Chapter I, the introduction, consist of nine points describing all about this thesis globally. Chapter II will be the theoretical framework, in which the writer gives a more detail explanation about some related theories and the theory that will be used in the analysis. In Chapter II she will also mention some related studies about this thesis. Chapter III consists of the general discussion about the biography of the author concerns with his life and works Chapter IV is the presentation and analysis of the study. Finally, chapter V is for the conclusions and findings, as the result of the analysis in the chapter IV. Then it is followed by bibliography which stands for references used for making this thesis.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK