

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Daiches in his book Critical Approach to Literature stated, there is no single 'right' method of handling literary problems, no single approach to works of literary art that will yield all the significant truth about them. (Daiches, 1956:396).

It suggests that one method or approach is always cut, indirect or incomplete. It is clear to us, but then Daiches explains why this is so. He continues: While the scrutinizing of literary theories is a valuable philosophical activity that cannot only throw light on the nature of literature but also helps us read individual works with greater understanding and appreciation, the active appreciation of literature is not always dependent on such theorizing. (Daiches, 1956: 396).

So, the theories being used are due to the goal that we are going to achieve in analysis. Regarding what Daiches said and seeing the subject matter which is going to be analyzed, the writer applies two approaches, namely philosophical and literary approaches.

II.1. Philosophical Approach

The writer regards literary work is the reflection of an author's deep thoughts and ideas in attitudinizing the worldly life. So, the relevant approach here is philosophical one.

There is a similarity between literary work and philosophy. They both try to seek the value, in this case the universal value and also the moral tendency.

The relation between literature and ideas can be conceived in very diverse ways. Frequently, literature is thought of a form of philosophy, as 'ideas' wrapped in form; and it is analyzed to yield 'leading ideas'. (Wellek and Warren, 1978: 23). So, in philosophical approach, the stress lies on the content of the literary work. "... moral critics have attended to the 'what' of meaning." (Scott, 1962: 23).

Thus, we can dig the idea of literary work up, even the new idea that has not ever been discovered before and might have been never thought by the author himself. That is what literary analysis for. By doing this, the literary work itself gets its meaning and existence.

Even the literary work that does not seem to have philosophical values, there should be philosophical loaded. We have to say that philosophical-unloaded poetry, implicitly raised up philosophical values because poetry is a description of life vision, about the world. These values should be better uncovered by the critics rather than by the authors themselves. (Goenawan Mohammad, 1993: 99).

From this point of view, philosophical approach is suitable with the matter being analyzed, that is the relationship between human-kind and life.

Before analyzing further, the writer would to make a similar starting point of the matter of this thesis. It is important in order to avoid misunderstanding in evaluating the analysis.

This study deals with the relationship between human-kind and life through Robert Frost's The Road Not Taken. There are key words that need further explanations. What does the writer think about "human-kind," and "life?" What is a human-kind and life?

According to the philosophy of man, human-kind is defined differently in accordance with the world-view. From the point of view of psychology, it is defined as "homo sapiens." Based on the view-point of feeling and

desire, it is defined as "homo valens." Besides, a human-kind is also defined as "homo economicus" based on the view-point of social aspect. Therefore, a human-kind or a man, being viewed from its existence, performs itself as a multidimensional creature that is impossible to define logically in simplified way. The difficulty to define it lies on the fact that a living man is to satisfy its need. In this case, it uses many ways to get what it wants. Hence, there are so many kinds of man's activities and these are different from one another; that is why there are many names for human-kind or a man.

In general, however, man is defined as the animal that reasons. Alone among the animals, man is concerned about his origin and end, about his purposes and goals, about the meaning of life and the nature of reality. He alone distinguishes between beauty and ugliness, good and evil, the better and the worse. Human-kind may be a member of the animal kingdom but it is also citizen of the world of ideals and values. (Talley, William P. in Anshari, 1985: 17).

According to Holy Qur'an, a human-kind is God's creature that is created from a gushing sperm and then God makes it in a perfect shape and gives it spirit and mind. With the mind, man can survive in life. More than a

thinking animal, man also desires as well as feels.

The interesting thing of human-kind is that it has two different sides. It consists of body (physical aspect) and soul (spiritual aspect). Body without soul is not human-kind anymore and the other hand direction is not either. However, the activity of body is restricted by space and time while of soul is not. The body can feel something only when it appears in the same space and time, but the soul can feel something without touching and holding it. Hence, due to the soul, man can think anything, even things in the future, of course, it has not experienced yet.

According to philosophy of man, life is where human-kind lives. In this study, the writer refers to this meaning, namely the human life, not animal or plant. For human-kind is a social creature, the life here involves the group of people, the society.

According to F. Nietzsche, the essence of life is struggle for self, tribe or nation by ignoring even oppressing other nations. That is why, it is known as 'the gladiatorial theory of existence.' (Quraish, 1992: 228).

The essence of life, in the eyes of Islam, covers the process of human creation by God, since it is from a

drop of sperm, in the womb, after being born, growing up until its death, even after death. (Quraish, 1992: 233). In this mundane life, a man is demanded to do good and obey God's commands in order to establish peaceful, prosperous society. This wholly Islamic concept of life includes the activity of human-kind to complete its life that is to observe God's rules. So, from this point, life is to achieve the best and struggle for survival but still to pay attention to others' concerns. The writer holds this theory as, besides material side, it involves moral values.

In this thesis, it is not right place to talk about the whole life of the multidimensional creature called human-kind. What the writer is going to discuss is dealing with the connection between human-kind or man and life in the world including its activities described through the poem and refers it to the real world.

We cannot talk about human-kind without relating it with anything. Each of us may not have more generally explanation and understanding than by denoting its connection with the universe. (Burhanuddin, 1988: 19). It is from this angle, the writer tries to connect human-kind and life through Robert Frost' The Road Not Taken.

The branch of philosophy being used in this thesis

is metaphysics. "Metaphysics is investigation of, and speculation about, objects, ideas, and realms beyond what can be known from direct observation and experience." (Shaw, 1972: 236). Moreover, in The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, it is stated: Metaphysics is the philosophical study whose object is to determine the real nature of things --to determine the meaning, structure, and principles of whatever is insofar as it is. (Gwinn, 1985a: 1). Lending Gwinn's words that metaphysics means "what comes after physics."

It is also in The New Encyclopaedia Britannica that there are four characteristics of metaphysics. ... they present metaphysics as (1) an inquiry into what exists, or what really exists; (2) the science of reality, as opposed to appearance; (3) the study of the world as a whole; (4) a theory of first principles. (Gwinn, 1985a: 1). From these categories, we can conclude that the point of metaphysics is reality.

Dealing with reality, there is a principle which has a close relation with metaphysics. Some of us regard it as another branch of metaphysics; this is transcendentalism.

Transcendentalism is a 19th-century New England movement of writers and philosophers who were loosely

bound together by adherence to an idealistic system of thought based on a belief in the essential unity of all creation, the innate goodness of man, and the supremacy of insight over logic and experience for the revelation of the deepest truth. (Gwinn, 1985b: 894).

Immanuel Kant designated transcendental as "those elements which were necessary constituents of experience, but which could not come from sense perception." (The Encyclopedia Americana, 1976: 63).

This matches the followers of transcendentalism that it maintains that man has ideas, that come not through the five senses, or the powers of reasoning; but either the result of direct revelation from God, his immediate inspiration, or his immanent present in the spiritual world, and it asserts that man has something besides the body of flesh, a spiritual body, with senses to perceive what is true, and right and beautiful, and a natural love for these, as the body for its food. (The Encyclopedia Americana, 1976: 3).

Hence, we see that there is another power human-kind has besides reasoning which can be used to grasp knowledge and experience, especially when we try to understand the absolute reality or --as stated above-- revelation from God.

The revelation cannot be achieved through senses and rationality, that is why we must refer to particular experience which has a very special type that Iqbal called it: Intuition. With intuition, we can catch and understand the Absolute Reality. (Maitre, 1993: 50-51).

Why is it necessary to use intuition in analyzing a literary work? Yes, because a literary work does not tell us a daily fact only, but also imagination and even religious experiences.

An author's understanding in conveying his work emerges from scientific-factual perceptive experience through the power of senses and fantasy and imaginative perception which is solely generated by imagination. (Hardjana, 1991: 14).

Thus, transcendentalism brings us to the spiritual life. In modern life, many people look at life just from the material phenomena. They do not realize that life consists of two sides, namely material and spiritual world. Human-kind itself is made of two substantial sides. They are body on one side and soul on another side. A good literary work should have the value of transcendentalism, too. As stated above that it does not tell us a daily fact only. It does not talk only the poet's expression either. So, in analyzing a literary

work, it is not necessary to have a same view as the poet's. Readers have freedom and authority to interpret it according to their ideology and even to their culture and religion (faith). This is the point of philosophical approach. "In short, philosophy is also always a critical ideology. ... to react on it critically and in argumentative way." (Suseno, 1992: 22).

II.2. Literary Approach

Here, literary approach is a mean, basic concept of thought to examine a literary work based on literary theories. Regarding the topic the writer is going to analyze, the theory being applied in this thesis is mimetic theory.

The mimetic orientation, the explanation of art as essentially an imitation of the aspects of the universe. (Abrams, 1976: 8). A poem, as one of genre of literary works, is the reflection of life and, in turn, life can be represented within a poem.

Literature is one form of the expression of life. Literature is the expression of the meaning of beauty of life; if men could not find beauty and meaning in life, they would not care to live. (Greenlaw, 1933: 2-3).

Men live in the realm of reality. A literary work is a reflection of reality that has passed through the thought of an author. So, the mimetic theory that states a literary work is a reflection of real life is right to use. Furthermore, the literary work can be used as a lesson to understand the reality of life because, indeed, men could not be separated from real life. That is why, in this thesis, the writer applies mimetic theory in learning the given poem of Robert Frost.

In literature, however, the imitation is not like a photograph just as a historian does. It passes through the intelligence of the author who undergoes the experience.

Eventhough the author seems to be important, the work of art criticism --in this case, a literary criticism-- contains four elements that cannot be separated. Abrams in his book The Mirror and The Lamp, stated that in literary criticism, we cannot escape from those four elements, namely the work, the artist (the poet), the universe (the subject of the work), and the audience, in this case, the readers. (Abrams, 1976: 6). If one of those elements is not present, the criticism then seems to lack of excellence and will be incomplete.

Thus, the readers cannot be abandoned as the

literary works are aimed at them. It will be worthless if a poet writes a kind of poem without any purpose to the readers.

Moreover, it is the readers that must play a great role in interpreting and evaluating the meaning and value of literary works. It is stated in Literature as Experience: "Now it is true that for any of us, as readers, communication between the work of art and ourselves is primary consideration." (Bacon and Breen, 1959: 125).

So, in literary criticism, readers are even the most important. Eventhough we cannot escape from the poet, the statement above implicitly gives allowance for readers to judge the literary works and interpret them which can be different or even contradictory to what the poet means.

The more there is interpretation of literary work, the better the literary work is, because the literary work is, then, not static but dynamic work if it is exposed. The result of interpretation can be different from any person and from time to time.

CHAPTER III

MODERN ERA AND BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH