

CHAPTER I

I N T R O D U C T I O N

A. Background of the study

In this modern world where material things have been profoundly used as the main orientation for leading the way people live their lives, the existence of religious aspects which principally refer to non-material things have been less interested. Power which enables people to provide material fulfillment becomes an ideal purpose of people's lives. Then the presence of T.S. Elliot's play Murder in the Cathedral (1935) in this modern age becomes an interesting phenomenon to be discussed because it offers a very contradictive aspect to the main stream of people's way of life stated above. In this play the main character, Thomas Becket, has firmly refused the frame of thought which is oriented to the use of power in maintaining material needs. On the contrary, Thomas chooses to negate the importance of material things by taking the religious aspect as his basic of life style. And martyrdom becomes his answer in the struggle to fight for his principle.

By analyzing the martyrdom of Thomas Becket this thesis will give a description about how the temporal happiness like the need for material things and power has

been challenged by what is considered as the eternal happiness, the happiness which is offered by involving in an intense relationship with God.

The word drama is derived from the Greek word "dram" meaning "to do, to act". Aristotle also depicts drama as "imitated human actions", which could satisfy the superficial needs of the box-office and the more profound requirement of an educated audience (Styan: 73)". However, this drama will be treated as literature which is understood by reading it privately, while the aspects of theatre it possesses, like the art of acting, stage performance, costumes, etc, will not be concerned here.

Murder in the Cathedral, according to the year of publishing, is categorized as a modern drama which specifically shows the return of poetry to the theatre. J.L.Styan in his book Modern Drama in Theory and Practice says that "Theatre history will acknowledge that Elliot deliberately set himself the all but elusive goal of writing a successful poetic drama for the twentieth century audience (73)". Elliot, through this poetic drama, apparently uses the workings of symbolism which could treat a Christian martyrdom as if it were a murder (the first title for Murder in the Cathedral was The Archbishop Murder Case). Through the symbolism Elliot tries to describe how Thomas Becket becomes a martyr, how Thomas proves that he will die not in a similar way with how

common people die, but he will die in a purpose to stand on his faith as a priest in a duty to serve God.

T.S. Elliot (1888-1965), whose drama is going to be discussed in this thesis, is "the most influential poet and critic of the twentieth century (Cuheta:1962)". In 1947, Elliot was awarded the Order of Merit and the Nobel Prize for literature. The publication of The Waste Land (1922) established his reputation as a poet. However, together with Yeats, he also continued to experiment a symbolist drama, especially verse drama in which he demonstrates his interest in why Elizabethan verse drama had succeeded and in introducing poetry into modern theatre.

Through Murder in the Cathedral, "in adopting St. Thomas Aquinas' *via negativa*, the way to reach God through the rejection of temporal and material things and by assuming the validity of man's original sin and need for atonement (Styan:73)", Elliot proposes Thomas Becket as representative of a society in which all are sinful.

Murder in the Cathedral as a drama is more attractive to be analyzed actually in its form in which poetic-drama style in Shakespeare era is revived again in modern time, when western theatre, with prose style, was growing ever more internationally. However, there is one thing which also interesting to be discussed, that is the life and death of Thomas Becket whom Elliot put as the major character in this drama. In his book *Poetry and Drama*, Elliot

said that, "I did not want to write a chronicle of twentieth century politics, I want to concentrate on death and martyrdom (p.30)". J.L. Styan also says that "Elliot's real achievement in this play was to find a symbolic action in Thomas' martyrdom which a devout member of the audience could apply to himself (73)".

The writer considers that the drama entitled Murder in the Cathedral is quiet representative to come out critics on martyrdom as a life value of Christian priest called Thomas Becket. Thomas negation against the earthly glory which will be accepted if he follows the King's order, accentuates his faith to serve God for searching heavenly glory. Thomas' principle to serve God is interestingly described in his preaches in the Cathedral on Christmas Morning, 1170.

A Christian martyrdom is never an accident, for saints are not made by accident. Still less is a Christian martyrdom the effect of a man's will to become a saint, as a man by willing and contriving may become a ruler of men. A martyrdom is always the design of God, for His love of men, to warn them and to lead them, to bring them back to His ways. It is never the design of man; for the true martyr is he who has become the instrumen of God, and who no longer desires anything for himself, not even the glory of being a martyr (53).

B. Statement of the Problem

Dealing with the preceding discussion, the writer find several problems in the play that are going to be analyzed :

1. How does the martyrdom arise in Thomas Becket character ?
2. What is the significance of martyrdom?

C. Objective of the Study

This study is intended :

1. to find out how the spirit of martyr or martyrdom arises in Thomas Becket's character.
2. to know the significance of Thomas Becket's martyrdom

D. Significance of the Study

In respect with this study, the writer wants to improve his knowledge and understanding on literature. Hopefully, this study will provide a few contributions to the readers, In more specific, this study may enrich knowledge about the works of T.S. Elliot. By reading this analyses, the readers could understand the skill of Elliot in matching poetry into theatre, the novelty experiment for the modern literary world. Beside that, this study will be usefull especially for the student of the English Departement on how to analyze literary work within more specific object, that is, the play. In line with an

analysis of this thesis, this study may give views and insights on how to analyze play, determine what problems should be taken as main subject matter to be discussed more deeply, and determine what theories and approaches to be used in analyzing the problems more properly. Finally, the readers may obtain any significant teachings and findings to be applied into their analysis, especially the new beginners in analyzing play.

E. Scope and Limitation

This thesis is concerned with the major character's inner conflict resulting from his interaction with the dictatorship of the King Henry II. His life is faced with a dilemma between obeying King as a chancellor or serving God as a priest. To stand for his faith, he had to refuse King's order though this has caused his death.

This play is based on the life and death of Thomas Becket that is composed in poetic-drama form by T.S. Elliot. Therefore, in its true story, beside his own faith, there are any other aspects that also influence Thomas Becket's decision to choose death as his ultimate solution in facing the dilemma above. However, as stated previously, the writer want to concentrate merely on the death and the martyrdom of Becket. More specifically, the writer will limit the study on inner conflict of Thomas Becket as main Character in facing a life with sin or a

death with glory. So, the main focus in analyzing this play is the study of Thomas Becket as the main character.

F. Theoretical Background

Having stated previously, this thesis is focused to analyze the major character's inner conflict in defending his position as a priest. In struggling for his fate, he is confronted with the threaten of King Henry II, influences of Knights, temptations of Tempters, which sharpen his conflict.

First of all, it should be noted that though the play is a transmittion of true story, in its written form Elliot has made it to be focused on its major character. By virtue of this conditions, the writer uses the objective theory.

Here to, Welleck and Warren said that "the study of literature should first and foremost concentrate on the actual work of art itself (140)".

In other words, it views a literary work from its intrinsic elements such as setting, plot, character, theme, and so on. Here, the writer use one of them to be analyzed, that is, the character.

In analyzing this play, the writer is demanded to read the work more deeply and make any interpretation to reveal and understand those problems. This can be achieved by hermeneutic theory. Hermeneutic theory that is employed

here, permits the writer to obtain on the essence of the work better.

Paul Ricour said that hermeneutics "is a science of interpretation and the nature of it is to construe a text something more than its physical presence. That is, the nature of text is to mean whatever we construe to mean (Newton: 105)".

G. Method of the Study

As stated before, this thesis deals with the major character's inner conflict rising from pressure of the King. His seven years of exile shows that he is not wanted to live in England. And his arrival in England after being exiled in France does not change King's intention to kill him, if he refuse to cooperate with King. But, bravely Thomas surrender to let her neck under the Knights' sword. To further extent, conflict between King and Thomas is more like a trigger for the development of Thomas' inner conflict which leads to the awakening of martyrdom in Thomas. This complicated situation can be revealed first by reading the play carefully along with another critics from some experts. After getting profound understanding of what has been read, the writer describes events and problems being dealt with, then he interpretes them accordingly.

This means that this analyses uses descriptive-ana-

lytic method since in working out his thesis, the writer attempts to describes events and problems and then analyzes them. Since reading, understanding and analyzing of the thesis involve interpretation, the use of hermeneutics method is reasonable. In this method, interpretation is "to construe text something more than its phisical presence. That is, the nature of text is to mean whatever we construe to mean" (Newton: 105).

H. Definition of Key Terms

- Martyr : the word martyr comes from Greek meaning witness.
- : is a person who defends a principle eventhough it means sacrificing many things, perhaps his or her life.
- : many social and political movements have created martyrs.
- Martyrdom : is a part of the Church's nature since it manifests Christian death in its pure form as the death of unconstrained faith, which otherwise is hidden in the ambivalence of all human events.
- Conflict : a stage of disagreement or argument between opposing group-

sor opposing ideas or principles; a struggle or a battle that grows out of the interplay of the two opposing forces. There are four possible kinds of conflicts: a man against himself, man against man, man against a society, and man against nature or destiny.

- **Struggle** : a great or determined effort within a person when trying to deal with difficult problem or situation.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK