

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The play entitled Murder in the Cathedral talks about the life of Thomas Becket, the main character in the play, especially his part of life which is involved in conflict with King Henry II. However, T.S. Elliot, the author of the play, has also created another characters, that is, Tempters, who are also involved in conflict with Thomas when he has to face the King's order to renew their relationship that has been broken so long. Finally this conflict has led Thomas to his death, under the swords of the Knights who have been the loyal vassals of the King. And these conflicts, that has led to the death of Thomas Becket, has attracted the writer to study the development of character, Thomas, in facing these conflicts.

Therefore, the study is focused on analyzing the main character, Thomas Becket, mainly his spirit of martyr, a spirit to defend on the principle, which arises in Thomas Becket's personality through his long and tough struggle to settle his conflict (especially his inner conflict) with the force of King's power. This analysis will concern merely on the work itself, where its intrinsic elements will be the main source of the study, disregarding the external aspects related to the work such as

the biography of the author, the period of time, the condition of the author when the work is written, etc. For that reason, the writer will choose the objective theory as the basic of analysis.

To support the theory above, the writer will also use the intrinsic approach in analysing the work. The intrinsic approach, as a basic of analysis, will concentrate solely on the intrinsic elements of the work itself such as characters, conflicts, plot, settings, theme, and so on. Intrinsic approach in its analysis more or less as opposite of extrinsic approach will basically observe the internal aspects and some other aspects such as history, background of the author, period of time, will be out of its concerns.

Since in analysing this work, the writer is demanded to read, to understand and then to interpret it on the basis of the realities presented in the work of the play, he uses hermeneutic theory that heavily rests on interpretation. And as a supporting device for this theory the writer uses *An introduction and notes by Nevill Coghill* as its related studies.

A. Objective Theory

As the study concerns about intrinsic elements, the writer uses the objective theory as the basic theory. It focuses on the study of the intrinsic elements of a

literary work, disregarding any extrinsic aspects of the story. M.H. Abram in his book "Mirror and The Lamp" stated that "the objective orientation which on principle regards the work of art in isolation from all external points of preferences, analyzes it as self sufficient entity constituted by its parts in their internal relations set out to judge it solely by criteria intrinsic to its own mode of being (6)."

A.1 Character

According to Harry Shaw in his *Dictionary of Literary Terms*, "Character is aggregate of traits and features that form the nature of some person or animal" (70). Character also refers to moral qualities, ethical standards and principles. In literature, it has several meanings, notably that of a person represented in a story, novel, play, etc. "Characters in literature generally, and in fiction specifically, is extended verbal representation of human being, the inner self that determines thought, speech, and behaviour (Robert 143)."

B. Hermeneutics Theory

Hermeneutics would focus on understanding (Verstehen) rather than on explanation (Erklaren), which operated in the natural sciences, since in natural sciences interpretation was directed at non-human world. In the

human science, in contrast, interpretation was directed at what had been produced by human beings, so that understanding had to operate in order to bring humanly produced objects to life (Newton 103).

Stated bluntly, the nature of interpretation is to construe a sign-system (for short "text") something more than its physical presence. That is, the nature of a text is to mean whatever we construe to mean. That is, the nature of a text is to have no meanings except that which an interpreter wills into existence. We, not our text, are the makers of meaning we understand, whilst a text being only occasion for meaning, in itself an ambiguous form devoid of the consciousness where meaning abide. One meaning of a text can have no higher claim than another on the ground that it derives from "nature of interpretation", for all equally read. Interpreters make best of our historicity not only by reconstructing an alien world from our text but also by interpreting them with our own world and making them speak to us (109).

In respect with this study, hermeneutics is referred to *negative hermeneutics*. This means that analysis of the work should be based on the work itself exclude all external constituents, such as socio-cultural backgrounds, the life of its author, social condition when the work is created, and other external factors. Paul

Ricoeur said that "the hermeneutic field, whose outer contour we have traced, is internally at variance with itself (Newton 193-194)."

C. Related Studies

There are some notable problems, though it seems technical ones, which bother the writer in studying this play. First, the play that will be studied here, *Murder in the Cathedral*, was written in poetic drama form. This kind of style, which has been famously acknowledged as the style of Shakespeare in writing his drama, is now presented again by Elliot in this modern age. It is a kind of drama writing where the dialogues, speeches of its characters are presented in poetic style. So, in trying to study this kind of play the writer should have treated it first as a poetry, where the elements (rhyme, metre, etc) of every speeches of the characters must be taken into account, which certainly in contrast with the way to treat a play which is written in prose style. Of course, it will be very difficult for the writer to catch the meaning of the play in a direct way because, in line with the context of effectiveness, the process in which the writer attempts to pursue the meaning will be time consuming. Besides, the writer does not want to be trapped into an excessive study on the style that may exceed the scope and limitation of the analysis which in one way or another could possibly reduce a more detailed study about the martyrdom that has been the main concern

in this study.

It should be remembered that this play, Murder in the Cathedral, is a kind of religious play where its composition was aimed to fulfill the need of religious purpose of Christian people at that time. It was stated that George Bell, the Bishop of Chichester, who had founded the Religious Drama Society in 1929, had invited Elliot to write a play on religious subject which has resulted in the composition of Murder in the Cathedral (Styan 71). Therefore, it will be probably suitable if this play is studied through a kind of religious approach. Because in this play, Christian martyrdom was offered and accepted as history and as truth which more or less is weighted by a dogma of Christian values. In other words, in an attempt to understand the truth of martyrdom in this play it will be more suitable to use Christian value as a tool of observation.

However, the writer realizes that the lack of related references in line with Christian values of martyrdom that will be a helpful tool to study this play will only lead to the less accurate of the study itself.

Therefore, in order to settle these problems the writer use An Introduction and Notes by Nevill Coghill as the reference to support the hermeneutic theory in studying this play. It is undeniable that Nevill Coghill through his notes has given some very detail explanations about what might be the exact meaning lying behind the poetic style of this play. In this context, Coghill's

description has helped the writer in dealing with the difficulties to understand the poetic style stated in the first problem. Because through this description it will be easier for the writer to catch the meaning of speeches or dialogs of each characters of the play. And in respect with the second problem, Coghill also has pointed out several Christian values that could be used as the grounds to understand what has been written about the martyrdom.

It should be noted, however, that *Nevill Coghill's Notes* is used only as a reference to help the writer in settling those two problems above. In other words, Coghill's notes have its function only in the explanation and description of the whole play while the writer's opinions remain central in interpreting and understanding the martyrdom of Thomas Becket that had been purposed in the making of this study as stated in the section of Statement of the Problem in Chapter I.

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS