

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Literature is one of the interesting studies that can give pleasure and enjoyment for the students, but only few students can realize it. Some students think that reading literature is useless and wasting time. They think that literature is not important for their life and their future. That is the reason why literature is often ignored and neglected by some students. It is because some students do not realize that literature has become part of their life everyday. Further, Kettle (1951:12) states, “Literature is a part of life and can be judged only in its relevance to life.”

Literature also has the elements of entertaining in spite of containing people’s value, thoughts, conflict, the moral life, social values and human culture. It also enlarges the students’ knowledge and builds their intellectual. Through literature, the students can also learn about other cultures, which reflect or deal with human existence.

In addition, studying a literary work shows people about humanity, philosophic, morality, religious world, idealism, culture, human feeling- love, hate, and human dreams in certain current of time. Supporting this idea, Robert and Jacobs (1989:2) state that literature can help people grow into a broader cultural, philosophic, and religious world and recognize human dreams and their

struggle in order to develop mature sensitivity through analyzing and looking of human situation.

The great eighteenth-century English critic, Dr Samuel Johnson, once says, “Literature is like light, everyone knows what light is but few can define or even describe it” (Howe 1978:1-2). The author uses literature to describe about the most fundamental feelings of people’s life which is usually difficult to be describe in words.

In addition, Burito (1971:1) says that “literature has an element of entertaining or to afford pleasure; so learning literary work can give the enjoyment in people’s life. Literary work can seize people’s interest and more or less makes the rest of the world vanish for a moment.” The author hopes when the readers read literary work they can feel happy, and find some pleasures from the story.

There are many pieces of literature such as fiction, poem, and drama. Drama presents characters in dialogues, actions and appearance on a stage. Drama can entertain the audiences who observe the attitude of actor or actress in playing their roles on the stage. Moreover, Scholes, Silverman, and Klaus (1978:73) state that drama offers people a direct presentation of its imaginative reality. In drama, the audiences can see and hear many things, such as the characters, costumes and moving within a specified setting: costumes, sets, gestures, and the tones (Barnet et al, 1993:3).

The writer chooses one of Eugene O’Neill play as the subject of her study because O’Neill is one of the American foremost playwrights in the twentieth

century. Most of his plays are well known and valued in all countries for example: *Ile*, *The Hairy Ape*, *Mourning Becomes Electra*, *The Emperor Jones*, *Long Day's Journey into Night* etc. In his plays, he always talks about people's sorrow and that is caused by their own faults or by the pressure of forces around them.

In this study, the writer chooses "Desire under the Elms", one of O'Neill's great plays since this play concerns the basic passions of human and religion aspect. This play talks about the life of some people which are influenced by ambition to get something as much as possible. The writer focuses her study on analyzing in the life of its central characters Ephraim, Eben and Abbie. All the central characters in this play are drawn with remarkable credibility and exhibit all the human complexities of emotion and motivation. Ephraim leaves his family to achieve his ambition to dominate the farm. He dedicates his entire life to God who is an image of his own ego. Eben feels that he is the rightful heir to the land. Eben hates Ephraim because he does not care about his family. Eben also hates Abbie, he feels that Abbie marries his father just for getting the farm.

In this thesis, the writer tries to analyze the central characters' trait. There are three main characters in this drama that clearly represent basic passions. Ephraim characteristics represent greed and religious devotion, Eben and Abbie characteristics represent greed and sexual passion.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

After reading Eugene O'Neill's play "Desire under the Elms", the following problem is put forward as follows:

What basic passions are illustrated by O'Neill in his play "*Desire under the Elms*"?

1.3. Objective of the Study

This study in general aims at revealing the representations of basic passions of human being. This study is intended to find out the kinds of basic passions as represented by the main characters in "*Desire under the Elms*".

1.4. Theoretical Framework

The writer uses some theories especially those dealing with the elements of drama and psychological analysis. Hence, the writer uses the theory of Robert and Jacobs (1989:1009) about the elements of drama. They state that the basic elements of drama are character, plot and setting. Furthermore, psychological analysis is used here since this study deals with the behavior of the protagonist character of *Desire under the Elms*. This is justified since every human being has his own behaviors that differentiate him from another person.

1.5. Significance of the Study

The writer hopes her thesis will make other students enjoy reading Eugene O'Neill's play "*Desire under the Elms*" and get deeper understanding of human's life. Moreover, this thesis will give a lesson for students about how they can face and handle the feeling of greed and passion which always appear in someone's life in a better way than what the main characters do.

1.6. Scope and Limitation of the Study

Since the time is limited, the writer only analyzes the study of basic passions of the main characters of “Desire under the Elms”, Ephraim, Eben and Abbie, through the analysis of character, plot, and setting.

1.7. Definition of Key Terms

The writer lists some terms that are used in this discussion in order to avoid any misinterpretation of this study. The terms are stated as follows:

a. Drama

Drama is the presentation of human beings engaged in action. It consists of character, costumes and moving within a specified setting, costumes, sets and gestures (Barnet 1993:3).

b. Character

Character is a person who appears in a play, which refers to personality of the individual that represented of a human being, the inner-self determined thought, attitudes, and behavior (Barnet 1993:6).

c. Plot

Plot is series of events or arrangement of happenings that should have a rising action, a climax and a falling action (Barnet 1993:6).

d. Setting

Setting is the time and place in which the action occurs (Barnet 1993:6).

e. Psychological analysis

Psychology is the scientific study of behavior and mental processes (Munn, 1966:7)

f. Basic Passion

Passion is based on basic need to be considered special where passion is in the air, so are feelings of attraction and drives that lead to romance and sexual interaction. (www.topsynergy.com/info/passion.htm.)

g. Greed

Greed is a desire to obtain more money, wealth, material possessions or any other entity than one need. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greed>)

h. Sexual passion

Sexual passion is the amount of interest and enjoyment a person associates with the physical act of making love (www.eharmony.com).

i. Religion Devotion

Deep and strong belief in religion which governs one's thoughts and actions.

1.8.Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters. The first chapter deals with the introduction of the study, statement of the problem, the objective of the study, theoretical framework, the significance of the study, the limitation, the definition of key terms, and the organization of the study. The second chapter discusses some theories that are related to the topic of the thesis, psychological analysis on basic passions and previous study. The third chapter is the research methodology,

which deals with the nature of the study, research design, source of data, procedures of data collection and data analysis. Meanwhile, the discussion of the finding will be discussed in chapter four, and finally the last chapter, chapter five, concludes the whole discussion.