

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Perrine (1973:6) claims that literature is an important means of allowing us, through our imagination, to live more fully, more deeply, more richly, and with greater awareness in two ways. The first way is that it broadens our experience and makes us acquainted with a range of experience with which, in the ordinary course of events, we might have no contact. The second way is that it deepens our experience and makes us feel more poignantly and more understandingly about our everyday experiences.

Literature has also much practical knowledge to offer us. As an art of words, it helps us become more sensitive to language, both our own and other people's. Being sensitive to our own language means that we have the ability to use words to express our own feelings, thoughts and ideas in a better and clearer way. On the other hand, being sensitive to other people's language, means that we have the ability to communicate and to comprehend others' language either explicitly or implicitly. This can also be seen in the verbal interactions between characters in a literary work. How they address

each other, how they express their own feelings, and how they respond to summon, are some examples.

Kennedy (1990: vi) asserts that many careers today call for a close reading and clear thinking expressed on paper. As an answer to this need, college placement directors have reported more demand for graduates who are readers and writers that are persons who can handle words. They are people who can understand not only the literal meanings but also the implied ones.

Literature also supports education. Little (1966:1) says that wherever there is education, there is the study of literature. Each generation naturally feels impelled, in its turn, to express its own thoughts. To help people towards effective expression, there is no such better way than the study of literature, for when we see how others have achieved something, we are in a much better position to achieve something ourselves. In studying literature, we explore "the best" in writing and in doing so, learn to think, speak and write more effectively ourselves.

To learn literature is, however, much more than to build a sense of admiration; it also needs skills to see its multidimensional language. It is also the main problem why so great a number of readers does not even care about literature.

Among various forms of literature - novels, poetry, and drama - the writer has chosen poetry as the sub-

ject matter of her study. To her, poetry is like a shrine - box which saves an amount of surprising fact emphasizing what Heddle (1952 : xxi) says "sometimes it is this startling freshness we like in poetry, the 'telling us we did not know that we knew ...". Although it is said in a form that differs from prose and in a language slightly more difficult - in the sense that poetry is expected to refer to implied meanings from its connotative language - than prose, poetry talks about experiences of people in a solid and short time , much less than what prose or drama should have.

In line with this, students tend to agree that to read great works of poets is probably good for the spirit, and most of them even take some pleasure in the experience. But many, if they aren't planning to teach English, often wonder whether the study of poetry, however enjoyable, is not a waste of time or, at least, an annoying obstacle.

The reasons might be that poems employ incomprehensible words or odd diction and they are difficult to understand. Kennedy (1966:xl) comments that the learners will complain that poets are liars or poetry is just a waste of time or even just a series of gorgeous noises to be funneled through one ear and out of the other without being allowed to trouble the mind.

Among various types of poems, there is a certain type of poems named Metaphysical poems which are con-

cerned with the relationship between men and God - like those written by the seventeenth century well-known poets - John Donne, Herbert, Crashaw, Vaughan, and Traherne. The poems like *Holy Sonnets*, "*Death, Be Not Proud*", *The Argument of His Book*, *The Altar*, *The Destruction of Sennacherib*, *The Pulley*, *Jordan I, II* and the most famous epic poem *Paradise Lost* and its sequel *Paradise Regained* have been written based on the Bible as their major source of ideas.

As a matter of fact, the Bible does not only contain priceless and countless amazing stories which could be put as fresh ideas but also books of great poems namely the *Book of Psalms* - with its famous Psalm 23 "*The Lord is my Sheperd*", the *Book of Job*, the *Book of Proverbs*, the *Book of Ecclesiastes* and the *Book of Song of Songs*.

Nevertheless, the reason that common people sometimes regard poems as a sacred thing and not to be disturbed from their holy position results in the fact that only few researches were done to see the Bible's beauty as a literary work. Several studies done so far, merely debate and criticize the Book's real place in the Bible, the time it was precisely written, the exact place it was written or who the real author of the Book is.

The writer was interested in studying the Book of Ecclesiastes since, in general, the Book of Ecclesiastes reflects clearly the experiences of a philosopher whose

mind was in conflict over the problems of life and its mysterious bound with God as the Supreme being (Thompson, 1982 : 201) stressing what John Bettenbender (1966 : 103) says "Men have always been fascinated by the unknown, from primitive times our imaginations have created".

The Book of Ecclesiastes mirrors our everyday life. It pictures out how we struggle with our own desires and our passions for an enjoyable living. This book honestly unveils a man's life from the earliest time of his life until his final existence on earth.

Only few researches have been done by experts in literature which deals with this "most difficult work in the Bible" (Scroogie; 1958:143). One of them is Professor Jonathan. R. Pagalan, a lecturer of literature in Petra University. However, his work was done in connection with the whole unit of the Bible. Approximately, there are more than sixteen books which have been published concerning this Book, but almost all of them only give a slight criticism or comment on the Book's literary aspect since they pour out their attention mainly on its religious points and the dispute inside the Book (Pagalan, 1992). Under all these considerations, the writer with all her limitations, encouraged herself to analyze the Book from a literary point of view.

Peterson (1968:xi) says that a single poem offers a more meaningful and moving experience than an entire

book of poems. For this reason, the emphasis in this study is on the study of a particular poem rather than on the study of the whole poems in the Book of Ecclesiastes. Accordingly, the writer of this thesis has analyzed only chapter twelve of the Book which concludes the whole topics meant by the author. By viewing the conclusion part, the readers are expected to picture out the whole idea of what the author of the Book of Ecclesiastes is trying to say in his Book. Reaching the meaning of the conclusion part, the reader might find it easy to understand the whole section of the Book when he reads it starting from the beginning of the work up to the end of it.

The idea of a poem may be expressed and presented in a single image or revealed through many images. Through the poem studied, the writer has explored some of the eternal questions that concern all men. What is the meaning of youth, old age, or life? The poet attempts to answer these questions for himself and the writer of this thesis tries to share with the readers the poet's thoughts and feelings.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Related to the Background of the Study, the research questions explored were formulated as follows :

- a. What is the central theme of chapter twelve (the conclusion) of the Book of Ecclesiastes?

- b. What verbal expressions are used by the author to show the theme of chapter twelve (the conclusion) of the Book of Ecclesiastes ?

1.3. Objective of the Study.

Answering the above questions, this study automatically intended to :

- a. describe the central theme of chapter twelve (the conclusion) of the Book of Ecclesiastes
- b. describe various verbal expressions used by the author of the Book of Ecclesiastes to express the theme of chapter twelve (the conclusion) of the Book

1.4 Significance of the Study.

It is expected that the findings of this thesis might contribute something to the study of discourse analysis and literary criticism. An analysis on this English translated poem might suggest an idea that a genuinely foreign language poetry after having its translated form have an English poetical characteristic as well.

Practically, this study might also be a help for the students of the seventh semester who take literary Appreciation as a part of their program. The lecturer sometimes asks the students to analyze poems to catch the theme, or expressions that the author uses in his poems. By referring to this thesis which gives an example in

making an analysis on poems especially chapter twelve of the Book of Ecclesiastes, it is expected that this study might give a better picture to them on how to apply a set of theories into a real analysis.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study.

This study was limited to poetry, one of the literary forms. But since it talks about so many poems, the focus of this study was The Book of Ecclesiastes-one of the Books of the Old Testament. Nevertheless, because the Book of Ecclesiastes consists of twelve chapters , it would be impossible to study all of them in such a short time; therefore the writer analyzed only the last poem that is Chapter twelve of The Book. The aspects analyzed are the verbal expressions used by the author and the central theme of the poem itself. The writer included also a slight religious interpretation to the analysis whenever needed.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

The Book of Ecclesiastes is not familiar to non-Christian readers; therefore, this particular subject might bring confusion to them. To avoid this confusion, the writer herewith defines the following terms which will be used throughout her thesis.

a. Poetry

Poetry is the most intensely emotive literary form. In a sense, it does all that prose can do, in developing its theme in a carefully - ordered sequence of statements ... it displays that almost indefinable quality of emotional and imaginative impact that earns it the name of poetry ... it occurs when the language is more imaginative and more emotionally telling. (Little, Graham; 1966:162).

b. Biblical Literature

In Pagalan's *Introduction to The Bible* (1989), biblical literature is defined as a literary work that was based on Biblical Stories. It might also be the works inside the Bible itself which has the literary nature itself.

c. Old Testament

According to Unger (1988:939) "the Old Testament is the part of the Bible extending from *Genesis* to *Malachi*". The Old Testament constitutes of five books of Pentateuch, twelve Historical books, five Poetical books - among which the Book of Ecclesiastes is included -, seventeen Prophetic books divided into five Major prophets and twelve Minor prophets (Thompson, 1983:1510).

d. Ecclesiastes

Thompson (1982 : 200) stated that in the Hebrew Bible Ecclesiastes is called 'Koheleth'. The term is borrowed from the Septuagint. The meaning of this word is somewhat disputed, but it is usually rendered in English versions as 'preacher', or one who addresses an assembly. According to Cayne (1991:295) it is a book of Old Testament purporting to be the work of King Solomon but probably written in the late 3rd B.C. It considers the purpose of life.

e. The central theme of a poem

According to Perrine (1973:140) the central theme of a poem is the meaning of a poem itself. It is the experience it expresses or its basic subject - what it has to say.

f. Concrete Imagery

Concrete Imagery is a sharp, sensuous, concrete language or a word or sequence of words that refers to any sensory experience. It constitutes a sight (visual imagery), a sound (auditory imagery) and a touch (tactile imagery) (Kennedy, 1990:73).

g. Coloured Term

It is a word or words that bear with them strong emotional overtones or associations (Little, 1966:163).

h. Metaphor

A metaphor is a statement that one thing is something else, which, in a literal sense, it is not (Kennedy, 1990:91).

i. Personification

Custer (1964:91) defined it as the giving of human powers or characteristics to inanimate objects or ideas.

j. Synecdoche

Kennedy (1990:99) defined synecdoche as the use of a part of a thing to stand for the whole of it or vice versa.

k. Metonymy

The use of something closely related for the thing actually meant (Perrine, 1973:65).

l. Symbol

A symbol is a visible object or action that suggests some further meaning in addition to itself Kennedy (1990:205).

m. Overstatement

Overstatement (hyperbole) is a statement containing exaggeration (Kennedy, 1990:91).

n. Understatement

Kennedy (1990:98) simply defined it as a statement which implying more than is said.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

There were three theories used as the framework of this study : content analysis, practical literary criticism, and discourse analysis. Content analysis was used to specify the study objectives, data, analysis procedure and findings while practical literary criticism was used to make judgements of the poem by analysing its stylistic features. The judgement are focused on the verbal expressions or terms (affective elements) of the poem as used by the author. To go deeper, it worked also in the poems' exageses. Finally, discourse analysis was used to maximize the investigation by leading the analyst to face the text as an extract. It deals with the principle of local interpretation and the principle of analogy. This is done to analyze the relations of each line to gather the whole theme of the poem.

1.8 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter I deals with the background of the study, statement of the problem, objective of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation, definitions of key terms, theoretical framework, and organization of the thesis.

Chapter II presents the review of related literature which introduces the previous studies, the problematic of finding the author, the importance of translation, the Book of Ecclesiastes, and the literary analysis. Chapter III deals with methodology of the study. It presents the nature of the study, research design, the research data - consist of data source, data collection procedure, and data analysis technique - finally the instrument used in the analysis. Chapter IV discusses the analysis of the poem in chapter twelve of the Book of Ecclesiastes. Chapter V presents the conclusion and suggestions.