

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Literature is one of the interesting subjects that are taught to the students of English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University. Literature is a reflection of human life discussing every aspect of life that people face in the world. In literature, students may find morality, situation and condition of the society, and reality of life, such as: happiness, sorrows, angers, excitement, ideals, truth, and lies. Literature contains the record of people's values, their thought, their problems, and conflicts, in short, their way of life (Little, 1966, p.1).

In addition to that, literature gives something valuable to the readers, particularly students. Other valuable things that students can obtain by studying literature are enlarging knowledge, building their intellectual, sharpening their sensitivity and last but not least, training their imagination. Simon and Schuster (1996:7) mention, "By analyzing literature, the readers do not only develop their intellectual and emotion skills but are also aware of many things going in the fiction."

Little (1966:67) states that there are three forms of literature; they are fiction/novel, play and poetry. Drama is rather different from other kinds of literary works, since in drama the interaction of the characters is presented in the form of dialogues, and thus it can be performed on stage. Whatever the form is, the main point of literature is its message and its power to move the emotions of the readers.

The writer chooses drama as her thesis because drama consists of human problems and moral value in daily life. It also carries social messages made by the playwright to make people aware of the issues,

situations, and conditions. Drama is often meant by series of events that elicit high excitement (Kennedy, 1978, p.565). The playwright shows their feeling, thought, consideration, and ideas to readers through drama.

In this study, the writer takes Henrik Ibsen as the playwright since he is a very well known and qualified playwright to be her thesis. Born at Skien in South East Norway on 20th March 1828 from a poor and ruined family, Ibsen is often referred to as “Father of modern drama” (Goodman, 1971, p.19). Ibsen is regarded to be the greatest of Norwegian authors, and he is chosen as the national symbol by Norwegians and one of the world’s important playwrights of all time.

Henrik Ibsen is considered as he father of modern drama by being the first to bring dramatic genius and change social and material condition into new age (Cubeta, 1970, p.25). He produced many good literary works. Five of his dramas become frequently performed on the stage in honors to his existence in literature. They are: *A doll’s House (1979)*, *Ghost (1881)*, *Wild Duck (1884)*, *Hedda Gabler (1890)*, and *The Master Builder (1892)*.

The writer chooses *Hedda Gabler* because the play asks questions of the power dynamics between women and men, the proper role of women in marriage, and of the concept of morality (Hedenskoog, 2006). *Hedda Gabler* was published in 1890 by Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen. The play was premiered in 1891 in Germany to negative reviews, but has subsequently gained recognition as a classic of realism, nineteenth century theatre, and world drama (eNotes, 2012).

In a letter dated on December 4th 1890 to Moritz Prozor, who translated the play into French, Ibsen explained the reason why he had chosen Hedda "Gabler" instead of Hedda "Tesman": he said that, "In that way, I want to indicate Hedda as a personality. Therefore, she is regarded more as her father’s daughter than her husband’s wife". In other words,

even though she is married to Tesman, she still does not want to be more mature in married life, but still wants to live in her childish life as a maiden of General Gabler. Furthermore, Ibsen wrote in his letter: "In this play I have not really tried to deal with so-called problems. My main purpose has been to describe human beings, human moods and human fates on the basis of certain conditions and views prevalent in society"(Sanders, 2008, p.1).

Hedenskoog (2006) states *Hedda Gabler* is a play about human unwillingness to challenge their own gender and societal roles. From the start of the play, Hedda is unhappy with her new life. Hedda, the daughter of an esteemed General Gabler, deigned to marry Tesman only because she has reached the age not because of true love. The tragedy starts when Mrs. Elvsted, Hedda's schoolfellow come to the town only to find Eilert Lovborg the good writer in manuscript. Hedda gets jealous with Mrs. Elvsted because she leaves her family only looking for Lovborg and helping him to finish the manuscript. Besides that, Tesman feels jealous after he has listened to Lovborg's manuscript. Eilert Lovborg's lost his manuscript because of being drunk and it is found by Tesman and give it to Hedda. Hedda who possesses the manuscript herself, encourages Lovborg to commit suicide with her father's pistol. Hedda does a mistake that she burns the manuscript and tells Tesman if she has destroyed the manuscript to secure their future. When the news comes that Lovborg has killed himself, Tesman and Mrs. Elvsted try to reconstruct Lovborg's book that they have known. Judge Brack, who Tesman and Hedda friend, finds out the problems and tells Hedda that only he can keep her falling into the police's hands or suffering through a scandal. Realizing that she is now in Brack's power, Hedda goes into the next room and shoots herself.

"Tragedy" is the key word of this study. The writer finds some interesting parts on knowing how and what caused Hedda's tragedy. The

writer thinks that happens illogically only because Judge Brack threatens Hedda to end her life with her late father's pistol. "Hedda Gabler" is a text in which jealousy and envy drive a woman to manipulate and attempt to control everyone in her life (studymode, 2010). That is why the writer considers that it is interesting to discuss about what causes lead to Hedda's tragedy in Henrik Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler*.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In relation with the title and the background of the study, a research question is formulated as follows:

"What causes lead to Hedda's tragedy in Henrik Ibsen's "Hedda Gabler"?"

1.3 Objective of the Study

In accordance with the research question, this study is intended to find out the causes leading to Hedda's tragedy in Henrik Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler*.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

This study is conducted under these following theories. They are drama, tragedy, and objective.

Drama is a story without a story-teller; in it characters act out directly what Aristotle calls an "imitation" of such action as people find in their life (Roberts, 1989). Drama does not only contain human life problem, but also carries social messages and values made by the playwright to make people notice and aware of their existence.

Tragedy depicts the downfall of a basically good person through some fatal error or misjudgment, producing suffering and insight on the part of

the protagonist and arousing pity and fear on the part of the audience (Simpson, 1998).

According to Abrams (1953), *Objective* theory is a literary approach whose major point is to see the work (the art) as the way it is. Objective theory believes that an art should have these following elements: setting, plot, characters and theme.

1.5 The Significance of the Study

This study is expected to contribute to the study of literature in English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University. The writer expects that students will be more interested in reading and analyzing literature, which usually presents human values. By studying literature, students can enlarging their knowledge, building their intellectual, sharpening their sensitivity and last but not least, training their imagination.

1.6 Scope and Limitation of the Study

In this study, the writer focuses finding out the causes of Hedda's tragedy and this causes are analyzed through the elements of drama. They are: setting, character, plot, and theme. The plot is considered to embody the whole play which starts from exposition, complication, climax, falling action, and conclusion in the drama. Therefore the writer decides to narrow her study only on analyzing the causes leading to Hedda's tragedy in Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler*. The writer limits her study by using only verbal information and the written work of the drama.

1.7 Definition of the Key Terms

It is necessary to give the definition of key terms used in this study in order to avoid misunderstanding and ambiguity.

1. Tragedy is a very sad event or situation, especially one involving death or suffering. Tragedy depicts the downfall of a basically good person through some fatal error or misjudgment, producing suffering and insight on the part of the protagonist and arousing pity and fear on the part of the audience (David L. Simpson, 1998).
2. Cause is the reason why something, especially something bad happens. (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary).
3. *Hedda Gabler* was originally written in Norwegian and is full of untranslatable wordplay (Sparknotes, 2013). In this study, *Hedda Gabler* refers to the work translated by Edmund Gosse and William Archer in *Literature and Interpretive Techniques* (1986) pages 798-869 published by HarperCollins. The drama mentioned here is in the form of written text or verbal information.

1.8 Organization of the Thesis

This study consists of five chapters. Chapter I deals with the background of the study, statement of the problem, objective of the study, theoretical framework, significance of the study, scope and limitation of the study, definition of the key terms, and organization of the thesis. Chapter II covers the review of the related literature and review of the related studies. Chapter III presents the research methodology which consists of research design, source of the data, data, instrument, procedure of collecting data, and data analysis procedure. Chapter IV discusses about the causes leading to Hedda's tragedy in Henrik Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler*. The last chapter, chapter V, discusses conclusions and suggestions.