

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Literature plays an important role in the teaching of values and cultures. To this point, Little (1966:2) claims that whenever there is education, there is the study of literature. So it is important to teach it in schools and colleges. Besides, Mayhead (1981:12) states that by reading good literary works a man can get more closely into contact with the real world. Further, Perrine (1969:4) writes: “Literature can be used as a gear for stepping up the intensity and increasing the range of our experience and as a glass for clarifying it. It is not only an aid to living but a means of living.”

One can conclude that this is probably one of the main consideration for the curriculum designs to choose literature as one of the subjects to be taught at the English Department of Widya Mandala Surabaya Catholic University. It is assigned ten (10) credits distributed as follows: Contemporary Literature gets 4 credits, Critical Reading (it is actually a Literary Criticism) gets 4 credits, and Reading Plays gets 2 credits. Through these subjects, the students at this Department learn how to understand and analyze prose, drama, and poetry as the three main genres of Literature.

Readers can gain rich values reading these three literary genres. From the very ancient time, there has been a lot of high quality literary works produced by great novelist like William Blake (Nabholtz, 1974:4-5), playwrights like William Shakespeare (Inglis:1958:129-...), and poets like Geoffrey Chaucer

(Gardner:1984:5). One of the literary works that is not so much discussed in lay schools and colleges is the Bible. The Bible, as a literary work, is still a controversial issue among people along the history though actually it should not be like that. Gabel and Wheeler (1990:3) state that:

This view is not necessarily in conflict with the traditional religious one, namely, that the Bible was written under the direct inspiration of God and given to humans to serve as a guide to their faith and conduct.... Reading the Bible as literature should be uncomfortable for persons who hold the religious view. The important thing is to know what one is doing, to make one's choice explicit, and to follow it consistently. We are here going to look at a group of literary texts *as* literary texts.

So, with some fundamental respects, the Bible is a literary work besides its quality as a collection of Spiritual teaching. It was composed, compiled, shaped, added to, edited, copied, translated, and interpreted in ways quite recognizable to literary scholars.

The literary type that attracts the writer the most is poetry which goes beyond the rhyming of words. Perrine (1969:3) states that the objective of writing a poem is usually to make a very complicated statement using as few words as possible. Griffith (2006:409) defines poetry as a genre of literature that combines conventions that convey ideas (diction, speakers, imagery, symbolism), musical devices (rhythm, word sounds), structural arrangements (lines, stanzas), and sometimes visual qualities. Thus each of the device mentioned is packed with meanings which the poet wants to transfer to the readers or audience. A poet expresses his ideas, facts, and emotion in an aesthetic creative writing or composition in metrical form or in free verse which is called poem (cited at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/poem/>).

The writer of the study is challenged to analyze poems, particularly of the Bible. A poem, through its beautiful words, gives enjoyment that makes people like it. But this is not the whole answer. Poetry, in all ages has been regarded as important, not simply because of the enjoyment but as something central to each man's existence which is very close to human daily life or experience. To this point, Perrine (1969:3) says, "poetry has something having unique value to the fully realized life, something that human being is better off for having and spiritually impoverished without." A poet, from his own store of felt, observed, or imagined experiences, selects, combines, and recognizes. He creates significant new experiences for the reader—significant because focused and formed—in which the reader can participate and that he may use to obtain a greater awareness and understanding of his world.

There are four types of poetry as classified by Kennedy and Gioia (2002:10) They are Lyric Poetry, Narrative Poetry, Dramatic Poetry, and Didactic Poetry. All of these classifications are found in the biblical poetry. Those who diligently read and reflect on the Bible feel the sense of the lyrical verses, narrative and the dramatic verses. Through reflection, the people gain the didactic values that teach and guide the man into the right way of life.

The writer of this study is challenged to analyze on the biblical poetry in which the religious or spiritual values are conveyed, since the Bible, according to Potkay (<http://www.xlibris.com/>), is the root of western literature: stories, poems, and parables of the highest literary quality.

The biblical text of poetry that the writer analyzed is the Song of Songs, claimed to be written by King Solomon, since it is a collection of lyrical poems,

one of the five poetical Books in the Old Testament. As a poetic book, it is full of imageries and figures of speech in which very complicated to understand, especially the erotic and romantic expressions. Because of the use of the erotic and romantic expressions, many people, particularly the Christians almost never “touch” the Book or to have a discussion on it. Most of them say that it is a pornographic book in the Bible. The writer herself always gets confused when reading this Book then come to the curiosity to know the meaning of erotic and romantic expressions written figuratively. Thus, by identifying the imageries and figures of speech as well as by determining the meaning of the Song, the writer wants to find out the hidden message which are the religious or spiritual values.

1.2 The Problem Statements

In line with the background of the study, the research questions to be answered by the study under report are formulated as follows:

1. What types of imagery are encountered in the Song of Songs?
2. What types of figures of speech are encountered in the Song of Songs?
3. What meanings do the types of imagery convey?
4. What meanings do the figures of speech convey?

1.3 The Objective of the Study

In line with the problem statements, the purpose of the study is to identify, to analyze and to interpret the imagery and figures of speech of the Song of Songs spelt out more concretely, the objectives of this study are formulated as follows:

1. to identify and describe the types of imagery encountered in the Song

2. to identify and describe the types of figures of speech encountered in the Song of Songs
3. to determine the meanings of the types of imagery of the Song of Songs
4. to determine the meanings of the types of figures of speech of the Song of Songs.

1.4 The Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are expected to give some contribution to the progress of related theories, to the students and to the management of English Department in their effort to improve the teaching-learning of literary subjects. Besides, the findings are also expected to help readers to appreciate literary works in general through the understanding of the poetic language, in particular the meaning of the imageries and figures of speech used in the Song of Songs. Finally, it is expected that the findings would be useful for the teaching of literature in English study program.

1.5 The Scope and Limitation of the Study

1.5.1 The Scope.

In this study, the writer only limits her discussion about the types of imagery and figures of speech of the Song of Songs and their interpretations, because the spiritual meaning of the Song is interwoven behind the literal erotic expressions. The writer analyzes several verses that explicitly convey the imagery and figures of speech which are as follows:

- verse 2 of chapter 1
- verses 3 and 12 of chapter 1
- verses 3, 13-15 of chapter 1
- verse 5 of chapter 1
- verses 5-6 of chapter 1
- verses 6-7 of chapter 1
- verse 1 of chapter 2
- verse 2 and 6 of chapter 2
- verse 3 of chapter 2
- verse 8 of chapter 2
- verses 8, 10-14 of chapter 2
- verses 1-4 of chapter 4
- verses 1-7 of chapter 4
- verses 6 and 16 of chapter 4
- verse 9 of chapter 4
- verse 10 of chapter 4
- verses 12 and 15 of chapter 4
- verse 1 of chapter 5
- verse 2 of chapter 5
- verse 10 of chapter 6
- verses 8 and 13 of chapter 7
- verse 9[10] of chapter 7
- verse 10 of chapter 8
- verse 13 of chapter 8

1.5.2 The Limitation

The writer realizes that in conducting this study there are some weaknesses. First, the original text of the Bible in general and the Song of Songs in particular was written in Hebrew and then in Greece (Keel, 1994:42-48). The writer do not have any of the Hebrew and Greece. Because of that, she uses the New Revised Standard Version Bible, an English translation. As stated in the “preface (xii)” of the version, it has been authorized by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in the United States and by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. and Canada. Besides, as also stated there, the Roman Catholic are already familiar with the accuracy and elegance of the New Revised Standard Version, first published in 1990. This is the true ecumenical

translation, for it was produced by Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Protestant, and Jewish scholars. Though this version is accurate and elegant, it seems bias because it is not appropriate to its original language: Hebrew or Greece. Most of the words there are written in modern sense in which easier for the writer to understand the language.

Second, is the sources in which the books or other writings on the Song of Songs' interpretation are very limited. The writer only gets some books from Widya Sasana Malang Theology Institute which are all written in English with many adopted difficult terms. Thirdly is difficult to find the professional informants to discuss with. The writer has ever asked some priests about the Song. They said that the Song of Songs is the most difficult Book of the Old Testament to be analyzed. The last is the time limitation. The writer has very limited time in developing the thesis.

1.6 Definition of the Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding in reading the results of the study (thesis), there are some important terms that should be defined. These will be explained by the writer to give general picture of the theories related to this study.

1.6.1 Imagery

Knickerbocker (1960:358) defines imagery as the expression of concrete words related to the human five senses to replace the abstract ones in order to enable the reader of a literary work to join in everything experienced by the author. In this thesis, the writer wants to identify the imagery encountered in the

Song of Songs as one of the writer's problem to be identified and determined its meanings.

1.6.2 Figures of Speech

Figures of Speech, also called figurative language, are ways of saying something other than the ordinary way (Perrine: 1969:65). That is the literal meaning of the words under study. A figures of speech involves a comparison between two things: a literal term, or the thing being compared, and a figurative term, or the thing to which the literal term being compared. In this thesis, the writer wants to identify the figures of speech encountered in the Song of Songs

1.6.3 Song of Songs

The Song of Songs is one of the Books of the Old Testament. According to Gabel and Wheeler (1990:99-128) the Old Testament are divided in three parts which are the Pentateuch, the prophetic literature, and the Wisdom Literature. Furthermore they assert that the Song of Songs is included into the Wisdom Literature because it shares the didactic nature of wisdom literature as well as its literary form. The term "Song of Songs" carries the same superlative meaning or sense of the term like "holy of holies" (cf. Daniel chapter 2 verse 37) or "King of kings" (cf. Exodus chapter 26:33). It holds the highest degree meaning as a superlative song or the best song.

The Song of Song, also called Song of Solomon or Canticles (Murphy (1990:3), is a collection of lyrical love poems in which most of them organized as a lengthy dialog between a young woman and her lover. This Song is a celebration

of the joy and passion of love (Garret, Duane A., 1993:375-377). (This explanation will be added in Chapter II).

1.7 The Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter One (I) deals with the Introduction consisting of the Background of the Study, the Statement of the Problem, the Objective of the Study, the Significance of the Study, the Scope and Limitation of the Study, Definition of the Key Terms, and The Organization of the Study. Chapter Two (II) is concerning with the Review of the Related Literature such as, Imagery, and Figurative Language. Chapter Three (III) is dealing with the Methodology that covers The Nature of the Study under report, The Research Design, Data and Data Source, Research Instrument, Procedure of Collecting the Data, and The Data Analysis Procedure. Chapter Four (IV) contains The Findings and Discussion of Findings and Chapter Five (V) is the Conclusion and Suggestions.