

CHAPTER I

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1.1 Background of the Study

By studying a literary work, the students would learn one of the aspects of human life namely man's hard struggle to deal with the hardship of life and human experience such as love, grief, anxiety, hope, hopelessness, and so forth. Besides, it also reveals thoughts and emotions which can increase the students' knowledge, vocabulary, and grammar.

Roberts and Jacobs (1989:2) state that literature enables people to develop into broader cultural, philosophic, and religious world and to recognize human dreams and struggles in different places and times in order to grow mature sensibility for the condition of living things such as human, animal, and vegetable.

The writer has three reasons which make her choose to write this thesis. First, literature gives her knowledge and perception needed to see the beauty in the world. Second, studying literature can also exercise emotions through interest, concern, tension, excitement, hope, fear, regret, laughter, and sympathy so that her mature sensibility will develop. Third, it gives her the

truth of human life that usually happens in this world. It is the reason why the writer would like to discuss a literary study in her thesis.

The writer chooses drama as the subject of her thesis because it differs from other fictions such as poetry, short story, or novel. First, drama needs less time for the readers to read than novel does. Second, drama shows its presentation through actors playing role on the stage which other fictions do not have. Third, drama has always emphasized stories known to the audience so that it is more interesting than other fictions.

Moreover, Perrine (1966:85) says, "A story will be successful only when the characters are dramatized". Little (1966:2), then, adds that there might be no form of literature more popular than drama. It is uncommon literary form that may be treated as literature or as theatre.

Arthur Miller is chosen as the playwright in this study because he is a modern playwright who wins the New York Drama Critics Circle Award in 1947, Pulitzer Prize in 1949, and other appreciations as what Hochman (1984:385) says.

Furthermore Arthur Miller has an intense concern for the ordinary man that he shows in all his plays that

generally reflects man's relationship to society and the issues of personal identity and human dignity (Miller, 1987:555).

Biggsby (1984:136) states that,

Arthur Miller is a playwright who has consistently sought to translate the social world into private anxieties and to trace the connection between personal fallibilities and public betrayals. Because he has chosen to write about a world of moral dilemmas and because he has always proved so sensitive to the pressure of history he has been seen as elevating himself to the position of social conscience.

This is accordance with Porter (1969:ii) who claims Miller is one of America's dramatists and a professional playwright in America society.

The writer takes All My Sons in her study because she is interested in the topic of family as well as the description of each main character. Besides, the writer is also interested in the ideas of humanity in the play. Family, humanity, and social values are presented through the Kellers, Deever, and other characters that show the quality of Arthur Miller.

Hochman (1984:386-387) argues that All My Sons is a play about guilt and responsibility. The security of Chris Keller's middle-class existence is turned into a nightmare when he discovers that his much-loved father, Joe, was responsible, through his part in supplying defective equipment to the Army Air Force, for the deaths

of twenty-one pilots, an offense for which he deliberately allowed his business partner to become the scapegoat. Miller (1987:555) also adds that All My Sons is a play about man's relationship to society represented by the Kellers, the Deeveres, and the issues of the personal identity (Chris) and human dignity (Joe and Kate Keller). The problems are not simple, but they are complex and extended. That is why the play is worth discussing.

The writer is interested in discussing Joe Keller as the protagonist in All My Sons since Miller (1957:35) says that Joe Keller is one of the victimized innocent characters and has a mental flaw. Furthermore, Joe Keller in All My Sons, staged by Elia Kazan (1947) in Arthur Miller's Collected Plays (1957:34), is a criminal in legal sense.

Based on that point of view, the character of Joe Keller must be basically good. He only has a flaw since he too much concerns about his children's life, and wants his children have a better future and education. This makes Joe Keller meet his downfall. Finally, he shoots himself in the end of the play.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

This study is intended to analyze Joe Keller's downfall in Arthur Miller's play, All My Sons. In this

study the writer intends to analyze the protagonist's downfall and his conflicts with other characters. However, the problem discussed is formulated in two questions:

1. For which characters has Joe Keller been a hero?
2. What are the conflicts and the downfall that lead Joe Keller to a tragedy?

1.3 Objective of the Study

In line with the statement of the problem, this study is intended to find out for which characters Joe Keller has been a hero. It is also intended to find the conflicts and the downfall that lead Joe Keller to a tragedy from the literary point of view.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to give significant contribution to the literary research at the English Department of FKIP in studying Literature. It is aimed at making the readers realize about Miller's characters in All My Sons. Also the readers will hopefully be able to understand the play deeper and better. Finally, the readers will hopefully appreciate Miller's work, All My Sons.

1.5. Scope and Limitation of the Study

The discussion of the study will be limited to the main characters. Joe Keller is one of the main characters who brings about his downfall and his conflicts with his sons in Arthur Miller's All My Sons.

Burroways (1992:98) states that characters are the foreground of all fictions, including drama. Supporting Burroway's opinion, Potter (1967:22) also claims that characters are the core of the content of a literary work. Based on that point of view, the writer just limits the discussion of this study on the characters since the characters are the most important subject matter in drama.

1.6 The Definition of Key Terms

Before further discussion, it is better to clarify some key terms applied in this thesis.

1. A Character is a person (or personified, anthropomorphized animal, object, or deity) who acts, appears in a work. It refers to his nature, his attitude toward life and his personality (Bain, Carl E., 1977:500).

In a play a character is created by a playwright to carry action, language, idea, and emotion of the play

(Roberts, 1989:1011).

- 2. A hero is an insignificant figure since he is just an ordinary man. The hero also seems to be confronting the worst elements in himself and in the world (Peck 1984:98). In a drama a hero is usually the protagonist.

Protagonist means a person who takes the leading part or the principal part in a play and becomes the central character in the conflict and action (Perrine, 1966:59). The Protagonist becomes the tragic hero in a tragedy.

Tragedy describes as a type of play which dramatizes the conflict between the protagonist and the laws or limits of life (Barnet, 1992:116) and usually applies to literary especially to dramatic, representation of serious actions which turn out disastrously for the chief character (Abram, 1958:98).

Tragic hero is a man who represents universal character, he is not a passive agent but an active one who becomes the victim of fate. He is usually a man of admirable character but he possesses a flaw or an error (Hatlen, 1967:27).

- 3. A conflict defines as a clash of actions, ideas, desires, or wills. It can also be man-against-man, man-against-environment, and man-against-himself (Perrine, 1966:59).

4. Downfall is a sudden fall from power, reputation, or happiness. In another way, it is the fact that causes someone's destruction or ruin (Webster Dictionary 1986).

1.7 Organization of the Study

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 of the Study, and Definition of Key Terms. Chapter II presents the Review of Related Literature. Chapter III explains the Research Methodology. Chapter IV discusses the Analysis of Joe Keller's Downfall. Finally the whole discussion will be concluded in chapter V.