

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background Of The Study

The courses at the English Department of The Teacher Training Faculty of Unika Widya Mandala are emphasized on language skills, teaching methods, and linguistics. Nevertheless, the literary courses are also given a portion although only 8 credits out of the required 160 credits. Considering the tiny allocation of those courses, only 5% of the entire curriculum, one may conclude that the students do not have plenty opportunities to formally read literary work and practice their analytical ability in literature.

As an art that says something worth saying, literature gives us a better understanding of life in the world around us and embodies our thoughts and feelings, on matters of life's most important issues such as love hatred, peace, war, survival, death, ambition, failure, idealism, and compromise etc. All these ideas according to

Little (1966:2) must be beautifully well arranged, sustained imaginatively, and clearly as well as vividly exposed from the beginning to the end.

Studying literature is important since literary works offer insights and truths, which are very important for one's life. To this point, Perrine (1966:5) says that:

An interpretive literary story presents us with an insight--large or small--into the nature and condition of our existence. It gives us a keener awareness of what it is to be a human being in a universe sometimes friendly, sometimes hostile. It helps us understand our neighbors and ourselves.

Realizing the importance of literature, the writer would like to deepen her knowledge about it by, among others, writing a thesis on literature as a prerequisite to conclude the S1 program.

Drama, one of the literary genres, is quite different from other genres, such as novels or short stories. First, it does not take much time for the readers to read since it is not as long as a novel; however, it represents a story as a novel and a short story do. Little (1966:113) explains that "Drama is a subject to a time limit (say two or three hours) to which the novel is not restricted.Hence, dramatic plots are generally more economical, more

selective than non dramatic plots". Second, a drama presents characters which are shown in dialogues and action, so that drama has a dramatic characterization in which other literary genres do not have. It has a quality to describe human characters and attitudes in action. Little (1966:2) claims that there is probably no form of literature that is more popular than a drama. It is a peculiar literary form of literature which can be read and performed on stage.

Arthur Miller, one of the greatest American playwrights of this century who believes that life has meaning, is a prolific playwright. To Richard (1976:4) "He belongs to that group of committed writers who take a stand on the side of human dignity and oppose any move that adds to the suffering of mankind"

Miller tends to write dramas which deal with moral values, and he is a popular playwright because he has the touch of common speech mingled with democracy, idealism, poetic expression and an ancient people's capacity for understanding the anguish of the soul (see Jean Gould, 1966: 263). Further more Richard (1976:5) explains that his

writings have been admitted in the world of literatures, and he himself has been awarded an Honorary DHL. from the University of Michigan, a Gold Medal for drama from the prestigious National Institute of Arts and Letters.

The Crucible, a tragic drama, is one of Miller's famous plays. It has obviously its own merits from which we can have a good grip of its intrinsic worth, when it ran for over 5000 performances in an Off Broadway revival (Calandra 1968:6). Eventhough it is not his most popular play, it is thought by many critics to be a more unified and superior drama. It won an Antoinette Perry Award (Stanley 1953:5). According to Miller this play has been produced more often than any of his other plays (Welland 1983:5).

The Crucible is a morality play for it concentrates on moral issues and the conflicts between Good and Evil in the concept of a Christian society (Welland:1986:50). It is also essentially a topical drama in which Miller is concerned with what is inside the human heart, the weakness, raw desire and the struggle of a respected farmer who did not like the severity of the Minister's sermon and did not like to attend the church as he thought that the state which was

governed by the Minister was a somewhat corrupted state. He also withdrew himself from society to take care of his family only. In the meantime when his wife was sick he was tempted by his servant, a young beautiful girl, who lusted after him. The farmer committed adultery with the girl, whom he actually did not love. His adultery was probably not more than a moment of passion prompted by impetuosity that characterizes his other actions and speeches (Welland 1983:51). The young beautiful girl who loved the master very much made a revenge by accusing the master of being a witch (Calandra 1968:27). The Puritan society who would not allow any person standing against the church, and feared of witches very much, finally prosecuted the master, the common countryman, to be hung (Calandra:43-44).

As a good playwright Miller portrayed a variety of people confronting many life's important issues in this play. The problems between the major characters are discussed in such special circumstances that made *The Crucible* have a great appeal as Watts, Jr. (1959:vii) says that "*The Crucible* stands forth as an eloquent statement on the universal subject on the free man's courageous and

never ending fight against mass pressures to make him bow down in conformity". From those problems we can take many lessons and develop our character, enlarge our mind and deepen our insight, because these problems are all true that might actually happen in the world as what Jaffe (1966:11) states that "Fiction, at any rate, does not exist merely for entertainment; indeed, the most effective fiction might be defined as that fiction which interprets honestly and intelligently a genuine human problem".

Being aware of the basic problems described in this drama, the writer is interested in discussing the problems or issues that the major characters are confronted with.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

"There is an infinite range of human relationships, any of which may be the basis of a work of literature. Among the most generally interesting relationships are those of love and power,no account of a story is complete that does not make clear the human relationship it portrays" (Little,1966:90) Acknowledging this matter the writer would like to focus the study on the human issues, confronted by

the major characters. Two research questions concerning this were formulated as follows:

1. What human issues are presented in Miller's play, *The Crucible*?
2. What roles do the main characters play in creating those issues.

1.3. Objectives Of The Study

The objectives of this study were directly derived from the statements above. As such, this study intended to

1. Describe the human issues presented in Arthur Miller's play "*The Crucible*".
2. Describe the roles that the main characters' play in creating those issues.

1.4. Significance Of The Study

This study is expected to give some contribution to the students of the English Department of Widya Mandala University in analyzing a literary work. Since mastery of literature is a partial requirement for the students of English Department to finish their study in this university, while the credit allocation for literature is

so tiny as compared to the whole credits, the writer hopes this work can be a model for those who have willingness in analyzing a drama or play.

As this study processes an analysis of the human problems, the results are expected to enable the students to analyses the human problems in other plays. By studying this work, students are expected to automatically develop their literary knowledge and analytical abilities, concerning especially with the human problems presented in a drama.

1.5. Limitation Of The Study

Considering the primary human problems that "*The Crucible*" deals with, this study was limited to the discussion of, the human issues which involve a number of characters. So the discussion starts with an issue in which a number of characters are involved.

1.6. Definition Of Key Terms

Analysis : is separation of a book, character, or situation into parts possibly with comment and

judgement (A.S. Hornby, 1974:29).

Character : a reasonable facsimile of a human being, with all the good and bad traits of being human (Roberts & Jacobs, 1986:56).

Characteristic: a special and easily recognized quality of someone or something (Longman, 1987:161).

Characterization: process of characterizing (Longman, 1987:161).

Drama/Play : is a special fiction which has plot, characters, and dialogues and it issues words to create action through the dialogue of the characters (Scholes 1978:731)

Human Issues : This term refers to the issues that are encountered by the characters. In a tragic drama, these issues are "incidents arousing pity and fear" (Quinton 1963:194). These incidents represents "the terrible side of life" (p.198). They are referred to as misfortunes, sufferings, or disasters (p.196).

Literary Appreciation: is a recognition of a literary work through feeling and spiritual sensitivity,

and understanding and confession of beautiful values expressed by the writer (Gove, 1969:169).

Protagonist : is one who takes the leading part of the principal part in a play and becomes the central character in the conflict and the action (Perrine 1966:59)

Puritanism : is practices and beliefs of a Puritan, a member of a division of the Protestant Church which wanted simpler forms of church ceremony or person who is strict in morals and religion, who looks upon fun and pleasure as sinful and who believes that all people should work hard always.

Role : It refers to a position occupied by an individual. The role assumed by an individual is defined in the context of other roles that are performed by other individuals (Schaefer and Lamm 1986:113-114). These individuals share a set of expectations (Johnson 1986:90). For example, Mary and George are

playing the roles of doctor and patient. Mary's role is associated with being a doctor because George fulfills the role associated with being a patient. Each has expectations, such as Mary will help George get well and George will pay for her services. These expectations affect how they feel, think, and believe.

Tragedy : is a type of play in which the protagonist is defeated (Potter 1967:139) and usually dramatizes the conflict between the protagonist and the laws or limits of life (Barnet 1992:116).

1.7. Organization Of The Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter 1, elaborates the writer's reasons for choosing "*The Crucible*" as the topic of her study. Chapter 2, relates the underlying theories for the analysis of the study. Chapter 3, describes the methodology of the thesis in which the writer describes the way she provides in conducting her study.

Chapter 4 the analysis of the study where the writer brings up several elements of human issues as depicted in the drama. These issues are supported by quotations from the drama so as to supplement critical and textual analysis. Finally chapter 5 ends the study in the form of a conclusion of the study and suggestion for further studies.

To summarize, chapter I deals with the background of the study. It mentions that literary analysis increases awareness of human problems. So, it is important to study human problems and the characters' roles in creating those problems. This study is a good exercise for students for literary appreciation. To carry out this study, a number of definitions are needed. They are the definitions of issues, roles, and characters.