

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Literature is the reflection of human's mind in order to express feelings, opinions, and ideas. Dr. Johnson stated that 'great literature was universal and expresses the general truth about human life' (Dr. Johnson in Selden and Widdowson 1993). Hardjana (1991) also says that literature is the revelation of what humans have witnessed and experienced especially the most interesting part.

Literary works are created by the authors not only to express feeling, opinions, and ideas but also at the end to be read by the readers. While reading literary works, readers not only enjoy what they read but also can move into a further step that is judging those works. According to Aminuddin (1987:20) readers connect their mind and feeling critically to find and develop a concept by comparing the context of literary works with knowledge, experience and other reality known by the readers to give identification, comparison, summary, and judgment. From the explanation above, it is obvious that there is a relationship between literary texts and readers.

Reader-response theories emerge to answer the relationship between literary texts and readers. Iser states that 'literary texts always contain blank which only the readers can fill' (Iser in Selden and Widdowson 1993). Rosenblatt (in McManus retrieved in 2005) shared similar thought with Iser. She believes that meaning emerges from the transaction between readers and texts.

From the statements above, the writer assumes that reader-response theories view that text cannot be understood as an isolated material; readers should

2. finding the factors contributing to readers' understanding of the issues they grasp from the short stories.

#### 1.4 Limitation of the Problems

The scope of this study is limited on the students' response to the short stories collection of Sobron Aidit entitled *Razia Agustus*. The response is mainly focused on three short stories namely: *Razia Agustus*, *Bu Tam*, and *Ziarah*.

#### 1.5 Methodology

This research is qualitatively designed by employing descriptive method. Gay (in Halida 2001) states

A descriptive method of research that involves collecting data in order to test hypothesis or to answer question concerning to current status of the subject of the study. The descriptive study determines and reports the things are.

The method is chosen because it is the most appropriate methodology for the research. There are three short stories chosen as the texts to which the readers are asked to give their response which are: *Razia Agustus*, *Bu Tam* and *Ziarah*. Those short stories are taken from a collection of short stories entitled *Razia Agustus* by Sobron Aidit. The writer chooses *Razia Agustus* because it tells the author's life experience and shows some historical facts. Since it is based on true story, the writer believes that the readers will be engaged more deeply with the texts.

The first short story, *Razia Agustus*, tells how main character 'aku' is intimidated by some military persons because his relationship with 'bang Amat'. 'Bang Amat' is his oldest brother who involved in a movement to seize control from the government.

The second short story, *Bu Tam*, tells a story of a 60-years-old and hunchbacked woman. She and her husband are opposed to the government. They were tortured in prison. However after a few time, she was released while her husband was still imprisoned. The bad treatments that she experienced were the reason why she is crooked. Although she passed many hard times, but she never gives up.

The third short story, *Ziarah*, tells about the disappointment of 'aku' to the government. Orde Baru administration discriminate people who have the relationship with 'bang Amat'. He believes that he and his relatives are the victims of their generation.

### **1.5.1 Subjects**

The population of the respondents in this study is the 5<sup>th</sup> semester (Education A class) of an English Department of a university in Bandung. The total population is 25 students. Using purposive sampling, the writer takes 10 students as samples.

### **1.5.2 The Technique of Data Collection**

In collecting the data, two steps are carried out:

#### **1. Distributing questionnaires**

The questionnaire is the guideline to gain data of the respondents. Richards et al. (in Wray et al. 1998:167) define a questionnaire as a set of question on a topic or group of topic designed to be answered by a respondents. The questionnaire is the written responses of the respondents.

## 2. Interview

The interview transcription is supporting data. It emphasizes the data taken from the questionnaire. The purposes of interview are to discover additional information which cannot be achieved by using other method and to confirm the validity of the respondents' answer. It is person-to-person interview and divided into two sections. The interview is recorded and later transcribed.

### 1.5.3 The Procedure of Data Analysis

The data are gathered from the respondents by asking them to give response to questionnaires and interview. They are then categorized to make comparison among those categories.

The respondents' statements are put in tables according to the category previously made. Each response's statement from each respondent is available for further analysis. The writer will also discuss the findings based on the writer's understanding toward the related theories provided in chapter II.

### 1.6 Significance of the Study

The study is expected to give contribution and inputs for the development of the literature subjects in the English Department of Indonesia University of Education and for whom who interested on investigating reader response.

### 1.7 Clarification of the Main Terms

In this study, there are several terms that need to be elaborated.

- Reader response theory is one of the literary theories which emphasizes on the roles of the reader, the text, and social or cultural context shaping the transaction between reader and the text (Beach 1990).
- From reader-response perspectives, literature is seen as a performative art and each reading is a performance, analogous to playing/singing a musical work, enacting a drama, etc. Literature exists when it is read; meaning is an event (McManus retrieved in 2005).
- According to the New Lexicon Dictionary of Basic Words (1991) to 'respond' means to (1) to answer; to reply or (2) to act in answer; to show some action or effect as if in answer. In this research, the readers are responding to literary texts.
- Short story is a brief fictional prose narrative to be distinguished from larger, more expansive narrative forms such as novel, epic, saga and romance. Relating to the study, the writer chooses three short stories: *Razia Agustus*, *Bu Tarn* and *Ziarah* as the short stories that the readers are asked to give their response. The short stories are taken from a collection of short stories by Sobron Aidit.
- Issue is subject for discussion (Oxford Learner's Pocket Dictionary 1995). In this study issue refers subject for discussion in the short stories.

### 1.8 Organization of the Paper

This paper is presented in five chapters. First, chapter I is an introduction that discussed background of the study, statements of problems, aims of the study,

limitation of the problems, methodology, subjects, techniques of data collection, procedure of data analysis, significance of the study, clarification of the main terms and organization of the paper. Second, chapter II reviews theoretical framework that relevant to the present study such as reader response theories, literary reading, responding to literature, issues on literature, factors contributing to readers' understanding. Third, chapter III explains the methodology of the research. It discusses research design, data collection and data analysis. Fourth, chapter IV provides findings of the study, the analysis of the findings and also the discussion. The last, chapter V provides the result of the study in a form of conclusions and suggestions.