

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Literature has become one of the instruments for people to deliver their messages to others. Canning (1987) states that people write literature to share their thought about their real life, experience and imagination. They express the ideas which they think is appropriate to share with the readers in many sort of literary works. The readers are interested in getting involved in the situation or setting and they are able to imagine the characters and characterization which are provided in the story because literature introduces us to a new world of experience.

According to Peck and Coyle (1986), in talking about literature, we are directly or indirectly, talking about language and the way in which language is used. It might seem easier to concentrate on the content of a text, but we can never ignore, or at least should try not to ignore, the fact that literary texts are built out of words. Richard as cited in Peck and Coyle (1986) argues that language used in literature is in emotive way – that is in a skilful way to arouse an emotional response in the reader. He says that the use of the word ‘emotive’ in particular tends to encourage the idea that a discussion of literary language is concerned with the emotional effect a text has upon a reader rather than with the meaning of the words.

Esther Lombardi (2000) states that literature is used to describe anything from creative writing to more technical or scientific works, but the term is most

commonly used to refer to works of the creative imagination, including works of poetry, drama, fiction, and nonfiction. A text must possess particular quality before it can be considered literature (Bressler, 1994). Such quality is an appealing aesthetic which contributes to literature's primary aim: telling a story. The subject of this story is particularly human describing and detailing a variety of human experiences. Bressler (1994) also states that literature concretizes an array of human values, emotions, actions and ideas in the story form. Ultimately, we may discover meanings in literature by looking at what the author says and how he or she says about it.

Literature is an art and imaginative creation that can tell truths gracefully, subtly through narrative, poetry and the movement of characters on a stage (Robertson Davies, 1992). Any imaginative act suggests possibility, and this is another reason to continue studying literature. Studying literature is important especially for English literature students to gain some information and knowledge about human real life and experience which are expressed within the form of the author's imagination.

According to John Philips (2002), the borders of literature are challenged by the ideas that all texts share common traits, for instance that they all are constructed of rhetorical, tropic, linguistic and narrative elements. Besides, he says that all experience in literature can be viewed as a text: experience insofar as it is knowable is consequently symbolically configured, and human activity and even perception is both constructed and known through the conventions of social practice; hence as a constructed symbolic field experience is textual.

One of literary works that becomes the subject of this research is the short stories. Short story is a kind of literary works that is included to fiction, particularly prose fiction, and is considered as a short fiction if it is compared to novel. The short story is like shooting at a moving target with cannon that can only be pointed in one direction (Hawthorn: 2001).

Edgar Allen Poe as cited in Carpenter (1974) says that in order to achieve a compressed unity, the short story generally limits its scope to a single event, a single emotion, a single impression and a small number of characters. So the story's effect must be sudden, powerful, revealing; whereas a novel can involve readers at a more leisurely pace, slowly illuminating complexities and nuances. Thorough understanding of a story, then, depends not only on reading with focused attention, but also it depends on knowledge of technique fiction and the elements of a short story.

A short story is chosen in conducting this study because it has some certain elements that are able to assist the writer to be more familiar with the content of the stories. Reading skill is required as the basic language ability to comprehend the story and to find some textual evidences that become the data to be analyzed in this study.

Literary theory is the body of ideas and methods we use in the practical reading of literature. By literary theory, we refer not to the meaning of a work of literature but to the theories that reveal what literature can mean. Literary theory is a description of the underlying principles one might say the tools, by which we attempt to understand literature (Brewton, 2002). The writer then is interested in conducting a literary analysis based on Feminist Literary Criticism. It may be

applied on woman writings to see how female authors would like to express their thought of patriarchal system in society.

Existentialist feminism is used to analyze the subjects of the research. It looks at the issues that females face daily as a result of their being born as women. Austine Cline (1998) said that women are forced to find a balance between their need to be heard and to express so that the men do not feel hurt or unimportant. It is like saying a woman has to accommodate for men. She has to act dim-witted so that the male lot can feel superior. If she does not do that, she will not be seen as feminine, no men will want to marry her, she will be alone for the rest of her life, or she will be seen as masculine.

Concerning the assumptions above, the writer choose two short stories entitled “The Other Two” and The Descent of Man” written by Edith Wharton because those stories have a potential to be considered as feminist text. The writer then would like to analyze the main issue raised in both selected stories that is the manifestation of love. The analysis will focus on the husband and the wife’s view about marriage and the relationship between two individual in the marriage. The writer is interested in this issue because she is willing to see whether the conflict that emerges in the husband and wife relations really influences their manifestation of love and how the husband and wife resolve the conflict to uphold their marriage.

This analysis is expected to strengthen the writer’s sensitivity especially toward literary works that will be analyzed. It is also hoped that the findings from this analysis would gain the sense of consciousness and to improve critical reading and thinking.

1.2 Reasons For Choosing The Topic

There are some reasons for choosing Edith Wharton's short stories. Edith Wharton is a female writer who aims to create "situation" from which to drive "a shaft straight into the heart of experience" in producing short stories. The story itself should aim at achieving a powerful effect. She has published many novels and eighty-six short stories.

However, the writer only choose two short stories entitled "The Descent of Man" and "The Other Two", for those short stories can be analyzed based on existentialist feminist perspective. The writer would like to see Edith Wharton as a female writer or producer of textual meaning try to establish a female literary tradition and to tell us how female experience has been reflected in literature for ages written by woman.

In addition, by conducting this research, it is expected that the pattern of short stories created by Edith Wharton can be revealed. The pattern is how Edith Wharton reflects women characters in male-female relationship and how she elaborates the issues which are encountered by women characters in the selected short stories.

Besides, the writer attempts to find out how the husband and wife view the manifestation of love in their marriage that becomes the main topic of this research. The characteristics and the attitudes of the characters are also highlighted to see the implications of marriage through the eyes of the husband and wife in the stories.

In implementing this research, the writer expects to be familiar with literature, for the writer is inspired to be a female writer who is able to produce

some literary works such as short story and novel. Furthermore, the writer is interested in expressing the idea, thought and feeling based on woman's experience and situation.

1.3 The Scope of the Study

In this research, the writer analyzes short stories that present the relationship between the husband and wife in the marriage within the story. The writer limits the research on the analysis of feminist issues focusing on the manifestation of love and the husband-wife's view about marriage, as evidenced in the stories.

1.4 Research Question

This study attempts to analyze the short stories by using Feminist theory. To guide the study into more detailed explanation, the writer bases the research question:

- How do the texts construct the manifestation of love in husband and wife relations?

1.5 Aims of the Study

This study scrutinizes the issue of feminism as analyzed from short stories by Edith Wharton. Moreover, by conducting the study, the writer aims to reveal the manifestation of love in husband and wife relations based on existentialist feminism which is highlighted:

1. To identify how the husband and wife view about their marriage.

2. To identify the attitudes that the husband and wife do to uphold their marriage;

1.6 Research Procedure

The short stories are analyzed by the framework of qualitative case study. Fraenkel & Waller (1993) state that qualitative research focuses on specific situations or people and it emphasizes on words rather than numbers.

This study could be categorized into a qualitative case study because it dealt with a single phenomenon or knowledge. This is relevant to the characteristics of a case study, as stated by Merriam (1988, p.16) in Nunan (1992, p.77) that qualitative case study could be defined as an intensive, holistic and analysis of a single entity, phenomenon or social unit that is the manifestation of love in husband and wife relations presented in the short stories.

Library research technique is also used in doing this research in order to find numbers of books, journals, articles and other sources that have correlation to the topic of the study.

1.7 Data Resources

Data is organized information derived from the subject of the research as the result of observation and close reading. This analysis of short stories is supported by some resources from books and on line articles that are, indeed, close related to Feminist Literary Criticism.

1.8 Clarification of Terms

Some terms are clarified to prevent misunderstanding. The terms are:

- **Existentialist feminism** is a theory developed by French writer Simone de Beauvoir in the twentieth century which states that the woman is not always powerless and does not always need to be dependent in a male-female relationship. (Simone de Beauvoir, 1949).
- **Marriage** is the destiny traditionally offered to women by society. The institution of marriage is a union freely entered upon by the consent of two independent persons; the obligation of the two contracting parties are personal and reciprocal (Beauvoir, 1949).

1.9 The Organization of the Paper

Chapter 1 : Introduction

This chapter will elaborate what is being discussed and analyzed, the aims of this research and reasons why the writer conducts the study. It comprises background, the scope of the study, statements of problem, aims of the study, research procedure, data resources, clarification of terms and organization of the paper.

Chapter 2 : Theoretical Foundation

This chapter covers some theories which are related to the research. Those theories are about short stories, the husband's view and the wife's view about marriage, the manifestation of love, the husband and wife relations, feminist

literary criticism, existentialist feminism (*The Second Sex* by Simone de Beauvoir)

Chapter 3 : Research Methodology

This chapter deals with description of method applied to the study, research procedure, subject of the research, technique of data collection and technique of data analysis.

Chapter 4 : Findings and Discussion

This chapter comprises data presentation, findings and discussion of the research.

Chapter 5 : Conclusion and Suggestions

This chapter covers conclusions and suggestions which are related to the research.

