

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **I.1. Background of the study**

The thesis writer chooses George Bernard Shaw's plays for her thesis because George Bernard Shaw is one of the Anglo-Irishmen who has contributed so brilliantly to English Literature (Norton 1441). One of the critics, Nehru of India said that "Shaw was not only one of the greatest figures of the age but one who influenced the thoughts of vast number of human beings during two generations" (Adam 11).

Ruth Adam says in her book What Shaw Really Said, that the way Shaw wrote his play was unique since he

did not care in the rules of writing. For example in his Heartbreak House Shaw describes one of his characters who *fight a desperate duel with an imaginary antagonist and when he beat the imaginary antagonist, he sheates his sword.*" In this sentence, there are grammatical mistakes, but this is his style in writing his play. This is also why the thesis writer is interested in Bernard Shaw, because the thesis writer thinks that it is some kind of Shaw's rebellion toward the grammatical rules. It seems that Shaw wants to emphasize that there are too many rules in life and even in writing. It seems that Shaw wants to show that the rules can make someone feel bored because the rules have tied someone so that he/she can not express his/her feeling freely. Therefore, from his writing, Shaw wants to show that eventhough he does not care about the rules in writing, still his plays are accepted by the public.

The other reason why the thesis writer chooses George Bernard Shaw is because the writer is interested in the background of Shaw's struggle to become a famous playwright as he is. The thesis writer finds out that he comes from an inharmonious family. From the book written by Ruth Adam, What Shaw Really Said, the writer can take a conclusion that Shaw had experienced

discouraging times in his life. George Bernard Shaw came from a broken family where Shaw, his mother, and his sisters were abandoned by his father who was a drunkard (13). Shaw was sixteen when his mother finally left her husband and went to live in London and since that time, Shaw had to earn his own money in order to survive. Since Shaw came from an inharmonious family, the thesis writer can conclude that it is the reason why Shaw considers that marriage is just a virtual world. It is also not surprising if somehow Shaw uses the inharmonious family experience as one of his themes for his plays.

Another reason why the thesis writer chooses Bernard Shaw is because Bernard Shaw is a very productive playwright and he had been offered the Nobel Prize as one of the greatest playwrights (Adam 12). His talent in criticizing the society in 1911 through his plays is acknowledged by the public so that he was offered the Nobel Prize.

George Bernard Shaw had written a lot of plays, but the writer is interested in choosing Heartbreak House for her thesis. The thesis writer is eager to analyze Heartbreak House due to the critics that say that Heartbreak House is an unsuccessful play from Bernard Shaw (Magill 1496). Eventhough the performance

was unsuccessful, the thesis writer is interested in the way he criticizes the condition of the society in the beginning of the twentieth century. This play had been written in 1913 but the play was not published until 1919 and finally performed by the Theatre Guild on November 12, 1920.

The other reason why the thesis writer is interested to analyze Heartbreak House is because this play was written when Shaw himself felt mournful and hopeless. His bad feeling happened because of an accident near his house that killed one of his neighbors, but no one cared about the incident or even to the neighbor who was killed. That is why Shaw was so mournful and hopeless toward the incident, because it seems that the society in the beginning of twentieth century were really selfish toward the incident and also toward their dead neighbor. Although he was mournful, still Shaw could take the incident as an inspiration for writing Heartbreak House and he combined the incident with his background of his inharmonious family in it. In Heartbreak House Shaw creates a character that symbolized his dead neighbor, that is Alfred Mangan, who was also killed because of a falling bomb. Moreover, he pictures the selfish society in the play as Hesione's family who also did

not care about the dead of Alfred Mangan. The event that happens in Shaw's neighborhood shows that there are also some kind of inharmonious relationship among the people since they do not care about each other. That is why a critic says that Heartbreak House suggests the depiction of the imminent collapse of a civilization (Norton 1443). What the critic means is that Heartbreak House describes Shaw's predictions of the downfall of the civilization. The more civilized a society is, it comes closer to the downfall, because the members of the society do not care anymore about the others but themselves.

Since Shaw uses his inharmonious experience in his family and society, it is not surprising if the thesis writer finds out that the major problem in his Heartbreak House is also an inharmonious relationship between the main characters. In Heartbreak House, one of the main female characters, Hesione Hushabye, is married to a handsome person named Hector Hushabye. Hesione should be happy to have such a handsome and romantic spouse like Hector Hushabye, however, it is not enough for Hesione since she is not satisfied with her marriage. The same thing also happens to Hector Hushabye. He should be happy to marry such a beautiful and smart woman like Hesione, but still he does not

like to stay at home. Another main female character, Ellie Dunn, is described as a lovely young lady who has engaged to Alfred Mangan, a rich industrialist. Ellie should also be happy because she is going to marry her fiancé, but there is something that makes her dissatisfied. It makes the relationship with her fiancé, Mangan, becomes inharmonious. On the other hand, Mangan also has an affair with the other woman. Mangan is also not satisfied with the engagement. This arouses the thesis writer's curiosity to know how such a "good combination" like what each couple has, makes them dissatisfied.

### **I.2. Statement of The Problem**

The thesis writer is curious to know why the main characters feel dissatisfied with their relationships.

### **I.3. Purpose of the Study**

The thesis writer would like to discuss the main reasons of the main characters' inharmonious relationships.

#### **I.4. Importance of the Study**

The thesis writer hopes that the readers will learn more beyond the possible reasons of inharmonious relationship in marriage life through Heartbreak House. Unconditional love, understanding and communication perhaps are the keys to a healthy marriage.

The thesis writer hopes that the readers, especially the students of the Faculty of Letters will know and be interested in George Bernard Shaw because most of his plays are about criticism and description of the condition of the society where he belongs.

#### **I.5. Scope and Limitation**

In her thesis, the thesis writer wants to focus her study on the inharmonious relationship that happens among the main characters as her topic. In this play there are two couples who experience their inharmonious relationship. Therefore, the thesis writer limits the discussion by analyzing the conflicts that happen between Hesione and Hector Hushabye, and also between Ellie Dunn and Alfred Mangan. Other characters mentioned are used to support the analysis on the reasons of the inharmonious marriages.

## **I.6. Methodology**

In writing her thesis, first of all, the writer does the library research to find some data about George Bernard Shaw and collect other supporting data such as, articles, and critics which are related to Heartbreak House and her topic. Furthermore, the writer will use the theory of conflict in order to analyze the clash of ideas, desires, and hopes as the possible reasons why Hesione and Hector Hushabye, Ellie Dunn and Alfred Mangan feel that their relationship are not harmonious.

## **I.7 Organization of the Study**

The first chapter of this thesis is the introduction which consists of the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the importance of the study, the scope and limitation, the methodology and the last is the organization of the study. The second chapter is the review of related literature, which is the literary theory on conflict. The third chapter is the analysis on the reasons of the inharmonious relationships as



seen through the main characters' conflicts. The fourth chapter is the conclusion which includes the answer of the statement of the problem, which are the thesis writer's finding. The last parts are bibliography and appendix which consist of the synopsis and the biography.