

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Literature is a “performance in words.” It has in it an element of entertaining display, and surely we expect literature to be in some sense entertaining, or, to put it in slightly different terms, to afford pleasure (Barnet, 1963, p.1). Another definition on literature is writings in which expression and form, in connection with ideas and concerns of universal and apparently permanent interest, are essential features. The term is correctly reserved for prose and verse of acknowledged excellence, the value of which lies in its intense, personal, and superb expression of life in its varied meanings (Shaw, 1972, p.223). The types of literature are prose, drama, and poetry. The type of literature that the thesis writer chooses is drama.

Drama is a composition in prose or verse presenting in pantomime and dialogue a narrative involving and usually designed for presentation on a stage. Drama, derived from a Greek word (*dran*) meaning “to do,” “to act,” was referred to by Aristotle as “imitated human action,” a definition that remains serviceable (Shaw, 1972, p.123). Another source says that drama is a literary and representational art. As literary art, a play is a fiction made out of words. It has a plot, characters, and dialogue. But it is a special kind of fiction – a fiction acted out rather than narrated. As representational art, it offers us a direct presentation of its reality (Scholes, 1971, p.1-2). So drama has two advantages, it can be enjoyed by reading it as a complete script and also by seeing it as an act on a stage that imitated human action in the daily life. The thesis writer chooses drama as her thesis because of those two advantages, and drama help us experience the duality of human nature (judge and accused, oppressed and oppressor, lover and rival) by connecting us with our dislikes as well as our likes (Scanlan, 1988, p.8). The last reason is because drama has driven away the thesis writer so deep in emotional and spiritual manner.

The drama that the thesis writer wants to discuss is from Singapore. The Singapore literature was influenced by the British literature because Singapore had been under the British rules up to the year 1957 (Leong, 2000,

p.126). At first, it was poetry that flourished in Singapore during the fifties. But then, drama gains its recognition and dominates the Singapore literature in English in the nineties by having official approval and encouragement in the form of regular Drama Festivals (now converted into the biennial Festival of Asian Performing Arts), the Arts-in-Education program in schools, and the biennial Festival of Arts (Leong, 2000, p.132). The Singapore literature in English has flourished, especially Drama, until nowadays. That is why the thesis writer chooses Singaporean drama as her thesis.

The thesis writer chooses Stella Kon because she is a Singapore's famous playwright as the reporter Richard Lord has said in "Konfrontation and Konversion: Stella Kon gets her groove back" (Lord, 2002, ¶. 1). Kon has written and published dozens of plays, poetry, short stories, and novels. Her works are: A Breeding Pair, 1971; The Bridge, 1977 (a play); Trial, 1982 (a play); Emily of Emerald Hill, 1983 (a play); Dragon's Teeth Gate, 1986 (a play); Eston, 1995 (a novel); Dracula and Other Stories, 2000; Silent Song and Other Plays, 2000; Butterflies Don't Cry and Other Plays, 2000; The Scholar and The Dragon 2000 (a novel); The Immigrant and Other Plays, 2000; and Emporium and Other Plays, 2000. Kon has won the Singapore National Playwriting Competition three times. First; for The Bridge in 1977, second; for Trial in 1982, and; Emily of Emerald Hill in 1983. Stella Kon also has won a merit prize in the Singapore Literary Competition for her novel Eston in 1994. Moreover, some reviewers also said that she has a firm grasp of the changing faces of Singapore: political, social, cultural, linguistic and historical, which she projects via the different genres (A Glimps Into Stella Kon's Past, 2001).

The thesis writer chooses Emily of Emerald Hill as her source of the thesis because the play won the First Prize in the National Play-Writing Competition 1983. Since then, eight different performers, in Singapore, Malaysia, Hawaii, and Edinburgh, have presented it more than a hundred times and it has been translated into Chinese and Japanese and broadcasted over Radio Iceland. And because according to Le Blond, who directed the Singapore production has said that with Emily, English drama in Singapore lost its fear of 'being itself' (Le Blond, 1986, p.119). Another reason why the thesis writer is

interested in the character of the story itself is that the character seems to be found in everyday life of the thesis writer as Leow Puay Tin, the first actress to play the role of Emily, has remarked that the character of Emily 'is popular because she is credible -many can identify with her' (Emily, 1989, p.91). The last reason that thesis writer chooses Emily of Emerald Hill as her source of the thesis is because the thesis writer admires Emily, as the main character of this drama, who does anything to maintain her position as a good mother, a good daughter-in-law, and a good wife in her patriarchal family.

Emily of Emerald Hill, which is a monologue play, tells about a poor Chinese girl that has been thrown away by her mother after her father's death. Her mother did that, because Emily was a burden to her. From that time on, Emily lived with one relative or another. With her relatives, she lived an unhappy life for they treated her like a slave. From those experiences, Emily concludes that a woman is nothing in this world created by men, except in the role that men demand of her. From this conclusion, she made up her mind to have significant life by being a good wife and a good mother that looks after her husband and family, does everything for them so that husband and son and sisters-in-law depend on her. By doing that, she thought that there would be no one to throw her back into the gutter for they need her so much (Kon, 2002, p.49). And then, she gets a chance to carry out her beliefs in her husband's family, which has a patriarchal system. In order to survive in that family, she uses many ways until she succeeds to become a good daughter-in-law, a good mother, a good wife according to the patriarchal values, and become the owner of Emerald Hill.

The thesis writer is interested in choosing the topic of Emily's struggles to survive in patriarchal family, because the thesis writer sees the smart efforts of Emily in managing the whole family, as a daughter-in-law, as a wife, and as a mother. Even though Emily is facing many problems since she has entered Emerald Hill, she is struggling to change her condition as the child "from the gutter," as the reviewer: Sulin Chee has said (Chee, 1999, ¶. 3).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In the play of Stella Kon's Emily of Emerald Hill, the thesis writer sees how a woman struggles to survive in a man's world. Therefore, the thesis writer wants to know in what ways Emily is able to survive in her environment with its patriarchal systems and what is the result of her survival attempts.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

Through this thesis, the thesis writer wants to show the ways Emily survives in her patriarchal family by doing so many survival attempts and the result of her survival attempts as seen in Stella Kon's Emily of Emerald Hill.

1.4 Significance of the Study

In this thesis, the thesis writer wants to introduce Stella Kon and her works to the readers. Stella Kon is one of the famous playwrights of Singapore. Most of the Stella Kon's works deal with her society as an Asian society where to tackle patriarchy means 'using every single resource-wit, cunning, sexuality or just by force of will.' (Today, 28 August 2001).

Furthermore, the thesis writer wants to show how a woman lives and struggles to survive in a man's world, to show that a woman can gain a significant role in patriarchal systems through her status that she hold in her family as seen in Emily's characters.

The last reason of the thesis writer in choosing Stella Kon's Emily of Emerald Hill as her thesis is because no one who has discussed this work before. The thesis writer hopes that by discussing this work, the readers will have broader knowledge on Stella Kon's work especially Emily of Emerald Hill.

1.5 Scopes and Limitation

The thesis writer focuses her study on Emily's struggle in Stella Kon's Emily of Emerald Hill. In this thesis, the thesis writer limits her analysis only in Emily for she is the central figure in this monologue. The scope of this thesis is on Emily's attempts as her ways to survive in her patriarchal family.

1.6 Methodology

For this thesis, the thesis writer uses one of Stella Kon's plays entitled Emily of Emerald Hill as the primary source. To analyze this play, the thesis writer uses library research in order to find some theories, which are relevant to the topic. From some books that the thesis writer found, the thesis writer has identified some important definitions and other understanding about her analysis. Through these books, the thesis writer can obtain many materials in supporting her opinions and arguments in the thesis.

Besides using books as the library research, the thesis writer also finds more information from the Internet to find some criticism and some reviews. These criticisms give the thesis writer a good input for analyzing her thesis.

The thesis writer uses literary approach to analyze her topic. Since Emily is a fictional character, the thesis writer needs a literary device namely characterization in order to analyze her dominant traits. Another literary device that the thesis writer wants to use is conflict, which is used to explain the obstacles that Emily has in her family and also to explain the conflicts within Emily herself. The thesis writer discusses some of Emily's qualities that make her continue to survive as the central figure of this story.

1.7 Organization of the Study

The thesis writer divides her thesis into four chapters. The first chapter is introduction, which contains background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation, methodology, and organization of the thesis. The second chapter is review of related literature, which concerns the theories and tools used to analyze the

play. In it, she tries to show Emily's struggle in order to survive in her traditionally male-centered family. The last chapter is conclusion, which contains the answers and concludes the conclusions of the analysis.