CHAPTER I

Introduction

1.1.   Background of the Study

There are some reasons why the thesis writer prefers Washington Irving and
his work to be analyzed. For one thing, Washington Irving's achievement has
aroused the thesis writer's curiosity. Washington Irving is the first **American** to **be**
generally praised in England and has also been an author who has been widely
respected among young writers in his own country, America (Anderson **736**). At
the era when Washington Irving lived, to get such achievement was hard.
American writers at that time faced stiff competition with British authors. In fact,
there was an assumption that American writers' works were considered bad and

tasteless (Hedges 61). Nevertheless, Washington Irving proved that the assumption was not true. Such achievement arouses the thesis writer's interest and attention to know Washington Irving and his works.

Another reason that makes the thesis writer choose Washington Irving is the writer's high regard for Washington Irving's great competence in blending British' and American's way of life. Born as a New Yorker on April *3, 1783,* Irving was known spending most of his life in Europe, mostly in England because of his poor health. His experiences in England influenced most in his writings while his journey enabled him to blend the description of rural England with his understanding of America. His capability to blend them enriches his writings and makes them interesting to read. Because of this, his works have become a fresh interest to American readers in the old home of their forefather (Seton *52-55).*

The thesis writer's awe to Washington Irving's capability in painting characters and manner is another reason why the thesis writer chooses Washington Irving. The thesis writer agrees with Mc Dermott that Washington Irving had "a desire to paint characters and manners only in detail'' from the moment he began writing (Mc Dermott 6). That Washington Irving wanted to observe people and to sketch them in their everyday moments is clearly seen in one of his principal works, *The Sketch Book.* The thesis writer recognizes how Washington Irving pictured and described how every common got through his or her life. At this point, after Washington Irving observed people, he skillfully sketched them. Mc. Dermott also says that Washington Irving had given a new idea of what literature can be at that age; it is to be the observer who is sharply interested but no personally involved. Later, such statement made him called the

American's first classic that had a superb talent for genre painting, who painted life as it was not as it ought to be; who watched people in their typical and ordinary activities; and who formed appearance that created essence.

The ***Sketch Book,*** which is a collection of short stories, contains thirty-three short stories, and the most famous ones are *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* and *Kip Van Winkle* –two of which are widely and outstandingly known by American people from all ages and, thus, are considered as legendary tales. In other words, they are considered classical stories, since people from different ages and from all over the world enjoy them. Therefore, the thesis writer chooses *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* for its capability of transcending through times in past, present, and future. People, regardless the time, enjoy this story much. The thesis writer agrees with a critic named M. Thomas Inge, who said,

> Washington Irving could be said as a writer who remained in print and part of the reading matter of the general populace ever since he began writing. Washington Irving knew how to write for the widest possible reading audience, and not just for his own time but also seemingly for the ages (17).

Further, in his work entitled　　　　　　　　　 *Fable*, M. Thomas Inge adds,

> There have been many other American writers of greater originality, intelligence and skill, who have dealt with more profound themes and weightier subject matter, but few have managed also to sustain the willing attention and to give obvious reading pleasure to so many generations (18).

From that quotation, the thesis writer comprehends how Washington Irving's works are really enjoyed by every generation, especially from his bestseller *book, The Sketch Book.*

Actually, his father, Mr. William Irving, indirectly caused Washington Irving's great development in literary work. Mr. William Irving was very strict about literature. Mr. William Irving forbade Washington Irving to read literary work because he thought that literary work was wicked. Nonetheless, Mr. William Irving had a library that was full of books from Elizabethan age. In this case, the more his father forbade him, the more curious Washington Irving was. Thus, Washington Irving often read secretly the books and was delighted with the works of Chaucer and Spencer. It is true that those elder great poets had influenced and taught him, "the art of heightening his genial humor with poetic graces, and from both he might have learned a freer mastery over his native English than the somewhat the formal taste of that day encouraged" (Bryant **6**)**.** Later, such way of thinking enriched Washington Irving's mind and influenced much to his works till he is called the first American literary humorist. (http://www.csustan.edu/english/reuben/pal/chap3/irving.html)

According to George E. Woodberry, Irving composed *two* different kinds *of* stories. One is his realistic story, which seeks objectively to deal with real places, events, or persons. An example of this type of story is *The Alhambra.* The other is an impressionist story, which is a tale shaped and given meaning through the narrator. The example is *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* (1**38**)**.**

The idea of *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* is actually in Washington Irving's mind for years and later is blended with the borrowed theme from German

folktale and the folk material from Dutch settlement into a well-known short story. Then, Irving's *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* is assumed to be one of the American folklores. This story is about the headless horseman who haunts the Sleepy Hollow region. The main character, Ichabod Crane, is afraid of that headless horseman so that Brom Bones, as Ichabod's rival in love who wants to get rid of him, plays tricked to mock at him by terrifying **him** with a pumpkin that appears to be a severe head (Smith 138). In short, Ichabod's characters, later on, lead him to his self-destruction.

The thesis writer is going to analyze Ichabod's characters and conflicts. The thesis writer agrees with Norman L. Munn that the most distinctive feature of any individual is his personality, which refers to the whole individual. In *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, the thesis writer is interested in analyzing Ichabod's characters in such a way that the thesis writer can answer the problem in this thesis; it is how Ichabod Crane's characters can lead him to his self-destruction. In addition, the thesis writer is also interested in analyzing the internal and external conflicts that Ichabod faces because of the incompatibility between Ichabod's characters and the ethical values. For sure, Ichabod's conflicts are also the factors that lead Ichabod to his self-destruction.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Based on the explanation above, the thesis writer wants to know Ichabod Crane's characters and conflicts, and how they lead him into self-destruction.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The thesis writer's main purpose is to reveal Ichabod Crane's characters and conflicts, and in what way his characters and conflicts lead him into self-destruction.

1.4 Importance of the Study

The thesis writer hopes that firstly, this thesis can help the readers, especially the students of the Faculty of Letters, be acquainted with Washington Irving as one of the great American writers. Secondly, by studying one of Washington Irving's short stories, the thesis writer hopes that this study will inspire other students to choose short stories as important objects to be analyzed. Besides, the thesis writer also has important reasons why she analyzes characters and conflicts. First of all, by understanding fictional characters; the thesis writer, together with the readers, can get insight into the wonders of human nature. Basically, stories present complicated behavior and personality, which can be used both to understand the variety and mystery that human being possesses and to learn those characters for our own reflection. Second of all, since characters can cause conflicts, and conflicts can bring man to his self-destruction; to learn conflicts and later anticipate them is worthy. The thesis writer observes that many people often assume conflicts as simple problems. They assume that they have solved the problem, but later they have it emerged again mostly because they solve it incorrectly; whereas, conflicts can affect other aspects of life, such as: marriage, relationship with others, family life, job, and so on. In this case, it is unquestionable that the conflicts people have in life bring great impact to them

and may later change and lead their life to either a better or worst condition.

Consequently, it is important to anticipate further conflicts. Indeed, it is necessary

to manage characters in order to avoid conflicts that can lead to self-destruction.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

Since the thesis writer does the analysis about factors that lead Ichabod into a

self-destruction, the scope of the discussion is the main character's self-

destruction. The thesis writer limitation is the main character, namely Ichabod

Crane. Besides that, some other characters also help clarify the main character's

motives and action, such as Brom Bones and Katrina Van Tassel.

1.6 Methodology

Using the library research, the thesis writer gathers data to support the

analysis. Firstly, she looks at carefully criticisms, especially about the author—

Washington Irving—, and the short story—*The Legend of Sleepy Hollow.*

Secondly, she reads Washington Irving's biography to understand more

profoundly about the author's aims in writing his short story as well as the

author's idea in creating the short story.

The thesis writer uses literary approaches, which are the theory of conflict,

theory of setting and the theory of character. The literary theory of character is

used to analyze the characters of Ichabod Crane, and the literary theory of conflict

is used to find the conflicts that Ichabod Crane faces, such as the inner and outer

conflicts. While the theory of setting is ***used to*** show that environment influences

Ichabod Crane.

1.7 Organization of the Study

The thesis writer divides the thesis into four chapters. The first chapter covers the introduction, which consists of the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, and the importance of the study, the scope and limitation, the methodology, and the organization of the study. The second chapter talks about the review of related literature, which discusses about the literary theory of character and the literary theory of conflict. The third chapter presents the analysis of Ichabod Crane's characters and conflicts, which finally leads him into self-destruction. Finally, the last chapter concludes the analysis.