

Chapter I

Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

There are many interesting literary works that can be found, read and even analyzed in the world of literature. One of them is Novel. Like other kinds of literary works such as poetry and drama, novel, which is also known as prose, always contains the story of human's life. However, the most important thing that differentiates novel or prose from the rest of the literary works is that novel or prose tends to be easier to read and understand. It is indeed true though, that in

some exceptional cases, some novels are very difficult to read or even understood. These cases arise because there are many different characters and also many different ideas and stories in a novel. On top of that, there is a strong tendency among prose or novel readers just to read and understand the story only. They make no effort whatsoever to try to reveal the important thing the prose has, that is, the theme. As a result, they often find difficulties to understand and grasp the idea that the writer wants to present in his or her novel. The fact above encourages the writer to analyze novel and not other literary genre.

The writer is interested in choosing Albert Camus and analyzing his work, because Albert Camus has already earned a worldwide reputation. He gets a Nobel Prize for Literature in 1957. Not only is he known as a great novelist, a talented short stories writer, a genius playwright, an essayist and also a philosopher, but he also becomes the leading moral voice of his generation during the 1950s through his writings. In most of his works, Camus reveals the condition of real life of human condition in the world, besides Camus also known as a moderate existentialist. He is also famous as one of the most important and recognized authors of the twentieth

century and one of the finest philosophical writers of modern France. (Haggis, 88-89)

The writer is interested in choosing The Plague among other Camus' works because, firstly, this particular novel is known as a complex work of literature. Its complex theme and writing style can be seen through many different characters this novel has and also from the fact that each character represents different idea. It means that in The Plague, there are several worthy values of life, like morality, religious-value, psychology, social norms, and philosophy that could be revealed. Secondly, this novel is known to contain a popular philosophical idea of Albert Camus', Existentialism. One of the critics, Pierre-Henri Simon states about The Plague as "The most anti-Christian of all his books, because it is the one which affirms in the clearest manner a pure humanism, a religion of human nobility without God and even against God" (Hanna, 196). Thirdly, according to Haggis "this particular novel, The Plague, is also considered as Camus' masterpiece and also one of the most popular in English Literature published in 1948 besides The Stranger. Not only through this book Camus got his Nobel Prize, but it was also translated into sixteen different foreign languages." (Haggis, 9)

Dr. Bernard Rieux and Father Paneloux, the two main characters in The Plague, are chosen as the main objects of study. The writer does so, as Camus is known to be an author who likes to express his religious views through his main characters (Encarta Encyclopedia). Rhein, then, further emphasizes this fact. In his book Albert Camus, Rhein says that "Camus' inability to accept orthodox religion, reflected here in the character of Rieux, is juxtaposed to the Christianity expounded by Father Paneloux." In his thesis, the writer is trying to reveal the application of Camus' existentialism in his novel.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In this analysis the writer of the thesis is curious to know how the reactions of the two main characters in The Plague represent the idea of Existentialism.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The writer conducts this research to show how the reactions of both main characters Dr. Rieux and Father Paneloux represent Existentialism.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Through this thesis, readers will find that Camus uses his characters to transfer his philosophical thought

called Existentialism. Existentialism is a unique philosophy, because its essence as an unsystematic philosophy, that makes it interesting to be understood. This thesis will help other students who are interested in discussing the idea of Existentialism about 'existence precedes essence' since this philosophy stresses the meaning and the importance of human beings. Through this thesis, student could find out more about the idea of 'existence precedes essence' in existentialism related to God's existence. Hopefully by studying this thesis the reader will understand Existentialism better. The reader could find out the real condition of theist and atheist person facing their problems. As in the real condition, human being considers not to surrender all their problems to God instead, use their own effort and on the other group of human being considers to surrender and depends all of his life to God and this reflection reveals by Rieux and Paneloux condition. Last but not least, hopefully through this thesis, readers will be eager to read and to analyze The Plague and others Camus' literary works.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

The scope of the discussion is on the theme of Atheist Existentialism based on Sartre, Nietzsche and

Camus, and Theist Existentialism based on Kierkegaard, especially in Camus' The Plague.

In this thesis, the writer limits his analysis only on the two main characters of the novel, Dr. Bernard Rieux and Father Paneloux to find out how the differences in these two characters' reactions toward the plague which represent Camus' idea of Existentialism.

1.6 Methodology

In doing the analysis, the writer uses library research to collect data and information as well as some literary theories.

Library research is one of the popular methods of collecting data used by the writer to support his analysis. In this stage, the writer gathers all data, such as journals, books, and articles related to Existentialist ideas, Albert Camus, and The Plague. As the primary source, the writer uses The Plague, published in 1948 which was translated by Stuart Gilbert and the second source is its criticism.

In addition, the writer uses also literary approach in his analysis, that is, characterization. Theory of Characterization, in this case, is based on Dr. Rieux's and Father Paneloux's attitudes, responses, and reactions toward the plague. Secondly, the writer uses the theory

of Conflict. Through the use of the conflict's theory, the writer would like to see the reaction of Dr. Bernard Rieux as an atheist and Father Paneloux as a theist in the development of the story. Furthermore, it is used also to analyze Dr. Rieux as a narrator that represents him as an Atheist. The writer also analyzes Father Paneloux as a religious person that represents a Theist person. Since the writer analyzes about God's existence and religious belief, the writer will use the theory of atheist Existentialism and theist Existentialism.

1.7 Organization of the Study

This thesis consists of four chapters. Chapter one serves as the introduction of this thesis which explains the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose **of** the study, importance of the study, scope and limitation that points out the methodology and describes the organization of the study. Chapter two "Review of Related Literature" provides some theories, which support the writer in the analysis. It consists of theories **of** characterization, conflict, and philosophical theory. Meanwhile, chapter three is the analysis on how Camus expresses his idea through Rieux and Paneloux in The Plague. The last chapter of this thesis, chapter four is the conclusion.