

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I.1 Background of the Study

The existence of Puritanism in England had terribly become the great obstacle for the English dramatic literature to develop, precisely during 1642 until 1660. The Puritans, having the intention to purify the Church of England, were eager to forbid all sorts of amusement which were considered by them as public immorality. That is why when they came to power in 1642, they immediately closed down all the theatres. It means that the great blooming of drama and performance from the Elizabethan Age (1485-1625) was forced to put an end. As a result, playwriting degenerated during the government of the Republic of Commonwealth (1649-1659) (Woods 824).

The blooming of drama in England returned as soon as Charles II, who was restored to the English throne in 1660, came from his exile in France. The theatres were reopened under royal patronage. It caused the public's attention to return to theatre with great excitement after the long privation. The English playwrights' desire and spirit, which were pressed down during Puritanism, dared to rise again. This situation awakened the dramatic literature greatly. Thus this era, known as the Restoration Age (1660-1700), indicates the great development of drama, "the most spectacular type of literature produced in Restoration Age," in English literature (823-4). This fact makes the thesis writer

interested in this particular age since she is amazed by the revival of drama after being banned during the eighteen years of Puritan domination. It also becomes her reason why she chooses drama, instead of other literary genres, of the Restoration period.

As the greatest writer of the Restoration Age, John Dryden is eminent as playwright, poet, and critic. Because of his great contribution in literary work, he represents the important figure of the seventeenth century English man-of-literature, specifically of the Restoration. Since he dominates the Restoration period, people often consider that particular period to be "the Age of Dryden" (Archer 869). His substantial achievements affirm his place in the literary history as "one of the chief founders of modern English prose, the first great English critic, the most representative writer of the Restoration, and the greatest literary man of his time" (Needleman 325). His outstanding characteristics make him "the professional man-of-letter" who is dominant over his rivals and contemporaries (Schilling 4). Consequently, his remarkable ability in literary field has been admitted. His extraordinary competence in literature makes the thesis writer interested in this particular author among other Restoration ones.

As the leading representative of the Restoration drama, John Dryden's dramatic ability is absolutely undoubted. As a Restoration dramatist, he lives "under the shadow of Shakespeare" whose name had flourished in the Elizabethan Age, the age before Dryden's time, as a great English dramatist (Kaufmann 87). As a result, it is not easy for Dryden to triumph over Shakespeare because people have considered Shakespeare "the representative of true dramatic genius" (Nicoll 67). Particularly, they have adored Shakespeare as the greatest playwright ever since. Nevertheless, John Dryden has successfully made himself "rank near Shakespeare" in a specified way through his accomplishments as a playwright. He annually produces plays that dominantly "influence every writer of his time" (Berman

119). It is obviously a wonderful job of him. This amazing ability of Dryden makes the thesis writer decide to choose one of his plays for her thesis.

In writing his plays, Dryden intends to present better work than Shakespeare. It is because he notices some defects in Shakespeare's plays. In his preface to Troilus and Cressida, he says of Shakespeare, "Many of his words, and more of his phrases, are scarce intelligible. And of those which we understand, some are ungrammatical, others coarse; and his whole style is so pestered with figurative expressions, that it is as affected as it is obscure" (Campbell 8). Although Shakespeare's language style might be considered as the beauty of his plays in the Elizabethan Age, it does not absolutely fit with the literary taste of Dryden's time since the Restoration Age, influenced by the neo-classical movement, has the tendency toward "directness and simplicity of expression." From this point, he tries to follow the Restoration taste in writing his plays. He successfully does it since he has his own style and ability to make the plays simpler and more intelligible by using simplicity of statements that do not exist in Shakespeare's plays (Taine 227).

Dryden is also successfully able to make the plays "more compact and less diffuse" than Shakespeare's (Berman 120). Besides using simplicity of statements, he restricts his plays to the classical unities, involving time, place, and action, as the Restoration dramatists commonly observe (Woods 879). What is meant by the unity of time is "the action of the play should cover not more than a day," while the unity of place means "the scene of a play should take place in one given locality," and the unity of action is "a play should be of one type only, wholly comic or wholly tragic, and should have only one plot" (819). It is much different from Shakespeare's plays since he disregards these unities in writing his plays (Campbell 191). That is why Dryden's plays are "more condensed and more closely knit than the loosely constructed" Shakespearean plays (879).

Among Dryden's plays, All for Love is generally known as his best play. It is regarded as "the heart of his dramatic work" which "profoundly affected subsequent English tragic writing" (Kaufmann 87). In fact, it is successfully "the best tragedy of its age" (Prior 95). Even according to Bonamy Dobree, All for Love is "the best dramatic blank verse since Shakespeare." It seems that All for Love is considered as the most outstanding tragedy among Dryden's other tragedies since they hardly have "the same strength and fervour" as that particular play (Nicoll 148). All of these facts preoccupy the thesis writer's attention to write a thesis on this particular play.

In writing his All for Love, Dryden bases his story on Shakespeare's great tragedy Antony and Cleopatra of which source of story is taken from Sir Thomas North's translation of Plutarch's Parallel Lives (Woods 879). As Dryden has stated in his preface to All for Love, the story about Antony and Cleopatra has fancied him since it has interested many great writers after Shakespeare. Because the plays of Shakespeare had already been regarded "old-fashioned in form and language" in Dryden's period, Dryden attempts to retell the story along the demands of his age (Sampson 338). Although his play is an adaptation of Shakespeare's, it does not mean that John Dryden is simply an imitator. He modifies the play with his original way (Nicoll 147). Through the three unities and his simple language, he remodels Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra and gives title to his modified play All for Love. As the result of his adaptation to Shakespeare's great tragedy and his effort to follow the Restoration taste, that particular play of him implies "the relationship of the great Elizabethan age of drama and his own" (Berman 120).

The story of All for Love is taken from the well-known history of the Roman Empire. The name of Mark Antony has flourished as well as of Julius Caesar in history. Antony, one of the Roman Triumvirate, is the central character of this play. As one of the leading persons in Rome, he undoubtedly has fame, power, and honor over people. He is

outstanding since he is a great man. Despite his greatness, he has a lot of conflicts, and he solves his conflicts by committing suicide. Thus, Mark Antony's tragic downfall is interesting to discuss, as such a great man may take such a drastic step in solving his problem.

I.2 Statement of the Problem

Considering Antony's tragic downfall, the thesis writer is curious to know how Antony meets his downfall.

I.3 Purpose of the Study

Through her analysis, the thesis writer will try to analyze the process of Antony's downfall.

I.4 Importance of the Study

Through the topic she raises in her thesis, the thesis writer would like to show the readers that greatness in one's life will not exclude him from facing downfall. That a great man such Mark Antony may end his life in suicide is indeed a tragic thing.

Through her thesis, the writer expects that the readers will know and understand more about Dryden's best tragedy play, All for Love. Since this particular play is considered "the best tragedy" of the Restoration drama (Prior 95), the readers can at least recognize the sort of dramatic work in Restoration period, a period in which the dramatic literature has flourished greatly after being banned by the Puritanism. Then, after the readers know and understand this particular play, the thesis writer certainly hopes that they

will appreciate All for Love as a great piece of literary work. As the result, they will realize that John Dryden is an excellent playwright.

The thesis writer also wants to convey to the readers, especially the students of the English Department, that drama is interesting to analyze. It is her great desire to recommend them to choose other works of Dryden for their thesis since she believes that his works are interesting. John Dryden, as the dominant man-of-literature in Restoration period, has absolutely produced many good literary works which make people consider him a great writer. That is why she believes that his works are outstanding and worthy to be analyzed. She really hopes that her thesis may give some contribution to other students, especially the ones of the English Department, who are also interested in writing a thesis on Dryden's other literary works.

I.5 Scope and Limitation

In order to answer the thesis writer's statement of the problem above, she will focus her analysis on the process of Antony's downfall. In analyzing his downfall, she focuses her studies only on his characterization and conflicts since, based on the theory of Shakespearean tragedy, Antony's character traits and conflicts should take important part in leading Antony to his downfall. Thus, she believes that a deep analysis on them can answer her problem's statement concerning Antony's downfall. Since her focus is the process of his downfall, she will limit her discussion only to the analysis of Antony since he is the central character of the story who experiences the downfall.

Although the thesis writer's discussion is only about Antony, she believes that in order to analyze Antony's character traits and conflicts, it is impossible for her not to mention other characters of the story in her analysis. That is why she will inevitably

mention Ventidius, Cleopatra, Dolabella, Octavia, and Alexas in her analysis, but she is going to discuss their roles as long as they are related to Antony's downfall.

I.6 Methodology

In analyzing the play, the thesis writer will exert the library research to collect the data for supporting her study. She classifies her data into two groups, primary and secondary data. Her primary data is the play of All for Love by John Dryden. It is taken from The Signet Classic Book of Restoration Drama, edited by Ronald Berman and published by The New American Library Incorporation in 1980. Her secondary data includes the review of related materials used for her study, such as historical background of Restoration Age, comments on John Dryden, theories of literature and critiques of All for Love.

For her analysis, the thesis writer uses literary approach involving the theory of Shakespearean tragedy and the literary theories, namely theory of characterization and conflict. Since All for Love is a play of tragedy, of which typical characteristic includes the downfall of the hero, she believes that through the first theory, theory of tragedy, she is able to learn how Antony meets his downfall. In this case, she will refer to the theory of Shakespearean tragedy since the story of All for Love is a "true adaptation" of Shakespeare's tragic story Antony and Cleopatra (Campbell 192). Through the theory of characterization, she finds out what sort of person Antony is, so she will be able to know and understand Antony's character traits. Since the creation of fictional persons through characterization has accommodated authors to construct conflicts (Shaw 91), it is necessary for her to learn the struggle, besides his character traits, that Antony has to encounter. Thus, she needs the theory of conflict in order to analyze his conflicts, involving the problems that exist in Antony or the difficulties that he undergoes.

1.7 Organization of the Study

In order to help her in writing her thesis easily, the thesis writer determines to divide her thesis into five chapters. The first chapter is an introduction. It introduces the background of the study consisting her reasons why she chooses the particular author, the play, and the topic of her thesis. Still in the same chapter, she brings the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, importance of the study, scope and limitation, methodology, and also the organization of the study. In the next chapter, Chapter Two, she intends to present the review of related literature consisting of the historical background of the Roman Empire, the theory of Shakespearean tragedy, and some theories which are going to be her tools in analyzing All for Love, namely the theory of characterization and conflict. In the third chapter, she is going to analyze Antony's character traits. Then in the fourth chapter, she will analyze his conflicts, both external and internal ones, which are triggered by his character traits. At last, the thesis writer concludes in the fifth chapter that Antony's character traits have triggered his external conflicts, which result in his internal one, and his internal conflict brings him to his downfall.