

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the study

Literature is a literary work, which expresses and communicates thought, feelings and attitudes towards life through a written language. Literature usually reflects anything that happens in this life. It tells a lot about human beings with their complex problems which can not be separated from their life. The writer likes to tell people about things that happen in human life and he wants to hear the things that happen to other people through some ways by reading literary works. By reading literature, the readers can get off from their real life and they will get pleasure of it.

Literature is also a means to express imagination in which the people may have knowledge and entertainment. Furthermore, Hudson says in *Introduction to Study of Literature* in the following :

Literature is a vital record of what men have seen in life, what they have experienced of it, what they have thought and felt about those aspects of it which have the most immediate and enduring interest for all of us. It is thus fundamentally an expression of life through the medium of language (1965: 10).

It means that literature is the expression of life. People can express their experience and knowledge into the various forms of literary works, because literature is a written work that reflects human's life. Besides, Rees (1973: 9) also states in *English Literature* as follows:

Literature is a permanent expression in words of some thought or feeling or idea about life and the world. Literature may be good, bad or

indifferent; but good literature will have some, if not all, of the following qualities: (i) psychological truth or holding the mirror up to nature; (ii) originality; (iii) craftsmanship; and (iv) a consciousness of moral values.

Moreover, by studying literature someone will learn more about problem and difficulty in his/her life. It helps him or her have better understanding about life.

Literature can be classified into poetry, prose, and drama or play. These forms deal with the truth of human's life or ways of life such as human's value, moral, love, and passion, which are take place in the society. In *Outline of Literature: Short Stories, Novels, and Poems*, Jones says that: "Literature consists of poetry, novel, and drama or play and it depends on both the reader and the writer's knowledge and experience". (1968: 1)

Nowdays, the most common modern narrative form of literary works is fiction. Fiction is classified into short story and novel, setting apart from the fact of real life. Griffith in *Writing Essays about Literature* states as follows:

We commonly use the term fiction to describe prose works that tell a story (short stories and novels). In fact, however, all works of literature are "fictional" in the sense that the reader sets them apart from the facts or real life (1990: 35).

Short story and novel have been in existence for little more than two centuries. One of the most interesting forms of fiction is short story. Short story is almost the same as novel. The differences between both of them are in the length and complexity of the story. Jones states that a novel is like a short story, except that it is longer. Both are prose fiction, both deal with truths, both deal with problems and conflict (1968: 80). It means that short story is shorter than a novel, but the topic or the theme is totally the same, that is about a living thing.

Reading short story is very useful to increase the readers' imagination, to sharpen their mind, and to increase their sensitivity about certain problems related to life or event. Even, someone can learn character and personality of someone else because short story is like novel, it also depicts about person's character, problem and life. One of the short story genres is fiction. The researcher is interested in analyzing the short story which has the element of horror. Usually it is called gothic element. Gothic was a literary form in the late eighteenth century.

This research discusses the short stories of Edgar Allan Poe's *The Fall of the House of Usher* and *The Masque of the Red Death*. Edgar Allan Poe was born on January 19, 1809, Boston, Massachusetts, U.S. He was an American short story writer, poet, critic, and editor in 19th century. Edgar Allan Poe's tales of mystery and horror initiated the modern detective story, and the atmosphere in his tales of horror is unrivaled in American fiction. His *The Raven* (1845) becomes the best known poem in national literature. With his stories and poems, Edgar Allan Poe captured the imagination and interest of readers around the world. His creative talents led to the beginning of different literary genres, earning him the nickname "Father of the Detective Story" among other distinctions. His life, however, has become a bit of mystery itself. And the lines between fact and fiction have been blurred substantially since his death in October 7, 1849. His other famous literary works are *The Black Cat* (1845), *The Gold Bug* (1843), *Ligeia* (1838), *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* (1841), and *The Tell Tale Heart* (1850).

The researcher chooses Poe's short stories to become the topic to analyze because most of Poe's short stories are having horror and supernatural in theme. By analyzing Edgar Allan Poe's short stories, the writer wants to find out the Gothic element such as mystery, horror, madness, death and decay of the character that are found in those short stories. Moreover, these short stories *The Fall of the House of Usher* and *The Masque of the Red Death* are the gothic fictions. For instance, *The Fall of the House of Usher* tells about an old house and its secrets, while *The Masque of the Red Death* tells about the horror of the plague. The writer is interested to compare the gothic elements in these two short stories in order to find out the differences, the similarities and the influences of gothic elements toward the characters in each story.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Due to the topic of the discussion of this research, three main problems are formulated as follows:

1. What are the similarities of Gothic elements in *The Fall of the House of Usher* and *The Masque of the Red Death*?
2. What are the differences of Gothic elements in *The Fall of the House of Usher* and *The Masque of the Red Death*?
3. What are the influences of Gothic elements toward The Narrator in *The Fall of the House of Usher* and Prince Prospero in *The Masque of the Red Death*?

### 1.3 Objective of the Study

To find the answer for the problems that have been formulated before, the writer determines three important goals. They are as follows:

1. To find out the similarities of Gothic elements in *The Fall of the House of Usher* and *The Masque of the Red Death*.
2. To find out the differences of Gothic elements in *The Fall of the House of Usher* and *The Masque of the Red Death*.
3. To analyze the influences of gothic elements toward The Narrator in *The Fall of the House of Usher* and Prince Prospero in *The Masque of the Red Death*.

### 1.4 Limitation of the Problem

It is necessary to limit the problems that are discussed in this thesis in order to find clear information about Gothic elements in Poe's short stories. To avoid some problems out of context, the writer only pays attention to the similarities and differences of Gothic elements in *The Fall of the House of Usher* and *The Masque of the Red Death* and also the influences of Gothic elements toward The Narrator in *The Fall of the House of Usher* and Prince Prospero in *The Masque of the Red Death*. It has been known that the short story contains some Gothic elements such as the revenant, the suspense, and the uncanny. Therefore the researcher discusses those problems only.

### 1.5 Significance of the Study

By writing this research, hopefully, it will give a great contribution for the readers to analyze Gothic elements in *The Fall of the House of Usher* and *The Masque of the Red Death*. The researcher hopes that the result of this research will give benefits and advantages for the readers, it will be considered as additional source for those who are interested in studying literature, so that, they will know Gothic elements which are used in the short stories of Edgar Allan Poe entitled *The Fall of the House of Usher* and *The Masque of the Red Death*. Furthermore, by understanding the Gothic elements deeply, the readers will consider that short stories are not only reading materials but also the medium to increase their imagination, thought, and sensitivity toward life in the society surrounding them. Finally the readers realizes literature is not only the subject of study but also a part of human life.