

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Study

Many people say that literature is not important, it is just for enjoyment or fun. Such an opinion is wrong, because literature is a kind of art and it is closely related to life. By studying literature, people can enrich their knowledge and raise spirit and motivation in life. According Rees (1973:2) in *An Introduction for Foreign Readers*, "Literature is a work which expresses and communicates thought, feeling, and attitude toward life". However, literature is influenced by the way in which the thought and feeling are expressed. It also has close relationship with the life of human being. Another definition of literature which can support the explanation is asserted by Jones (1968:1) in *An Outline of Literature*, that, "Literature is simply another way people can experience the world around us through our imagination". One may imagine a beautiful thing and express their thought in literature. Literature may have power to change human life or influence it because the material is obtained from the experience of life and no one is able to separate literature from the problem of humanity, society, and civilization.

Moreover, literature has three forms, namely, poetry, plays and prose. All of them are interesting to read and analyze, but the writer prefers to analyze poetry than other literary works because poetry is a special kind of language in contrast to ordinary language we commonly use. According to Dunton (1865:65), "Poem is the concrete and artistic expression of the human mind in emotional and rhythmical language". It means that poem is the creative writing or the

imaginative written work that expresses poet's feeling and emotion. It is proved by the following statement, "Poetry is the most intensively emotive of literary forms" (Little, 1966:162). The writer is interesting in doing research on the concept of mothering in Rita Dove's poems collected in *Mother Love*.

The first African American to be named poet Laureate of the United States is Rita Dove (1992). In *Mother Love* (1995), her most recent book of poems, Dove takes her explorations of relationship into the realm of Greek myth. In a series of sonnets, she examines the mother-daughter love between Demeter and Persephone. Marking the end of Pulitzer Prize winner Rita Dove's two-year term as poet laureate of the United States, this new collection again confirms her extraordinary power. In addition to her poetry, Dove communicates the story through a remarkable use of concrete detail, especially of color and shape.

(http://voices.cla.umn.edu/vg/Bios/entries/dove_rita.html)

Regardless the above fact, the writer only focuses her research on the concept of mothering as reflected in *Mother Love*. *Mother Love* is the collected poems of Rita Dove that examine the dilemma story. In Greek mythology, Persephone, the daughter of Zeus and Demeter, was abducted by Hades, God of underground, and allowed her to return each spring and summer. *Mother Love* is talking about the description of being a good mother who takes care of her child and love him very much. *Mother Love* calls upon the ancient Greek myth of Demeter and Persephone to examine the tenacity of love between mother and daughter. Demeter bore a daughter; her name is Persephone, who grows up into youthful beauty. Persephone is an obedient to her mother and cheerful girl who

has a happy childhood. As a mother, Demeter, takes care of Persephone and love her very much.

1.2 Statements of the Problem

The problem of the research is to answer the question: What is the concept of mothering role in Rita Dove's poems collected in *Mother Love*?

1.3 Limitation of the Problem

The writer limits and focuses the discussion only on words reflecting the concept of mothering role in Rita Dove's poems collected in *Mother Love* to be analyzed. Those poems are "Persephone Abducted", "Statistic: The Witness", "Mother Love", "Demeter Mourning", "Demeter's Prayer to Hades", "Persephone, Falling", and "Demeter Waiting".

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The objective of the study is to solely analyze the concept of mothering role in Rita Dove's poems collected in *Mother Love*.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Hopefully, this research can give some significance for the writer and the readers. This research is useful and interesting for both the writer and the readers. The readers will know about the description of being a good mother who takes care of her child and loves him very much. The writer hopes that this thesis can be

used by her fellow students as the sources of idea in doing their further researches especially on Rita Dove's poems *Mother Love*.