

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I

1.1 Background of the Study

Every human being yearns for true happiness in his / her life. The ways people search and express their happiness vary. Happiness is a feeling of great pleasure, contentment, joy, et cetera (Guralnik and Neufeldt, 1991: 613). Whatever people do, their final aim at the end is only the want for happiness. Some people may try to get happiness through sports, such as skiing, riding, playing football, flying, and so forth. Another way to reach happiness is through art. Any creative works that display form, beauty or an unusual thing that include literature, painting, music, dance, sculpture, belong to art (Guralnik and Neufeldt, 1991: 77).

Reading literature gives many advantages for us for some reasons. First, particularly for English learners, it can strengthen their grammar, enrich their vocabulary and even idioms that they are not familiar with. Second, it will give us a description of a certain culture that will shape our personal development and deep understanding of it.

According to Edward in his book *An Outline of Literature*, says, "Literature is simply another way we can experience the world around us through our imagination." (1968: 1). It means that literature has served highly value writing which we are doing to arrange our thought, opinion, experience, or imagination.

We know that reading habit, especially of literature, is perhaps not considered as an important thing in our country, if we realize that we are lack of this habit, knowing it is not yet developed here. From now on, we should advocate reading habit of literature to fill our leisure time due to the advantages and the importance of it.

In general literature includes poetry, drama, and prose fiction that later developed to novel. Among these three, the novel is more widespread to be enjoyed in society since it is easier for everyone to catch the purpose and message it delivers. By reading a novel we get worthwhile things, for it is a description and a mirror of human life that may include reference to real places, people and events. It gives not only joy and great pleasure but also messages and lesson that we can apply in our real life.

Novel is written in a certain period of time. Their existence is meant to depict the life of a particular society in a certain time which reflects culture, religion, the way of life, et cetera. Therefore, by reading a novel we will be given picturesque and important descriptions of the life of a certain era or place.

There are so many novelists. Mary Ann Evans is one of controversial novelists because of hiding behind a man pen name, George Eliot. Her works have become the object of great interest in the Victorian Era. Even in this twenty first century, many critics still concern about her works, especially dealing with the character and psychology of both the author and the work. One of her works

which is going to be analyzed here is *The Mill on the Floss*. The writer interested in analyzing this novel for certain reason. First, this novel according to many critics is the closest to George Eliot's real life, sibling relationship. The major character is somewhat like George Eliot herself and Tom, Maggie's brother, is said to be the resemblance of Isaac, Eliot's brother. What is written about their relationship is quite similar to what happened to Eliot and Isaac. Second, the writer suspects that materialism is strongly presented in *The Mill on the Floss*. Most of the characters in this novel are puzzled by the expanding economic world. They also have some behaviors which tend to the materialistic. They may not care for others' pain and suffering, since what they have in mind is only material things and their own happiness. Then, *The Mill on the Floss* depicts the larger context of the increased materialism of the British midlands in the first half of the nineteenth century.

1.2 The Statement of the Problem

Based on the background the writer has written, this study is trying to answer following questions:

1. How are the characters' materialistic points of view and action described in George Elliot's *The Mill on the Floss*?
2. What are the effects of materialism in George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss*?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

Referring to the problems stated above, this study is conducted to answer those questions. The objectives of the study are in the following:

1. To describe the characters' materialistic points of view and action in George Elliot's *The Mill on the Floss*.
2. To explore the effects of materialism in George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss*.

1.4 The Limitation of the Study

In this section, the writer of this thesis would like to focus her attention on the analysis of materialism in George Eliot's novel entitled *The Mill on the Floss*. The writer limits on the characters' materialistic points of view and action in *The Mill on the Floss* and also takes the effect of materialism that happens to the characters'.

1.5 The Significance of the Study

The result of this study is expected to be worthwhile not only for the writer but also for the English learners who are interested in materialism. There are at least three advantages for the writer to conduct this study. First, this study is meant to complete the requirement and to obtain the undergraduate degree. Second, it is expected that this study contributes deeper understanding and

knowledge for the writer and other English learners about materialism that is found in the novel of George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss*. Finally, it is also expected to become significant and good complement of other literary research of the similar field.