

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Literature has a major part in people's daily life, whether they realize it or not. It can be said that literature has an important role to reveal people's behavior and attitude. Literature is anything that is written to express thought, feeling, and attitude toward life. By studying literature, we can get the entertainment. Literature itself can be divided into three groups, namely play, prose, and poetry. After reading literary works, people feel that they keep in their mind any experience about life such as love, happiness, sadness, trouble, hatred, and misfortune. There is also another assumption from some people that literature is aimed just for pleasure and they read literary works only to get rid of their boredom after doing activity during all the day. Furthermore, those people think that it is useless to read literature. In fact, there is a lot of experience and knowledge about life in literature.

R.J. Rees has stated the explanation of literature in *An Introduction for Foreign Reader* that "Literature is writing which expresses and communicates thought, feeling, and attitude toward life" (1949:3). While the other linguist, Dick Hartoko, has also stated in *Pengantar Ilmu Sastra* that:

Literature is a creation. It is not an imitation thing. The creator creates a new world, continuing the process of creation in the world. Literature, even, also perfects it. Primarily, literature is a directly explosive emotion(1984:5).

As a form of art, literature uses language as its medium. It can be explained by the statement of William Henry Hudson in *An Introduction to the Study of Literature*:

Literature is a vital record of what men have seen in life 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 and expression of life through the medium of language (1965:10).

Through those three explanations, we can see that literature cannot be separated from society. It goes without saying; literature is closely related to social life. This statement has a meaning that we can express our desire for self expression, our interest in people and their doing of literary works influence readers in order to get the truth of the word, knowledge, deep understanding of main life and world which are influenced by the environment.

In regard to this study, the writer wants to focus on the study of the play entitled *Antigone* which is written by Sophocles because he is the greatest tragic playwright of the Ancient Greece; it is proved by his first successful tragedy, *Ajax*; and other famous works including *Antigone*. In addition, he is also considered as a master of dialogue, he uses a variety of masters to create variations of tone and emotion. "The language is rich of transmutations of ordinary, forms, metaphors, unusual constructions, and coinages" (Stanley Hochman, 1984:487).

There have been a lot of criticisms on Sophocles and his work, *Antigone*. According to Robert J. Milch in *Antigone Cliffs Notes* (1965:58). The problem in *Antigone* is called age-old conflict or universal problem. He states that:

In *Antigone* Sophocles examines the age-old conflict between the requirements of human and divine law. This universal problem is crystallized in the dispute about the burial of Polynices, in which Creon's

understanding of the public welfare is opposed to Antigone's conception of her religious duty.

Clifford Geertz has ever stated in *The Interpretation of Cultures* that "play is a way of text, what is meant by a text is for students of culture not only the written one but also that of cultural context" (1973:6). Since a play is a piece of literary work, which all of information as well as the development of the story, plot and conflicts happen.

Furthermore, the next discussion is about hamartia. Human beings sometimes have hamartia in their problems. They often have to choose one between two choices meaning that difficult decisions in facing problems between yes or no. If they choose wrong decisions, it will bring bad effects and destructions in their lives. It can be seen in the following statement that is quoted from *Introduction to Psychology*:

Decision always involves the choice of one or more alternative as a answer to a explicit question, of some sort. The minimal number or alternatives is of course two, as represented by the relatively simple yes or no decision (Melvin H Marx, 1976:291).

The play also talks about the phenomenon above. Literature is closely related to human being's works or arts, which influence human's lives, whether they have problems on their personal life. The people's problems are hatred, anger, disappointment, and death. Graham Little in *Approach to Literature* (1966:1) states that "it contains the record of the people value, their problems and conflicts in short, their thought, their whole way of life."

Hamartia means the great error that is made by the main characters and it makes them into their downfall. The downfall happens because of bad or wrong

judgment in their decisions. Holman C. Hugh in his *A Hand Book to Literature* states that “hamartia is often faced by the main characters when they are getting a serious problem. They make great error in solving the problem and his decisions lead them into misfortune” (1986:30).

The hamartia that is found in a literary work can be proved in *Antigone*, one of Sophocles’ famous works. *Antigone* tells about main characters that face hamartia in their lives. Hamartia is experienced by the main characters that brings destruction or sometime death. When they take wrong decisions in their problems, it can lead them to downfall for their lives long. In this play, hamartia is experienced by Antigone and Creon.

The play of *Antigone* has been chosen for this thesis because of two reasons. First, there are many things that can be discussed in Sophocles’ *Antigone* but the writer is interested in analyzing hamartia because it can happen to everybody who makes mistakes in choosing the decisions. Second, *Antigone* presents the existence of chorus that makes the story more beautiful, full of sonorous, and more life. It supported by L.R Lind in his book (1957:81) *Ten Greek Plays*:

The choruses are especially beautiful. Full of sonorous and melancholy meditations about the nature of man, the victory of Thebes, the family curses the theological parallels to Antigone fore and Dionysus.

The writer is interested to discuss the study is to illuminate the hamartia which is experienced by Antigone and Creon and expound the comparison between the main character’s hamartia in Sophocles’s *Antigone*.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Based on the phenomena in the background of the study, there are three main problems that can be analyzed, as follows:

1. What hamartia is experienced by Antigone and Creon?
2. What are the similarities between Antigone's and Creon's hamartia?
3. What are the differences between Antigone's and Creon's hamartia?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

According to the statement of the problem above, the writer wants to discuss the objectives of the problem with these limitations:

1. To clarify the hamartia that is experienced by Antigone and Creon.
2. To find out the similarities between Antigone's and Creon's hamartia.
3. To figure out the differences between Antigone's and Creon's hamartia.

1.4 Limitation of the Problem

In *Antigone*, there are several elements that can be analyzed. Such as, conflict, moral, character, theme like love, death, hatred, and hamartia. The writer in this thesis focuses on hamartia because hamartia can be raised in characters when they face conflict but they make the great error to solve it. Hamartia itself has many kinds, such as ambition, impulsiveness, fecklessness, stubbornness, jealousy, and weakness. Here, the writer is interested in analyzing about the stubbornness and weakness.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The thesis writer wants to show the danger of hamartia. The main characters must be careful in making decision to solve their problems. If they take wrong decisions, it can cause them into destruction. Sometimes it makes them regretful for their lives long and it can make someone lose their beloved people, such as family. By knowing its danger, the writer hopes that the readers will take right decision in their life. The writer also hopes to give contributions to other students, especially for those who want to study more about Sophocles' *Antigone*. Furthermore, it will encourage them to love reading literature works.