

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of the introduction of this study. It consists of five items. The first item is about the background of problems. It gives an explanation on the reasons of the topic of the discussion “Light in August” to be analyzed. The second item consists of the formulated problems of the study, which deal with the problems to analyze this novel. The third item is the objectives of the study in order to limit the analysis. The fourth item consists of significance of the study. The last item is the scope of the study in order to limit the discussions.

1.1. The background of the problem

Life is beautiful. Many people express this thing by enjoying their lives and feelings. Even though life is beautiful, not all of them always have good and happy times. Everyone has their own problems in their daily lives. The Chinese say that life consists of two essential parts known as yin and yang, which symbolize the balancing of conditions in every part of life. Those conditions are bad and good matters. Someone feels happy in one time and feels sad in another time. The sad time always comes when people have problems, which may come from outside or inside of them.

The outer and the inner problems are the interesting topics to discuss for all authors. One of them is William Faulkner. Faulkner said that his basic theme of his novel was the basic human heart in conflict within itself, when he received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1949. Faulkner is considered as one of the greatest American modern writers. He is the South of the US author, hence he writes a lot about the South of the US condition in most of his novels, especially Mississippi. He is very popular with his imaginary region in Mississippi named Yoknapatawpha Country. He creates this region, which is mythical and actual region, and uses this imaginary places as the setting of place for most of his novels.

One of Faulkner's novels is *Light in August*. It describes the situations of the black and the white relationships in Mississippi. Racism comes up among those relations. The write still considers the blacks as the second class. Through Faulkner's main character named Joe Christmas, Faulkner tells the readers about a person who has the problem of defining himself based on the skin color. Joe is a mulatto and he is confused whether he is black or white person. The main reason of choosing this novel to be analyzed is that the inner problem of searching identity matter is interesting to be analyzed, especially derived from the life of Joe Christmas.

The identity matter may come to everyone, and it varies to everyone. Many people have identity crises. They want to define their identities. However, they do not know how to reach it. Many of them take the wrong ways to define the identity. This is the reason why this topic is chosen in this study.

Character, as the interesting elements of fiction, is the essential part of the story for most readers. Forster (1974:32) stated that fiction provides the opportunity for readers to figure out the characters on fiction well. The readers may find out the external performances, the internal performances, the emotion, and the moral of the characters, which are hidden in the real life of the readers. Furthermore, the readers may judge the characters of the story because the readers recognize each of the characters well and the readers have enough information on the characters. The reason why character is chosen as one of the focuses of this study is that through the characters, the author delivers and illustrates his message that he wants the readers to catch it. Faulkner delivers his message through Joe Christmas who tries to define himself in this novel.

Kenny (1966:95) stated that the plot is one of elements. Plot is the plan, which consists of the action done by the characters and events happen to them. Therefore, the actions and the events make the progress of the story. It is important to analyze the plot of this novel, especially the influence of the plot towards Joe Christmas as the main character. The reason is that the plot and the character have a close relationship. The plot arranges the actions done by the characters, and the characters perform the actions as requested by the plot. Therefore, when the readers know the plot well, the readers will understand the characters in details. In other words, when the readers want to analyze the characters, the readers cannot leave the plot behind.

Stanton (1965:4) stated that the theme is the central meaning idea. The theme is the message that the author wants the readers to discover. The theme of this novel discovered from Joe Christmas as the main character. It is well known that the theme of the story can be found by analyzing the main character. Kenney (1966: 96) stated that character is obviously of major importance for theme. The theme chosen in this study will be discussed, because it is important to discover the core meaning of the story. It is useless when the readers only read the story without known the message from author. When the readers understand the theme of the story, the readers discover the message and the meaning of the story. It means that the author is successful to give the message to the readers.

1.2. The statement of the problem

The statements of the problems are follows:

1. How is Joe Christmas characterized in the novel?
2. How does the plot reveal the character development of Joe Christmas?
3. What is the theme as seen from Joe Christmas as the main character?

1.3. Objectives of the study

This study aimed to answer the questions presented in the problem formulation:

1. To expose Joe Christmas characterization in the novel.
2. To find out the revealing of the plot to the character development of Joe Christmas.
3. To find out the theme as seen from Joe Christmas as the main character.

1.4. The scope of the study

The writer only focuses on the main character, namely Joe Christmas, in William Faulkner's novel *Light in August*. Actually, there are many aspects that can be analyzed from this main character. However, the writer does not analyze all aspects. But the writer limits this study on one characterization of the main character which, in the following turn, determined the plot, and the theme of the novel.

1.5. Significance of the study

This study is meant to introduce the readers with William Faulkner and his works, especially his novel entitled *Light in August*. Faulkner is considered as the greatest American modern writer and his novel is one of his best novels. Hopefully, the discussion of this research can assist those who want to study about William Faulkner and his novels in greater detail.