

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of Study

Literature is a kind of art. It is closely related to human life, because literature is the work of human being and enjoyed by human being. In its widest sense, literature is anything that is written to express thought, feeling, and attitude toward life. Edward H. Jones Jr. in *An Outline of Literature* explains that literature is simply another way that we can experience the world around us through our imagination, feeling, and thought. In its broadest sense, literature includes all written materials. It means that literature falls into history books, philosophical works, short stories, novels, poems, and plays (1968: 1).

Hudson in *Introduction to the Study of Literature* says as follows:

Literature is a vital record of what men have seen in life, what they have experienced of it, what they 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).

Literature has two meanings. It can be in its broadest sense and it can also be in the narrow sense. In its broadest sense, literature can be all written materials such as magazines, newspapers, schoolbooks, dictionaries, directories, etc. Literature in its narrow sense may be in the form of novels, dramas, short stories, and poems.

A lot of people like reading literary works since they can entertain them. However, the literary works do not only entertain but also enrich the people's understanding about the society. Besides, literature may teach us a good experience. Indeed, the literary works are just fiction stories, however they are some time as a truth in societies.

Novel is one of the most interesting and popular forms of literature. Jones in *An Outline of Literature*, says that novel is a long story written in prose, but because it is long, it differs from a short story (1968: 80). It entertains and enriches our experience of life. A lot of people in the world have read novel, because reading novels is not as difficult as reading poetry, and it is neither as easy as reading short stories. A novel, because of its length, it suited with the development of the character from childhood to maturity. By reading a novel, the reader will know the age and the society in which the novelist lived, for a novel is the expression of feeling, ideas, and the outlook of it in certain society and period of time. As a form of literature, a novel also has its contribution to influence men and even society. Novel gives the reader broader and deeper understanding of life, of society and of himself. Novel is a book, length story in prose, whose author tries to create that, while we read, we experience actual life (Kennedy, 1979: 231).

The novel, which will be discussed, is *King Arthur's Knights*, written by Henry Gilbert. In England it is especially the legends that had grown up round the figure of the British hero, King Arthur. Gilbert's book published in 1911. It was a version of Malory's *Morte D'Arthur*. It is a beautifully written version of the legend. The style and vocabulary are present for modern student. Sir Thomas

Malory is the author of the most famous work of Arthurian Literature. His work becomes the definitive version of the story of King Arthur. It is the standard source for later versions of the legend. It is also the basis of most modern telling of the Arthurian story.

In this novel, besides reading of wonderful adventures and brave fighting, the reader will learn a perfect knight who is required to be in the chivalrous times when they are wearing armor. The knights are men of courage, honor, dignity, courtesy, and nobility. They are: to protect the distressed, to speak the truth, to keep his word to all, to be courteous and gentle to women, to defend right against might, and to do or say nothing that must keep the fair name of Christian knighthood. Indeed, the great and simple lesson of Chivalry, which the tales of King Arthur teach, is, in a few words, to merit "the fine old name of gentleman". Arthur and his knights become the champions of the weak and the oppression.

In *King Arthur's Knights* it is created a knight named Sir Lancelot Du Lake as one of the main persons or characters. He is a chief of all Christian Knights, the most courteous man and the truest friend. He is the most famous of the knights and brings most worship to the fellowship of the Round Table. The Round Table is illustrative of the Eternity of God, the equality, unity, and comradeship of the Order, and singleness of purpose of all the Knights. Lancelot as the best of all the knights: skilled in arms and chivalry and courtly love and all the other qualities that make a knight successful. Both the knights and the common people acclaim him as a noble and mighty knight.

According to Cuddon, J. A in *Webster's Students Dictionary*, explains that hero is the principal male personage, usually of noble character, in a poem, story, drama, or the like (1959: 383). Lancelot can be called as a hero because he has bravery for upholding the justice to get the rightness. He protects ladies and damsels. He releases many of captives who are kept in the foul dungeons by an evil knight. King Arthur and his queen, Gwenevere, joy for his knightly prowess in the list, and for his gentle courtesy and noble manners to all, both poor and rich, high and low. The relationship between him and his lord, King Arthur is right well. He is the king's champion, fighting challengers and going on quests in the king's name. He is time and again the symbol of Arthur's justice.

Moreover, Lancelot is a hero and patriot knight. He proves himself to defend right against might that is when he rescues the queen from the stake of fire after she is condemned for adultery with him. Sir Lancelot and his kinsmen come to rescue the queen. Ultimately, it causes the destruction of King Arthur's realm. There are the greatest woeful war and the downfall of The Round Table.

Lancelot is a super hero who does so full of gentleness and much fame. Further, The writer interests to analyze the novel of Henry Gilbert's *King Arthur's Knights*. The analysis is focused on the heroism of Sir Lancelot, the main character of the novel. Hence, it is very interesting to discuss Lancelot's heroism in facing and solving a problem. So, the writer interests to analyze further about it.

1.2 The Statement of Problems

This thesis discusses the description of Sir Lancelot's qualities and abilities, which make Lancelot a hero. The problem is to answer the question: how is Sir Lancelot's heroism as the main character in the novel?

1.3 The Limitation of Problem

In analyzing the novel, the writer wants to give limitation of the analysis. The writer limits discussion in order to get a clearer understanding on the discussion. It is important to guard the discussion run well. The writer would like to discuss a problem concerning with title *The Analysis on Heroism of Main Character in King Arthur's Knights* by Henry Gilbert.

Furthermore, this study is limited to find out the reason why Lancelot is called a hero. We should briefly note that the novel has a certain number of characters, for example there are major characters while the others are minor ones. In this novel, Lancelot is a major male character. The writer will add brief explanation about social conflicts as the effects of the main character's heroism to other characters as well, and Lancelot's actions in solving his conflicts.

1.4 The Objective of Study

The writer would like to focus the analysis on a study, especially to analyze the description of Sir Lancelot's qualities and abilities related to the character of Sir Lancelot's heroism, as the main characters.

1.5 The Significant of Study

The significant of this thesis, first of all, the writer wants to show the literary work of Henry Gilbert, which adapted from the most famous work of Arthurian Literature, Sir Thomas Malory. Second, the writer wants to help a literary works development about heroism. However, literary work can have a close relationship with other science to make the story more interesting. The combining between the ability of the author and the knowledge of science, such as physic, math, geography, etc., it will produce the literary works that have the best quality. Third, the writer hopes that by reading this thesis, the reader is able to understand the content of the novel thoroughly. The reader can refer the character of Lancelot as a hero, and the ways of Lancelot faces his conflicts and solves them in his daily life. Of course, most people take the goodness and let away the badness. Moreover, the writer learns about the person's personality, and gets more knowledge about social effect.