

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

‘Novel is a lengthy fictitious prose narrative portraying characters and presenting an organized series of events and settings. Every novel is an account of life, every novel involves conflict, characters, action, setting, plot and theme.’ (Shaw, 1905:257). The present writer would like to analyze a novel for her thesis, because compared to the other genres, its form of narration makes the present writer and the readers comprehend the story and see the purpose of the author more easily and clearly.

From among the English novelists, the present writer has decided to choose Charles Dickens because he is one of the greatest English novelists in the Victorian period. He wrote so many works, some of which are charming, and he contributed amusing characters to the English literature.

The present writer has decided to choose one of Dickens’ novels, A Tale of Two Cities. It is one of Charles Dickens’ historical novels. Although the story of A Tale of

Two Cities takes place seventy years before Dickens' time, it does indirectly address contemporary issues about which the author was concerned. "Dickens' works are characterized by attacks on social evil, injustice and hypocrisy. He is a quintessential Victorian author: his epic stories, vivid characters and exhaustive depiction of contemporary life are unforgettable. He was an enormously complex man, a fact seen by many of the important literary figures of his day who were acquainted with him." (www.dickens-literature.com)

A Tale of Two Cities is one of Charles Dickens' historical novels. The two cities of the title are London and Paris. The settings of places are both of the cities and the story takes place before and during the French Revolution. As Murphy says, the background of French Revolution is because of 'various social, political, and economic conditions led to the revolution in France. These conditions included much dissatisfaction among the lower and middle classes, interest in new ideas about government, and financial problems caused by the cost of war.'

A literary work is considered good if there is a theme presented. According to Laurence, 1974:102 and Kenney, 1966:94, Theme is the total meaning of idea that unifies all literary elements like plot, character, setting, conflict, point of view and it is a total meaning discovered by the writer in the process of writing and by the reader in the process of writing and by the reader in the process of reading. The statement above shows how important a theme in a story is.

Theme in a novel can be seen through many aspects, such as character, plot, and setting. However, in this novel, the theme is revealed through the major characters, particularly their characters' traits changes. As Kenney says in How to Analyze fiction,

‘as a major element in fiction, character is obviously of major importance of theme. One matter to be kept in mind is the kind of character the story deals with.’ (Kenney,1966:94-95). After learning all the problems the three major characters face and the possible sources of the problems, the present writer is encouraged to formulate the theme. The present writer tries to understand the message delivered by the author in order to appreciate the novel better. Therefore, in discussing the theme of the novel, the present writer is going to focus her analysis on the portrayal and actions of the three major characters whose roles are significant and dominant in revealing the theme. Accordingly, the analysis presented in this thesis is dedicated to reveal the theme.

1.2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In analysing Charles Dickens’ A Tale of Two Cities, the present writer would like to state the problems as follows:

1. What is the theme of Charles Dickens’ A Tale of Two Cities?
2. How do the major characters reveal the theme?

1.3. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

1. To show the theme of Charles Dickens’ A Tale of Two Cities.
2. To show how the major characters reveal the theme.

1.4. METHOD OF RESEARCH

In writing her thesis, the present writer conducts the library research. Firstly, she reads the primary text, Dickens' A Tale of Two Cities, then she consults some references in the library to look for the theories which are relevant to the topic being discussed. After that, she searches for some additional information in the internet. Finally, she uses the selected data and theories to write the analysis and the conclusion.

1.5.ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

The present writer divides her thesis into three chapters, which are preceeded by the Preface and the Abstract. Chapter One is the Introduction, which contains the Background of Study, the Statement of the Problem, the Purpose of the Study, the Method of Research and the Organization of the Thesis. Chapter Two contains the Analysis of Theme through the Major Characters in Charles Dickens' A Tale of Two Cities. The last chapter, Chapter Three, contains the Conclusion. This thesis ends with the Bibliography, which lists the references the present writer has used in her thesis, and the Appendices, which contain the Synopsis of the Novel and the Biography of the Author.