

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

I prefer discussing poetry to novel or drama because many people know that poetry is harder to analyze than novel and drama. Seeing this, I feel challenged to analyze poetry. I also find that reading poetry is more enjoyable because of the rhyming words which make poetry sound beautiful when it is recited. As well poetry is ‘... the art of rhythmical composition, written or spoken, designed to produce pleasure through beautiful, element of profound thoughts.’ (Shawn, 1972:292).

I choose Browning and Tennyson; English poets of the Victorian period. I am interested in Browning and Tennyson because ‘they were the two greatest poetic figures of their time.’ (Thornley, 1986:107). Besides, they also used women as the characters in the four poems to be analyzed in this thesis.

Some works of Browning and Tennyson were based on the social condition which happened at their time. Moreover, they used the condition at that time in most of their works. At that time,

women had some rules which last made them oppressed and suffer. They were oppressed especially by men and women's voice is often overshadowed by men's voice.

Browning and Tennyson are very well known because they have produced a lot of good works, but I decide to choose My Last Duchess, Porphyria's Lover, The Lady of Shallot, and Marianna. I see that the women characters in these poems portray the characteristics of women who lived in the Victorian period. They had to stay at home and do the housework. They did not have freedom to express their opinions and reasons. They often became the sexual objects of men. The married women got less sympathy. Women were isolated in their rooms. A lot of women were even killed just because of men's ambition. (<http://victorianweb.org/gender.html>). Staying at home, not having freedom to express their opinions and reasons, becoming sexual objects, getting less sympathy, being isolated, and being killed made women at that time subordinate to men.

Therefore, these poems are interesting to be analysed further using sociological background. Sociological criticisms also analyse the social content of literary works like the culture (Kennedy, 1996:2194) and it is explained in How to Analyze Poetry that 'we arrive at a greater understanding of people and society by arriving at an understanding of poetry; there is indeed a relationship between literature we read and the life we lead.' (Reaske, 1966:10). I also use some poetic devices to reveal the hidden meaning in these poems. The poetic device used is symbol 'a visible object or action that suggests some further meaning in addition to itself' (Kennedy, 1996:997). So, by knowing the women subordination at that time which is revealed through the poetic device, we can understand the meaning of the poem together with the themes.

I decide to analyse the four women characters in the poems because I am interested in showing the themes of the four poems and I also want to show that the women subordination in the poems is the same as the women subordination in the society at that time. So by using sociological approach to analyse those poems, I hope the readers can know the women subordination in the Victorian period which is reflected in the themes of the poems.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

I state the problems as follows:

1. What are the themes of the four poems related to women subordination?
2. What are the poetic devices used to reveal the themes?

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The analysis is done for the purposes as follows:

- 1 To show the themes of the four poems through the women subordination
2. To show poetic devices used to reveal the themes

METHOD OF RESEARCH

I use library research in writing my thesis. Firstly, I begin by reading the poems. Then I read several references, which are related to the topic being discussed. In addition, I have also taken some data as the references from internet web site, in order to support my analysis of the poems. In the end, I make some conclusions of the analysis of the poems.

ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

This thesis consists of three chapters. Chapter One is the Introduction, which consists of the Background of the Study, the Statement of the Problem, the Purpose of the Study, the Method of Research and the Organization of the Thesis. Chapter Two is the analysis on women subordination in Tennyson's The Lady of Shalott and Marianna; and Browning's My Last Duchess and Porphyria's Lover. The last chapter, Chapter Three, is the Conclusion of what has been discussed in the previous chapter. The thesis also includes the poems and the biographies of the authors.