

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### I. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Questions on the meaning of life, existence and whether a human has a freedom to choose, have become debatable questions for centuries. Existentialism, as one of the philosophical thinkings, deals with human existence in the world which emphasizes individual existence, freedom, and choice. Existentialism also examines the determination of choice and personal responsibility which is based on his/her experience, beliefs, and biases. Those questions above and existentialist theory make me interested in analyzing literary works based on existentialism.

In this thesis I choose Franz Kafka, who is one of existentialist thinkers that expresses loneliness, frustration, and despair of an individual threatened by invisible power behind his ability. Kafka's characters usually feel a sensation of anxiety and shame; he sets his major character in a state of loneliness and frustration. He also makes his work painful or tragic.

I choose four of Kafka's short stories entitled A Country Doctor, Josephine the Singer, Or the Mouse Folk, A Hunger Artist, and A Report to Academy. I choose to analyze the themes of existentialism.

In these four Kafka's short stories, all the protagonists struggle to determine

what they want in their life regardless of the opinion of the society. All of the protagonists face the obstacles in achieving their own freedom.

Existentialism is a philosophical thought that learns about a human and his/her existence which appears in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This philosophical thinking refers to humans as individuals who try to find the purpose of their life, to live their life. Humans as individuals have a choice and freedom to show their existence.

Existentialism emphasizes free will, choice and personal responsibility. People make their choice based on their belief, experience, and their assumption. In existentialism, it is explained that a human's choice is subjective, because individuals finally must make their own choices without the help from external standards as laws, ethical rules, or traditions. As a result, individuals are free to determine their own choice, despite this fact; they are completely responsible for their choices. The existentialists criticize the fight of freedom and responsibility into self-deception. They insist that individuals should accept full responsibility for their behavior, no matter how difficult it is. If an individual is to live meaningfully and faithfully, he/she must become fully aware of the true character of the human situation and bravely accept it.

Jean-Paul Sartre, a famous philosophical thinker in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, is famous for the slogan of existence precedes essence. It means that, individuals have no predetermined nature or essence that controls what they are, what they do, or what is valuable for them. They are totally free to act independently of determination by outside influences. An individual creates his/her own human nature which means that the individual comes into his/her existence without predetermined nature but then the individual creates his/her nature or essence through his/her actions in free choices. The individual must create his/her own essence. This means he/she is living in the

world, suffering there, struggling there, that he/she gradually defines himself/herself, and the individual will create his/her values through these choices.

Existentialism has a strong relation with the society. In existentialism, society acts as judges who assess the individual's choice in doing his/her task. Everything that the individual does is judged by the society; sometimes the society cannot accept the weakness of the individual. There is no perfect individual, sometimes he/she cannot do what should he/she do because of something beyond his/her power, and this is his/her weakness. If the individual has a weakness in doing his/her task the society will reject him/her. And it makes the individual lose his/her freedom of choice. The weaknesses also make the individual's choice to be meaningless and hopeless which is followed by rejection and dissatisfaction. As a conclusion the society restricts the individual to act freely, and makes one's lose freedom to choose. Despite this fact the individual must not conform to society what ever the situation and condition are, the individual must choose wisely what he/she wants to do in his/her life to get a value of it.

## **II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

1. What is the theme of Franz Kafka's A Country Doctor, Josephine the Singer, Or the Mouse Folk, A Hunger Artist and A Report to Academy?
2. How is the theme revealed through the protagonists?

## **III. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

1. To show the theme of Franz Kafka's A Country Doctor, Josephine the Singer or the Mouse Folk, A Hunger Artist and A Report to Academy.
2. To show how the theme is revealed through the protagonists.

#### **IV. METHOD OF RESEARCH**

In writing this thesis, I use both library and internet research. First I read and analyze the primary book that has been chosen. Then I proceed to read supporting reading on the theory related to the chosen approach that will be used and applied to the analysis of the thesis. Furthermore readings on related subjects related to both the primary reading and applying theory are done through internet sites research and readings. Afterwards, I use all the information for the analysis of the topics I choose for my thesis.

#### **V. ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS**

I organize my thesis as follows

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 of the Theme through the Protagonist. Chapter Three is the Conclusion, which is about the similarity of the themes in each of the short stories of Kafka's. Then I arrange every book and website that I have read into the Bibliography, I write the Summary of four Kafka's short stories, and end with Franz Kafka's Biography.