

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains an introductory paragraph and some backgrounds of the study in analyzing liberal feminism in Sylvia Plath's novel *The Bell Jar*. It includes of background of the study, statement of the problems, purpose of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation of the study, definition of special terms, and organization of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Literature always tells about human and humanity. It always describes the human's feeling about love, jealous, sadness, and happiness. It interprets in the form of literature such as prose, poetry and drama. M.H Abrams states literature is applied to a number of works in drama and prose fiction which have in common the sense that the human condition is essentially absurd, and that this condition can be adequately represented only in works of literature that are themselves absurd (1999:1). It means that literature is one of the stories of our life that we cannot separate.

One of the subjects in literary works is novel. According to Abrams the term "novel" is now applied to a great variety of writings that have in common only the attribute of being extended works of *fiction* written in prose (1990:190). It includes in a kind of prose. It has long narration and dialog. It is also has many characters from the major until the minor character. It usually

serves with several chapters that have different story, but have connection to each other. Here, the author chooses novel as the object to analyze.

Feminism is one of kind literary criticism that discuss about women. It is a movement ideology that explains women's struggle to get the equality with the same rights in education, work, politic, social and so on. According to Freedman (2001:3) feminism is thus a term that emerged long after women started questioning their inferior status and demanding an amelioration in their social position. This philosophy also describes about woman status and man's opinion about to get rights and place in a society.

According to Freedman feminism has two waves in its history. 'First wave' feminism is used to refer to the late 19th century and early 20th century feminist movements that were concerned (although not exclusively) with gaining equal rights for women, particularly the right of suffrage. 'Second-wave' feminism refers to the resurgence of feminist activity in the late 1960s and 1970s, when protest again centered around women's inequality, although this time not only in terms of women's lack of equal political rights but in the areas of family, sexuality and work (2001:4).

One of feminism writers in 1950s is Sylvia Plath. She was born in Jamaica Plains, Massachusetts on 1932 in a middle class family. She ever published her poem in young age. She married an English poet named Ted Hughes. She wrote a novel *The Bell Jar* and it published 1963 which has inspired many people at that time. This is one of kind of a literary works that contains about woman's life at the time. In her novel she wrote about a

woman that tried to find the meaning of life. Woman who has different opinions about life, and marriage.

The Bell Jar is a novel written by Sylvia Plath. It is published in 1963. This is first and the only one novel of Sylvia Plath that she ever writes. Before that she was famous as a poet. This novel contains some issues of feminism such as the major's character Esther Greenwood's unwillingness to marry, unwillingness to have a baby, the sexual double standard as the effect of her experiences, and the searching of the meaning of life.

The Bell Jar is a novel about a young girl named Esther. She was smart girl who has bad experiences in her life. In the story she was told as a young college girl who worked at fashion magazine in New York as a guest editor. In New York she experienced with the issue of virginity. Until she returned to her home found out her condition was unwell, she couldn't write, read, or sleep. She also did not accept in writing class in her college. She was told as a girl who had strong principle in her life because of unwillingness to marry, unwillingness to have a baby, and have the sexual double standard as the effect of her experiences. All her principle was created by her when her relationship was betrayed by her boyfriend.

The researcher chooses Sylvia Plath's novel is because this novel includes some feminism issues especially liberal feminism. The liberal feminism here includes liberal in education, work and social that become her strong reasons to decide never want to marry, have a baby and has double sexual standard as her effect of her experiences through the main character

Esther Greenwood. It can describe the feminism issue in 1950s. This novel also a little bit enough represents the first wave of feminism. The setting of this novel was in 1950. It is also the only one of Sylvia Plath's novel which she ever written. Before that she had already famous as a poet. Not only that this novel is contain some different thought about being a housewife, a mother, and the main character's faith about man and woman at that time.

In addition, this novel represents the woman life in 1950s when a man had power to control their lives. It made women at that time has no chance to liberate herself in education, work, and social relationship in society. Then, the main character of this novel tried to liberate her to get everything what she want even her action was contrast with other common girls at that time. That is why feminism in this novel should be studied.

1.2 Statements of the Problems

- 1.2.1 How does the characterization of Esther Greenwood in *The Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath?
- 1.2.2 How does the Esther Greenwood's characterization in *The Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath as reflected in feminism?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

- 1.3.1 To explain the characterization of Esther Greenwood in *The Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath
- 1.3.2 To describe the Esther Greenwood's characterization in *The Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath as reflected in feminism.

1.4 Significance of the Study

By reading this novel, the writer expects that the reader will understand about struggle of the women in the world which based on feminism to get the rights, place, and equality in political, work, education, social and so on. It is because feminism has two movements in its history. Then, in 1950s when the a novel is written, it is the time when the women in the world made first movement and entered to the second movement to struggle their rights and equality. The last purpose is for to get more contribution to increase the interest of the reader to learn more about feminism especially liberal feminism.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The scope of this study is literature. It studies a literary work such as novel that the researcher uses as the object of the study. The researcher chooses Sylvia Plath's novel *The Bell Jar* because this novel contains some issues of feminism that happened in 1950s.

This research is focuses on feminism especially liberal feminism which reflects to the main character Esther Greenwood. The liberal feminism here includes never want to marry, because of she had an opinion that marry can limit herself in reaching her dreams. She also wanted to liberate herself in education, work and social relationship. All her liberal feminism action saw from the description of her characterization.

1.6 Definitions of Special Terms

1.6.1 Feminism

Feminism is a basic ideology that supports woman to make movement for equality and their rights this life. It tends to make the clarity of equally status between man and woman in society. According to Freedman (2001:3) feminism is thus a term that emerged long after women started questioning their inferior status and demanding an amelioration in their social position.

1.6.2 Liberal Feminism

According to Lewis in his blog based on the Jaggar's book *Feminist Politics and Human Nature*, liberal feminism is theory and work that focuses more on issues like equality in the workplace, in education, in political rights. Where liberal feminism looks at issues in the private sphere, it tends to be in terms of equality: how does that private life impede or enhance public equality (March, 12 2014).

1.6.3 Character

Character is some people who act in the story as a narrative, or as a person who always most appear in the story that has influenced many other people in the story or people whose got influenced from that person. They usually represent the feeling of the description of the story. Bennet and Royle state that characters are the life of literature: they are the objects of our curiosity and fascination, affection and dislike, admiration and condemnation (2004:60).

1.6.3 Characterization

Characterization is how the author describe every character in that story, how the character habits in the story. The character usually tells through dialogs and the narration that can build the physical attitude of those characters. Bacon states in his article *Literary Elements Characterization* that characterization is a name for the methods a writer uses to reveal a character's values, feelings, goals, etc. to readers (March, 12 2014).

1.7 Organization of the Study

This thesis that has titled *An Analysis of Feminism in Sylvia Plath's Novel "The Bell Jar"* "consists of five chapters. First is introduction that includes background of the study, statement of the problems, purpose of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation of the study, definition of special terms, and organization of the study.

The second chapter, it includes about definitions, comments, ideas or insights of literature, novel, character, characterization, feminism and liberal feminism. In addition in the third chapter, it explains about the method of the study. It contains the nature of the research, the source of the data, the selection of the data, the data, and the steps of the data collection.

The fourth chapter contains the analyzing of the data. Here, the writer analyzes the data based on the theory on chapter two. The data will be analyzed one by one by giving some explanations in details of each data. Then, it continues with giving conclusion of this research. It will be explained in the chapter five. After that, the writer adds the bibliography and appendices: summary of the novel.