

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents basic consideration, research question, the objectives of the research, significances of the research, and scope and delimitation of study.

1.1. Basic consideration

People have many ways in understanding a history or various aspects of life in a certain society. One of them is by revealing a literary work which illustrates the social condition and situation around the works were created at, so it is possible to let the people nowadays to have a worldview. As one of the literary works, poem becomes a medium that mostly used by poet in actualizing things on their mind and express how their emotion works when experience or witness something, which is transferred into the soulful words. That is why a poem might be created in any situation, including in war period.

In accordance with War period, it evidently could not stop the poet in that time to create a poem, no matter what their background are. For instance, during the World War I or called as Great War on July 1914 to November 1918, there was a premiere English poet and also an infantry soldier namely Wilfred Owen from British Empire. Owen, who was well known with his work entitled “*Dulce et Decorum Est*”, created almost all of his poems from August 1917 to September 1918.

As an important point to inform, this study was inspired by the researcher’s interest on literature, and its relation to history, as these two are inseparable. Accordingly, an exploration was made to identify a big discourse, and eventually

found the soldier named Wilfred Owen showcased World War 1 through his precious works. Actually, there was another American poet named Alfred Joyce Kilmer who has done a quite outstanding works on Great War. However, Owen's involvement is much more intensive and valuable compared to Kilmer, thus, this research embraced him as its primary object. Following this, it is also interesting to see how good someone to produce a poem in unsupportive situation, specifically in war, since normally poets create their works in some emotional situations, such as happy, fall in love, betrayed, and sad. Therefore, the output of this study is an essential for those who possess the same concern as the researcher.

Scholars have attempted to explore Owen's poems in the last ten years through its structure and pragmatic elements. For instance, an *English Association Bookmark 66* by Peter Cash (2010) limited the analysis to eight poems of Owen's by considering the rhyme. Another study has done by Sandra M. Gilbert (2016) who traces the influence of John Keats in two of Owen's poems; they are *Anthem for Doomed Youth* and *Dulce et Decorum Est*. However, it seemingly limited study of Owen's poems regarding the social condition reflected through his poem during the Great War.

The researcher spotted some stanzas in poems of Owen that portrayed The Great War, for example:

*"He Sat in a wheeled chair, waiting for dark,
And shivered in his ghastly suit of grey,
Legless, sewn short at elbow. Through the park
Voices of boys rang saddening like a hymn, ..."*
(*Disabled*, S1, L1-4)

Through the stanza, Owen would like to portray the condition of war victims since the poem was written when he was a patient in Craighlockhart hospital (European History, 2017; Webb, 2006). The line “*legless, sewn short at elbow*” is one of the examples, it was illustrated that people suffered wounds and had a serious treatment in the hospital. Another instance, “*voices of boys rang saddening like a hymn*” indicates the moan of soldiers, which refers to two things, the first one is moaned for having serious treatment in hospital after been wounded in war, and the second one is moaned for losing their soldier friends.

Another stanza in poem “The Chances” indicates of massacre. It indirectly portrays how the situation around Owen during the Great War was full of the gunshot and explosion, so that made the people lived in very high possibility of death, at anytime and anywhere. Consequently, many people down, blown to chops, wounded, and even killed. This is illustrated by this following stanza:

*“One of us got the knock-out, blown to chops.
T’other was hurt, like, losin’ both ‘is props.
An’ one, to use the word of ‘ypocrites,
‘Ad the misfortoon to be took by Fritz.
Now me, I wasn’t scratched, praise God almighty
(Though next time please I’ll thank ‘im for a blighty),
But poor young Jim, ‘e’s livin’ an’ ‘e’s not;
‘E reckoned ‘e’d five chances, an’ ‘e’s ‘ad;
‘E’s wounded, killed, and pris’ner, all the lot --
The ruddy lot all rolled in one, Jim’s mad.”
(The Chances, in Sassoon, 1921, p.22)*

In fact, the information as reported by European History (2017) attempted to clarify that Owen involved in the situation where allied counterattacked Germany as they wanted to separate French and British and killed many people. Owen in this case

joined allied forces in order to beat Germany. Therefore, through this study the researcher would like to keenly investigate how is the social condition of “The Great War” portrayed on Wilfred Owen’s poems.

1.2. Research Question

Based on the basic consideration in the previous section, the researcher would like to answer the question; how is “The Great War” portrayed on Wilfred Owen’s poems?

1.3. Objectives

The objective of this research is to reveal “The Great War” portrayed on Wilfred Owen’s poems.

1.4. Research Significances

This research contains several significances. The first one is to reveal the social condition during the Great War that reflected through poems of Wilfred Owen. This is because by considering the literature as the reflection of the society, means that what is being written by the author, or in this case by the poet, was from the phenomenon happened at that time. Subsequently, to enrich the knowledge of the readers about the history, since the function of analyzing the literature is also capturing the historical event based on the time. In addition, this study is expected to be the reference for students and lecturers in poetry subject.

In terms of literary criticism concern, this study is able to provide reference in applying genetic structuralism theory within literature, thus, those who want to employ the theory can employ it to analyze other kinds of literary works.

1.5. Scope and Delimitation of Study

This research focuses on the analysis of Genetic Structure as portrayed on 8 poems of Wilfred Owen: 1) *Greater Love*; 2) *Disabled*; 3) *The Chances*; 4) *Apologia Pro Peomate Meo*; 5) *A terre*; 6) *Wild with All Regrets*; 7) *Smile, Smile, Smile*; 8) *Dulce et Decorum Est*. Those poems are selected since they were written in about 1917-1918, the time when Owen was involved in Great War as a soldier. The reason of choosing the above poems are, firstly, those contained very noticeable condition of “The Great War” that becomes object of this study. Secondly, the time when Owen’s poems were produced can be identified, hence, reflecting it towards historical fact would not be a difficult case. Lastly, it is due to limitation of time in doing this study, so that only 8 poems are included.