

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter covers background of the study, the statements of problem, objectives of the study, significances of the study, and also scope and limitation.

1.1. Background of the Study

American writers, such as poet, novelist, essayist, and playwright give a good contribution to the development of literature every year (Abrams, 1999). There are also American writers whom their literary works become the best seller and also get the international achievements. For example, *Moby Dick* by Herman Melville, *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison, *The Waste Land* by T.S. Eliot, *The Glass Menagerie* by Tennessee William, and etc. In addition, American literary works become the best seller not only in Indonesia but also in other countries.

One of the divisions of American literature based on the historical period is contemporary American period. In *A Glossary of Literary Terms Seventh Edition*, Abrams (1999: 209) describes that the contemporary American period starts from 1939 to the present which has various themes of writing. The themes are the images of sexuality, death, and sensuality. Again, the themes of adolescence are coloring the contemporary American literature for the readers, especially for teenagers. Then, the themes of liberty and justice are explored in contemporary American period. The last, the literary works which contain the values of life, such Judaism, Christianity, or other religion are also portrayed in the contemporary American literature.

There are women writers coloring the writings of literary works in contemporary American period. For example, Suzan Lory Parks builds a success for her drama entitled *The America Play* which tells about the assassination of President named Abraham Lincoln by John Wilkes Booth. Afterwards, Harryette Mullen has attained success as a poet in her *Sleeping with the Dictionary*, which was nominated for a National Book Award. Then, Toni Morrison won the Pulitzer Prize and American Book Award for her novel entitled *Beloved*.

Concerning with the existence of women writers in contemporary American period, there is a famous woman writer named Sarah Gorham. She is not only a poet but also an essayist. She also works as a publisher of Sarabande Books. Her fourth collections of poem are *Bad Daughter* (2011), *The Cure* (2003), *The Tension Zone* (1996), and *Don't Go Back to Sleep* (1989). Then, there are a lot of Sarah Gorham's achievements. Her individual poems have been published in *Best American Poetry*, *American Poetry Review*, *The Nation*, *Kenyon Review*, *Paris Review*, *Open City*, *Georgia Review*, and among other places (Gorham, 2011). She also writes essays which have appeared in *Iowa Review*, *AGNI*, *Creative Nonfiction*, *Gulf Coast*, *Pleiades*, and *Real Simple* (Gorham, 2011). Besides the 2012 NEA grant, she has received fellowships from the Kentucky, Connecticut, and Delaware Arts Councils, Yaddo, MacDowell, and the James Merrill House (Gorham, 2011).

One of Sarah Gorham's collections of poem is *Bad Daughter* which is written in 2011. *Bad Daughter's* collection contains several titles of poem. One of the poem in that collection entitled *Salon*. It is a contemporary American poetry.

Furthermore, VanSpanckeren (1994: 121) argued that contemporary American poetry broke free from the rule of writing a poem such as rhyme and the meter. It means that the contemporary poets try to create the poems into free pattern for the form of their poems. Likewise, Sarah Gorham's *Salon* consists of ten stanzas. The lines of stanza are different each other which contains one until three lines. Then the end rhymes of *Salon* are different too. Again, contemporary American poetry is a vast territory of free imagination (VanSpanckeren, 1994: 121). It means there is no limitation of writing a poem according to the poet's creativity.

The writer is interested in analyzing Sarah Gorham's *Salon* as the source of data because this poem is an attractive poem for many reasons. *Salon* was featured on *Poetry Daily*. Almost all of the dictions appear beautifully in Sarah Gorham's *Salon*. In that poem, each word has different meaning. There are also many italic lines which show many implied meanings that the reader must understand well in Sarah Gorham's *Salon*. Consequently, the readers must read Sarah Gorham's *Salon* more than twice to get better understanding about many implied meanings which show in that poem.

Talking about the title of Sarah Gorham's *Salon*, salon itself has three definitions in *Oxford Dictionary* (2006: 1291). First definition, salon is shop/stores that gives customers hair or beauty treatment or that sells expensive clothes, for instances a beauty salon or a hairdressing salon. Second definition, salon (*old-fashioned*) is a room in a large house used for entertaining guests. Last definition, salon (*in the past*) is a regular meeting of writers, artists and other guests at the house of a famous or important person. In summary, salon has many

functions, including as the place for making beautiful, a guest house and a regular meeting for the people.

More specifically, Sarah Gorham's writings are influenced by religion, moral values and other writers. In fact, most of Sarah Gorham's writings are influenced by the Bible as a Christians' holy book. Then, Sarah Gorham puts Hebrew Proverbs to show moral values toward her writings. From an interview, Rachel Andoga talks with Sarah Gorham about the basic writing ideas which the themes of Sarah Gorham's literary works are influenced by Edgar Allan Poe (Retrieved from <http://fourwaybooks.blogspot.com/2011/11/interview-with-sarah-gorham-by-rachel.html>). The last, Sarah Gorham's writing process is influenced by her husband, named Jeffrey Skinner. Sarah Gorham compiles Jeffrey Skinner's poem with her style of writing. Gorham also creates the poem having same theme with Skinner's poems.

This study uses deconstruction and intertextuality theories to analyze Sarah Gorham's *Salon*. The function of deconstruction is to find the meaning of *hair* which is renewed from the general perspective. Then, intertextuality is used to find the correlation between the word *hair* which refers to human reflection with other non-literary works and also other literary works. It is very important to put deep analysis upon the case of poem with other literary works or non-literary works by using deconstruction and intertextuality theories. Overall, it is essential to do more study on this field.

According to Derrida, deconstruction works to renew the idea (Norris, 2002: 19). That statement can be illustrated by a process to return from the first

idea of literary work itself. Its function is to examine the idea of writing that must be discussed clearly. As the writer, he/she will not be able to justify that every idea has general meaning. To this end, the writer must identify the idea itself by using deconstruction theory. Its function is to deconstruct the idea for knowing the other specific meanings from the idea which has general meaning.

Allen (2000: 70) observes intertextual reading encourages the reader to resist a passive reading of texts from cover to cover. Intertextual reading is not a single reading. The readers must read the text more than one time. In addition, the reader must read other texts to know the correlation with the text which they have been read before. It will help the reader to get better understanding about the idea of literary work. Every text has its meaning, therefore, in relation to other texts (Allen, 2000: 6). It means that every text has implied meaning which we must try to find out as the reader.

More importantly, there have been a number of valuable studies by using deconstruction and also intertextuality theory (Sampurno, 2004; Wijoseno, 2007; Yudha, 2012), all of which only present analyses whether to deconstruct the literary work or to find the intertextual relationship of the literary works. Nevertheless, none of those studies provide study by using both theories to analyze literary works. Therefore, this study provides a study about making relationship by using the collaboration of both theories to get the implied meanings of italic lines in Sarah Gorham's *Salon*. By applying deconstruction, this study renews that the word *hair* has many implied meanings inside Sarah Gorham's *Salon*. Afterwards, by applying intertextuality, this theory is used to

strengthen the trustworthiness about the result of deconstructed *hair* in Gorham's *Salon* which also has the intertextual relationship to the other sources.

1.2. The Statements of Problem

Dealing with background of the study, the questions that belong to the statement of the problem include:

1. How is *hair* deconstructed in Gorham's *Salon*?
2. What are the intertexts of the Bible, Hebrew Proverbs, Poe's poems and Skinner's poem in relation to human reflection in Gorham's *Salon*?

1.3. The Objectives of the Study

Based on the statements of the problem, this study is to be conducted with the objectives as follows:

1. To identify *hair* that is deconstructed in Gorham's *Salon*.
2. To establish the connection from intertexts of the Bible, Hebrew Proverbs, Poe's poems and Skinner's poem in relation to human reflection in Gorham's *Salon*.

1.4. The Significances of the Study

These significances of writing this study are hoped to give contribution as follows theoretically and practically.

Theoretically, the result of this study gives contribution to the next writer. This study is expected to provide benefit as the first source of information data about Sarah Gorham's *Salon* to the next studies, because there is no study about it

before. Then, the result of this study gives the way to analyze the literary works by applying deconstruction and intertextuality theories.

Practically, the result of this study is hoped to give contribution for the society. For Christians, this study can enrich their knowledge about the relationship between literature and the Bible, for instance the poem about human reflection which is stated in the Bible. After that, the result of this study is hoped to give a guidance of life about the moral values from Hebrew Proverbs to the society.

1.5. The Scope and Limitation

The scope of this study is the use of deconstruction and intertextuality theories. Then, the discussion is limited by focusing only the data in the form of phrases which have the relationship with the word *hair* in Gorham's *Salon*.

This study also needs the supporting data. First, the supporting data are in the form of sentences or quotations from the Bible and Hebrew Proverbs which are in relation to human reflection. The value of the Bible about human reflection is examined in *The Old Testament of Habakkuk, Ezekiel, and Isaiah*. Then, it is also examined in *The New Testament of First Corinthians* and *First Thessalonians*.

Second, the supporting data are in the form of phrases from Poe's *Alone* and *The Conqueror Worm* and also Skinner's poem which is entitled *Elegy with Yellow Boat* which have the same theme about human reflection.