

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents five sub chapters that are informed in this research, namely background of the study, research question, research objective, scope and limitation, and significances of the study.

1.1 Background of the study

There is an art in human life, and the art which offers a beauty is literature. Literature is different with the other kinds of art because it uses language as medium to fulfill the element of art. Besides, literature represents tradition, history and culture. Literature introduces us to many new experiences of world. Also, it has function in giving knowledge and entertainment as like human can enjoy a tragedy and comedy histories. The subjects of literature are notable for literary work as an expression. Literary work is the results of an idea which has an aesthetic value. Literary work is able to elaborate a message from the author to the human's life. Basically, literary work is the mirror of society because it related to the social reality. According to Wellek and Warren (1954 : 11), literary is something which has creative and art value. It reveals some various of phenomena that occur in human life which is poured by the author in form of writing.

Poetry is mentioned as one of the unique in literary works because it was created from poet's contemplation. The meaning of each poetry usually has a multi interpretation. It means that everyone has their own perspective in interpreting poetry because everyone has different views related to the poetry

which they read. It often uses particular forms to suggest the alternative meaning in the words and to invite the sensual or emotional responses. One of device is symbolism. The use of symbol in poem often suggests multi interpretation. For example, a rose represents a love, white represents holiness, red represents courage, moon represents a beauty, sun represents a light, and a soaring bird might stand for freedom. Those symbols can represent another things depending on how they are used in a particular poem. Poetry presents in several era, one of them is contemporary era. Contemporary is the style of poetry written today and as the reaction of conventional literature.

One of the genius American contemporary poet who is capable in giving a sense through her poem is Meghan O'Rourke. *My Life as a Subject* is one of her poem which published in June 2008 and it tells about national power and civics. Based on the data record as have been explained by Meghan O'Rourke that She calls the poem as *My Life as a Subject* because when she was thinking about the poem, she liked to think about someone who went to the museum and they saw a kind of ancient Roman and Greek artifacts and old amphora that able to be seen by the visitors. This poem is supposed to be kind of those fractured amphoras which amphora itself has a story and scene related to her life experiences in the kingdom (O'Rourke, 2009 : 16).

Meghan O'Rourke is an author of poems as well as a memoir. She lives in Brooklyn and be famous because of her best works. Her works have achieved several awards such as inaugural May Sarton Poetry Prize, the Union League Prize for Poetry from the Poetry Foundation, a Lannan Literary Fellowship, two

Pushcart Prizes, and a Front Page Award for her cultural criticism. She was a graduate from Yale University and began her career as a youngest editor in the history of New Yorker (Poetry Society of America, 2012). Meghan O'Rourke grew up in Brooklyn, the city in United States that is known as independent city which has many museums, libraries and educational center. The society in Brooklyn always organize an education program, public program and an exhibition to show materials related on Brooklyn history as for the exhibition that showed to the visitors as like photo, document and artifact (NYCgo.com, 2006-2020).

Meghan O'Rourke's poetry collection includes *Sun in Days* (W.W. Norton 2017), *Once* (W.W Norton, 2011), *Halflife* (W.W.Norton, 2007) and list some poems such as *Navesink* (2017), *My life as A subject* (2008), *Halflife* (2005), *On Marriage* (2008) and *Sleep* (2005). These poems for sure have their own characteristics which make them special. Although those are written by the same author actually the structure and historical aspect will be distinct. *My Life as a Subject* is containing about archaeology which was expressed by the author in form of poem. Therefore, the writer becomes interested in analyzing the archaeology in term of artifact and material culture which exist in Meghan O'Rourke's poem.

Furthermore, artifact and material culture become one of important aspects in literature. There are many culture, histories, and stories which are created by the people in society as learning and results of association in life. Human can use

artifact as the cultural form of human activity or as the physical culture which can be seen and touched as the real product of human's behaviors.

There are many kinds of artifact that revealed in poem entitled *My Life As a Subject*. So, it is important to analyze this poem due to intention of the writer to extend the content and meaning of the poem, especially the artifacts. Also, the poem is one of the contemporary poems that ever written by the famous American author, Meghan O'Rourke. *My Life as a Subject* poem is chosen by the writer as material of analysis because of two reasons; First, it has never been analyzed before. Second, the content of the poem is related to the artifact that represents culture and history of society.

This study used post structuralism approach focused on Michel Foucault to analyze the poem. Post structuralism of Foucault is the most suitable approach to analyze artifact and material culture in poem like *My Life as a Subject* by Meghan O'Rourke. Although, Michel Foucault is a linguists, but post structuralism approach generally can be applied in literature because language has a connection with literature itself. Language is a system of conventional written symbols or by means of speech sounds that combined into words and combined into sentences or it can be said as fundamental unit of literature. According to White (2006 : 54) “Language governs the behavior and thoughts, it is essential to see how cultural conventions affect expression, both literary and verbal”. It means that literature is created of the thoughts which expressed in any given language.

In applying Foucauldian archaeology, this study has different way and shows the different result with the previous studies which used. The first previous study showed the two literary texts showing the changes in the function of language between discursive formation and the epistemic configurations. The second previous study showed the critique of discourse that appeared around the problem of exception in order to legitimate exceptional practices. The last previous study showed that archaeology can describe a major discursive discontinuity in public housing policy in Tasmania Australia. Also, this study used Foucauldian archaeology, but it showed different result where it showed a social elements, social conditions and social- cultural of the society in America.

1.2 Research Question

Based on the title and background of the study that has been formulated, the major focus can be translated as the research question as follow;

1. How is the archaeological construction of Meghan O'Rourke's *My Life as a Subject* poem by using post structuralism?

1.3 Objective of the Study

In line with the previous statement of the research question, the objective of the study aims to;

1. Analyze the archaeological construction of Meghan O'Rourke's *My Life as a Subject* poem by using post structuralism.

1.4 Scope and Limitation

In this study, the analysis focuses on poem by Meghan O'Rourke entitled *My Life as a Subject* using post structuralism approach by Michel Foucault to do the analysis of archaeology in term of artifact and material culture that influence the author in writing the poem and to convey the archaeological construction of that poem. In addition, this analysis is limited only on the words or the lines in each stanzas of poem.

1.5 Significances of the Study

This study gives some benefits and significance in both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this study is expected to give better understanding about the analysis of archaeology in poem *My Life as a Subject* by using post structuralism approach, particularly in conveying the meaning of poem. Practically, this study is expected to give an inspiration and able to become reference of the readers and the other writers especially for the students of English Department in University of Trunojoyo Madura who are interested in analyzing the archaeological construction of poem in literary work. Hopefully, this study can be useful for the researcher as the reference for doing similar research with the distinct object. Furthermore, it can help the reader or the researcher to learn more about the post structuralism theory which was applied in analyzing a poem.