

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of Study

People always have a purpose in doing anything. For example in working, relaxing or just sensing the air or breath, everyone will always have an aim in doing their activity. The teachers teach the students with aims to give an understanding for the students about the subject they teach. The mothers scold their children in order to show that the thing have done by their children is wrong. The shopkeepers smile to their customers to show their politeness and respect to the customer. By doing that, they all have purposes in what they did. Just like the writer of literary work. The writers also have a purpose in conducting their work. Thus, there is always something behind the literary work that represents the author intentions or motives in conducting their work.

Besides that, literature that is written by the author also becomes the image of the author's worldview toward society. It is strengthened by the statements argued by Wellek and Werren that is 'literature is mirror of life, because literature is expression of human society' (1945:95). Society has an important role to evolve the author's imagination by capturing the things that happen in society. After their capturing activity then they pours their creativity to the literary work. Through this process, the author wrote their literary work directly linked with the social condition of certain time and place that is told in the literary work. Or in other

words, it can be said that literary work can reveal the historical event of the society during the period of the setting inside the literary work itself.

The historical event that is popular to be made into literary work is holocaust. It can be seen from the appearance of holocaust that becomes the theme in literary works. Vashem, Y (n.d.a). Found that there are many writers wrote their literary work start from poem, short story, novel, and even the film script with the Holocaust as the main theme. For example *The Reader* by Bernhard Schlink that was also made into film. Besides that, German poets Paul Celan's portray holocaust or the murder of Jews through his poems *Todesfuge* or *Death Vague*. There are also American writer that raises the holocaust as the theme in their work, those are John Hersey (*The Wall*, 1950), Bernard Malamud (*The Assistant*, 1957), and Lewis Wallant (*The Pawnbroker*), and Saul bellow (*Mr. Summler's Planet*, 1972) and so forth. Among them, Bernard Schlink's work entitles *The Reader* is choosen as the source of the data in this study.

According to Schlink (2001:2) Bernard Schlink was born in July 6, 1944 in Bethel, Germany. His works are *Die Gordische Schleife*, *Selbs Betrug*, *Liebesfluchten*, *Selbs Justiz*, *Selbs Mord*, and *Der Vorleser* (*The Reader*). Among these works, *The Reader* is chosen as the source of data because this novel is admitted as a great novel. It can be seen by the number of award that is given to Schlink for this novel. *The Reader* was the first German book that reaches the number one position in the New York Time best seller list. In 1997 it won the Hans Fallada Prize, a German literary award, Italian Literary Prize Grinzane

Cavour, and the Prix Laure Battalion for works translated into French and the 1999 Literature Prize Daily Newspaper *Die Welt* and it was then translated into 30 languages (Schlink, 2001:2). Thus, *The Reader* becomes Schlink's eminent point on his history of writing because it has given him the award as stated above. Based on the previous reason, thus this novel is chosen to be the source of data.

The Reader originally published in German as *Der Vorleser* in 1995 (Vashem, n.d.a). It tells about the 'holocaust' tragedy that happens in Segregation Camp Auschwitz that guarded by Hanna Schmitz. *The Reader* comes up with complicated social concerns that are the Nazi Holocaust that wiped out over six million people, which are the majority, is Jewish.

The Reader raises the Holocaust as one of the major theme. According to the story, the holocaust tragedy happens when the major character 'Hanna Schmitz' becomes the Guard in Auschwitz concentration Camp. In the westward march to moving the Jews to another camp, there is the Bomb Raid in the church where the Jews are settled out. As the guard that only has authority to keep the camp, Hanna cannot open the Church where the Jews people are blockaded when the bombing raid happens. Thus, it kills the hundreds Jews people inside the church. Because of that, Hanna and other guards in the camp are accused as a defendant. Then the trial holds to judge Hanna and the other guard that admitted as the defendant (Schlink, 1998).

The westward march that is stated above is the imitation of the *historical record*. Schlink imitates the holocaust in Death March tragedy with different

perspective. In the novel, the holocaust happens in the Church where the Jews were blockaded because of the Bomb Raid, while in the *historical record*, the holocaust not only done by the death march. There are also mass murder, gas chamber, and the others. After knowing this, some question might appears in the reader of *The Reader* about why does Schlink only raises the Death March tragedy in his novel. Thus, Schlink interpretation towards the Death March holocaust and Schlink motives is proper to be analyzed.

The holocaust is a true history and recorded in the *historical record*. Holocaust comes from Greek word *holokauston*, then it's originally derives from Hebrew *olah*, that means "completely burnt offering to God" (HuffPost, 2014). Then, Oxford English dictionary describes holocaust as the mass murder of Jews under the Nazi regime during the period of 1941-5 (Bull, 2008). From that mass murder, more than 6 million European Jews were murdered at concentration camps such as Auschwitz. Based on this definition, the readers can automatically conclude that Holocaust is the most appalling atrocities in the entire human history.

Holocaust is important to learn since it has become a global reference for Universal history. Brenner (2010) said that by learning the holocaust, the society can engage their critical reflection about the share of humanity, the roots of genocide and the necessity to keep peace and human rights, and also the acceptance for diversity. Thus, because of those reason, this holocaust topic is chosen to be analyzed.

According to Gilbert (1987:2) in his study about the holocaust entitled *The Holocaust 'The Jewish Tragedy'*, the history of holocaust is something that must never be forgotten. The holocaust was an unforgettable event, not only in the 20th century but also in the entire of human history. By studying the holocaust, it will open people's mind about what had happened in the past. The people will come to realize that democratic and values are not automatically get, it needs sacrifice and struggle, thus, it needs to be appreciated and protected.

This holocaust novel (*The Reader*) had been analyzed by many critics; those are Melodie Nothing Slabbet (2009) entitled *Memory, History and Guilt in Bernhard Schlink's Der Vorleser*, Sally Johnson and Frank Finlay (1999) entitled *(Il)Literacy and (Im)Morality in Bernhard Schlink's The Reader*, Margitt Assmann (2010) *Authority and Obedience in Bernhard Schlink's Der Vorleser and Die Heimkehr* and many more.

Different with the previous research above, this study analyzes the historicity of the 'holocaust' between the *historical record* and *The Reader* and the motives of the author in writing *The Reader*, thus the appropriate theory that is used in analyzing holocaust tragedy in this novel is new historicism theory. According to Tyson (2006:286) New Historicism views the historical accounts as narratives, as stories, that are inevitably biased according to the point of view, conscious or unconscious of those who write them. It means that, the new historicist analyst points out that the *historical record* as same as with the literary work. It can be analyzed just like the literary work that is written by the author. In

this study, the New Historicism theory is chosen as the basis of understanding and analyzing the data. New historicism is chosen because this study needs to be configured with the historical context. This study requires the historical record as the supporting material since the purpose of this study is to looking for the historicity of the novel and the motives of the author in writing the novel. Therefore, the New Historicism theory becomes appropriate to be used.

1.2. Statement of Research Problems

Related with the previous discussion, the statements of research problems of this study are formulated as the following question:

1. What are the historicity of the holocaust between *The Reader* and the historical record?
2. What are Bernhard Schlink's motives in writing *The Reader*?

1.3. Objectives of the Study

According to the research problem above, the objectives of this study are:

1. To analyze the historicity of the holocaust between *The Reader* and the historical record.
2. To describes Bernhard Schlink's motives in writing *The Reader*.

1.4. The significance of the Study

The significance of this study is divided into two parts, theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this study will provide better understanding about the New Historicism in Bernard Schlink's novel entitled *The Reader*. Practically, this study would become a guide to evolving people knowledge that text are not only

from literary works but also from historical text. Furthermore, historical theme novel can help people to know many things in the past. By learning the history, the people will remember what had happened in the past and learn something. Those are learning for morality, patriotism and appreciation to others. At last, they will take the value that can be taken from its history.

1.5. Scope and Limitation of the Study

As the scope of this study, this study concerns about the new historicism aspect from the historical record of holocaust with the holocaust that appears in *The Reader*. The theory used in this study is new historicism theory. This study also limits on the utterances of the characters and also narration of the author that shows the holocaust tragedy.