

THE REFLECTION OF SYLVIA PLATH'S ANXIETIES ON ESTHER
GREENWOOD AS THE MAIN CHARACTER IN THE BELL JAR

A Thesis

Submitted in partial Fulfillment to the Requirement
For the Degree of Sarjana Sastra

AGUSTINA SIMANULLANG

05 985 046



ENGLISH DEPARTMENT - FACULTY OF LETTERS

ANDALAS UNIVERSITY

PADANG

2010

ABSTRAK

Skripsi ini membahas tentang kecemasan-kecemasan yang dialami oleh Sylvia Plath sebagai pengarang, yang mana kecemasan tersebut direfleksikan melalui karakter Esther Greenwood sebagai tokoh utama dalam novel The Bell Jar. Esther Greenwood digambarkan mengalami berbagai kecemasan yang disebabkan oleh kegagalannya dalam mewujudkan obsesi untuk menjadi wanita yang sempurna, baik dalam berkarir maupun dalam menjalin hubungan dengan lawan jenis. Akibat dari kegagalan tersebut Esther Greenwood mengambil tindakan yang ekstrim, menolak semua bentuk kesadaran dan kewajaran manusia.

Dalam pengumpulan data penulis menggunakan metode studi kepustakaan. Untuk menganalisa permasalahan yang ditemukan, penulis menggunakan pendekatan ekspresif, didukung dengan teori psikologi sastra yang dikemukakan oleh Sigmund Freud. Ini untuk membuktikan bahwa kecemasan yang dialami oleh Esther Greenwood dalam novel merupakan refleksi dari kecemasan Sylvia Plath sendiri sebagai pengarang. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif, karena itu metode penyajian data yang digunakan adalah metode deskriptif.

Dari analisis ini penulis menyimpulkan bahwa kecemasan yang dialami oleh Esther Greenwood dalam novel The Bell Jar merupakan representasi dari kecemasan yang dialami oleh Sylvia Plath sendiri. Terdapat kesamaan penyebab dan cara mengatasi kecemasan antara pengarang dan tokoh utama. Terbukti bahwa psikologi dapat digunakan untuk menjelaskan proses kreativitas pengarang dan karakter yang dibangun dalam sebuah karya sastra tidak terlepas dari psikologi pengarang itu sendiri.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of the Research

Anxiety is a painful emotional experience representing a threat or danger to the person (Lawrence, 1993:84). In the most familiar pattern, anxiety is known as worry, and usually anxiety comes to warn people towards the dangers that will come. The main factor of anxiety is occurred when someone feels threatened or in unpleasant situations in facing the upcoming condition. The anxiety is different from each other because it is influenced by different factors. But, someone will not always feel the anxiety for a long time because she/he will develop the ego defense mechanisms to cope the anxiety (Krech et al, 1969:761).

The Bell Jar is one novel that deals with psychological problem. The writer finds that the most psychological problem in the novel is anxiety that reflected to character Esther Greenwood. As the main character in The Bell Jar, Esther Greenwood portrayed as a young woman with obsession and emptiness in her life. She worries about her future and relationship with men. These conditions make her scared to face the world and tired to be perfect woman. The anxieties which are faced by the main character are assumed as the reflection of the author's anxieties, Sylvia Plath.

Sylvia Plath is not only known as a poet but also as an outstanding novelist. She is also well known as one of the American writer who exposes the

terrible condition of her feeling. The Bell Jar is the only novel that ever been written by Plath and she has different way to write. This novel uses the author's experiences as the source inspiration which is filled with the anxieties and obsessed with a sense of isolation (Mc Michael, 1980:1725). The novel shows the psychological problems of the main character Esther Greenwood which is assumed as the psychological description of the author.

The psychological problem of author that presented within her main character in The Bell Jar can be analyzed by using psychological approach since they have the same object that is called human psyche (Wellek and Warren, 1962:109). The psychological research will show more clearly that literary work is a product of the human imagination working in certain ways under certain conditions. Therefore, the psychological problem in literary work, especially in novel cannot be separated from the psychology of author. In this case, the writer wants to reveal the anxieties of Esther Greenwood in The Bell Jar is the reflection of Sylvia Plath's anxieties as the author

Based on the explanation above, the writer chooses the anxiety as a topic. Since the anxiety is regarded as the psychological problem, the writer uses psychological approach proposed by Sigmund Freud as her guidance and entitled her thesis "The Reflection of Sylvia Plath's Anxieties on Esther Greenwood as the Main Character in The Bell Jar".

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

After analyzing the novel, the writer finds that this novel is actually the reflection of Sylvia Plath's anxieties. There are two reasons that make the writer concludes The Bell Jar is the reflection of Plath's real anxious feeling. Firstly, Plath faces the anxious feeling in her life because her failure to be perfect and accept reality. To cope with the anxiety, Plath decides to commit suicides. She shows this condition feeling in her novel, The Bell Jar.

Secondly, the writer finds that in the novel, Plath tries to point out her anxious feeling. She also explores her obsession with death, self, and personality in works that express her unsure attitudes towards the world. From some analysis, The Bell Jar is one of the psychological novels which explore the anxiety of the main character. Esther Greenwood becomes anxious towards her future and relationship with men because she fails to be perfect and faces the reality. She cope the anxiety by committing suicide and it almost success. There are some correlations of anxieties and ways to cope these anxieties between the main character Esther Greenwood and the author, Sylvia Plath. In the novel, Esther Greenwood was successful to free herself from the anxious feeling, but Sylvia Plath chooses to die after finishing her novel, The Bell Jar. This difference ending showed that life is a bad dream for someone who feels the deep anxious through her/his life.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abrams, M.H. The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition. London: Oxford University Press Inc, 1956.
- Bartens K, eds. Psikoanalisis Sigmund Freud. Jakarta: PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2006.
- Boeree, George.ed. Personality Theories. Yogyakarta:Prismasophi, 2008.
- Bogdan, Rober C. Qualitative Research Education: An Introduction to Theory and Methods. Boston: Allyin and Bacon, Inc, 1982.
- Daiches, David. Critical Approaches to Literature. New York: Longmans, Green and CO, 1956.
- Di Yanni, Robert. Reading Fiction and Anthology of Short Stories. New York: Random House Inc, 1998.
- Endraswara, Suwandi. Metodologi Penelitian Sastra. Yogyakarta: Penerbit Pustaka Widyatama, 2003.
- Guerin, Wilfred L. et al. A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature, 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature, 4th ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Harriman, Philip L. An Outline Modern Psychology. New Jersey: Littlefield, Adams, & co. inc St Peterson, 1983.
- Hudson, William. An Introduction to study of Literature. London: George G. Harrap Co, ltd, 1963.
- Jefferson, Ann and David Robey, Ed. Modern Literary Theory: A Comparative Introduction.2nd ed. London: B.T Bathford Ltd, 1986.
- Kenney, William. How to Analyze Fiction. Manhattan. New York: Monarch Press. 1966.
- Klarer, Mario. An Introduction to Literary Studies. 2nd ed. London and New York: Routledge, 2004.