CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Chivalry can be considered as an ancient norm, because it was only applied in the old and middle age of Britain. Chivalry consists of four commendable acts such as courage, religious, readiness to help the weak, and honorable. Those deeds appear in *The Knight’s Tale*, one of twenty three tales in Geoffrey Chaucer’s *The Canterbury Tales*. Tale as we know is a kind of literary work.

‘Literature’ is a term from middle age, that are ‘lettre’ in Frence or litera in Latin which referred as written works, especially those considered of superior or lasting artistic merit. Literature can be judged as a media to share an idea through words in oral or written form. The idea is built by beautiful words which would interest the reader, listener, or the spectator. Knowledge, understanding, illustration and stories are used to be transferred by it. Roberts & Jacobs in their books *An Introduction to Reading and Writing* stated that literature refers to compositions that tell stories, dramatize situation, express emotions, and analyze and advocate ideas (1995:1). The stories, situations, emotions, and ideas must be derived from real life, so generally literature can be considered as the mirror of human’s mind in a written or oral form.

Robert Eaglestone in his book *Doing English* stated that perhaps literature is more like a verb, a ‘doing’, than it is a noun or thing (2000:50). By the opinion above, it can be said that it is not too important to define what literature is, because it is more important to “play” with it rather than to “know definitely” what it is.
more we try to define, the more we will lose the essential of literature. Therefore, generally literature can be considered as the mirror of human life to tell stories, dramatize situations, and express emotions in the most beautiful and artistic way, whether it is written or oral. Yet, not all written materials should be classified into literature. Literature must always be interesting; it must always have a structure and an aesthetic purpose, a total coherence and effect (Wellek and Warren, 1967: 212). As result from those opinions, there is a conclusion that it is easier to understand literature is something which cannot be defined but something which can be considered. Literature can be considered as “nothing at all” which has an aesthetic purpose, a total coherence and effect when we wander in it.

There are three traditional genres of literature: lyric, epic or narrative poem, and drama (Wellek and Warren, 1977: 25). As time changes, the genres develop where lyric becomes poetry and epic or narrative poem becomes prose but drama still has its own name. Poetry today has various kinds in order to be classified easier.

The origin of the word is the Greek word, poëma; that is, “something made or fashioned [in words]”. Poetry is written in verses which each verse has relational meaning to the other verse. Poetry is not just the creation of meaningful arrangement of words. Poetry also reflects idea towards something that poet thinks about. We must enter the imagination of the poet and try to feel what does the poem means, which only can be understood by understanding every word which are contained, so it can picture everything that we cannot see and also gives us, maybe much information of poet’s purposes. Robert and Jacobs in their book Literature: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, and Drama state that poetry and poem describe a wide variety of spoken and written forms, styles, and patterns, and also a wide
variety of subjects. Because of the variety, it is not possible to make a single, comprehensive definition (1995: 547).

One type of poetry which was popular in the middle age is blank verse. Blank verse is type of poetry which use unrhymed iambic pentameter pattern. Kennedy in his book *Literature: An Introduction of Fiction, Poetry, and Drama* says that iambic pentameter is a line of five iambs, a meter especially familiar because it occurs in all blank verse (1991: 651). Iambic is the stress of a line which has one-two rhythm, where the stress is in the second. Pentameter is a scale for a line that has five feet which measured from the number of units which each unit has two syllables. In other words, iambic pentameter can be defined to be a line that has five feet, which each foot has two syllables, where the stress is on the second syllable.

Beneath are examples of what is called blank verse with iambic pentameter. The examples are taken from original spelling of *The Knight’s Tale* lines 1587-1594.

1. *I wol be deed, or ells thow salt die*→ *I ’wol| be ’deed | or’ ells| thow’

   **shalt | die’__|**

2. *Thow salt nat love my lady Emilye* → *Thow’ salt | nat’ love | my’ la | dy

   **Emi | ly’e_ |**

3. *But I wol love hire only and namo.* → *But’I | wol’ love| her’ on | ly and |

   **na mo |**

4. *For I am Palamon, thy mortal foo,* → *For’ I | am’ Pa | la’ mon|thy’mor |

   **tal foe |**

5. *And thogh that I no wepne have in this place*→ *And’ thogh| That’ I | no’

   **wepne | have’ in | this place |**
6. But out of prisoun am astert by grace → But’ out | of pri | soun am | as tert | by’ grace

7. I drede noght that outher thou shalt die → I’ drede | noght’ that | ou ther | thou’ shalt | die’ __ |

8. Or thou ne shalt noght loven Emelye → Or ‘ thou | ne ‘ salt | noght ’ lo | ven Emi | lye __

Eight lines above consist of five feet which from one foot to the other has two syllables to make a rhythmical form. A foot is ended by the symbol (|). So the first foot in the first line is I’ wol and the second foot is be deed. The stress in each foot is in the second syllable, which is marked with __. A syllable to another syllable is separated by (‘). From the unrhymed seven lines above is also a proof that The Canterbury Tales does not have a rhyme. A little analysis above prove that The Canterbury Tales are written in the form of blank verse, because it is unrhymed and formed in iambic pentameter which have five feet and the stress is on the second syllable. The Canterbury Tales is a narrative poem, because there is no feeling expression and thoughts of the author, but it contains tales that are combined by author into a book. Kennedy explained in his book that the narrative poem is a poem whose main goal is to tell a story (1977: 504).

The Canterbury Tales contains tales or stories from many tellers. Chaucer packs all of the tales into a book named The Canterbury Tales. The tales are taken from the stories which were told by the tellers in a group of pilgrims which are going to see the tomb of Thomas à Becket in Canterbury. Each tale depicts the teller’s attitude and life experiences. The pilgrims have different professions, that makes the tales which they tell is fitted to their profession. There are twenty three kinds of profession which have the tales in The Canterbury Tales, they are: Knight, Miller, Reeve, Cook, Man of Law, Friar, Nun, Physician, Pardoner, Prioress, Monk, Yeomen, Parson, Wife of Bath,
Summoner, Clerk, Merchant, Squire, Franklin, Shipman, Manciple, Sir Thopas, and Canon. Each pilgrim must tell a story in turn, in their way to Canterbury. One of those pilgrims is a knight and at his turn, he told the tale about knight. His tale is considered as The Knight’s Tale which is taken as the source of material of the thesis. The Knight’s Tale represents the knight’s identity. The life of the knight who tells the story has a similarity to the life of knights in that tale.

Knights are men with courage, honor, justice, faith, skilled in using weapon, and appointed directly by king to be the guardian of the king and his kingdom. Knights also serve the church beside dedicate his life to their kingdom, and it proves that knights are devout. They uphold their behavior and deeds based on the norm of the knights, which known as chivalry. Chivalry that was brought by the knights as the norm of his life is also owned by the knights in that tale.

This Thesis analyze the knight’s deeds toward chivalry from the character of The Knight’s Tale, they are Theseus, Palamon Arcita, which is pointed out in a love triangle between Palamon and arcita toward Theseus’ sister. This tale is talking about Arcita and Palamon, Knights of Thebes which is sent to the prison by Theseus, a duke which conquer Thebes. Palamon and Arcita try to escape from the prison not for their freedom, but because “love”. They fall in love for same maiden - the duke’s sister, which conquer their city. It seems impossible that a prisoner can get a love from a conqueror’s sister. The knights, try to change the impossible thing become possible by their efforts in this tale. The knights, who are bounded by knighthood become rivalry each other to win their love. Love triangle is the theme of this tale. From the theme, subtheme becomes the subject that the writer wants to analyze in this thesis that is chivalry of the knights that contains four deeds namely courage, honor,
religious, and readiness to help the weak which really appear in *The Knight’s Tale* by Geoffrey Chaucer.

Geoffrey Chaucer (1343 – 25 October 1400) was born in London, the son of a city wine-merchant. His life was active and his employments diverse. Chaucer writes five great literary works and a lot of poetry, beside of *The Canterbury Tales*. The five great literary works are: translation of *Roman de la Rose* (1360s), *The book of Duchess* (1368), *The House of Fame* (1375), *The Parliament of Fowls* (1380), *Troilus & Criseyde* (1381 – 1386), and *The Legend of Good Women* (1386-1387). He begins his career at seventeenth as a page (boy who works for knight while training to be a knight himself, Oxford: 2000) and two years later he becomes a soldier. At twenty nine years old, he becomes a squire of Duke of Lancaster, John of Gaunt in France for an expedition. In age of thirtieth, he works as a diplomat in Italy and France. In thirty first, he works as esquire of king’s chamber. Chaucer according to Emile in His book *History of English Literature* stated that Chaucer constantly uses English for his works in fourteenth century (Emile, 1945: 140, 135). Chaucer’s choice to use English as the nature of his poems is a proof of his decision and of his sure judgment. Chaucer does not let his works to be tempted by Latin and France, which have influence English for three centuries. His works are the trial to pureeing English, to clear English from the influence of Latin and France. The Chaucer’s trial was not easy, because using pure English without any Latin or France in a literary works is considered as a poor works in that time. According to Emile, Chaucer has ends the middle ages which are dominated by Latin and France for three centuries with his highly-skilled verses in his works. His deed has make middle-age English give its fragrance (Emile Legouis, 1945: 130, 153).
It would be nice if chivalry as appeared in Chaucer’s *The Knight’s Tale* can arise again as human’s nature of this twenty first century. In our country Indonesia, these natures are already set down after forty years, the reign of our first president, Mr. Sukarno. After that era, most of leaders in Indonesia are proved that they have bad reputation because of corruption, bribing, no responsibility, and neglect the interest of people. Those are caused by they did not try to own the nature of knights. The nature of knights In *The Knight’s Tale* is hard to find in common people nowadays. However, we would be glad because Mr. Jokowi the governor of DKI Jakarta has mirrored the natures of knights in *The Knight’s Tale*. He has shown many acts which can be concluded as acts in loving his people. Oftentimes he blends with his people, seeing the real condition of his people. Others which have mirrored the knight’s nature are Mr. Munir, and Ms. Butet Manurung. These two people have done the honorable deeds and have devoted their self to people who really need their help.

**1.2 Problems of the Study**

There are many tales that contained in *The Canterbury Tales*. Each tale is referenced to each character and also depicts their behavior and responsibility toward a problem. There are twenty three characters which told their stories which seems to heighten their profession in their surroundings. Knights are characters which have unique deeds as depicted in *The Knight’s Tale* in *The Canterbury Tales*. The analysis will answer the following questions:

1. What kinds of chivalry act were done by the knights in *The Knight’s Tale*?
2. How was chivalry expressed?
1.3 Objective of the Study

After exploring those questions above, the writer tries to find out the answers of those questions, they are:

1. To identify the knight’s chivalry, especially in the middle age.
2. To elaborate how the chivalry acts expressed by the knights.

1.4 Scope of the Study

Through this thesis, the writer wants to analyze and describe the knights’ chivalry which is found in *The Knight’s Tale* of Geoffrey Chaucer’s *The Canterbury Tales*. Chivalry contains courage, readiness to help the weak, religious, and honor which are reflected through Palamon, Arcita, and Theseus in *The Knight’s Tale*.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The significances of this analysis are as follow:

1. To enrich the literary study especially about the knight character as depicted in *The Canterbury Tales*.
2. To understand how the knight’s expressed the chivalry through their deeds and behavior.
3. As the reference, especially about the knights in the middle age.