CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Being a language subject teacher at High School level in this modern era for some reasons has been a complex challenge. Maybe it is not only in Indonesia, but also in many other countries around the world. It is commonly heard from students that learning literature is somewhat 'boring', 'weird' and 'useless' for their practical lives.

In Indonesia, this has been a long observed phenomenon in schools but I found it rarely reported. It is a common thing when we hardly found any of Indonesian classic literature works in any bookstores, or even school's libraries. Indonesian classic novels, short stories, and poetry anthology were seldom re-printed and published to the public, included to the students. It then make sense that because of this lacks appreciation that our country's rising modern generation tend to look for western literature works, and somewhat put Indonesian literature works as something 'out of level'.

Moreover, when we simply talk about learning poetry. I do not know how poetry has become a topic that accept lacks appreciation from students and even sometimes from the language teachers as well, but through my own experiences in schools, it really does lack appreciate. Nancie Atwell (1998, p. 416, 417) also found in her experiences that poetry has been perceived "as difficult to read, difficult to understand, and, especially, difficult to talk about." It also becomes the "dry-as-dust sections in literature anthology" and they "stopped reading it the moment it stopped being required."

Some reasons which I thought of were, it might be because: 1) Their former teachers didn't get life examples of literature appreciation along his/her educational journey, 2) Their

former teachers has no interest in literature teaching and appreciation, and 3) The students have no idea about literature appreciation as the result of the two previous points.

Sawali Tuhusetya, explained about the danger of this phenomena in Indonesia in his paper entitled "*Bahan Ajar Puisi: Antara Tuntutan Kurikulum dan Kepentingan Apresiasi*" (freely translated: *Poetry Teaching Materials: between the Curricula's Demand and the Importance of Literature Appreciation*) as shown as this following paragraph:

> *Banyak pengamat menilai pengajaran apresiasi sastra selama ini berlangsung monoton, tidak menarik, bahkan membosankan. Siswa tidak diajak untuk menjelajahi dan menggauli keagungan nilai yang terkandung dalam teks sastra, tetapi sekadar dicekoki dengan pengetahuan-pengetahuan tentang sastra yang bercorak teoretis dan hafalan. Mereka tidak diajak untuk mengapresiasi teks-teks sastra yang sesungguhnya, tetapi sekadar menghafalkan nama-nama sastrawan berikut hasil karyanya. Dengan kata lain, apa yang disampaikan guru dalam pengajaran sastra barulah kulit luarnya saja, sehingga peserta didik gagal menikmati "lezat"-nya isi dan aroma kandungan nilai dalam karya sastra. Kondisi pengajaran sastra yang semacam itu tidak saja memprihatinkan, tetapi juga telah "membusukkan" proses pencerdasan emosional dan spiritual siswa.*[1] (Sawali, 2009, para.1)

That conditions of teaching produced students who not just have less and less appreciation of literary works but also have less appreciation of culture and life values, which mostly contains in the works of poetry.

"Poetry deserves better, and kids deserve better" (Atwell, 1998, p. 416). Continue in her writing, Atwell quote poet Wallace Stevens' writing that the role of poetry is to "help people live their lives" (Stevens, 1951, p. 29 as cited in *ibid*). Poet Marge Piercy in her poem "*To Be of Use*" desires that poetry itself should be of use in people's lives, she writes:

> "When I mean by useful is simply that readers will find poems that speak to and for them, will take those poems into their lives and say them to each other…and remember bits and pieces of them in stressful or quiet moments. That the poems may give voice to something in the experience of a life has been my intention… We can hear what we hope for and what we most fear, in the small release of cadenced utterance. We have few rituals that function for us in the ordinary chaos of our lives." (Piercy, 1982, p. xii as cited in *ibid*).

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[1] "Many observers considered the teaching of literary appreciation along these years were monotonous, uninteresting, even boring. Students are not encouraged to explore and mingle with the greatness contained in the value of literary texts, but simply fed with knowledge about theoretical and memorization-featured literacy. They are not encouraged to appreciate the real literary texts, but simply memorize the names of Indonesian famous poets and writers, then next their literary works. In other words, what the teachers transferred in the teaching of literature was only skin deep, so that learners failed to enjoy how "delicious" are the content and the aroma of values contained in literature. Such conditions of teaching literature did not just pitiful, but also have "rotten" the students' emotional and spiritual intelligence development process." (*Free-translated from* Sawali, 2009, para.1).

Indonesian literature is a national heritage that should be preserved, appreciated, kept, and lived out by Indonesian people. In appreciating our own literary works, we learn also more about our cultural norms and values, our environmental treasures and beauty, and our language's richness and art.

It is also a literature teachers' duty to help students understand that poetry is not something disconnected to daily life, but instead poetry is something born out of daily life; that poetry is a form of life's reflection that "gives voice to their feelings and experiences", and it "could be just about anything – any subject, any theme, in any voice." (*ibid*).

Christian teachers who teach literature to their students are also called to do the same, but with a higher purpose. "Christian learning and teaching aims to discover God's laws and apply them in obedient response to God." (Van Brummelen, 1998, p. 12). He continues in its application in literature teaching, "it may mean using the laws of language creatively in composing a story", I might add also that it included any kind of literary works. "The key point is that we recognize God is the Creator and Sustainer of all of reality and the norms of human life (Pr 3: 19 – 20; Job 38 – 41)."

Based on my observation in a National Christian School in Malang, East Java, Indonesia where I was assigned to do my third teaching practicum as an Indonesian Literature teacher from 21 July – 27 November 2009, I found that the language and literature teaching in that school has been conducted in various ways that open possibilities to implement this aim in each of the lesson offered.

For example, in the Indonesian language class, literature has not just been a theoretical and memorization-featured teaching, but also encourages appreciation and open possibilities for the students' to demonstrate their creativity, like doing art integrated projects instead of doing written test about Indonesian classic literature. Because it was still a new

school, its curriculum has been improving along the years along with the efforts of the teachers and the school team.

I found also that the school has a good standard for academic (minimum score 70%), physical and art education, character building, and spiritual development, the students in that school were typically good students. They commonly have good behavior, cognitive skills, great talents, and are motivated to learn. This does not mean that all of the students are performing those attributes consistently all the times. There were times where teachers face special cases in the classroom where some students cannot behave or learn well, or got minimum scores and need to be put in the Study Hall (special designed class after school, to help students who are struggling in certain subjects, to improve their learning and achievement) or making other problems in school, but they did not become big issues, because the school has its preventive and curing system running well.

In each teaching and learning session, it seems that the students are likely to demand new things to be introduced. It includes almost everything included opening games, teaching methods, different form and type of assignments, and even the class' setting, environment and location. So, then I saw the challenge is shifting upon the teachers' side: how to design a lesson and learning environment that would meet these students' needs and achieve the learning objectives.

At High School level, the students are interested and well-scored in technological applied learning e.g. movie production and editing, poster design, and photography. Most of the students also are active users of this modern world's virtual activities such as social networking, online photo sharing, web messaging, online gaming, and online group activities. Some of them are even true daily users of today's most famous social networking site: Facebook. Often I met some of them online when it is almost midnight, even sometimes past midnight. Doing activities in Facebook could somewhat be "addictive" because the users'

activities in that site are updated in seconds, so it made the user curious what happened with their network inside the site daily. Based on the frequency of meeting them online in Facebook and Yahoo Messenger within my first weeks there, I calculate that these students could spent more than 25 hours per week doing things on Facebook that are not related to their learning at school.

Linking literature teaching and the phenomena that I observed and have explained above, I come to a thought that I have to do something with this. With the students' great abilities to learn and the open chances given by the school's curriculum to explore teaching methods and learning designs, it was in one conversation with my mentor on an ordinary school day that I told her I want to integrate Facebook in my poetry class with Grade 10 several weeks ahead. She supported me, and would like to see how the students' respond to this. I anticipated this would be a great learning experience.

What I hoped to achieve in this study were firstly, I do not want Facebook to be said and remained as a time-wasting social media for the students, but I want them to use Facebook also for learning interest and use it as a platform for building learning community. Because, I believe that learning could happen in anytime and anywhere and could be about anything. When people come together to share skills and information and could help each other in day-to-day basic life experiences, that is when learning comes in its very applicable and beautiful form and it is a teacher's role to make it happen. Secondly, I hope that this study would become another recommendation for teachers and readers everywhere about kinds of learning experiences that teachers could make to help students or others explore more about their own potentials and about the learning scope itself.

Statement of the Problem

Based on the background explained above, the problems in this study could be stated in the form of research questions as follow:

1. How does integrating Facebook to Indonesian Literature teaching empower students learning and increase their appreciation of modern Indonesian Poetry?

2. What are the biased impacts of integrating Facebook in Indonesian Literature teaching and learning process in school?

3. Could Facebook, in its use as a virtual learning environment, help students to explore, unfold, and develop their potential and skills, also give them new learning experiences?

4. How does this experience of learning teach the students and the teacher about simple life values?

5. Could Facebook be a medium of transformational Christian education?

Purpose of the Study

The purposes of this study are:

1. To know how this new learning experience empower students' learning and help students to increase their appreciation of Indonesian literature, especially poetry

2. To find the impacts of this learning experience to the teaching and learning process in school, and to the students and the teacher as well

3. To discover the strengths and weaknesses of this learning design and ways to improve it

4. To know the students' response about this learning experience

5. To encourage teachers everywhere not to set limitations to their own possibilities in teaching and designing learning experiences

Significance of the Study

For teachers:

1. To give teachers perspective that a social network is not a bad media for students, but could be used as a media for building a learning community

2. To encourage Indonesian language and literature teachers everywhere to explore creativity and to open up more possibilities to enhance Indonesian literature teaching and learning experiences in school

3. To give teachers another reference of methods teachers can use to unfold students' hidden potentials and creativities in learning

4. To give teachers another point of view about how exciting learning Indonesian literature could be, when both of teacher and students give more space for it to happen.

For students:

1. To give students a different learning experience that hopefully will be meaningful and interesting

2. To give students space to expand their limits, gain life experiences and not be shameful to express themselves in Indonesian poetry learning

3. To give students a perspective that learning does not just happen in school, but also anywhere, anytime, and could be about anything

4. To encourage students to use Facebook as a media for personal learning, and for building their learning network/community

5. To give students another point of view that virtual world could help those who could express themselves better in indirect communication forms (writing, voice and video recording, photo sharing, etc).

Definition of Terms

Empower

Is a transitive verb for the act 2: enable, 3: to promote the self-actualization or influence of *sth.* Enable 1 a: to provide with the means or opportunity, b: to make possible, practical, or easy, c: to cause to operate. (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2010).

Meaningful Learning

Meaningful learning, in short, is learning that makes a difference—in one's mind and in one's life. (Boettcher, 2006). Meaningful learning occurs when complex ideas and information are combined with students' own experiences and prior knowledge to form personal and unique understandings. Learning is meaningful when the student comprehends the relationship of what is being learned to other knowledge (Grabe & Grabe, 2007).

Web 2.0

Web 2.0 named by Tim O`Reilly in 2004, refers to the second generation of the Web, which has a wide range of services, such as *social networks*, *blogs*, wikis or *folksonomies*, that encourage collaboration and efficient exchange of information among users. For example enables people with no specialized technical knowledge to create their own websites, to self-publish, create and upload audio and video files, share photos and information and complete a variety of other tasks. (Young, 2008; Masterbase, 2009.)

Facebook

Facebook is a very popular Social Networking Site founded in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg. The name Facebook comes from the paper document often issued to college freshmen to help them be acquainted on campus. In 2006, Facebook allowed everyone to join and added a News Feed feature, it then turned Facebook into a personalized social news service that by 2009 had more than 200 million members (Facebook, 2010).

Transformational Education

"Sometimes called global education or transformative learning is considered a methodology, a phenomenon, and an approach to education. It involves a shift in consciousness that begins with teaching and learning and results in healing and transforming persons, institutions, economies, and political systems locally and globally (Garcia, 1998 as cited in Apostol, n.d.). Thus, transformative education is seen as a process and product of education (Salazar, 2004 as cited in *ibid*).

Integration

Integration is simply means the process of integrating or 'bringing all parts together, unify, to make a whole'. Integrate also means 'to join something with something else' and 'to combine and adapt in order to attain a particular effect'. The word 'integrate' has been associated with the words: *combine, unite, embody, concatenate, blend, attune, articulate, synthesize,* and *accommodate.* (Integrate,1995; 2007).

Hybrid Class

A hybrid class combines classroom learning with online learning. In a hybrid course, a significant portion of the class learning activities are online, which reduces the amount of

time spent in a traditional, face-to-face classroom. Students benefit from the quality instruction and flexibility of both the online and classroom learning environments. (West LA College, n.d.)

Poetry – Indonesian Poetry

Poetry is "a form of literary art in which language is used for its aesthetic and evocative qualities in addition to, or in lieu of, its apparent meaning. It can tell a story, or simply be for amusement by measure of content or rhyme." ("Poetry", 2010). "Initially, poetry might be defined as kind of language that says *more* and says it *more intensely* than does ordinary language, it says most in the fewest number of words…. It is language that grows frequently incandescent, giving off both light and heat" (Perrine, 1969, p. 1, 10).

Indonesian, or Bahasa Indonesia, is the language used by Indonesian people in writing poetry. So, Indonesian Poetry simply means poetry that is written in Bahasa Indonesia. Since Bahasa Indonesia officially established in 1928, so there is no such thing as 'medieval Indonesian poetry', there is only modern Indonesian poetry (Amini, 2010).