

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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1.1. Background of the Study

Literature should inevitably be recognized as one of the significant subjects exclusively offered in the curriculum of the English Department in FKIP UNIKA WIDYA MANDALA. It is the reflection of how language is aesthetically arranged into a harmonious piece of art. Thus, literature invites people into the wonders of human nature. Naturally, it requires one's talent to unfold the beauty of its works besides knowledge, experience, and analytical ability.

Furthermore, literature is given as a mean of building their understanding and broadening their mind towards life itself. Further, it also contributes to them some supplementary inputs in recognizing certain situations in their existence as experiencing something that resembled to the situations they have encountered in the pages of literary work. Concededly, literature is the infinite device which enables them to maintain the perspective world of their own to be instinctively sharpened and fully matured. Roberts and Jacobs stated,

"Literature helps us grow, both personally and intellectually; it provides an objective base for our knowledge and understanding; it helps us connect ourselves to the broader cultural philosophic, and religious world of which we are a part. It enables us to develop a perspective on the events that occur around us and in the world at large, and thereby it is one of the shaping influences of life." (1989:2)

In view of the above, the writer is determined to conduct this literary research under two substantial points. First, literature plays an important role in language application as it is an example of language in use. When discussing about literature either directly or indirectly, we are discussing about language and the way it is used. Thus, the language used in a work of a fiction is masterly used in such a way that can enable the reader to understand what the work means as well as to enhance her appreciation of aspects of the different systems of language organization. Secondly, literature is able to show insights to the reader the essence of human life to its fullest. Thus, it extensively broadens the reader's way of conscious thinking and feeling as regards to the truth of life itself.

One of the literary genres is the novel. The writer of this thesis is interested in choosing a novel as the media for her study. The underlying reason is owing to the fact that in the writer's research subject, she intends to analyze its theme which can be revealed

through characters, plots, and settings. As in a novel, those three elements mentioned above are mostly well developed and greatly concerned. Doren claimed that the characters people remember best in fiction are those characters encountered in novels. In real life, we meet people only from time to time. On the contrary, we stay with characters in novels until their meaning have been exhausted. He then stated that a novel more often has several plots. These plots are composed of either one main plot supported by numerous subplots or equally important plot. Further, because of its greater length, a novel's setting is likely to jump from one setting to another (1965:587-590). To follow with, Doren also stated that novel has distinguished qualities and characteristics which make the effects it can achieve unique (1965:589). Conclusively, the novel is the appropriate device functioning as the profound supporting material for the writer in focussing her analysis.

The author whom the writer is interested in is John Steinbeck. Most of his works indicates a primary concern for humanity with all its nature and phenomena of life. Guerin (1986:247) stated that Steinbeck dignifies the common man by means of myth, whereas his naturalism is tempered by humanism. In writing his novel, John Steinbeck consistently shows the nature and the events of

ordinary people portraying social life and individualism in the society, emerging the universal problem that every one of us might have, or experiences. Lecker (1987:832) claimed that,

"Steinbeck is in many ways an anti-intellectual novelist: He responds to the unconscious "natural" forces that drive people and societies. Never an ideologue of the right and left, Steinbeck focusses on character rather than on economic doctrine. He combines an objective, almost clinical, observation with a mythic belief in the power of the human individual."

Gregory added that most of Steinbeck's works not only varied in contents and styles, but also penetrated human experience with lasting compassion, depth, honesty, and aesthetic success. Thus, they were held up for consideration and praised for their achievement (1971:371).

One of the Steinbeck's triumphal writings is The Grapes of Wrath. The writer employed this novel as the primary source of her research. In writer's opinion, The Grapes of Wrath vividly describes the act of humanism and successfully depicts the aspects of life of every common people which is full of complicated conflicts and restraints. Lecker convincingly argued that The Grapes of Wrath is a masterful examination of American Culture—a lyrical evocation of love, loss, and exile during the Depression—and a universal classic about human

struggle (1987:832). Additionally, It is an affirmation of Steinbeck's belief in the solidity of mankind and the sanctity of life (US Information Agency,1973:12).

1.2. Statement of the Problem

This study is focussed on analyzing the theme in John Steinbeck's "The Grapes of Wrath". In this case, the writer intends to fully analyze the message or the main idea revealed through character, plot, and setting. In this matter, what seems to be the problems occurred and discussed further are about the connection between:

1. characters and theme?
2. plot and theme?
3. setting and theme?

Other important issue that the writer needs to investigate is the theme of the novel.

1.3. Objective of the Study

By deconstructing the techniques, the writer is determined:

- to analyze the connection between:
 1. character and theme
 2. plot and theme
 3. setting and theme

Thus, by understanding the connections stated above, the writer would be able to find out the significance, or the theme of the story in John Steinbeck's "The Grapes of Wrath".

1.4. Significance of the Study

This study is expected to give some contributions to the students of English Department of FKIP in understanding and studying English literature. In this case, they are expected to be able to comprehend and to analyze a literary work, particularly the themes in novels. Consequently, they will get directly involved in exploring the underlying meaning and personal experience implied in the literary adventure. Naturally, they will be able to instinctively make use of their analytical and intellectual abilities.

1.5. Scope and Limitation

There are many features in a novel. However, this study is limited to those basic ones, namely the theme, the characters, the plots, and the settings.

In this study, the writer focusses on the theme which is considered to be the significant one of all in every literary work of art. Kennedy claims that the

theme in a story can be illustrated as the boundary of a state. Without this boundary, the people of the state will definitely flee out of the country. Theme plays an important role in a story since it provides the unity of the story (1983:104). In limited ways, therefore, theme is equivalent to the revelation of the underlying idea or wisdom that the author is presenting (Jones Jr.,1968:82).

Theme is presented through characters' traits, actions, and thoughts as well as developed through plots, and settings. In analyzing the theme, the writer acquires the messages conveyed in John Steinbeck's "The Grapes of Wrath".

1.6. Definition of Key Terms

Before any further discussion, it is necessary to clarify the following key terms in order to avoid misinterpretation.

1. "A novel can be defined as a fictitious prose narrative of considerable length that contains all of the elements of the short story, but with some important differences" (Freier,1989:56,143).
2. "Theme is the central and dominating idea in a literary work. The message or moral implicit in any work

of art" (Shaw,1972:378).

3. "Character is defined as a reasonable fascimile of a human being, with all the good and bad traits of being human. It is an extended verbal representation of a human being, the inner self that determines thought, speech, and behavior" (Roberts,1989:56,143).
4. "Plot is the framework of the story. It is what the story is about and the series of logically related events that lead to an outcome at the end of the story" (Huss,1971:25).
5. "Conflict is a struggle between opposing forces; a clash of action, ideas, desires, or values. It may take place between a character and an outside force or within the character himself" (Pooley,1967:518).
6. "Setting means whatever encompasses the plot and characters: not only the physical enviroment, but also customs, laws, and other conditions of life" (Beard-sley, et, al.,1956:481).

1.8. Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is organized into five chapters. First of all, the introduction in Chapter I deals with the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the objective of the study, the significance of the

study, the scope and limitation, the definition of key terms. The second chapter then describes the review of related literatures. The theoretical framework will also be included in this chapter. In chapter III, the writer will explain further about the research methodology. Chapter IV is mainly concerned with the analysis of the theme through characters, plots, and settings. Finally, work discussions and suggestions will be concluded in Chapter V.