

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University is a part of teacher training faculty. The students, therefore, are prepared to be English teachers. Yet, they are not only prepared with language skills, teaching methods, and linguistic courses, but also with literary courses. Literature is taught for four semesters, namely: Literature I, Literature II, Literature III, and Literary Appreciation. It shows that literary courses are essential for the students. By studying literature, the students would not only improve their vocabulary and grammar, but also learn about another culture and ways of life.

Little (1963:1) states that men have always found literature essential because the literature of a people is the principal element of its culture. It contains the record of the

peoples' values, their thoughts, their problems and conflicts, in short, their whole way of life.

Howe (1978:V) believes that literature is a major reflection and illumination, both mirror and lamp, of human experience. Since a literary work is the reflection of human life or experience, students will also learn about feelings, emotions, dreams, and struggles of life written there.

Literature, to the writer himself, provides valuable ideas, thoughts, feelings and the moral teaching of society that are connected with the development of one's character, his outlook on life and his understanding of right conduct in human affairs. Because of those above reasons, the writer finally decides to write a literary research in his thesis writing.

The writer chooses novel as the subject of his research because it is very different from other literary forms. Kennedy (1991:213) argues that drama comes alive only when actors perform it; poem only when a bard sings or chants it. Novel, however, is a story to be communicated

silently, at whatever moment and at whatever pace (whether quickly or slowly and meditatively) the reader desired. This is in line with Roberts and Jacobs' opinion (1989:2-3) which claim that drama, in contrast to prose fiction, is the form of literature designed to be performed by actors; poetry relies heavily on imagery, rhythm, and sound.

Another reason for choosing novel is that from the writer's experience, most of the English Department students enjoy reading novel more than any other literary forms. Kennedy (1991:213) states that among the forms of imaginative literature in our language, the novel has been the favorite of both writers and readers for more than two hundred years.

In this study the writer takes John Steinbeck as the author of the novel because he was a writer of great talent, sensitivity, and imagination (Magill, 1983:2522). Steinbeck had remarkable powers of invention and observation and a colorful style. He possessed a technical vocabulary that was exceptionally acute and

varied. He had a first rate ability in finding concrete metaphors through which to express abstract ideas successfully. One of his characteristics was his versatility (English Teaching Division, U.S Information Agency, 1973:33).

Another reason for taking Steinbeck is that he is the type of author who likes to know his material firsthand. He is not content to narrate a story which has no basis in fact (Carey, 1966:5). Furthermore Steinbeck was a writer who won three major literary prizes during his life time, namely: the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award in 1937, the Pulitzer Prize for Literature in 1940, and the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1962 (Schwerner, 1965:10,13).

The literary work that is going to be analyzed is John Steinbeck's novel entitled Of Mice and Men published in 1937. The reason for choosing this novel is due to the fact that this is one of the Steinbeck's best novels. Carey (1966:8) claims that of his many works, Of Mice and Men is considered one of his masterpieces.

This novel was also selected by the Book - of - the - Month Club in 1937 (Schwerner, 1965:9). The play version of this novel won the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award in 1937. And later, this novel became a much talked about motion picture in 1941 (English teaching Division, U.S Information Agency, 1973:10).

Of Mice and Men portrays the tragedy of two ranch workers. Lennie who is huge and powerful depends on his friend and guide George for protection and warmth. They are the below average and the dispossessed yet still have their own individual dream of a place of their own where they can live and can be protected from hurt. The relationship between Lennie and George is so unique and valuable that it becomes an integral part of their dream. The tragedy of the novel is that the two are so perfectly connected that when one is destroyed the other is automatically destroyed. The two protagonists are destroyed by their own limitations; the individual flaws inherent in each personality. This novel reveals the universal nature of

inalienable human right to crave for relationship with others, and the destruction of the major characters by their own limitations.

Based on that point of view, the writer considers that this novel contains experiences of common people that might happen in the society. Besides, this novel has typical major characters, the protagonists which are interesting that makes the writer focus his study on analysing these characters.

1.2 The Statement of the Problem

This study is intended to analyse John Steinbeck's novel entitled Of Mice and Men. In other words, it is an attempt to find the quality of the work in terms of characters. The analysis on the major characters will be based on Little's points in analysing character, as follows:

1. What are the basic qualities of the major characters?
2. How is the relationship between the two major characters?

3. How are the major characters treated by the author?
4. Do the major characters successfully embody the theme?

1.3 Objective of the Study

This study is conducted to find John Steinbeck's typical characterization in Of Mice and Men based on Little's points of analysing character. It is expected that the process on finding Steinbeck's typical characterization will give the students a clear picture on how to analyze novel in terms of characterization. This study is expected to find:

1. The basic quality of the major characters.
2. The relationship between the two major characters.
3. How the author treats the major characters in the story.
4. Whether or not the major characters are able to embody the theme.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to give some contributions to the students of the English Department of the teacher training faculty in studying literature. They are expected to be able to understand how to analyze a literary work, especially characters in a novel.

Since literary research always accords with literary analysis, the students will learn to develop their intellectual skills and analytical abilities. By having these knowledge, they would be able to explore the deep meaning contained in the literary works. Hopefully this study can be taken by the students as a model in analyzing a literary work especially novel.

1.5 Limitation and Scope

Being aware of how limited the time given to finish this study, the writer finds it necessary to limit the scope of the study.

The writer limits the subject of this study to the analysis on the major characters and in particular the protagonists in John

Steinbeck's novel, Of Mice and Men.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

Before coming to the core of this study, it is better to know some of the key terms used throughout the thesis. The aim is to avoid misinterpretation that may happen when reading this thesis.

a. A Character

A Character is an extended verbal representation of human being, the inner self that determines thought, speech, and behavior - a reasonable facsimile of a human being (Roberts and Jacobs, 1989:143)

b. Characterization

Characterization is the aesthetic or structural aspects of character - the art, craft, method of presentation or creation of fictional personages (Bain, Beaty & Hunter, 1977:101).

c. The Protagonist

The Protagonist is the central character in the conflict, whether he be a sympathetic or an unsympathetic person (Perrine, 1966:59)

d. The Theme

The theme is the general idea or insight the entire story reveals (Kennedy, 1991:144)

1.7 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter one presents the Introduction of the study including the background of the study, statement of the problem, the objective of the study, the significance of the study, limitation and scope, definition of the key terms. Chapter two presents review of related literatur. Chapter three presents the methodology of the study. Chapter four discusses the analysis of the novel. At last chapter five presents the conclusion and suggestion.