

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents several essential points of this thesis. They are: background of the study, statements of the problems, the purpose of the study, significance of the problem, scope and limitation, operational definition, organization of the thesis.

1.1. Background of Study

Mathew Arnold “says” because the literature of a people is the principal element of its culture. It contains the record of the people’s values, their thoughts, their problems and conflicts in short, their way of life. Whether transmitted through the spoken or the written word, literature may fairly be regarded as the chief art of mankind (Barnet, Berman, Bruto,1961: 1).

Therefore “Literature help us grow, both personally and intellectually; it provides an objective base for our knowledge and understanding; it help us to connect ourselves to the cultural context of which we are a part; it enables us to recognize human dreams and struggles in different societies that we would never otherwise get to know; it help us to develop mature sensibility and compassion for the condition of all living thing human, animal, and vegetable; it gives us the knowledge and perception needed to appreciate the beauty of order and arrangement, just as a well structured song or a beautifully done painting can; it provides the comparative basis from which can see worthiness in the aims of all people, and it therefore help us see beauty in the world around us; it exercises our emotions through the arousal of interest, concern, tension, excitement, hope, fear, regret, laughter, and sympathy; it can help us to shape our judgments through the constant comparison of the good against the bad; it is one of things that shape our lives and helps to make us human”.(Robert&Jacobs,1986:2) thus literature brings so many benefits for our life.

Novel is one of literature's genres. The word "novel" (which wasn't even used until the end of the 18th century) is an English translation of the Italian word "novella"--used to describe a short, compact, broadly realistic tale popular during the medieval period. The novel is one form of an extended fiction prose narrative. It differs from allegory (which functions to teach some sort of moral lesson) and romance (with its emphasis on spectacular and exciting events designed to entertain) in its emphasis on character development.

(<http://www.nvce.edu/home/ataormina/novels/history/define.htm>)

Of Mice and Men is a novel written by Nobel Prize-winning author John Steinbeck. Published in 1937, it tells the tragic story of George Milton and Lennie Small, two displaced migrant ranch workers during the Great Depression in California. It tells about two men, George and Lennie, from a strong friendship, one man assuming the role of father-figure for the other, who has a child-like mentality but a brute strength that needs to be kept in check.

Their quest in life is simple- to become settled and self-sufficient and to end their roaming lifestyle. However, George, the father-figure, is forced to face the reality of Lennie's mental instability/physical strength; he takes on the responsibility of preventing further hurt/death by ending his friend's life, and thus ending his dream for their future.

(<http://www.bookrags.com/notes/omam/sum.htm>)

From the bookrags article, we know that George as the father-figure has a responsibility to keep an eye on Lennie to survive in his life. But at the end of the story George killed Lennie. In this study, analyzing the reasons of George's killing Lennie is very interesting because we can take more lessons for our life.

From the reason above, the writer has decided to make a study which is entitled: The killing of Lennie: A study of the main characters and their conflicts in Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*.

1.2 Statements of the Problems.

There are some problems in this thesis. It is discussed as follows:

1.2.1 What are the characteristics of George and Lennie in Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*?

1.2.2 What are George and Lennie's conflicts depicted in Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*?

1.2.3 Why does George kills Lennie?

1.3. Purpose of the Study

Based on the problems above, the purpose of the study could be stated as follows:

1.3.1. To describe George and Lennie's characteristics in Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*.

1.3.2. To identify George and Lennie's conflicts depicted in Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*.

1.3.3. To find out why George kills Lennie.

1.4. Significance of the Study.

This thesis analyzes John Steibeck's novel *Of Mice and Men* because to the best of the writer's knowledge this work has never been analyzed in Muhammadiyah University of Surabaya before. Through this thesis the writer can reveal how remarkable John Steinbeck's work is. In *Of Mice and Men*, the writer can actually see that there are many social and psychological problems that can lead someone kill people they love. Moreover, the writer hopes that this thesis will help other students of English Department in the analysis of other works by using the methods and concepts that the writer is applying to analyze this thesis.

1.5. Scope and Limitation.

This study will limit the study mainly to the main character, George and Lennie, and the writer also includes their social and psychological problems from which the writer will be able to identify George's problems. The scope of this thesis will be focused on the discussion

of George's character and his social problems as seen from his many problems of life and the reasons of his killing Lennie.

1.6 Operational Definition.

In this part, the writer will give the definition that will help the students to comprehend; the writer's writing the definitions are as follow:

1.6.1 Character in literature generally, and in fiction specially, is an extended verbal representation of human being, the inner self that determines thought, speech, and behavior. Through dialogue, action, and commentary, authors capture some of the interactions of character and circumstance. (Roberts & Jacobs, 1986: 143).

1.6.2 Conflict is the struggle which grows out of the interplay of the two opposing forces in a plot. (Holman, 1936:71)

1.7 Organization of the Study.

The writer organizes this thesis into five chapters. In the first chapter, the writer deal with the background of the study, the statements of the problems, the purpose of study, the scope and limitation, operational definition, and the organization of the study. The second part of this thesis discusses the theories that will apply. The third part deals with method of the research. The fourth part is the analysis, while chapter five will conclude the whole discussion.