

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

This last chapter of the research is divided into two sub-chapters. The first sub chapter is the conclusion of all the chapter I have analyzed before and in the second sub chapter is the summary of the thesis.

A. Conclusion

In this research, I conclude that the analysis of the intrinsic elements through characterization and setting as well as the extrinsic elements through sociological approach by using *The American Dream* concept, can support the theme of this novel which is immigrants' struggle to achieve *The American Dream* ended in ironical success.

Based on the research analysis of this novel, it can be seen that America is a promised country which encourages people from many parts of the world came and realized their dream. Thus, they compete to each other for what they named as *The American Dream* consisting of *gold, glory* and *gospel*. The Immigrants coming to this superpower country had to face many barriers and challenges if they wanted to get ahead. The story seems to show us that not only skills, capital and hard work but also the nature origins where they come from do really become a part of determining the immigrants success in America. Although their great ambition finally let them get successful but it still remains irony behind their amazing success. The deification of achieving *The American Dream* proves to create ironic side of life. The truly happiness can't be measured by wealth, respect or success but the sincerity to mean the life itself. Antonia learns us a lot about the simplicity of life and the values of being a woman in his life. The little world that was the whole world for Antonia and Jim give us a glimpse of the melting pot in action.

Besides, the novel reflects accurately and faithfully the life of a new prairie community. Through the figure of Antonia, it shows us that there should be actually no limitation set on a woman's potential. The American life in the late of nineteenth century was indeed a hard time for immigrants' struggle especially for those coming from Eastern Europe countries. However, all the characters in this novel had taken their great contribution to the Western farm community.

Since the story of this novel is quite rich and complex, it's still very possible to view this story from other perspectives or approaches.

B. Summary of the thesis

The title of thesis of this thesis is the struggle of immigrants in achieving *The American Dream* resulted in ironical success. *My Antonia* is a novel written by Willa Cather. It tells about the immigrants especially those coming from Eastern Europe countries at the end of the nineteenth century. The characters such as Antonia Shimerda, Lena Lingard and Jim Burden represent these kind of immigrants. They all came to America to seek their fair chance of being successful persons. Indeed, there were so much hardship and barrier faced by these immigrants especially for Antonia and Lena Lingard because they were Eastern Europeans. These immigrant girls got bad and unfair affection from the old settlers. For this reason, they had to struggle harder than other immigrants did. In addition, these immigrant girls had to get a heavy burden on their shoulder to keep supporting their poor family. As result, whether Lena or Jim made a great decision to keep remaining single and never married any man or woman. They really focused all their time and mind to pursue their dream. Apparently, hard work and commitment brought Lena and Jim Burden could get ahead. Lena finally became a famous dressmaker, while Jim still concerned with her career and business abroad. Unfortunately, Antonia let her dream faded away because she got pregnant before getting married and forced her to come back to the country. However, Antonia remarried with a nice man and happily lived with many children in the field. It is

very contrary to Jim or Lena, both them had a boring life and felt unhappy behind their amazing success.

The thesis is divided into five chapters. The first chapter is the introduction. It consists of Background, Identification of the problem, Limitation of the problem, Objective of the research, Theoretical framework, Method of the research, Benefit of the research and System of presentation.

The second chapter is the analysis of intrinsic elements through characterization and setting. The first sub-chapter is the analysis of characterization through *telling method by the author* and *showing method through dialogue (of what's being said)*. The second sub-chapter is the analysis of setting consisting of *physical, social* and *spiritual* setting. The last sub-chapter is the summary of the chapter.

The third chapter is the analysis of extrinsic elements through sociological approach in the concept of *The American Dream (gold, glory and gospel)*. This chapter is divided into three sub-chapter. The first sub-chapter is about the glimpse of *The American Dream* concept. The second sub-chapter is the analysis of *gold, glory* and *gospel*. The last sub-chapter is the summary of the chapter.

The fourth chapter is the analysis of the theme by combining it with the analysis of the second and third chapter. This chapter is divided into three sub-chapters. First sub-chapter writes about the analysis of the theme idea correlated with the analysis of characterization, setting and *gold, glory* and *gospel*, while the second sub-chapter analyzes the second theme idea correlated with the analysis of characterization, setting and *gold, glory* and *gospel*. The third sub-chapter is the summary of the chapter.

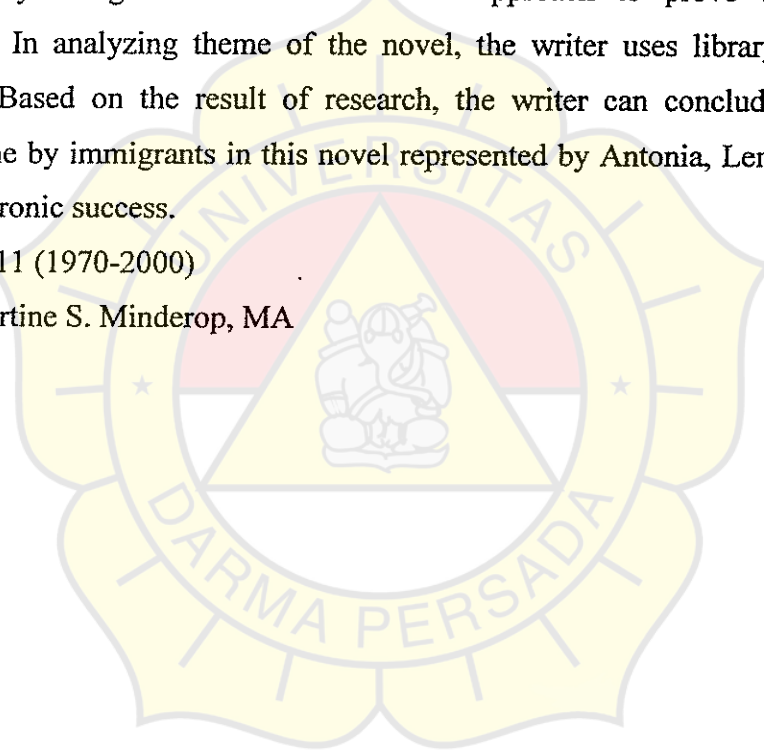
The fifth chapter is the conclusion of the chapters. It consists of two sub-chapters. The first sub-chapter consists of conclusion of the chapters and the second sub-chapter is the summary of the thesis.

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ABSTRACT

- A. JULIET (02130007)
- B. Theme analysis : Immigrants' struggle to achieve *the American Dream* ended in ironical success in *My Antonia*, a Novel by Willa Cather
- C. V + Bibliography + 64, pages, 2006
- D. Key words : characterization, setting, sociological approach : *The American Dream* concept.
- E. This thesis discusses the novel *My Antonia* by Willa Cather. The writer analyzes the thesis by using intrinsic and extrinsic approach to prove the theme assumption. In analyzing theme of the novel, the writer uses library research references. Based on the result of research, the writer can conclude that the struggle done by immigrants in this novel represented by Antonia, Lena and Jim is veiled in ironic success.
- F. Reference : 11 (1970-2000)
- G. Dr. Hj. Albertine S. Minderop, MA



SYNOPSIS

At the age of ten, Jim Burden traveled by cross-country train to live with his grandparents on the Nebraska frontier. He had just recently lost both his parents, and he was accompanied by a farmhand named Jake. On the same train, there was a Bohemian family that barely spoke English and that was going to the same place. When Jim arrived at the station, he was greeted by Otto Fuchs, an Austrian desperado cowboy.

Jim's grandparents were kindly people with simple religious beliefs and very generous natures. Jim enjoyed the wide expanses of the frontier, with all its insects, prairie dogs, and vegetation. At this point in the year it was still summer. Soon the Burdens went to meet their Bohemian neighbors, the Shimerdas, who were forced to pay too much for their farm by the only other Bohemian man in the country, Peter Krajiek. Jim met Mr. Shimerda, an educated musician who was very kindly; Mrs. Shimerda, a shrewish woman who was complaining and demanding; the oldest son Ambrosch, who was a stubborn, stingy brute; Marek, a mentally challenged boy; and Yulka, a young and pretty girl. The oldest daughter Antonia also came running up to him, grabbed his hand, and they went sprinting into the fields.

Antonia and Jim instantly became friends, and they spent a lot of time together outdoors, with Jim teaching her English. The Shimerdas were not doing very well in their new country, but they became friends with two Russian men, Peter and Pavel. The Burdens tried to help out as much as they can. One day during the end of summer, Jim killed a huge snake and impresses Antonia, who had been treating him with condescension.

Soon, winter came. Jim got very sick, and Pavel die, after unburdening his heart with a horrible story from his past. Mr. Shimerda became depressed after Peter moved away. The Burdens celebrated Christmas at home and made presents for each

other since they couldn't get into town to purchase some. Mr. Shimerda came to thank the Burdens for his family's gifts and ended up spending the day with them.

In the middle of the biggest snowstorm in ten years, Mr. Shimerda shot himself after arranging himself neatly in the barn. Jake suspected that Krajiek killed Mr. Shimerda, but nothing was ever proven. The day afterward, Jim was left in the house by himself, and he sensed Mr. Shimerda's spirit resting on his way back to his homeland. The Shimerdas insisted that Mr. Shimerda be buried at the corner of their property, where eventually a crossroads will be. The funeral ceremony was very moving though somewhat disorganized.

Afterward, the Burdens and other neighbors made a concerted effort to help the Shimerdas. Antonia began farming in the fields like a man and gave up going to school. Jim was resentful that Antonia no longer spent as much time with him, and the Burdens and the Shimerdas got into a little feud because of Ambrosch's bad behavior. The Shimerdas did not act grateful for the help that they received from their friends.

Eventually, however, everyone was reconciled. After three years in the country, Jim's grandparents moved to the town of Black Hawk so that Jim could go to school. Antonia also came into town to work for the Harlings in their home. Other immigrant country girls also started working in the town, and they became known as the hired girls. Jim spent a lot of time with Antonia and Harling children, who formed a happy household. Dancing became the craze in Black Hawk, and Antonia started going all the time. When the Harlings asked her to stop going because she was getting a bad reputation, Antonia quit and started working for Wick Cutter, a notorious philanderer. During this time Jim was antisocial and only spent time with Antonia and the other hired girls. He studied a lot in preparation for college and wanted to leave Black Hawk as soon as possible.

At college in Lincoln, Jim became very close to his Latin instructor and mentor Gaston Cleric. They spent a lot of time talking intimately, although Jim realized that he was not an academic as Gaston was. One day Lena Lingard, one of

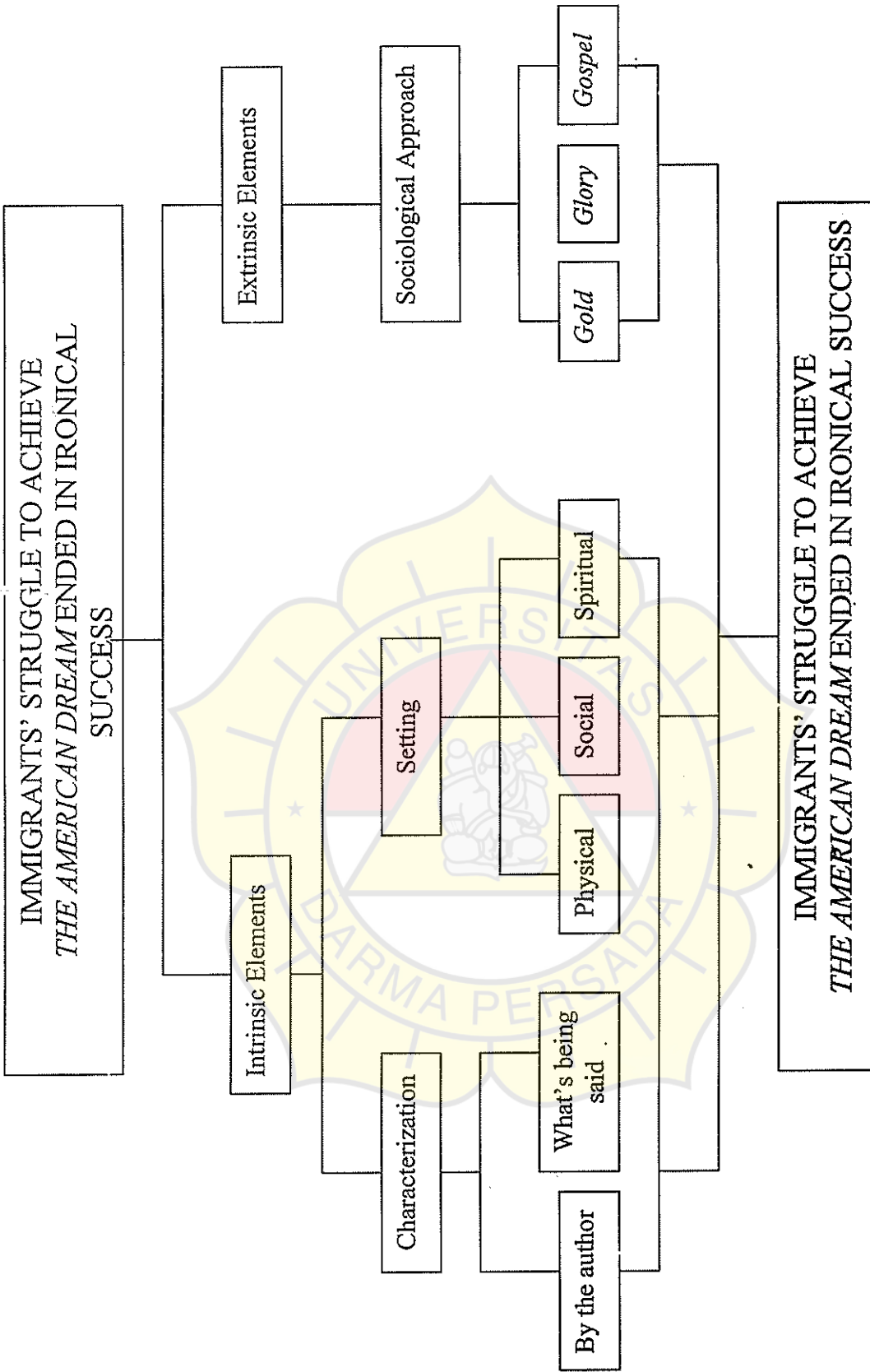
the hired girls, came to visit him, and they started going to play together. They spent a lot of time together, even though two other men in Lena's building were in love with her. Gaston Cleric noticed that Jim was being lax in his schoolwork and asked him to Harvard, Jim agreed and said goodbye to Lena.

Two years later, before entering law school, Jim returned to Black Hawk, where he heard about Antonia. Apparently Antonia had gotten pregnant and was engaged to be married to Larry Donovan. She followed him to Denver, but he ran off soon after she arrived. She returned to her family's farm where she had her child, avoided people, and worked the land. Jim went to visit her and told how much she meant to him. She was a little surprised that Jim was not disappointed in her. Jim promised to return again to visit.

He didn't return until twenty years had passed after hearing that Antonia had gotten married to a man named Anton Cuzak and now had about ten or eleven children. He was a little nervous about seeing how age had affected her. When he arrived on the Cuzak farm, he was greeted by many of her children. Antonia didn't immediately recognize him, but was very excited when she did. She showed him all around the farm, which was full of life. There were kids, trees, vegetation, and food everywhere they went, and everyone seemed happy and content. Jim was happy to see Antonia looking so well and slept in the barn with two of the boys.

The next day he met Cuzak, who was away on a small vacation. Jim liked Cuzak immediately and saw that Cuzak and Antonia's marriage was one of equality and mutual contentment. Cuzak told Jim how much he loved Antonia, and the next day Jim left. He promised to go hunting with Antonia's sons and returned to Black Hawk for the day. There he found the old dirt road that used to go his grandparents' farm, and he thought about how that road was the road of Destiny and how now he had returned full circle back to where he started.

SCHEME OF THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK



BIOGRAPHY

Willa Cather was born on December 7, 1875 in Back Creek Valley in Virginia. She was the eldest child of Charles Cather, a deputy Sheriff, and Mary Virginia Boak Cather.

In 1883 the Cather family moved to join Willa's grandparents William and Caroline and her uncle George in Webster Country, Nebraska.

A year later they moved to Red Cloud, a nearby railroad town, where her father opened a loan and insurance office. The family never became rich or influential, and Willa attributed their lack of financial success to her father, whom she claimed placed intellectual and spiritual matters over the commercial. In spite of the fact that Willa defied the norms for girls and cut her hair short and wore trousers. While living in the town Willa met Annie Sadilek, whom she later used for the Antonia character in *My Antonia*.

Willa graduated from Red Cloud High School in 1890. she soon moved to the state capitol in Lincoln in order to study for the entrance at University of Nebraska. After graduating in 1895, she returned to Red Cloud until she was offered a position editing Home Monthly in Pittsburgh.

While editing the magazine, she wrote short stories to fill its pages. The stories, published in a collection called the *Troll Garden* in 1905, brought her to the attention of S. S. McClure. In 1906 she moved to New York to join *McClure's Magazine*. In 1912, after five years with *McClure's*, she left the magazine to have time for her own writing.

In 1913 *O Pioneers* was published and in 1917 she wrote *My Antonia* while living in New Hampshire. By 1923 she had won the Pulitzer Prize for *One of Ours*, and in this year her modernist book *A Lost Lady* was published.

She managed to write some of her greatest novels, such as *The Professor's House* (1925), *My Mortal Enemy* (1926), and *Death Comes for the Archbishop* (1927). She maintained an active writing career, publishing novels and short stories for many years until her death on April 24, 1947.



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