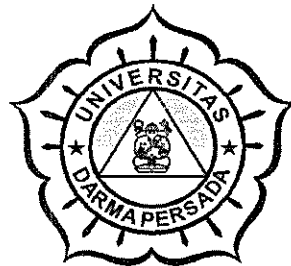


**JOHN STEINBECK'S SOCIAL CRITICISM
TO THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT
IN THE GREAT DEPRESSION ERA 1930s
IN NOVEL TITLED *THE GRAPES OF WRATH***

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Letters
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Undergraduate Program

By

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JAKARTA
2007**

The thesis entitled

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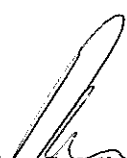
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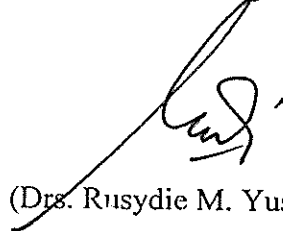
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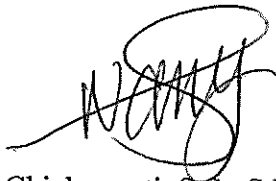
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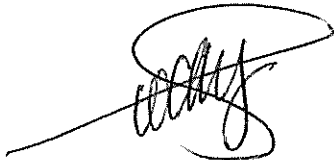
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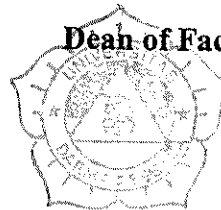
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The thesis entitled

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GOVERNMENT IN THE GREAT DEPRESSION ERA 1930s
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is a scientific research I conducted under the guidance of Dr. Hj. Albertine S. Minderop, MA. Since the thesis is truly original not a half or total plagiarism of another works, the contents has become my responsibility. With all sincerity, I made this statement on January 2007. Jakarta.

The Writer,

ENDAH GINUNG PRATINA

PREFACE

The thesis I have conducted entitled, *JOHN STEINBECK'S SOCIAL CRITICISM TO THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT IN THE GREAT DEPRESSION ERA 1930s IN NOVEL TITLED "THE GRAPES OF WRATH"*, is a partial fulfillment of requirements for obtaining *Sarjana Sastra* of Undergraduate program in English letters.

However, I do believe that this thesis is far from being expected, not only it's contextual analysis but also technical terms. For that reason, I would very much welcome suggestions from examiners and readers for its future improvement.

Finally, I hope this thesis can give a bit contribution to the readers in understanding how to apply intrinsic and extrinsic elements to form theme of a novel. Besides, it hopefully would be useful for all readers who have a great interest in literary works and some other useful things appearing in this novel especially about the migrant's life in California in 1930s.

Jakarta, January 2007

ENDAH GINUNG PRATINA

*I am only one,
But still I am one.
I cannot do everything,
But still I can do something.
I will not refuse to do the something I can do.*
(Helen Keller)

*With all respect and love, I would like to dedicate this
To my beloved
Mother, Father, Brother and Sister
as a bit contribution of my latest Achievement.
I am so thankful to my amazing family who always keep me grounded
with all loves and supports.
I am so proud to be your lovely daughter and sister.*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Owing to God's mercy and blessings, to whom belongs glory and majesty, and the Prophet of Muhammad, I am finally able to complete this research.

With all my respect, I would like to offer my profound gratitude to whom help me finishing this research, as follows:

1. Dr. Hj. Albertine S. Minderop, MA as the Advisor I and Swany Chiakrawati, S.S., S.Psi., MA as the Advisor II. Thanks for giving me encouragement, advice and extensive comments during conducting the thesis.
2. Fridolini, S.S., M.Hum as my academic advisor. I am grateful to you for always keeping my faith continuously during the study and research.
3. Agustinus Haryana, S.S., M.Hum as my lecturer who has borrowed me some books in order to fulfill my research. It helped me a lot.
4. All my great and wonderful lecturers in English Department who have taught me a lot about English and Literature.
5. My beloved parents, H. Suradji, S.H., M.Hum and Hj. Menik Sumini who have given me all the loves and pray for me all the times. You are the people who keep my feet on the ground. Thanks for being patient in growing me up. You are the best parents in the world. I could never ever repay you for all you have done for me. To you two I owe everything. Your love and support are priceless. I am really proud to be your lovely daughter. I love you...
6. My brother, Wijayanto Nugroho, S.H. and my sister, Anggun Tri Kusumaningrum who always support me and be there through everything. It's been a pleasure growing up with you. Keep on learning and make lots of money guys. It is our turn now. Let's make our parents proud of us!!!
7. All big families of the late grandpa Djuadi Hardjo Suwito and Redjo Sumitro who always support me in every situation. I am so proud to be part of these families. One that is full of such great love and support for each other.
8. My friends in English Department, HIMASINDA, and especially for my classmates which are Tias, Selly, Irma, Anna, Arum, Anggi, and Citra "Buncit", Riry, Utin, and

the names I cannot mention all here who always make my days colorful. Thanks guys...

9. My beloved *jia you sista'*, Satria Eka F. a.k.a. Sef who is always being there for me. You have helped me so much by just being you. I am so much proud to have such a trustworthy and nice *sista'* to help me when I need someone. And you know I'll always be there for you too. Love you *sist'*...
10. To my amazing *GLASNOST* and *PEPSI* friends such as Ramadhan Kurniadi "Dede", Yogi, M. Reza "My X-boi", Dimas "Dimoy", Embun, Lely, Resque, White, Sukma, and the names I cannot mention all here who make my life really meaningful. Thanks for the loyal support guys. Sorry I have not been around lately. Gimme a call if there is a reunion. Okay?! (High School never ends...!!! Rock on, dude!!!)
11. My beloved bro', Adjie Saka who always supports me and prays for me whenever I need it. Thanks for being my other bro' and always sending me support messages. You give me strength and cheerful my day. I am going to see you soon. You can keep my promise bro'...
12. Slamet Basuki, SE as the branch manager of *Intensive English Course* (IEC) Bekasi 01 and all the teachers, co-teachers, and the staffs who always support me finishing this research and give me a chance to teach there. I really enjoy the times we have. Thank you all...
13. All the names I cannot mention all here who help me a lot to finish this research. It would also be impossible without their sincere assistance and contributions in the making of this research.

The Writer

ENDAH GINUNG PRATINA

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. The Background of the Problem

What were the Americans like when Great Depression spread over the country in 1930s? John Steinbeck describes it in novel titled *The Grapes of Wrath*. John Ernest Steinbeck III (February 27, 1902 – December 20, 1968) was one of the most famous writers of the 20th century. Steinbeck's father worked in county government and his mother was a teacher. Steinbeck enrolled in Stanford University in 1919 and attended until 1925, but dropped out and moved to New York City, where he labored at various jobs, including as a construction worker while developing his skills as a freelance writer. His experiences among the working classes in California lent authenticity to his depiction of the lives of the workers who are the central characters of his most important novels. Steinbeck's first novel, *Cup of Gold* was published in 1929, and was followed three years later by *The Pastures of Heaven* and, in 1933, *To A God Unknown*. However, these first three novels were unsuccessful both critically and commercially. Steinbeck had his first success with *Tortilla Flat* (1935), an affectionately told story of Mexican-Americans told with gentle humor. Nevertheless, his subsequent novel, *In Dubious Battle* (1936) was marked by an unrelenting grimness. This novel is a classic account of a strike by agricultural laborers and a pair of Marxist labor organizers who engineer it, and is the first Steinbeck novel to encompass the striking social commentary of his most notable work. Steinbeck received even greater acclaim for the novella *Of Mice and Men* (1937), a tragic story about the strange, complex bond between two migrant laborers. His crowning achievement, *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939), won a Pulitzer Prize, a National Book Award.¹

¹ Umi Kulsum, "The Grapes of Wrath," *Kompas* 17 September 2005, 45.

I use the novel of John Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath*, because it has an interesting story. The novel describes the migration of a dispossessed family from the Oklahoma Dust Bowl to California and critiques their subsequent exploitation by a ruthless system of agricultural economics during the Great Depression of the nineteen thirties. Steinbeck effectively portrays how the struggle of the Joads mirrors the hardships of the entire nation. The Joads learn, through the inspiration of Jim Casy, that the poor must work together in order to survive. Steinbeck asks the meaning of ownership in the novel. The owners and the tenants reveal two conflicting views about the land. The tenants adopt the ideas of Jeffersonian agrarianism, which involves the belief that landed property held in freehold must be available to everyone. The Jeffersonians believed that a man could claim ownership of the land he occupied and cultivated by virtue of natural right. The absentee landlords do not occupy the land and only have legal ownership of the land. For the tenants, land is a vital part of their existence. For the landlords, it is only an investment, which yields profits.²

The main problem appearing in this novel is about a social gap between the poor farmer families and the government. Poverty, losing the farm and a place to live, and also losing the job create a fearful society. It is clearly showed that the situation influences their physic and psyche. Steinbeck depicts that the individual is increasingly at the mercy of the vast anonymous forces of capitalism and a market economy, which cannot be identified because they are faceless, mindless, and heartless. They are the faceless tractor drivers who do not feel the land. They are the banks that direct businesses because they possess the money. They are the large landowners who sometimes never see their farms.

² John Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath* (United State of America: Penguin Books, 1976).

B. The Identification of the Problem

According to the background of the problem, I identify the problem that the author tried to tell his disappointment and anger about the American situation in the Great Depression Era 1930s, when the government only sacrificed the marginal society at that time so there were lots of tensions appeared in this novel.

Because of that problem, so I assume that the theme in novel titled *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck is *John Steinbeck's Social Criticism to the American Government in the Great Depression Era 1930s in Novel titled "The Grapes of Wrath"*.

C. The Limitation of the Problem

According to the identification of the problem, I make the limitation of the problem in this research in the theme analysis that is related to the poor farmer families who got unfairness because of the Great Depression that happened in America in 1930s.

To analyze this novel, I use the literary approaches through characterization, plot, setting and symbol, and combine with the literary criticism through historical biography approach.

D. The Formulation of the Problem

According to the limitation of the problem, I formulate the problem as followed that whether my assumption of the novel, *John Steinbeck's Social Criticism to the American Government in the Great Depression Era 1930s in Novel titled "The Grapes of Wrath"*, is true.

To answer the question, I formulate the next problems as followed:

1. Whether the concept of literary approaches through characterization, plot, setting and symbol can be used to analyze this novel.
2. Whether the concept of literary criticism through historical biography approach can be used to analyze this novel.

3. Whether the theme analysis can be formed through the result of the analysis of characterization, plot, setting and symbol, and is combined with the literary criticism through historical biography approach.

E. The Purpose of the Research

According to the formulation of the problem, I intend to prove my assumption that the theme in this novel is *John Steinbeck's Social Criticism to the American Government in the Great Depression Era 1930s in Novel titled "The Grapes of Wrath"*. To reach this purpose, I take some steps as followed:

1. Analyze this novel through characterization, plot, setting and symbol.
2. Analyze this novel through the literary criticism (historical biography approach).
3. Analyze the theme of this novel through the result of the analysis of characterization, plot, setting and symbol combined with literary criticism through historical biography approach.

F. Theoretical Framework

According to the purpose of the research, I use the theories and the concepts of literary and non-literary. I analyze the novel titled *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck by using literary approaches (intrinsic) and also literary criticism (extrinsic). In the literary approaches, I use the theory of characterization, plot, setting and also symbol. Meanwhile in the literary criticism, I use historical biography approach.

Both of the theories of literary and non-literary works I use for analyzing this novel are completely mentioned as followed:

1. Theory of Literary Works

In the research of the novel titled *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck, I analyze the intrinsic elements of the novel by using four intrinsic

elements, which are characterization, plot, setting and symbol. These intrinsic elements will beneficially support to establish the assumed theme.

a. Characterization

The theory of characterization I use for analyzing this novel is taken from the book *Concise Companion to Literature* by James H. Pickering and Jeffrey D. Hooper. According to the book, characterization is the feeling of the characters or the actors which do not only describe their behavior and habits, but also their appearance in the story.³

There are two basic methods or techniques in presenting and establishing characters; first, the *indirect method* which is *showing* and second, the *direct method* which is *telling*.

1) Telling Method

Telling method is a method which relies on exposition and direct commentary by the author. In *telling*, the guiding hand of the author is very much in evidence. The *direct method* of revealing character or characterization by *telling* includes: characterization through *the use of name, appearance, and by the author*.⁴

In analyzing the characterization of the novel. I use *telling* method through *appearance* and *by the author*. Characterization through *appearance* means that in the world of fiction details of appearance (what a character wears and how he looks) often provide essential clues to character.⁵ While characterization *by the author* means that the author interrupts the narrative and reveals directly, through a series of editorial comments, the nature and personality of

³ James H. Pickering and Jeffrey D. Hooper, *Concise Companion to Literature* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1995), page 27.

⁴ *Ibid*, page 28.

⁵ *Ibid*, page 29.

the characters, including the thoughts and feelings that enter and pass through the characters' minds.⁶

2) Showing Method

Showing method is the *indirect* method of characterization which involves the author's stepping aside, as it were, to allow the characters to reveal themselves directly through their dialogue and their actions.⁷

To analyze the characterization of the novel, I use *showing* method *through dialogue* and *action*. With showing, much of the burden of character analysis is shifted to the reader, who is required to infer character on the basis of the evidence provided in the narrative. *Showing* method *through dialogue* is divided into six parts: *what's being said, the identity of the speaker, the occasion, the identity of the person is addressing, the quality of the exchange and the speaker's tone of voice, stress, dialect and vocabulary*.⁸

In analyzing the characterization of the novel, I use *showing* method *through dialogue of what's being said* and *through action*. *What's being said* method means that the reader must pay attention to the substance of the dialogue itself. Is it small talk, or is the subject an important one in the developing action of the plot?⁹ While in *action* method, what a given character is revealed by what that character does. In short, the single most important and definitive method of presenting and revealing character is through action.¹⁰

⁶ *Ibid*, page 30.

⁷ *Ibid*, page 32.

⁸ *Ibid*.

⁹ *Ibid*.

¹⁰ *Ibid*.

b. Plot

The theory of plot I use for analyzing this novel is taken from the book *Concise Companion to Literature* by James H. Pickering and Jeffrey D. Hooper. Based on the book, a plot is a narrative of events, the emphasis falling on causality. The term plot implies just such an overview. It implies the controlling intelligence of an author who has winnowed the raw facts and incidents at his disposal and then ordered and arranged them to suggest or expose their causal relationship.¹¹

The plot of the traditional short story is often conceived of as moving through five distinct sections or stages:¹²

1) Exposition

The exposition is the beginning section in which the author provides the necessary background information, sets the scene, establishes the situation, and dates the action. It may also introduce the characters and the conflict, or the potential for conflict.

2) Complication

The complication, which is sometimes referred to as the rising action, breaks the existing equilibrium and introduces the characters and the underlying or inciting conflict (if they have not already been introduced by the exposition). The conflict is then developed gradually and intensified.

3) Crisis

The crisis (also referred to as the climax) is that moment at which the plot reaches its point of greatest emotional intensity. It is turning point of the plot, directly precipitating its resolution.

¹¹ *Ibid*, page 13.

¹² *Ibid*, page 16.

4) Falling Action

Once the crisis, or turning point, has been reached, the tension subsides and the plot moves toward its appointed conclusion.

5) Resolution

The final section of the plot is its resolution. It records the outcome of the conflict and establishes some new equilibrium or stability (however tentative and momentary). The resolution is also referred to as the conclusion or the denouement, the latter a French word meaning, “unknotting” or “untying”.

c. Setting

The theory I use for analyzing the settings in this novel is taken from the book *Concise Companion to Literature* by James H. Pickering and Jeffrey D. Hooper.

Setting is a term that, in its broadest sense, encompasses both the physical locale that frames the action and the time of day or year, the climactic conditions, and the historical period during which the action takes place.¹³

According to Pickering’s book, setting in fiction is called on to perform a number of desired functions.¹⁴ It may serve:

- 1) Setting as background for action.
- 2) Setting as a means of creating appropriate atmosphere.
- 3) Setting as a means of reinforcing theme.

¹³ *Ibid*, page 37.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, page 38.

d. Symbol

A symbol, according to Webster's Dictionary, is "something that stands for or suggests something else by reason of relationship, association, convention, or accidental resemblance... a visible sign of something invisible."¹⁵

In literature, however, symbols—in the form of words, images, objects, settings, events and characters—are often used deliberately to suggest and reinforce meaning, to provide enrichment by enlarging and clarifying the experience of the work, and to help to organize and unify the whole. In bahasa, it is said like this quotation below:

*"Simbol dalam kesusastraan dapat berupa ungkapan tertulis, gambar, benda, latar, peristiwa dan perwatakan yang biasanya digunakan untuk memberi kesan dan memperkuat makna dengan mengatur dan mempersatukan arti secara keseluruhan."*¹⁶

A symbol may be private (its meaning known only to one person), original (its meaning defined by its context in a particular work), or traditional (its meaning defined by our common culture and heritage). Symbols are not, however, always this complex. In one sense, symbolism is the most common of all linguistic devices. After all, a word is nothing but a sound that symbolizes a particular image or concept. No word has meaning unless our human ability to symbolize makes it so. (Pickering and Hooper, 1981:150).

¹⁵ Pickering, *Op. Cit.*, page 69.

¹⁶ Albertine Minderop, *Metode Karakterisasi Telaah Fiksi* (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 2005), page 54.

e. Theme

Theme is the general idea of a story. In other words, it is something that the author wants to tell about in her or his work, whether it is about problems in life or other commentaries toward this life.

"Tema adalah ide sebuah cerita atau dengan kata lain tema adalah sesuatu yang ingin disampaikan oleh pengarang dalam karyanya, baik itu berupa masalah kehidupan ini ataupun komentar terhadap kehidupan ini."¹⁷

2. Theory of Non-literary Work

To analyze the extrinsic element of this novel, I use literary criticism through historical biography approach. The theory is taken from a book of *Kritik Sastra* by Dr. Albertine Minderop, MA.

a. A Glimpse of Literary Criticism

The concept of non-literary that I will use is literary criticism. Literary criticism is the way to understand deeply how the author describes the elements of literature and theme. In bahasa, it is said like this quotation below:

"Kritik sastra adalah cara memahami secara mendalam bagaimana si pengarang menggambarkan berbagai unsur sastra hingga pada penyajian tema."¹⁸

b. The Concept of Historical Biography Approach

In literary criticism, there are so many approaches but I only use the historical biography approach to analyze this novel. Historical

¹⁷ Jakob Sumardjo dan Saini K.M., *Apresiasi Kesustraan* (Jakarta: Gramedia, 1996), page 56.

¹⁸ Dr. Albertine Minderop, MA, *Kritik Sastra* (Jakarta: Universitas Darma Persada, 2001), page 3.

biography approach sees a literary work chiefly if not exclusively, as a reflection of its author's life and times or the life and times or the life and times of the characters in the work.¹⁹

A historical novel is likely to be more meaningful when either its milieu or that of its author is understood. And of course there is a very real sense in which these books are about these great historical matters, so that the author is interested in the characters only to the extent that they are molded by these events.²⁰

G. The Method of the Research

In this research, I use the method of the qualitative research, the written data resource (text) which is the novel titled *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck, and also is supported by the other written sources which are relevant. The kind of the research is bibliography. The characteristic of the research is interpretative, interprets the text. The method of the data collection is through the bibliography research, and the pattern of theory research is inductive, from general to specific.²¹

H. The Benefit of the Research

I hope this research will be beneficial for the readers to understand all of the stages taken in analyzing a novel. Besides, those who want to know more about how the Americans looked like when Great Depression spreaded over the country particularly in Oklahoma in 1930s.

¹⁹ Wilfred L. Guerin, et al., *A Handbook of Critical Approach to Literature* (New York: Harper and Row Publisher, 1979), page 25.

²⁰ *Ibid*, page 26.

²¹ Dr. Albertine Minderop, MA, *Metode Penelitian Telaah Sastra* (Jakarta: Unsada, 2000), page 25.

I. The System of Presentation

This is the system of presentation that I use in the formation of the research in the novel titled *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck:

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains of the common problems including the background of the problem, the identification of the problem, the limitation of the problem, the formulation of the problem, the purpose of the research, theoretical framework, the benefit of the research, the system of presentation.

CHAPTER II THE ANALYSIS OF THE NOVEL BY USING LITERARY APPROACHES

This chapter contains of the analysis of characterization, plot, setting and symbol in the novel titled *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck.

CHAPTER III THE ANALYSIS OF THE NOVEL BY USING HISTORICAL BIOGRAPHY APPROACH

This chapter consists of the analysis through literary criticism with using historical biography approach.

**CHAPTER IV JOHN STEINBECK'S SOCIAL CRITICISM TO THE
AMERICAN GOVERNMENT IN THE GREAT
DEPRESSION ERA 1930s IN NOVEL TITLED *THE
GRAPES OF WRATH***

This chapter consists of the theme analysis through literary approach (characterization, plot, setting and symbol) combined with the literary criticism through historical biography approach.

CHAPTER V CONCLUSION

This chapter consists of the conclusion of the research and summary of the thesis.