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

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#### 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. Hajj. 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.
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- 3. And also to Agustinus Haryana, S.S., M.Hum as my lecturer who has borrowed me some books in order to fulfill my research.
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The Writer

is a scientific research I conducted under the guidance of Dr. Hajj. 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 July 2007. Jakarta.

The Writer,

#### PREFACE

The thesis I have conducted entitled, THE REFLECTION OF THE GREAT DEPRESSION IMPACT OF JEETER LESTER'S LIFE IN NOVEL TITLED TOBACCO ROAD BY ERSKINE CALDWELL, is a partial fulfillment of requirements for obtaining Sarjana Sastra of Undergraduate program in English letters.

However, I do believe that this thesis is still far from being expected, not only it's contextual analysis but also technical terms. For that reason, I would 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. Beside that, this thesis 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 condition of social life during great depression happened in America, especially in Georgia

Jakarta, July 2007

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I am grateful to all my friends in English Department and specially for my wonderful friends Selly, Arum, Anna, Ginung, Tias, and for all their love and care who always on my side and also for my beloved parents and my lovely sister who has given me advice, support, and prayers for me. It would be impossible without their sincere assistance and contributions to complete this research.

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### CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

#### A. The Background of the Problem

Erskine Preston Caldwell was born in Coweta Country, in the town of White Oak, Georgia, on December 17,1903. Caldwell was only child of Caroline "Carrie" Bell, a schoolteacher, and Ira Sylvester Caldwell, a minister in the Associate Reformed Presbyterian A.R.P. Church. Ira's work led the family to move frequently. In the summer of 1919 they moved back to Georgia and settled in Wrens, a small town about thirty miles South of Augusta. Erskine was profoundly influenced by his father a social reformer in a deeply conservative denomination. As a teenager, Caldwell helped Ira provide assistance to desperately poor people in central Georgia. His experiences with his father shaped much of his writing. He concern for the less fortune- poor whites- shines in his great novels and short story. Erskine Caldwell is a contemporary American author, chronicles rural South life and values in his major works. Caldwell's bestknown novel Tobacco Road (1932) that concern about the depravity in the lives of the Southern poor, who are exploited by the agricultural system. His novels and stories are distinguished by their brutally realistic depiction of the rural South. Caldwell's other successful novels include God's Little Acre (1933) and Georgia Boy (1943). Caldwell is one of the most widely read authors of the twentieth Century. And he died in Paradise Valley, Arizona on April 11, 1987.1

I use the novel of Erskine Caldwell, *Tobacco Road*, because it has an interesting story. The novel describes about Jeeter Lester who lived in a small house in Tobacco Road with his family during the Great Depression. Caldwell

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Erskine Caldwell, *The Macmillan Family Encyclopedia* (Princeton New Jersey, U.S.A: Arete Publishing Company, 1980), page 26

described about the impact of the Great Depression to Jeeter Lester's life who worked as a farmer or sharecropper in rural South America in this novel. Tobacco Road takes place in Georgia during the worst years of the Great Depression. It depicts a family of poor white tenant farmers, the Lester, as one of the many small Southern cotton farmers estranged by the industrialization of production and the migration into cities. The central character in this novel is Jecter lester who is an ignorant and sinful man, beside that he is redeemed by his love of the land and his faith in the fertility and the promise of soil. Although many people or farmers moved to another city or region to get a better life but Jeeter didn't do that because he loved with his land or his region that his father's heritage for him. He won't leave his land although his plantation had bad condition, so Lester family had starve in their live. Unfortunately some of Jeeter's children had moved to Augusta or another city to get better life than in Tobacco Road. Jeeter's wife want to move too because she thought it unless to live in Tobacco Road again that become worst place. But Jeeter felt that he would die if he had to move away from his plantation. He wouldn't even consider going elsewhere to live, even though he were offered a chance to work another man's farm on shares. Even to move Augusta and work in the cotton mills would be impossible for him. Then Jeeter had thest to get some food for his family. Beside that Jeeter with his son, Dude tried to sell wood in Augusta, but they were unlucky because no body bought it. Then, Jeeter begged some money to another his son in Augusta but his son didn't give him money because the starvation that his father had caused by himself because Jeeter won't to leave the land. He would rather die of starvation than leave the land. He felt if God made the land and God put he there. Then when Jeeter and his wife were sleeping in bed suddenly a fire came and burned his house so they died.

The main problem appearing in this novel is about the Poverty and hunger that Georgian or white farmer" Jeeter Lester" had in their live as the impact of changing agricultural system or economical system during Great Depression in America in 1930's. Caldwell describes about Jeeter and his family's life in poverty in Tobacco Road. Because Jeeter preferred to live in there than to move another city so he lived with suffering in Tobacco Road until his death came to him.

#### B. The Identification of the Problem

According to the background of the problem, I identify the problem that the author tried to describe about the American situation, especially condition of people in rural Southeastern area, Georgia during the Great Depression in 1930s. When many of sharecropper or farmers in there that had starved because their plantation got worst condition because the agricultural system had changed. It is reflected by Jeeter Lester character in this novel. Because of that problem, so I assume that the theme in novel titled *Tobacco Road* by Erskine Cardwell is *The Reflection of the Great Depression impact of Jeeter Lester's life.* 

#### C. The Limitation of the Problem

According to the identification of the problem, J make the limitation of the problem in this research in the theme analysis that is related to Jeeter's family's life that struggle to maintain their live in his hometown that got the bad impact of the changing in agricultural system during in Great Depression in 1930s.

To analyze this novel, I use the literary approaches (intrinsic) through characterization, plot, and setting, and combine with the historical biography approach (extrinsic).

#### 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, *The Reflection of the Great Depression impact of Jeeter Lester's life in Novel titled "Tobacco Road"*, is true. To answer the question, I formulate the next problems as followed:

- 1. Whether the concept of literary approaches (intrinsic) through characterization, plot, and setting can be used to analyze this novel.
- 2. Whether the concept of historical biography approaches (extrinsic) can be used to analyze this novel.
- 3. Whether the theme analysis can be formed through the result of the analysis of characterization, plot, and setting, and is combined with the 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 The Reflection of the Great Depression impact of Jeeter Lester's life in Novel titled "Tobacco Road". To reach this purpose, I take some steps as followed:

- 1. Analyze this novel through characterization, plot, and setting.
- 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, and setting, combined with the 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 *Tobacco Road* by Erskine Caldwell by using literary approaches (intrinsic) and also the historical biography approach (extrinsic). In the literary approaches, I use the theory of characterization, plot, and setting. Meanwhile in extrinsic I use the 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 *Tobacco Road* by Erskine Caldwell, I analyze the intrinsic elements of the novel by using three intrinsic elements, which are characterization, plot, and setting. 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 that do not only describe their behavior and habits, but also their appearance in the story.<sup>2</sup>

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

#### 1) Telling Method

Telling method is a method that 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.<sup>3</sup> Direct methods of revealing character—characterization by telling—include the following:

a. Characterization through appearance: In the world of fiction details of appearance (what a character wears and how he looks) often provide essential clues to character.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> James H. Pickering and Jeffrey D. Hooper, *Concise Companion to Literature* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1995), page 27.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* page 28.

b. Characterization by the author: In the most customary form of telling the author interrupts the narrative and reveals directly, through a series of editorial comments, the nature and personality of the characters, including the thoughts and feelings that enter and pass through the characters' minds.

#### 2) Showing Method

Showing method is the *indirect* method of characterization that involves the author's stepping aside, as it were, to allow the characters to reveal themselves directly through their dialogue and their actions.<sup>4</sup> There are essentially two methods of indirect characterization by showing:

- a. Characterization through dialogue: It is a rare work of fiction, whose author doesn't employ dialogue in some way to reveal, establish, and reinforce character. For this reason the reader must be prepared to analyze dialogue in a number of different ways, but I only use "what is being said", "The identity of the person the speaker addressing", and "The speaker's tone of voice, stress, dialect and vocabulary".
- b. Characterization through action: 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.

#### 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

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, page 32

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.<sup>5</sup>

The plot of the traditional short story is often conceived of as moving through five distinct sections or stages:6

#### 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 in roduces 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.

#### 4) Falling Action

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

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, page 13. <sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, page 16.

#### 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".

#### Setting c.

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.7

According to Pickering's book, setting in fiction is called on to perform a number of desired functions.8 It may serve:

- Setting as background for action. 1)
- 2) Setting as an antagonist.
- Setting as a means of creating appropriate atmosphere. 3)
- Setting as a means of revealing character. 4)
- 5) Setting as a means of reinforcing theme.

But in this case, I only use three kinds of function in my analyses, there are setting as background for action, setting as means reinforcing theme, and setting as a means of revealing character.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, page 37. <sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, page 38.

#### d. 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."

#### 2. Theory of Non-literary Work

The extrinsic element sees another interesting part outside the main elements. The main elements in the novel are characterization, plot, and setting. The approach that is used by the author in this novel research is extrinsic approach. The most interesting part in the novel "Tobacco Road" is when the story itself tells about the description of condition of American during great depression happened. To analyze the extrinsic element of this novel, I use the historical biography approach.

Although the historical biography approach has been expanding for years ago, H.A. Taine discussed the basic principles briefly through the France critics writing in nineteen century. He explains about races, society's life, and times in his books titled History of English Literature. The historical 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. <sup>10</sup>

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

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Jakob Sumardjo dan Saini K.M., *Apresiasi Kesustraan* (Jakarta: Gramedia, 1996), page 56. Wilfred L. Guerin, et al., *A Handbook of Critical Approach to Literature* (New York: Harper and Row Publisher, 1979), page 25.

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 moided by these events.<sup>11</sup>

Biography is the oldest genre. Biography in chronological or logical is a part of historical. Based on this view, Coleridge said that life whether it's meaningful or not to be told, honestly it becomes interesting. Biography can be from the usual evidence such as the evidence of everyone's life, so that the problem of biography author is the historic problems. In bahasa Indonesia:

Biografi adalah genre yang sudah kuno. Pertama, biografi secara kronologis maupun secara logis adalah bagian dari histories. Sejalan dengan pemikiran ini, Coleridge berpendapat bahwa setiap kehidupan walaupun tak ada artinya jika diceritakan secara jujur pasti akan menarik. Biografi bisa berbentuk fakta biasa seperti fakta tentang kehidupan siapa saja, ajdi permasalahan penulis biografi adalah permasalahan sejarah. 12

Biography is also collecting the matter to answer the literary historic problem such as author reading material, the relationship of the author with other author, his life and places or cities of the author that have been visited and lived. All of those kinds explain about the tradition that obtained in the author living place or area, the influence and matters that's author used in works. In Bahasa Indonesia:

Biografi juga mengumpulkan bahan untuk menjawab masalah sejarah sastra seperti bacaan pengarang, persahabatan pengarah dengan sastrawan lain, perjalanannya, serta daerah dan kota-kota yang pernah dikunjunginya dan didiaminya. Semua hal-hal tersebut menjelaskan tradisi yang berlaku di daerah pengarang,

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, page 26.

Renne Wellek dan Austin Warren, Teori Kesusastraan (Jakarta: Gramedia, 1995), page 82.

pengaruh yang didapatkannya, dan bahan-bahan yang dipakainya dalam karya sastra. 13

#### 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 *Tobacco Road* by Erskine Caldwell, 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.<sup>14</sup>

#### H. The Benefit of the Research

I hope this research will be beneficial for the readers to whom wants to know more about the things that relates with this novel titled Tobacco Road by Erskine Caldwell, especially about condition of Georgian farmers that got the impact of changing agricultural system during the Great Depression in America in 1930's that reflection of Jeeter Lester's life.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, page 88.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> 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 *Tobacco Road* by Erskine Caldwell:

#### 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, method of the research, the benefit of the research, and the system of presentation.

## CHAPTER II THE ANALYSIS OF THE NOVEL BY USING LITERARY APPROACHES

This chapter contains of the analysis of characterization, plot, and setting in the novel titled *Tohacco Road* by Erskine Caldwell.

## 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 THE REFLECTION OF THE GREAT DEPRESSION IMPACT OF JEETER LESTER'S LIFE IN NOVEL TITLED TOBACCO ROAD BY ERSKINE CALDWELL

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

### CHAPTER V CONCLUSION

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