

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In this chapter, the thesis writer presents some related literary criticisms about the author and the novel, The Grapes of Wrath, the related theories on literature, and some key terms which she uses to analyze the work. Since the thesis writer is discussing about the influence of settings on the developing character traits of Ma Joads and on the changing character traits of Rose of Sharon, she chooses to analyze the study through two important elements of fiction, that is setting and characterization.

II.1 Criticisms on the Author and the Novel

In The Grapes of Wrath, Steinbeck uses setting as a means to describe the social conditions of America at that time. Peter Lisca said that the setting of the novel is structured in three parts: the time in Oklahoma (Chapters 1-11 in the novel); the time on the road (Chapters 12-18); and the time in California where the novel ends (Chapters 19-30), (1978:106-7).

Therefore, in this study, the settings of place is also divided into three parts: Oklahoma, the journey, and finally California.

Analyzing the characters in The Grapes of Wrath, Malcolm Cowley declared that "In the Joad family everyone is a distinct and living person." (1941:696). Horace Bristol, who accompanied Steinbeck into the field while he was doing his research in preparing the novel, also stated that "Steinbeck's characters were not coming out from his imagination but living, breathing, suffering Americans." (1987:13). His characters are the example of one of the families who lived in America at that time.

Steinbeck intentionally puts his characters in certain settings that at the end of the novel influence

their character traits. Louis Owens in his book The Grapes of Wrath: Trouble in Promised Land stated that:

"Almost invariably Steinbeck begins his novels with a careful realized setting before introducing his characters into the setting that will in large part define them." (1989:23).

Therefore, it is important to analyze the character in relation to the settings to deeply understand Steinbeck's work.

Steinbeck creates two main female characters in the novel, Ma Joad and Rose of Sharon. Discussing about Ma's character, Joseph Warren Beach, in John Steinbeck: Art and Propaganda stated that "The strongest character of all is Ma. She is a tower of strength in all that concerns the family welfare and great mission of keeping them together and intact." (1984:24). In addition, Steinbeck also puts Rose's final action as the climax of the story and as the most touching event in the novel. All the criticism about Steinbeck and his novel above will help the thesis writer to analyze the novel from the settings and the characterization.

II.2 Literary Theories

Literary theories are also essential tools which help the thesis writer in analyzing the novel. In this case, she chooses the theory of setting and theory of characterization as main tools to analyze the novel.

II.2.1 Theory of Setting

There are many elements that authors use to express their ideas in fiction. Setting is one of the elements of fiction that is used by every author to describe his/her ideas. The author of the story may design the setting to help shape another elements of fiction such as characterization. Very often the way in which a character perceives setting, and the way he reacts to it, will tell the readers more about character and his state of mind (Pickering, 1988:46). As the consequence, the relations between a character and his/her environment such as how man adapts him/herself to his/her environment, how the place where man lives influences his/her life, his/her occupation, his/her way of life, his/her way of thinking, and his/her habit, are considered very crucial and therefore consume careful attention (Pickering, 1988:47).

C. Hugh Holman divided a setting into several elements:

- (1) the actual geographical location, its topography, scenery, and such physical arrangements;
- (2) the occupations and daily manner of living of the characters;
- (3) the time or period in which the action takes place;
- (4) the general environment of the characters (1972:49).

Usually the author combines those four elements to give a clear description to the readers about the setting which involves the characters in a literary work. In this analysis, the thesis writer will use the theories of the actual geographical location or the setting of place, the time or period or the setting of time, and the general environment to analyze the influence of settings towards the changing character.

Furthermore, Edgar V. Robert in Writing Themes about Literature wrote that "Setting refers to the natural and artificial scenery or environment in which characters in literature live, move and have their beings (1977:65). In general, the author always combines two kinds of settings in his novel, that is natural and artificial settings. Natural settings deal with nature as the story's background. The nature

itself is the same as a tool which can shape the characters and their actions. Some examples of the natural settings are the times, the places, the sun, and everything that has close relationship with nature. On the other hand, the artificial settings consist of the artificial scenery that reflects the society who creates it. The buildings and statues are some examples of artificial settings. In The Grapes of Wrath, Steinbeck clearly describes the natural settings of the novel such as the natural condition of Oklahoma and California. In this case, the thesis writer will use the theory of the natural setting to analyze the novel.

The different aspects of settings greatly affect human's life and shape human's characterization because human is closely related to his/her environment. Man cannot be separated from setting. Arnold W. Green said that: "Any individual belongs to society which is made up of a population, organization, time, place, and interests. One's act is determined by his social environment." (1964:36, 41). From this quotation, the thesis writer can see that there is a close relationship between the environment and the society who live there.

Moreover, setting is considered important since a novelist gives emphasis to the motives of certain characters through setting. It means that the circumstances of the character's life described in the setting often influences his reactions and conducts. This theory of settings will help the thesis writer to find out the causes that make the two female characters change at the end of the novel.

II.2.2 Theory of Characterization

In a fiction, the word 'characterization' refers to the creation of images of imaginary persons which are so convincing that they exist for the reader as real within the limits of fiction (Holman, 1978:72-91). Characterization is the technique that an author uses to reveal the personality and character of imaginary person. According to Edgar V. Roberts in Literature: An Introduction to Reading and Writing, to understand a character, people need to know about his/her major trait or traits. Robert says that, "A trait is a typical or habitual mode of behavior." (1986, 25).

Furthermore, there are three fundamental methods of characterization in fiction, those are:

(1) the explicit presentation by author of the character through direct exposition; (2) the presentation of the character in action; and (3) the presentation from within a character.

(Holman, 1986:81).

In analyzing the character traits of Ma Joad and Rose of Sharon, the thesis writer make use of those three kinds of presentations to get a clear description about their character traits.

This theory of characterization is important for the thesis writer to help her in analyzing the changing character traits of Ma Joad and Rose of Sharon in the novel.