

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Broadly defined, literature can refer to just about everything written, from a grocery list to a Shakespearean sonnet (Roberts and Jacobs, 1989;1). However, in relation to the study, literature refers to written (and also spoken) compositions designed to tell stories, dramatize situations, and reveal thoughts and emotions. It is also to interest, entertain, broaden, and ennoble readers about the value of life.

Learning literature is like walking on a never-ending way, with beautiful scenery around. One reason why learning literature is very interesting is that literature provides enjoyment in terms of knowing and understanding the life and human value. Brooks (1975;1) even describes that literature is an attribute of our nature. Learning literature improves one's capability to understand how life represented in words; growth, love, hatred, conflict, and experience. Literature can be described as a reflection and illumination, mirror and lamp of the human experience. It reflects how people live at the certain time, the problems and the conflicts occurred, and it acts as a mirror for people to look back, how they have changed, what have they changed, and what can be changed.

The reason why the writer chooses literature to be the subject to study because literature varies one from another, as it is related to human's life. Since humans react differently towards emotions they feel, the reaction may lead into different outcome. These emotions form one to

be unique and personally different, and provide essential character of living.

Literature, then, as stated by Roberts and Jacobs (1989;2), is classified into three kinds of genre or classes: (1) prose fiction, (2) poetry, and (3) drama, in which novel belongs to the prose fiction class. The writer chooses a novel to be the object of the study because it deals greatly with many people, and describes thoroughly all the existence inside; thoughts, scenery, feeling, and emotion. A novel deals with people in recognizable places and social settings, confronted with situation and problem that can happen in the real life.

According to Little (1963;97), a novel has four elements: plot, character, theme, and setting. Conflict, the most influential part of a novel, is covered in plot. Conflict occurs between a man and his world, a man and others, and even a man and his mind. Conflict can also be influenced by social environment, economic condition, or even psychological condition. Conflict resolution may also be different according to who resolves the conflict; the same conflict may result in different resolution, but different conflicts may be resolved by same resolution. By analyzing the conflict, one can understand the characteristics of the characters, especially the main character. In addition, analyzing conflict can enrich one's perspective of life.

As Shaw (1972;64) states there are three types of conflict: physical, social, and psychological/inner conflicts. The writer considers the inner conflict is important to analyze as it holds deeper understanding about characteristics of a character. Internal conflicts usually relate to moral aspects of the character as they occurs within the character's mind,

trying to determine whether right or wrong the action the character is doing or has done.

The writer, then, decides to pick John Steinbeck's novel, *The Grapes of Wrath*, as the object of the study with the analysis of the inner conflict of the novel's main character, Tom Joad. Besides the well-known name of the author, the novel reflects values of humanity. In the novel *The Grapes of Wrath*, the writer finds the suffering of a family somehow becomes something valuable. Moreover, the story takes place during the America's Great Depression, when long period of drought and high winds affect large parts of the American Midwest, making people hope for fertile land to make a living. At this time, it was very hard to get a job. Steinbeck portrays in the novel the hard condition of the Depression with a family, the Joads, being swept away from their land. Having nowhere to live in and realizing that they need money to live on, they decide to move on from Oklahoma to California, searching for a better life. Yet, it turns out bitter: They have to live miserably during their journey and they have to face the breaking down of the family, but they can get through it. During their journey, they have to work as a cropper, but things do not go smoothly around them. The local people consider them and the other migrants as "Okies", the cops get harsher towards the migrants; they are rejected. This is the time when anger, starvation, and money meet authority, and that things can be getting worse anytime. Moreover, Tom Joad, as the main character, is on parole, and he is not allowed to go out of the current country, or else, he will go back to jail. With this, the Joad family should keep Tom from the cops at all cost, or they will lose Tom. However, Tom gets himself into a deep trouble with the cops when he deliberately kills a cop after his friend, Jim Casy, gets killed. Values to note in the novel are their effort to maintain the unity of the family and

how they deal with such condition. Besides, this novel is also one of the greatest classics where the author, John Steinbeck, wins Pulitzer Award in May 6, 1940, one of the most honorable awards at that time.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Related to the title of the study, the research questions are generated as the following:

1. What inner conflicts does the main character of John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* have?
2. What are the causes of the conflicts?
3. What are the solutions to the conflicts?

## **1.3 Objective of the Study**

Related to the research questions above, this study aims at finding out (1) the inner conflicts encountered by the main character, (2) the causes of the conflicts, and (3) the solutions to the conflicts.

## **1.4 Significance of the Study**

The writer hopes that this study will encourage the students of the English Department of Widya Mandala to enrich their knowledge by reading literature. The writer also hopes that literature will take more places in the study of teaching and learning in this university, as literature deals with the image of experience and human values. It is also expected that this study will inspire and enrich people's thoughts about the people in needs and about resolving problems.

## **1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study**

To avoid the study of going too broad, the writer limits the point of the study into the analysis of the inner conflicts faced by the main character. The reasons of the emergence of the inner conflicts as well as the steps taken to overcome the conflict are also to discuss, in line with the inner conflict. In this way, the writer uses objective approach theory to get closer to the analysis of the inner conflict faced by the main character through the intrinsic elements of the novel. The extrinsic elements, however, are not to be discussed in this study. The writer may talk a little about the extrinsic elements only to support the analysis of the intrinsic elements.

## **1.6 Theoretical Framework**

Related to the topic of the study, there are some underlying theories to discuss. They are as follow: (1) theory of Literature, (2) theory of novel, (3) the elements of novel: setting, character, plot, and theme, (4) types of conflict: physical, social, psychological (inner) conflict, and (5) theory of objective approach.

## **1.7 Definition of Key Terms**

### **1. Main Character**

A main character is a character that plays an important and prominent role in the story.

### **2. Inner Conflict**

An inner conflict is a conflict within the mind of the character who is torn frequently between contrasting loyalties and ways of life or between two aspects of the

self, usually one that is “idealized” and one that is “real” (McKenzie, 1978:31).

### **3. The Grapes of Wrath**

A Novel written by John Steinbeck that takes place during the America’s Great Depression

## **1.8 Organization of the Study**

This research consists of three chapters. Chapter I deals with the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the objective of the study, the significance of the study, the scope and limitation of the study, the theoretical framework, the definition of key terms, and the organization of the study. Chapter II presents the review of the theories used in analyzing of the literary work as well as the review related literature. Chapter III views the research method of the study. Chapter IV presents the findings and the analysis of the study. Chapter V presents the conclusion of the study and the suggestion.