

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I.1 Background of the Study

Literature is writing that uses literary language to express and to communicate thoughts, feelings and attitudes towards life. Stated by R.J. Rees in his book *English Literature: An Introduction to Foreign Readers*, that literature 'holds the mirror up to nature.' It means that literature is reflecting some thoughts or feelings that we immediately recognize as being 'true of life' (1973:6). Literature is concerned with thoughts and feelings that are recognized as belonging to real life, that enables the reader to experience the world around him through imagination.

Since literature imitates human life, in the writer's opinion, the best reason to study literature is that literature can help man toward a better understanding themselves, their fellow of human beings and their lives. People will be able to understand the reality, to absorb and to get the essence of life, moreover, to have a quality to put themselves in proper place to run their life.

One form of literature is novel. Novel is fictitious narrative considerable length in which characters and actions represent the real life that is potrayed in a series of event which is arranged in a particular order: the one comes just where it does after the other. The writer is interested in novel because through the novel she can grasp about situation, place, and what the characters of the story act, feel and think

about, more detail and freely through her imagination than what the other forms of literary work are not able to give.

Thornton Wilder, the author whose novel is going to be analyzed here, is considered as a contemporary writer. He is a widely cultured man who writes as he pleases and primarily intends on communicating his own sense of life's values through the complex disguise of fiction, (*Encyclopaedia Americana: Vol. 19*).

Wilder also has the capability to bring up the great themes and subject. He has chosen to so much in little. In *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*, Wilder describes about the collapse of that bridge. It is an usual event that the bridge collapse. So many bridges have been fallen in the world, and so many people are killed. But, what Wilder provides here is really different from the others. He makes this event is very special in his story, through Brother Juniper's point of view about this accident.

The Bridge of San Luis Rey is his first popular success and had won a Pulitzer prize in 1928. It is a best seller and is converted into popular movie. The key to Wilder's significance in this novel, perhaps, is the number of important paradox that is brilliantly reconciled in his writings. Here, Wilder presents such paradox that becomes Brother Juniper's conflict.

In short, the story talks about a dream of a Franciscan friar in Lima, Brother Juniper, who really wants to justify the ways of God to man. He gets an assumption

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that, as far as he knows, God is unfair for He has condemned the innocent people who have dedicated their lives for His grace, at least his friend's experience and several facts indicate and support that assumption. These facts are confronted with his belief that God is the Source of Wisdom, All-knowing and All-good. Based on his faith, Brother Juniper wants to prove historically, mathematically, that all people's pains are inserted to their lives for their own goods.

His observation is continued when he witnesses the fall of the Bridge of San Luis Rey. This catastrophe has participated the five travelers to the deep gorge below. He spends six years to observe the lives of those five victims to find whether there is any particular pattern so that they are killed in that accident together. As a result of his observation is an enormous book that deals with one after another of the victims of the accident, cataloguing thousands of little facts and anecdotes and testimonies, and concluding with a dignified passage that is describing why God has settled upon those persons and upon that day for His demonstration of Wisdom. The church board rejects Brother Juniper's finding for heretical reason and orders to put both the book and its author to torch.

The way in which the Brother Juniper looks into the facts in his circumstances is in the philosophical territory. It is full of deep contemplation about the universal essence of life, especially the way in which people have to understand the discrepancy

between faith and facts. In the writer's opinion, it is necessary for her to know the meaning or the essence of the facts in human life as Brother Juniper has been observed, from which the writer can learn something valuable to understand more about life. The result of Brother Juniper's research is a universal essence and can also be adopted in the writer's life. It is the major problem what the writer wants to discuss in this thesis.

I. 2 Statement of the Problem

Reading a story is the matter how to understand it. *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* is rather difficult to understand for its complexity in plot. Thornton Wilder gives several facts in Brother Juniper's surroundings through which the writer will catch its meaning by herself objectively based on what is revealed in the story by the author. These facts give so many possibilities to solve the main problem that is revealed in the story. The writer wants to extract and get the essence of all as they belonging to real life.

To make a schematical analysis and achieve the analysis on its aims, the writer states the problems on:

1. How is the discrepancy between faith and facts presented in the story?

2. How does Brother Juniper look into the facts of life in his surroundings as his effort to solve his problem?
3. What is actually the essence that can be extracted from the facts that is experienced by Brother Juniper (as an outcome of his observation)?

I. 3 Objective of the Study

The objective of this study is the facts in Brother Juniper's surroundings that cause the rise of such paradox in his mind. They are reflected by the author in his work through the intrinsic elements of the story. Considering what Brother Juniper wants to find is the truth of life, the writer will give philosophical understanding of the discrepancy between faith and facts in the story.

To give philosophical understanding in Brother Juniper's observation, the writer will concretize and involve with Brother Juniper in the story as if she herself experiences Brother Juniper's life. It will help the writer to observe every fact and its implication towards Brother Juniper's point of view to get the essence of the facts by the way in which Brother Juniper works on his observation that is not fully depicted by the author.

I.4 Significance of the study

The writer wishes that this thesis will give worth contribution to the world of knowledge in general. Hopefully it will help the readers especially English department students who are interested in Thornton Wilder's works will understand better about this novel and make them easier to work in further study on this novel.

Through the process of making this thesis and therefore understanding better of this novel, the writer hopes that this thesis will increase her capability in analyzing literary works and get something valuable to understand about human being and life. Moreover it is going to be the writer's expectation if this thesis also helps the readers who are interested in this work to find or to absorb the essential meaning of the story.

I. 5 Scope and Limitation

This thesis is focused on the discrepancy between faith and facts that is brought up in the story by fully counting on the intrinsic elements that establish it. The writer will trace the facts from the plot of the story from which the writer will know about the development of the characters, who are the victims of the catastrophe and their conflicts. It will reveal the sameness of the victims, in some cases (especially their conflict), will bring the possibilities to answer the main problem of the novel, once as the possibilities for the outcome of Brother Juniper's conflict. This analysis of the

intrinsic elements will help the writer to know Brother Juniper's point of view about all facts that happen in his surroundings, to control the writer's point of view in giving the meaning for the facts in the story through her philosophical understanding.

The writer also discusses about the setting of the story as a supporting element in analyzing the characters, because setting also has contribution to develop the character of the story.

As the author does not reveal the problem in fully description (he is not commenting as an omniscient narrator of the philosophical value). The writer, as though, deserves to give the meaning by herself, this analysis is presented in subjective interpretation that is controlled by objective orientation from the work itself.

I.6 Theoretical Background

The best way in understanding literary work is based on the interpretation and analysis of the novel itself. To analyze the discrepancy between faith and facts in the story, the writer supports it with the analysis of intrinsic elements of the novel. In this context the author uses plot, setting, characterization and conflict. The writer assumes that the most appropriate way to understand the story is through intrinsic approach.

Considering what Brother Juniper has done here is to find the truth of life which also become the task of philosophy, the writer uses philosophical approach to

support the analysis by using phenomenological theory. Phenomenological theory is needed to be functioned since the author is not commenting the philosophical value of the story and there is no particular solution to the paradox that has been raised, it is necessary to the writer to concretize the story and to eliminate the separation between the novel and the reader (herself) to get satisfactory interpretation of the story. As we know, phenomenological theory is the matter of how to understand something. This theory will be explained further in Chapter Two.

I. 7 Method of the Study

To analyze the problem of the study, the writer gives her own interpretation to explain the problem solving of the analysis through dialogues, events and actions that are available in the story. In this case the writer gives her own understanding about the essence of the problem. The method in the way like this is called suggestive - interpretation method.

This method is supported by the work itself and library research from where the writer gets the material to discuss and supports the analysis, as the main source of technical collecting data to find any relevant theory and literature that is used to support in analyzing process of this thesis.

I.8 Definition of Key Terms

Essence: The most important quality of a thing. The essence of God is his characteristic that is reflected in all phenomena in the universe.

Fact : Something that has exist in the world either human being realizes about it or not.

Faith : A feeling of belief in God that considers God as the creator of the world, All-knowing and All-good.

God : The Supreme being, creator of the universe that is worshipped as having power over human nature and control human affairs.

I.9 Organization of the Paper

This thesis is devided into five chapters. Chapter I is *Introduction*. In this chapter the writer states the first step in analyzing the problem, by defining the background of the study, the statement of the problems, the objective and the significance of the study and gives the description of basic theory of analysis in short. This chapter consists of nine subchapters.

The second chapter is *Theoretical Framework*. It is a further explanation of theoretical background that is already mentioned in the first chapter slightly. It is the description of the theory and approaches that are used in this analysis. Here the writer

discusses about intrinsic approach that is used to analyze the elements of the story (in this case, plot in which characterization and conflict are included, and setting) and philosophical approach. The writer also describes about philosophical approach and phenomenological theory.

The third and fourth chapters are the analysis. The third chapter is about *The Story as Seen through its Intrinsic Elements*. It will discuss about the intrinsic elements of the story. Here the writer will analyze plot and setting, include the analysis of conflicts and characters. The fourth chapter describes about *The Discrepancy between Faith and Fact* in the novel. It is the analysis of the main problem that is revealed by the writer in *Chapter I*.

The last chapter is *Conclusion* about the whole analysis of this thesis in short.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAME WORK