

CHAPTER I

I N T R O D U C T I O N

1.1 Background of the Problem

As a creative human art, literature has been given a plenty of definitions by so many critics as well as artists. A definition is, sometimes, applicable to some literary works but it will not to others. Therefore, It needs not to collect every available definitions in order to redefine a new representative one.

What is important to be noticed carefully is that a literary work is created to be read, enjoyed, understood and utilized —if possible— for the good of the society.

Little wrote that a good literature must have two qualities:

One quality of all good literature is that it says something worth saying. Good literature adds to our understanding of life in the world around us. It embodies thought and feeling on matters of human importance. ...

The second quality of good literature is that it is something well said. Good books show such qualities as careful planning in the arrangement of ideas, sustained imaginative invention, and clear and vivid language from beginning to end. (1966: 2)

John Steinbeck's works can be said as fulfilling the

two criterias of good literature given by Little above. In the first place, Steinbeck's works reflect the values of human life:

With Steinbeck, it is the other way round. He has been interested in people from the beginning, from long before he had any theory to account for their ways. What is more, he is positively fond of people, more obviously drawn to them than any other of our group of writers. More especially he has shown himself fond of man who work for bread in the open air, on a background of fields and mountains. They have always appealed to him as individuals, and for something in them that speaks to his esthetic sense. He sees them large and simple, with a luster around them like the figures in Rockwell Kent's engravings. He likes to see the woman nursing their babies. He likes to see people enjoying their food, however coarse, and sharing it with others...

Steinbeck has always had a liking for brave men, men who could fight when occasioned served, who could take their punishment, and who could risk their lives without repining in the cause of justice and human solidarity. He likes men who have the courage, the cunning and the singleness of mind that make them leaders. (JW. Beach, 1941: 327-8)

This idea can even be made clearer by quoting what Rampan had felt about Steinbeck's thoughts reflected in his works:

Pikiran-pikiran Steinbeck rasanya begitu hidup dan terus hidup sebagaimana inovasi dan kreativitas terus hidup di sepanjang jaman. Pijaran-pijaran pikiran Steinbeck merupakan api hidup yang menyalakan semangat hidupku. (Korrie Layun Rampan, "Pikiran Prosais John Steinbeck," in Pu-Sara, June 1990)

In the second place, Steinbeck's works are written in a well manner. Beach wrote that "the first thing we should take note of Steinbeck is the sheer literary genius with which he is endowed." (1941: 309) Beach wrote further that Steinbeck's literary talent is worthy to be compared with Chekhov or Anatole France for "his skill in shaping up the stuff of human lives in form that delight the mind and imagination." (1941: 310)

Those are reasons why I choose Steinbeck's work as a topic of analysis. Steinbeck wrote not only fictions but also plays (drama) and film scripts. The Pearl is one of Steinbeck's short novels which, for some reasons, indicates Steinbeck's excellent literary talent in writing good literature.

Firstly, The Pearl is written in a wonderful mixture technique, such as the inclusion of the musical device. Second, The Pearl reflects and portrays some important problems and aspects of human life. And finally, it is a short novel that is composed in such a high degree of literary writing, in the sense that its form is closely related to and coincided with its content.

The three considerations above are reasons why the writer takes The Pearl — among other Steinbeck's works — as the object of analysis.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

From the background of the problem above, it will be stated some questions which the writer tries to look for the possible answers or solutions. Those questions will, basically, be based on inquiries of evaluating both the intrinsic and the extrinsic aspects.

1. Intrinsic aspects:

- a. How is the plot of the story achieves its goals?
- b. What kinds of conflicts may be found in the story?
- c. How deep the characters' portrayal is portrayed ?
- d. Can the setting of the story fulfils its function?
- e. To what ideas are the pearl symbolized for?
- f. What are the importances of the musical device ?
- g. How well is the style of the story presented?
- h. What is (are) the theme(s) issued in The Pearl ?
- i. How is the intrinsic elements of the story related to each other in establishing meaning?

2. Extrinsic aspects:

- a. What are the sociological aspects presented ?
- b. What are the psychological aspects described ?
- c. What are the moral (philosophical) aspects issued?

1.3 Objective of the Study

In the case of the intrinsic analysis, the objective of the study will be focused both on understanding the aesthetic or the artistic quality of The Pearl and also on how the intrinsic elements will help us to grasp its meaning. It is important to emphasize that the term aesthetic quality here must not be confused with aesthetics as a branch of philosophy. The study of the aesthetic values in literature (as a kind of art) will not be included as a scope or a subject matter of the aesthetics as a branch in philosophical studies:

The word general is emphasized because a narrowly specialized study of a particular work of art or artist would not ordinarily be regarded as an example of aesthetics, although it might provide data for aesthetics. ...

Aesthetics as a philosophic or scientific discipline is not to be confused with art, though it may undertake to study the arts in a more or less intellectual, logical way. ("Aesthetics" in The New Encyclopedia Britannica. 1985 Edt.)

What is meant by the aesthetic quality here is taken to mean as the artistic values in a piece of literature, as it was understood by Fakhrunnas MA Jabbar:

Sementara Estetika Sastra lebih cenderung mempertahankan eksistensi karya sastra sebagai pewujudan hasil cipta seni yang mengutamakan nilai-nilai keindahan tanpa memperdulikan apakah

masyarakat penikmatnya dapat mengerti atau tidak.

Di sudut lain, Estetika Sastra tetap saja memandang bahwa karya sastra memiliki kekuatan dan keindahan yang ditampilkannya. ("Pilih Mana: Sosiologi Sastra atau Estetika Sastra," in Pe-lita, 19 May 1991 Edt.)

Thus, the aesthetic values will be searched in this analysis is not specifically related to its philosophical meaning.

Whereas, the extrinsic analysis will be aimed at understanding some aspects and problems of human life in The Pearl.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The writer hopes that this thesis can be a contribution to the study of literature, more especially in enriching and broadening our understanding the nature and the essence of literature as a creative art.

The writer hopes that this thesis can provide such a short and simple illustration concerning the aesthetic quality of The Pearl as a work of literary art. This is expected as well to give a little understanding on Steinbeck's views and thoughts about the nature and the essence of human life that is stated, either implicitly or explicitly, in The Pearl.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

1.5.1 Theories

In the tradition of literary study, there are commonly known four different conceptions or theories in viewing the nature of literature. In an analysis of literature these basic conceptions are matter of very important because a basic conception one holds will play a crucial role in applying the criteria of judgement:

There seem to be so many different ways of evaluating literature, and there is considerable disagreement among critics past and present about what criterias or principles of judgement to adopt. Almost invariably, too, the choice of criteria depends on one's basic conception of literature. (Danziger & Johnson, 1961: 157)

From the quotation above, it can be understood that formulating at least one basic conception of literature is a very urgent step to take in order to begin the analysis.

The four basic conceptions of the nature of literature are: (1) pragmatic or affective theory which treats literature in its relation to its public or audience. It is also oftenly called as receptive theory; (2) Expressive orientation which regards literature in its relation to the expressions or the emotive contents of the author

(3) the theory of mimetic or imitation which sees literature in its connection with life (its external aspect or element); and (4) objective theory which regards literature in its connection with its form (its intrinsic elements) (Based on M.H. Abrams, 1976: 8-29, and on Danziger & Johnson, 1961: 8-13)

It has been stated earlier that the scopes of analyses will be limited as far as evaluating both intrinsic and extrinsic aspects. Therefore, what I will treat further is the last two orientations or theories: imitative and objective theory. That is because the two theories are basic conceptions which possess a relevance with the scopes of analyses.

The objective theory views the nature of literature in relation to its form or its intrinsic elements. Abrams said that the objective theory basically regards the work of art (including literature, of course) as a self-sufficient entity constituted by its parts in their internal relations, and sets out to judge it solely by criteria intrinsic to its own mode of being. (1976: 26)

The objective theory prones to maintain an opinion that a work of literature has already been clear in itself. Therefore, understanding the meaning of a literary work needs not, in the objective theory's tradition, to pay attention to any external aspects of the work.

The so called mimetic or imitative theory has been understood by M.H. Abrams as "the explanation of art as essentially an imitation of aspects of the universe." (1976: 8) Abrams wrote further that the term "imitation" itself refers to some different descriptions but each of which are similarly directed to one main understanding: 'reflection,' 'copy,' 'feigning,' 'representation,' 'counterfeiting,' and 'image.' (1976: 11) All these different terms are all to mean — more or less— that the fictional world of literature may be related to, in one way or another, the actual world of human life.

Again, the theory of imitation, following Danziger and Johnson, "defines literature in relation to life, seeing it as a way of reproducing or recreating the experience of life in words just as painting reproduces or recreates certain figures or scenes of life in outline and color." (1961: 8)

Danziger and Johnson gave a further explanation concerning two important points in viewing the relation of literature and life in according with the view of the mimetic theory.

In the first point, they argued that the sense of imitation of life in literature is put on the "subject matter" of literary works:

Taken at face value, it suggests that it is

life which literature imitates or mirrors; in other words, the subject matter of literature is the manifold experience of living people. (1961: 9)

In the second point, it tends to be put more on the way through which human life is touched by literature:

The second important point suggested by the theory of imitation is that life is being imitated in the sense of being reinterpreted and recreated. Here the main emphasis seems to be on how life is imitated.... (1961: 9)

So far, it has been described the two theories that is taken as basic conceptions in viewing the nature of literature. The question is now, how can we relate these two different conceptions?

A possible answer to such a question can be met by borrowing Hudson's view in the case of the relationship between literature as an art and life,

To say that literature grows directly out of life is of course to say that it is in life itself that we have to seek the sources of literature, or, in other words, the impulses which have given birth to the various forms of literary expression. (1963: 11)

From Hudson's view we may, then, compromise the two different basic conceptions (objective and mimetic theory) into an understanding that literature is a kind of art in writing that is aimed either at yielding esthetical pleasure or at understanding aspects of human life.

1.5.2 Approaches

Differences in viewing the nature of literature will cause, as a logical consequence, differences in applying a criteria of judgement or approach in a literary analysis or literary criticism. Therefore, the choice of theoretical approach is very much influenced by some factors : the basic conception one holds, the taste of the analyst and also by the most dominant aspects in the work.

Theoretical approach is needed not only to make a better understanding to the work in question but also to make the central focus of the analysis itself. It has been said that literature here is viewed from two different conceptions, therefore it is important to decide what is the most suitable approach to be applied in this analysis.

For some reasons, it seems that the eclectic is the suitable one to take. Guches talked of the eclectic approach as follow:

Many readers have become dissatisfied with the seemingly arbitrary restrictions that are imposed by the purists of each analytical approach. These restrictions have led modern analysts to the view that literary analysis should be eclectic; analysts should be free to select from more than one approach. Eclectic analysts begin by reading (or viewing) a literary work and then deciding what combination of analytic

points of view will contribute the most insight, the most understanding to the reader. The eclectic critic, then, analyzes by employing whatever approaches, or part of approaches, seem to be demanded by the literature. Consequently, the boundaries between the author's life and the social conditions of the times, the literary techniques, psychology, archetype, and feminism may be crossed to give added insight.

Neither a new nor an original idea, eclecticism is gaining in popularity and use. One reason for this new popularity is that the freedom to choose among approaches leads to a more thoughtful intermingling of ideas which, rather than complicating, actually tends to simplify and make analysis more understandable.

The main characteristic of eclecticism as an analytical approach is selectivity. In any one analysis, the critic is not obligated to include all analytical perspectives or even more than one. The chief virtue of eclecticism is in the choice; many literary works will seem demand a particular analytical view. Often choosing one predominant analytical point of view, and one or more insightful sections from others, gives a more perspective analysis than would be possible by rigidly adhering to one arbitrary perspective. This kind of selectivity gives not only more freedom and responsibility to the analyst but far more understanding to the reader. (1980: 153-4)

From the cited lines above, we can grasp some important

advantages of the eclecticism compared to any other approaches. In the first place, the eclectic approach can avoid of making an arbitrary analysis which usually happen in other kinds of approaches. In the second place, a critic can possibly give a far more understanding of the work in question because the analysis is done by mixing any relevant insights which give help in searching the meaning of it. In the third place, the eclectic analysis can cover the lacks of any single approach.

In this thesis some approaches will be applied. All the approaches taken are suited to the basic conceptions about the nature of literature described previously. The combination of approaches will be applied must be helpful to each other, in the sense that one approach will cover the lacks or the weaknesses of the others.

The first approach will be applied is formalistic approach (that is called also as the New Criticism):

The New Critics took the position, however, that the really important or valuable information can be derived only from the text of the work itself. Everything else, according to their theories, is peripheral, extraneous, and distracting. ... It is through an examination of a work's form—the structure of a work such as the short-story form or the ballad form—that one may derive a deep understanding of it as a form of art or a work of art.

The central focus of the formalistic approach

is, then, to discover what a work expresses and it means without any other reference to the work such as biographical data on the author or the history of the times. One must examine a piece of literature closely enough to begin discovering its structure; one must look for the unifying patterns that shape the work and give its parts a relevance to the whole. ...The form is the concern of formalistic analysis and a formalist tries to discover what a work means by first discovering how the work expresses its meaning through its structural form. (R.C. Guches, 1980: 81-2)

It can, then, be summarized that the New Critic focus an attention mostly to the esthetic quality of the work and also to the effort of how the analysis on the forms may help a critic to understand its meaning.

Guches wrote further that the formalistic approach: "putting aside the esoterics of sociological, biographical, and historical information." (1980: 85) This is, at the same time, the lack or the weakness of the formalistic approach.

It is true that the formalistic approach alone will not give a deep understanding to the meaning and the essence of literature because the formalist objects to any interference of the external factors, the factors which can, indeed, be very useful in understanding literature.

In order to cover the New Criticism's lack, I will

use some frame of reference, that is to say psychology, sociology and moral. Danziger and Johnson believed that such frame of references will be a great help in grasping the meaning of one piece of literature. (1961: 129)

These external approaches possess a weakness too because this kind of approach pays no attention to the esthetic quality of the work in question. In other words the extrinsic approaches to literature prone to analyze literature for the sake of searching knowledge from it.

This lack is, of course, covered by the formalistic approach which, as it has been mentioned, concerns deeply towards the artistic forms of the literary work. In this way both formalistic and extrinsic approaches used in this thesis can give support one to another. Thus, by combining these different approaches, a more fruitful analysis can, optimistically, be hoped.

1.6 Method of Analysis

In the foregoing section, it has been said that different point of views deal with the nature of literature causes differences in the use of theoretical approach in evaluating a literary work. Along with this idea, it is said in an article of The New Encyclopedia Britannica, (NEB, 1985 edt.) entitled Criticism of the Art, that :

The theory of criticism and the theory of the nature of a work of art are largely aspects of

the same question. (NEB, 1985 ed.)

That statement means that the method of analysis or criticism can not be disintegrated from the theory of the nature of literature. Accordingly, the logical consequence is that the method of analysis will also be influenced strongly by the theoretical approach applied in the analysis itself. In other words, it is safe to say that—in any literary analysis—the theory of the nature of literature, the theoretical approach, and the method of analysis should be interrelated to each other.

Wellek and Warren have keenly criticized the lacks and the weaknesses of either scientific or anti-scientific tendencies in literary analysis. (1978: 15-9) Unfortunately, they did not propose a new method as one possible alternative in overcoming that problem. Thus, that problem is still left unsolved.

Based on the consideration above, in this thesis I will try to intermingle the two dichotomic straits above by combining three different methods of analysis: descriptive, interpretive, and evaluative (value judgement) methods. In addition, these three methods are relevant with both the theory of the nature of literature and the approaches applied in this analysis.

What is meant by descriptive method is a description towards both intrinsic and extrinsic elements of the work. Thus, it focuses mainly on presenting textual data.

The interpretive method will provide an expensive interpretation upon the available data taken from that description. There is, of course, a distinction between them, as it has also been noted in that article:

The solution is to distinguish between describing works of art and interpreting works of art: a critic's description may be true or false of the work in question, but his interpretation of the work can be only plausible or implausible. (NEB, 1985 ed.)

It is added that "interpretation, therefore, depends on some indisputable range of critical description." (NEB : ibid) This means that a good interpretation can only be gained if there is a satisfactory description.

The method of interpretation is a coherent path with the eclectic approach because both of them allow the use of multifarious approaches:

Since interpretation is concerned with plausibility, rather than with truth, plural approaches to works of art may reasonably be tolerated. (NEB, ibid)

Finally, I will use too the evaluative or the value judgement method. This method refers to the "judgements that entail reference to a norm, or standard of merit." (NEB, ibid) It is true that this method prones to be a subjective valuation, but it will not be an arbitrarily evaluation because it has been supported by both sufficient data and a critical interpretation.

It is, however, significant to note that the three methods of analysis above will not be applied in a very strict restriction, in the sense in a step-by-step order consistently. In other words, each of the methods will be used proportionally and combinatively, and not, thus, necessarily in an orderly arrangement. In fact, such a combinative order or crosswise order in using them is not a rare occurrence in the tradition of literary analysis, as it is noticed by Hudson:

As already implied, criticism may be regarded as having two different functions— that of interpretation and that of judgment. It is indeed true that in practice these two functions have until our own time been generally combined, since the majority of critics, while conceiving judgment to be the real end of all criticism, have freely employed interpretation as a means to that end. Within recent years, however, the distinction has been forced into prominence by various students of literature, who, setting the two functions in opposition, have more or less consistently maintained the thesis that the critic's chief duty is exposition, even if (and this, we shall see, has been denied) he is ever warranted in venturing beyond exposition into questions of taste and valuation.

(1963: 267)