

CHAPTER I

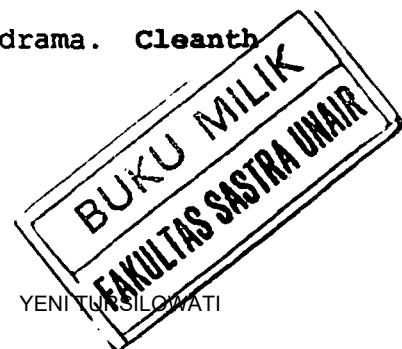
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Literature is the human experience of life in the world of writing, which reveals so many aspects of life, dealing with human thoughts, values, problems, and conflicts. It may talk about a real life situation combined with imaginary one, but it prominently deals with worthy and meaningful all valuable experiences of human life. Furthermore, **Robert G. Carlson** identifies literature as ' a means to transmit the loves and hates, the hopes and fears, ambitions and frustration, the failures and triumphs, the questions, the problems, the experiences of people confronting life (11).

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

In terms of literary field, this thesis analyzes **Thornton Wilder's** *Our Town*, which take the form of drama. **Cleanth Brooks** defines drama, then, as follow:



A drama is a dialogue spoken by the character with directions from the author telling what the characters do and perhaps how they speak their lines, and with directions (usually fairly brief) describing the background against which they perform their action (Brooks 432).

Drama is a peculiar literary form, which maybe treated as literature to be read privately, or as theater, to be seen in public performance (Little 12). Compared to other literary form it has strong points since the author can present certain things more vividly and intensely.

The writer of this thesis chooses Thornton Wilder as the author of her object of the analysis on this thesis because he is known as one of America's greatest dramatist, primarily because of his skill in expressing his deep concern toward human life on his works. The need for love is much of Wilder's fiction; the need for awareness, savoring every minute of our brief lives is at the heart of his play. He primarily intents on communicating his own sense of life value through the complex disguise of fiction (Encyclopaedia Americana: Vol. 19).

Wilder is the author of four short novels, three full-length dramas, and two collections of one-act plays. On three

occasions within fourteen years he has received America's most notable literary award, the Pulitzer Prize, for his novel *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*, in 1927, and his plays. *Our Town* and *The Skin of Our Teeth* in 1938 and 1942.

The writer is interested in '*Our Town*', one of Wilder's play and not others, because it is a very exceptional work. This short play contents Wilder's deep contemplation about the value of the daily details of human life. In this play Wilder tells about life in a small village, Grover's Corner, New Hampshire, an ordinary life, about their birth, marriage, and death. It concentrates on two families the Webbs and the Gibbsses. It traces the growing relationship between George Gibbs and Emily Webbs. As the time goes by, George and Emily find out their affection to each other. They fall in love to each other. They get married and live at George's farm that is given by his uncle. Their life is not much different from their parents. Emily dies when she is giving birth her second children.

The interesting thing in *Our Town* is at the end of the play. Wilder presents an unusual event, that is an after death life. He shows Emily among the death with her strange feeling. Always remember her former life, Emily decides to relive her life. She chooses to relive at her twelve- birthday party. She is able to live it and see it. But finally she decides to be

among the death again. The writer of this thesis is interested in what has happened to Emily. At first she desperately want to relive again but at the end she doesn't want it anymore. That's why the writer would like to find the reasons of her decision.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Considering the background of the study above, the writer will purpose some problems as follow:

1. How is the humanistic view of the society in the play?
2. How far does the humanistic view of the society influence Emily?
3. How is Emily's humanistic view as the reflection of her existence?

1.3 Objective of the Study

1. To find out the humanistic view of the society in the play.
2. To reveal the influences of society's humanistic view toward Emily's humanistic view.
3. To explain Emily's humanistic view As the reflection of her existence.

1.4 Significance of the study

By analyzing this drama, the writer surely hopes that it

will give contribution to the world of knowledge generally and to the literary study particularly. Hopefully it will help the reader especially English Department students who are interested in Thornton Wilder's works understand better about the play and make them easier to work in further study on this play.

The writer hopes this thesis will enrich her understanding about the meaning of life and being alive so that the writer will be able to appreciate all the moments in her life and explore all her talent and potential into something useful for her specially and human welfare generally

Through the process of making this thesis and therefore understanding better of this play, 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 the essential meaning of the play.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

In this study, the writer concentrates on the subject matter by limiting only to the behavior and the view of Emily through the analysis of the plot, setting and character since

her behavior and view are representative enough to recognize the importance of what is going on related with the topic of analysis.

1.6 Theoretical Background

This thesis is intended to analyze Emily's view toward life in her society. The writer limits the analysis to the character, the setting, and the plot. Plot is used to show the tone of her life . The setting is used because it plays important role in building Emily's life. While the character analysis is used to know the characteristic of the main character. So the writer decides to used the intrinsic approach since it concerns with intrinsic elements of drama, therefore, the writer assumes that the most appropriate theory in analyzing the problem is **Objective theory**.

To support this, concerning to the topic of the analysis, the writer uses the sociological and philosophical background of the main character that regard the sociological and philosophical conditions of Emily as the main character in the story.

1.7 Method of the Study

In working on this thesis, the writer reads many books, articles, encyclopaedias, and other printed materials related

to works of Thornton Wilder, particularly of *Our Town*. The writer also tries to find the information from any particular books dealing with literary theories and approaches that will be used in the analysis. As the main source of the analysis of the work itself - in this case is Wilder's *Our Town* - whereas the other sources are used for supporting the study.

Regarding the subject of the study, that is the work itself, content analysis is used. To support the analysis the writer also uses descriptive analysis. So the analysis of the thesis is done by describing the problems of the work through dialogues, events, and actions of the story. The descriptions of the problems are clarified by the data found in the library

1.8 Definition of Key Terms

- Life : qualities, events and experiences that characterize the existence as a human being
- View : way of understanding or interpreting a subject, series of events, etc
- Humanistic view : a view that concentrates on human welfare and is directed to enhancing the value of human existence
- Humanism : a system of beliefs that concentrates on

common human needs and seeks rational (rather than divine) ways of solving human problems

Existentialism : a theory (derived from Kierkegaard (1813-1855), the Danish philosopher, and made popular by Sartre (1905-1980), The French writer and philosopher) that man is a unique and isolated individual in a meaningless or hostile world, responsible for his own actions and free to choose his destiny

CHAPTER III

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RELATED STUDIES