

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **A. Background of the study**

William Shakespeare in his *As You Like It* says; “All the world’s a stage. And all the men and women merely players” (124). There are many roles on stage, so are in reality. Each person has his own role. Since he lives in a society, he has to play the expected role from his society. He cannot avoid that, so he has to obey the required behavior norms in his society.

A person mostly tries to carry out his role as well as possible in order to get a good impression from his society. It sometimes happens that one plays roles outside the prescription of his society. For the consequence, he runs the risk of being regarded as immoral.

Society is said to be audience who views the individuals’ performance. They have freedom to value the roles carried out by the member of the society. It judges whether the performance is accepted or not. Its reason is that what the members do is to be part of the society. Society requires those individuals self-disciplined in order to meet the expectations that others have on them (Green 68).

In fact, society functions as social control for its individual. It means to keep its members to stay in expected line (Berger 68). It provides such punishment for those who are out of the expected line. So, society as social control has limited its members' activities.

This thesis is a study that slum social life always brings effect to its people. The slum people are trapped in their conventional values that they have to adopt and to follow the social values in order to be accepted in the society, but in fact they fail to measure up to deal codes of Nobility and Human Kindness (Bassan 3). They are unable to avoid the forces of their social environment that cause them live in pressure. Besides, the destruction of man cannot be separated from the nature of man himself. Man has no choice but has to collaborate with his environment in the destruction of others. In spite of to build harmony and brotherhood, man himself also distributes to man's destruction (2).

In *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* Crane presents his readers "a slice of life" as he states in his letter to John N. Hilliard (Perosa 84). He does not want to moralize his view of the morality of the slum but he will leave his readers free to draw the moral lesson. Stephen Crane's *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* is a successful picture of slum. It does not simply tell about the physical reality of slum, but also portrays the life of slum people. It deeply shows out the

helplessness and exhaustion of the slum people. Moreover, this story can open the eyes of the readers to acknowledge what life is especially through the chaos of the main character, Maggie.

Crane came to know New York through its slum and streets life, particularly in the Bowery. His 'Maggie' records slum life with the realistic accuracy of a camera (Carlsen 176). It is a plain story of Maggie Johnson and her brother Jimmie in Rum Alley, a tenement district of New York City. The young girl is driven out of her home by her drunken mother; she falls in love with a bartender named Pete, a friend of Jimmie, who leaves her. Eventually she ends her short life by drowning herself, the helpless victim of her sordid surroundings. Pete and Jimmie and the drunken mother are to blame for Maggie's death, but the real villain is the Bowery environment itself.

Stephen Crane is usually credited with being one of the first naturalist writers in American literature. He was born in November 1871, in Newark, New Jersey. In 1891 he left Syracuse University for New York City and life as a newspaper reporter in New York *Tribune*. His first novel *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets had* to be published privately, for no respectable house or periodical would print it, in 1893. It was the first naturalistic novel written by an American and its complete description of immorality was so shocking for its time. Crane's major target was the nature of man himself, his hypocrisy

and his weakness in running his life in the society. *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*, later acclaimed as the first dark flower of American Naturalism, a novel which emphasizes the oppressiveness of the slum environment and focuses on the basic drives of hunger, sex, and fear. Environment itself is a relentless controlling force, a trap that destroy the innocent and defenseless Maggie. His fiction is a mixture of the most brilliant insights into details of its subjects of the behavior of the men in the circumstances of stress, and heavily obvious reliance upon the ironies of life of which the naturalist was often inordinately fond. In the eyes of a naturalist like Crane, people like Maggie can not avoid the forces of the environment, physical drives, and so on.

#### **B. Statement of the problem**

Considering the background above, the writer of this thesis has formulated questions that may give clearly understanding of this research:

1. What kind of society is Rum Alley?
2. In what way does the slum social life bring destruction to its people?

### **C. Objective of the study**

The thesis writer's purpose of writing this thesis is to show what the life of Rum Alley is. Also she would like to prove that slum social life is a tremendous thing that brings destruction to its people.

### **D. Significance of the study**

Personally, the writer of this thesis hopes that this thesis will help the readers to understand about social life and the human behavior that exists in their social environment.

Furthermore, it is expected that through this thesis the readers can learn how to treat another person due to his existence as a member of society.

### **E. Limitation of the study**

This thesis merely concentrates on the intrinsic aspects, mainly plot, characterization, and setting. Plot analysis will be used to seek the interrelationship of incidents and characters. Since character plays an important role in this novel, character analysis will be used as a major mean in the analysis through the dialogues, actions, and thoughts of the characters. Here, the theory of setting will also be used as a mean to analyze since setting gives contribution to the destructiveness of the Rum Alley people.

## **F. Theoretical background**

The thesis writer uses the intrinsic approach consists of plot, character, and setting since the analysis deals with the theme. Also, the thesis writer is going to apply the sociological approach to analyze the social life of slum Rum Alley environment that affects its people.

## **G. Definition of key-term**

### *Bowery*

A city district notorious for cheap bars and homeless derelicts.

### *Slum*

Court, alley, or street of small badly built, dirty, crowded houses.

### *Society*

System whereby people live together in organized community.

## **H. Research Methodology**

In analyzing this thesis, the thesis writer uses the descriptive analysis method, which is the descriptive explanation of the dialogues, events, and actions. She also uses the primary data and secondary data. The primary data is the text of the novel, while the secondary data are the dictionaries, encyclopedias, criticisms, reviews, biographies, and letters of Stephen Crane.

# **CHAPTER TWO**

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**