

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Problem

The life of a flower is predictable; the seed is planted and the flower grows, flourishes, and dies. Much the same can be said of a fish, a cat, or a dog. The lives of these animals depend a great deal on the circumstances into which they are put, but what they do is done instinctively, seemingly predetermined by their natures. With human beings, however, the situation is different. They can make choices, they can think about their lives and decide what direction they want to take. And they realize they are in a world that does not always make sense, a world that may be filled with uncertainty where actions based upon the best-laid plans of individuals and societies often have an unintended effect.

There are times when we are conscious of our powerlessness, particularly in the situations that are inevitable. We are aware that our freedom does not begin from the very start. Many things have been set up by nature, histories, and social background; providing facts that we have to realize. The comprehension of the term *struggle for existence* starts from the facts that there is a reality which is unavoidable, in contrast with the presence of our freedom

of choosing; our consciousness of being free to choose, our personal responsibilities, and moral judgment towards events and actions.

Furthermore, the study of human experiences within a work of literature begins with the idea that the fictional realm in a work of literature, however, has never flown over the border of its reference; that is the human life itself. In his book, *English Literature: An Introduction for Foreign Readers*, R. J. Rees stated what a work of literature should maintain is to pass on to us some feelings or ideas that we recognize as, either actually or potentially, a part of our own experiences (5).

●f course, literature itself implies its relationship with human experiences towards life which form feelings, thoughts and attitudes. Apparently this relationship appears more obvious in fiction; a genre of literature that constitutes the major part of literary works. Novel is one of these fictional forms that convey the imaginative exploration of human experiences through characters in action and in a setting. In *Mastering English Literature*, Richard Gill stated that a novel is a world specially made in words by an author and exists in the way it does because an author has chosen to put it together in a particular way (77). Indeed, a novel is not a real life. It is a copy of real life in particular time and space. Yet it

comes from the craft of contriving representations of human life through the written words. A story within a novel possibly happens or has happened in real life; characters, plots, conflicts, and settings may also occur in real life. They have previously been there. What is new in a novel is the representations of real life itself.

In this study, the writer intends to fit the previous ideas to a work of the Later Victorians novelist and poet, Thomas Hardy. He is a great author in the time of changes; when people are aware of new science – initiated by the working of ‘Darwinian Evolution’ in many aspects of life within the society – which view man as the product of blind mechanistic forces over which he has little control. In all of his works, Hardy tried to show the stark realities of life and present it in a grim nakedness. He exposed the basic laws of nature and society that militate against many human aspirations. And all these qualities had made one of Hardy’s work, *Tess of the D’Urberville*, become his masterpiece.

According to Rees, *Tess of the D’Urberville* is the greatest of Hardy’s works that reflects “his outlook on life in term of high tragedy rather than of mere triviality and unhappiness.” (127). The novel conveys his ideas of a beneficent, omnipotent, and omniscient deity with the fact of omnipresent evil and persistent

tendency of circumstances toward unhappiness. It is carried out by Hardy's frequent use of chance and circumstance to generate the conflicts as well as to build the plot of the story. The great conflict of the main character, Tess Durbeyfield, – that is between her inherent will to enjoy and the circumstantial forces that are indifferent to her wishes and efforts – is an expression of his outlook on life.

The novel itself is a story wherein the great campaign of the main character, Tess Durbeyfield, begins after a particular event in her experience. And it has precipitated her into a course of events that end in murder. Tess Durbeyfield has appeared as a victim of predetermined realities that have been set up by either nature or society. Her poverty, for instance, has made her – as the first born child of the Durbeyfields – work hard to earn money for the family in her younger days. And she, finally, is seduced by a man in her working place because she is too young and credulous. This event, then, becomes the beginning of her bitter cries against life; the resentment of her society towards the baby of her illicit relationship, the refusal of her husband after he knows that Tess is not a virgin before they're married, and other painful realities she has to endure.

The tragic life of Tess Durbeyfield is Hardy's depiction of suffering and struggling figure in conflict with forces that are too strong for her. Nevertheless, the writer has seen fascinating phenomenon behind such story —fundamental actions of human being to succeed the need and will against predetermined and inevitable realities. It is a matter of how people live their life; a unique way of living that does not exist in the life of animal and flower. Despite of their inability to choose their history and social background or to avoid the works of nature, people still have choices to decide how they will live their life. Hence, they exist as unique individuals since they have their own course of life. It deals with the *struggle for existence*; that is the efforts to decide the way of living.

In this thesis, the writer has encouraged himself to say that despite her tragic life, Tess has appeared as a phenomenal figure of struggle. It is not merely struggle for survival, yet also the struggle to comprehend the predetermined and inevitable realities, her struggles to make choices and to decide the course of life she wants to take. All are the endeavor to participate in her life and, therefore, to exist as a unique individual within the life that has been molded by circumstances.

In short, how Tess Durbeyfield struggles to exist within her tragic life is the underlying interest of this study. The uncertain world where her actions often have unintended effects, in some ways has reflected human inability to comprehend the world as well as the inability to gain thorough understanding of other people or even Tess herself. From this notion, the writer has considered that the vain struggles of Tess Durbeyfield should not only convey her as a subject of tragedy, but also as attempts to exist; not merely as living creature, but as an unique individual who has her own course of life. In this sense, all her vain struggles are linked in the term *struggle for existence*. It is to say that Tess' struggles and sufferings are valuable and meaningful to make her appear as an individual who is not merely driven by nature forces but is capable to make choices and, therefore, to decide her own life.

B. Statement of the Problem

Based on the preliminary background, the writer has stated the problems to be discussed in this thesis as follows:

1. How do the background that yields Tess' *struggle for existence* manifested in the works?
2. How does Tess *struggle for existence*?
3. What is the essence of Tess' *struggle for existence*?

C. Objective of the Study

Relating to the previous statement of the problem, the purpose of the study is to find out the qualitative information and description of the *struggle for existence* of Tess Durbeyfield. By pointing out the background that yields her struggle and the events that affect her actions and decisions, the writer will convey how Tess has faced important and difficult situations in her life and participated in through series of struggles. The writer will also provide the discussion about Tess' appreciation towards life with philosophical understanding to encounter what the essence of Tess Durbeyfield's *struggle for existence*.

D. Significance of the Study

Mainly, the significance of this study is to present the discussion about the essence of individual's existence by contrasting the work of fate against human freedom in a given condition. It, perhaps, can serve as a trivial effort to look for a more optimistic view of human life in Hardy's works despite of his pessimism.

Hopefully, this study will also bring out some explanations that give better understanding about individual's life as once it was depicted by Hardy in his *Tess of the D'Urberville*; providing another scene to sight individual relationship with the world.

In regard to the struggle of the main character, the writer hopes it will give a chance to the reader to increase their knowledge about human characteristics as well as to learn individual's attitude towards life and other valuable experiences.

E. Scope and limitation

This study concentrates on the efforts to reveal Tess Durbeyfield's *struggle for existence*; considering and analyzing evidence and clues to bring out her *struggle for existence* through characterization, setting, plot, and conflicts within story. The analysis of these intrinsic elements will help the writer to comprehend the story as an actual happening, as well as an attempt to strip it off extrinsic aspects. Other intrinsic aspects that contribute to this study may be considered as to support this paper.

Since the writer has attempted to point out the meaning behind the struggles of the main character in a particular point of view, the analysis will also be presented in subjective interpretation which is controlled by objective orientation from the work itself.

F. Theoretical Background

The writer intends to use the intrinsic approach in this analysis, since this study only concerns with a subject matter that

lies within the content of the work itself regardless of its authorial background. Thus, the intrinsic approach serves as means to give an access to the elements of the story. Another reason of the use is to give appropriate approach to analysis of characterization, setting, plots, and conflicts.

Further consideration for the underlying idea of carrying out the main character's *struggle for existence* within the story, will be represented by the existentialism theory that the writer employs in this analysis as means to sustain the subject matter.

G. Method of the Study

The writer has collected some important data from the work itself as the main source of this study. The writer also needs to make a research in the library as means to provide relevant literature and theories that will be used to support the analysis of the data.

In the process of finding information of Tess' struggle for existence, the writer must carefully read the novel and classify the data that are important for further analysis of the subject matter.

Considering the subject matter of the study, the writer then applies descriptive analysis, based on the employed theories, to the collected data. The problem solving of the analysis will be explained

by providing subjective interpretation through actions, dialogues, and events that are available within the story.

H. Definition of Key Terms

- **Individual** : Single human being.
- **Struggle** : 1. great effort. 2. fight (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary). In this thesis the term "struggle" particularly refers to "effort to achieve, gain or succeed something despite any obstacles."
- **Existence** : 1. state or fact of existing. 2. manner of living; way of living. 3. survival; continuance in life (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary). Particular use of the term "existence" in this thesis refers to "manner of living of individuals that are capable of development; carrying their plans, wills, and hopes in life."
- **Struggle for Existence**: Effort to participate in one's own course of life. In other words, it is an endeavor to decide how one should live one's life —based on one's experiences, thoughts, motives, wants, and needs— through choices and decisions one has to make.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK