

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

I. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

I choose John Steinbeck and Stephen Crane because both of them are good novelists. John Steinbeck remains one of America's most significant twentieth-century writers, whose popularity spans the world, whose range is impressive; whose output was prodigious (Shillinglaw).

While about Stephen Crane, I choose him because of his contribution to the world of literature, specifically the American Literature. Stephen Crane starts the beginning of modern American Naturalism. He is well-known for his naturalistic style. His works have had a popular success with a wide range of readers, and his styles and subject matter have influenced numerous subsequent writers, including Ernest Hemingway and the free verse "Imagist" poets, such as Amy Lowell, in the early twentieth century (Vanouse).

I would like to discuss their books entitled Of Mice And Men and Maggie: A Girl of the Streets because for me, the two works are very good and

worth reading. John Steinbeck's works are always amazing and have underlying meaning throughout the story. His Of Mice And Men is one of the most well-

known novels in the world, in which it tells about Naturalism. Blastiose once states that:

Of Mice and Men is a work that is different from a large number of so-called classics because of its brevity and universal appeal. It utilizes simplicity and linearity for the sake of writing a good, not great, novel. Despite any fault one might find, Of Mice And Men is nevertheless a decent offering from one of America's most respected authors of the twentieth century. (Blastiose).

I am going to analyze Stephen Crane's work, namely Maggie: A Girl of the Streets because this novel is often regarded as the first American specimen of literary naturalism. On a cursory reading, the novel may appear to dramatize the naturalistic precept that human beings are inexorably molded by environmental and biological forces (Sloan). Besides, this novel offers an accurate, detailed, straightforward portrayal of life in a nuance of naturalism (Richards).

I am interested in analyzing the characters, particularly the protagonist, because I want to go deeper, find any motive and the reasons of the author creating his characters in such a way; since we know that to analyze characters is not easy, for character is much more complex, variable, and ambiguous (Perrine).

I also pay attention to naturalism because I figure out that fate is already determined, and our life is controlled by nature. The universe has its own natural law, which is one can either accept the laws determining social order or become their victim. Naturalism deals with human beings, for they are creatures who are controlled by influences beyond their power (Richards).

I choose the Philosophical approach, particularly naturalism, because after reading both of the novels and try to portray the protagonist in each of the book, I come to a conclusion that both of the novels deal with naturalism of the Philosophical approach. It is widely known that Crane's novel, Maggie: A Girl of the Streets is a naturalistic novel; while Steinbeck is a writer who has experimented with and uses naturalism in his works. The definition of Naturalism in literature is:

The term *naturalism* describes a type of literature that attempts to apply scientific principles of objectivity and detachment to its study of human beings. Unlike realism, which focuses on literary technique, naturalism implies a philosophical position: for naturalistic writers, since human beings are, in Emile Zola's phrase, "human beasts," characters can be studied through their relationships to their surroundings (Campbell).

Naturalistic work deals with these conditions:

The naturalist populates his novel primarily from the lower middle class or the lower class.

The second tension involves the theme of the naturalistic novel. The naturalist often describes his characters as though they are conditioned and controlled by environment, heredity, instinct, or chance.

Characters. Frequently but not invariably ill-educated or lower-class characters whose lives are governed by the forces of heredity, instinct, and passion. Their attempts at exercising free will or choice are hamstrung by forces beyond their control.

Setting. Frequently an urban setting.

The forces of heredity and environment as they affect--and afflict--individual lives.

An indifferent, deterministic universe. Naturalistic texts often describe the futile attempts of human beings to exercise free will, often ironically presented, in this universe that reveals free will as an illusion (Campbell).

After reading both of the novels, I find out that both of these books fulfill the condition of a naturalistic work. These two books are suitable to be analyzed using this criticism. Thus, I choose the Philosophical approach, particularly naturalism for analyzing the portrayal of the protagonist in John Steinbeck's Of Mice And Men and Stephen Crane's Maggie: A Girl of the Streets.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problems are stated as follows:

1. How do John Steinbeck and Stephen Crane portray the protagonists in both of the novels?
2. How do the authors portray the protagonists in relation to the Naturalism?

III. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Based on the statement of the problems above this study is done:

1. To show how John Steinbeck and Stephen Crane portray the protagonists in both of the novels.

2. To show how the authors portray the protagonists in relation to the Naturalism.

IV. METHOD OF RESEARCH

I start the research for this thesis by library research, by first reading Of Mice And Men and Maggie: A Girl of the Streets as the primary texts. I also read and compile some texts that are taken from the Internet.

V. ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

This thesis contains four chapters. The thesis starts with the Preface. The first chapter is the Introduction, which consists of the Background of the Study, Statement of the Problem, Purpose of the Study, Method of Research, and Organization of the Thesis. Chapter two and three are the discussion of Of Mice And Men and Maggie: A Girl of the Streets. The last chapter is Conclusion. The thesis ends with the Bibliography and the Appendix, which contains the Synopses of the two novels and the Biographies of the Authors.