

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

I. Background of the Study

I choose both of the novels because the authors are excellent. Betty Smith is the author of A Tree Grows in Brooklyn. The novel is the work of a fresh, original and high-gifted talent. She is one of the finest writers in her generation. The theme is about love and honesty, which are the foundation of her writing. The book is semi-autobiographical and encapsulates the world of Brooklyn with all of its intricacies. Smith's themes mainly cover hope and poverty and track the lives of individual people struggling with both. Bastard Out of Carolina is the most famous and successful novel in her life that deals with this theme, similar with Smith's work, themes in Allison's work include class struggle, child and sexual abuse. "The whole idea in this book was to give you a working class family that had all the flaws...". "...brutal honesty has added a lot to working-class literature."

I am interested in analyzing the protagonists, both of whom deal with the same matter, the struggle to overcome poverty. The story is about the life of American working class in achieving freedom. I can learn a lot from their character in the process to achieve freedom. It is not an easy way to get something when the condition and the society are not supporting. The protagonist in A Tree Grows in Brooklyn finally succeeds in achieving freedom. On the other hand, the protagonist in Bastard Out of Carolina fails to achieve freedom. This is what makes me want to know more by analyzing what has happened to them in the process to achieve freedom.

Both of the protagonists look white but they are considered white trash because Francie's parents are German and Irish, and they are also poor. Bone's mother has Indian blood and also poor. They are impure white and poor; therefore, they are discriminated because of their identity. In the end, Francie succeeds to achieve her dream; she is able to raise her economic position while Bone fails to achieve it.

II. Statement of the Problem

The problems are stated as follows:

1. How do the authors present the protagonists in the novels?
2. Why do the authors create such protagonists?

III. Purpose of the Study

1. To analyze how the authors present the protagonists in the novels.
2. To analyze why the authors create such protagonists.

IV. Method of Research

The method of research for this thesis is formalism. I will analyze how the protagonists in the two novels are portrayed through their thoughts and behavior.

The research type is library research. I read A Tree Grows in Brooklyn and Bastard Out of Carolina as the primary texts. I also read and compile some texts that are taken from the Internet.

V. Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters. The thesis starts with Acknowledgements and Abstract. The first chapter is the Introduction, which consists of Background of the Study, Statement of the Problems, Purpose of the Study, Method of Research, and Organization of the Thesis. Chapter Two is Portrayal of the Protagonist in A Tree Grows in Brooklyn. Chapter Three is Portrayal of the Protagonist in Bastard Out of Carolina. Chapter Four is Conclusion. The thesis ends with the Bibliography and the Appendices, which contain the Synopses of the two novels and the Biographies of the Authors.