

The Aspects of Naturalism in Stephen Crane's *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*

A Thesis

Submitted as Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Attainment of the Degree of Sarjana Sastra in English Literature



By:
Yusiana Reginanita
07211144009

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE STUDY PROGRAM
FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND ARTS
YOGYAKARTA STATE UNIVERSITY
2012**

A. Introduction

Literature can be regarded as the chief of art whether it is transmitted through spoken or written words. Literature contains the record of the people's values, thoughts, problems and conflicts, or in short, their whole life. In other words, literature is an imitation of varied experiences of living people. As a work of literature, a novel is also an imitation of life. There are many kinds of genres novels which characteristics are different to one another. However, the modern novel, especially, is more expressive and representative in reflecting human life.

Maggie: A Girl of the Streets by Stephen Crane is one of the modern novels presenting naturalism. Naturalism is a literary movement taking place from 1865 to 1900s that used detailed Realism to suggest that social conditions, heredity, and environment had inescapable force in shaping human character. In naturalism, characters can be studied through their relationships to their surroundings.

It is a fact that *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* belongs to a modern novel presenting naturalism, but in reality not everybody knows why this novel belongs to such genre. In this case, the researcher feels that the information is still far from being satisfactory. In other words, it is needed to explore the aspects of naturalism in *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* to categorize it as a naturalistic novel.

Thus, in this research, the researcher tries to show the readers some aspects of naturalism in *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*. Finally, in the conclusion the readers can see how far this novel can fulfill the requirements or the characteristics of the genre of naturalism itself.

B. Literature Review and Research Method

The purpose of this research is to find some aspects of naturalism in *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*, to prove and to give information to the readers

about how far this novel fulfils the requirements of the naturalism genre. Structuralism approach is used to answer the problems of this research.

This research is a descriptive-qualitative study. The subject of this research is a novel entitled *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* written by Stephen Crane. The data were some phrases, clauses, sentences, and discourses related to the characteristics of naturalism genre. The key instrument of this research was the researcher herself with the concepts that there must be some reasons why this novel is categorized as naturalistic novel. The data analysis was conducted through six steps: identifying the data, reading and rereading the whole data, coding and categorizing the data, sorting the data, making the interrelation between the description of the data and the theory, finally making an interpretation based on the researcher's comprehension about the theory. To obtain trustworthiness, the researcher used triangulation technique.

C. Findings

There are two results of this research. The *first* result is answering the question about the aspects of naturalism which is classified into four aspects; determinism, pessimism, detachment of the story (objectivity), and unpredictable ending.

Determinism is a belief where characters do not have free will. They are controlled by external and internal forces. The external force is presented by the family condition and the environment (circumstance) and the internal force is presented by passion and instinct. The strength of society, environment, and nature obstruct human freedom that controls man's life, while the strength of instinct and passion determine human rationality and moral responsibility. As a result, human's life is completely controlled by determinism.

The pessimistic attitude toward life is the product of determinism. Men acts are meaningless because their destiny seems to be shaped by blind forces

which he could not control. As the result, people come to a state of having lost of hopes. Furthermore, there are four parts which represent pessimism aspect of naturalism namely having lost of hopes; lost hopes for jobs, lost hopes for love, lost hopes for security, and lost hopes for a better future.

Another characteristic of naturalism is detachment of the story or objectivity. The author tries to maintain objectivity by making a story as close as possible to the reality and avoid subjectivity. No human being can ever be truly objective, but by detaching from the story an author can achieve objectivity. Sometimes an author creates some nameless characters to achieve detachment or objectivity. Thus, there are two pairs classified as the data for detachment of the story (objectivity) namely telling the story as close as possible to the reality and creating nameless characters.

Unpredictable ending is the last aspects of naturalism that the researcher wants to discuss. Like in this life, people do not know what will happen to them in one minute later or perhaps in ten years later. However, it is very unclear to see. There is no formula in it, so that the story of the people's life leads them to the unexpected course. The ending of this story is quite surprising because Crane leads the readers in one direction at the beginning and in the middle ultimately drifting towards a completely unexpected course.

The *second* result is answering the question about how far *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* can fulfil the requirements of the naturalistic genre. It is answered by juxtaposing the theory from Donald Pizer with other theories of naturalism; Charles Child Walcutt and Emile Zola. Those theories are gathered and classified in order to show that *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* fulfills the requirements of the naturalistic genre and it is proved to be a naturalistic novel.

D. Conclusion

There are four aspects of naturalism namely determinism, pessimism, detachment of the story (objectivity), and unpredictable ending. Determinism aspect is a belief where characters do not have free will. The strength of external and internal forces that completely control man's life is believed to be the power of nature. Then, pessimism means a state of mind in which one perceives life negatively. The pessimistic attitude towards life is the product of determinism. Man acts are meaningless and they come to a state of having lost of hopes. Meanwhile, detachment of the story or objectivity is the presentation of characters and plot in a literary work without overt comment or judgement by the author. The last aspect is the unpredictable ending. The author leads the readers in one direction at the beginning and in the middle ultimately drifting towards a completely unexpected course.

Maggie: A Girl of the Streets is proved to be a naturalistic novel. Based on the theory of naturalism by Donald Pizer, this novel can fulfil the requirements of the naturalistic genre. It can be proven by some aspects of naturalism appearing in the novel. From the four aspects that have been presented, the most prominent aspect is determinism. It is an aspect which makes naturalism different from realism. Naturalism not only gives a truly depiction of life, but also gives a detail description that man's life is completely controlled by the external and internal forces.

E. Bibliography

- Abrams, M. H. 1988. *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (5th Ed). New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- . 1981. *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (4th Ed). New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Ahnebrink, Lars. 1961. *The Beginnings of Naturalism in American Fiction*. New York: Russell & Russel.
- Bassan, Maurice. 1967. *The Collection of Critical Essays of Stephen Crane*. University Michigan: Prentice Hall.
- Crane, Stephen. 1983. *Maggie: A Girl of the Street*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Duff, David. 2000. *Modern Genre Theory*. London: Licensing Agency.
- Given, Lisa M. 2008. *The Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Method*. Volumes 1&2. Singapore: Sage Reference Publication.
- Hawkes, Terence. 2003. *Structuralism and Semiotics* (2nd Ed). New York: Routledge.
- Holman, C. Hugh. 1980. *A handbook to Literature* (6th Ed.). Odyssey: The Odyssey Press.
- Little, Graham. 1981. *Approach to Literature: An Introduction to Critical Study of Content and Method in Writing*. Sydney: Science Press.
- Moleong, Lexy. 2001. *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*. Bandung: PT. Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Pizer, Donald. 1995. *American Realism and Naturalism Howells to London*. London: Cambridge University Press.
- . 1993. *The Theory and Practice of American Naturalism: Selected Essays and Reviews*. Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press.
- . 1984. *Realism and Naturalism in 19th Century* (revised Ed). Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Walcutt, Charles C. 1956. *American Literary Naturalism: A divided Stream*. Minneapolis: University Minnesota Press.