

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of The Research

Every literary work, including novels, short stories, prose, and poetry usually is influenced by the background of the author. Some of them are created based on the experience of the author's life, while the others are created from observing the environments and also become media by the author to criticize an issue in society.

One of the novelists that usually use their works to criticize social conflict is John Steinbeck. John Steinbeck (27 February 1902 - 1968) was an American novelist and short story writer. He was born in Salinas, California and the third child of Olive Hamilton and John Ernst Steinbeck. Steinbeck served as a war correspondent during World War II, and also got a Nobel Prize for Literature in 1962. He passed away in New York City in 1968.

In almost all of Steinbeck's works, we can see that he is one of a radical novelist. Most of his famous works, he always shows his idea and gives a direct critique towards the society. Steinbeck projects the social condition into his novel to convey the ideas to the readers. With social condition theme that he brought into his novels, he brings an awareness of capitalism in America. The main issue in his novel mainly is about exploitation and oppression of the upper class to the lower class. The upper class uses hegemony to control and exploit the lower class.

A novel that will be analyzed in this research is *In Dubious Battle* by John Steinbeck. *In Dubious Battle* is a novel by John Steinbeck that written in 1936. *In*

Dubious Battle can be categorized as John Steinbeck's first novel about social criticism. Steinbeck's previous works usually only tell about comedy and autobiography. This novel focuses on the common problem of American society during The Great Depression in the United States.

Depression period (1929-1939), also known as the Great Depression, is a period when the great economic depression hit many countries around the world. The Great Depression was the deepest and longest-lasting economic downturn in the history of the Western industrialized world. The Great Depression started soon after the stock market crash on October 1929, which sent Wall Street into a panic state. The Great depression was not the result of the stock market crash of 1929, but it was the result of the wrong economic policies pursued by nations and the United States in particular.

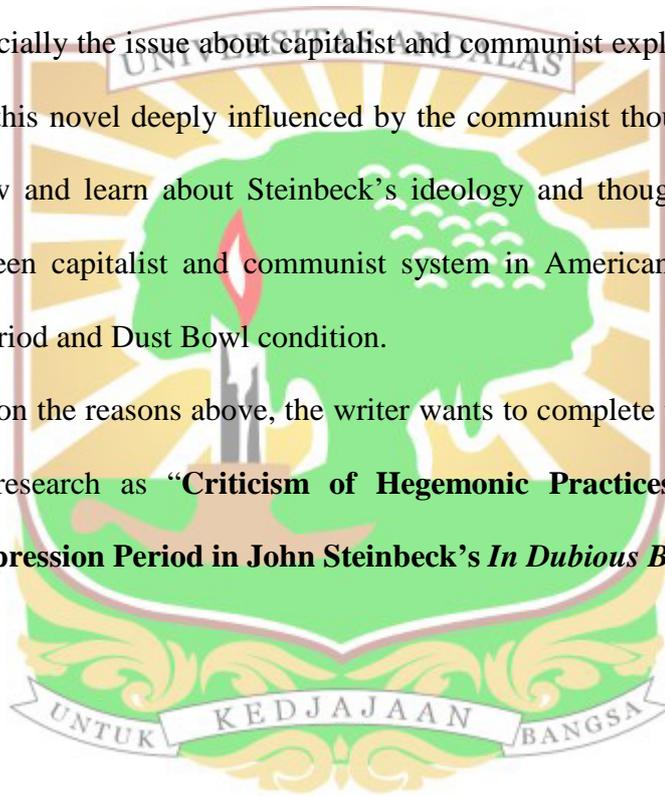
According to Clements (2012) in his book *The Great Depression and the Americas 1929–39*, the decline in construction sector, the cycle of international debt limiting trade, and overproduction that leading to unemployment becomes the indicators of economic problems at that time. Depression Period was not caused by the Wall Street Crash; it just only as an indicator of its onset. The writer believes that the Depression Period gives the impact to the author and it was reflected to the background of the author's. The great depression that happened in American society has influenced Steinbeck to make novels that criticize the social environment.

The writer chooses to analyze *In Dubious Battle* because of some reasons. First, there are many of Steinbeck's novels that criticize the social condition in the society. *In Dubious Battle* may be known as his first novel that criticizes the

social environment. This novel is important because it may affect Steinbeck to create other works which using the same idea to criticizing the social condition that also may influences other authors during his time.

The second reason is because the novel represents Steinbeck's view of social conflicts during the great depression in America. It shows a conflict between bourgeois and working class people, also the interference of communist party. Steinbeck shows his critical ideas regarding the issues that occurred in America, especially the issue about capitalist and communist exploitation. Labour organizers in this novel deeply influenced by the communist thought. The writer wants to know and learn about Steinbeck's ideology and thought about power struggle between capitalist and communist system in American society during Depression Period and Dust Bowl condition.

Based on the reasons above, the writer wants to complete the research and entitled this research as **“Criticism of Hegemonic Practices in American Society in Depression Period in John Steinbeck's *In Dubious Battle*”**.



1.2 The Identification of Problem

John Steinbeck's *In Dubious Battle* reflects the situation of exploitation and discrimination towards proletariat class. The novel is radical and tries to persuade the reader and encourage them to strike against injustice of social gap.

In the novel, most of the apple pickers want to get a better wages, but they do nothing before Jim and Mac come to them. The apple farm's owner who cut the wages still wants to control them and make them work under that situation. The landowner is hegemonizing the workers and citizen in process. Even the red party who seems in a good relationship with the workers actually also has their own interest and hegemonizing the workers through propaganda to start the rebellion. John Steinbeck wants to shows the greediness of human's life and their ambition to take control over them and make bourgeois community richer.

In this analysis, the writer analyze the novel *In Dubious Battle* by John Steinbeck using Marxist theory in the hegemony perspective. In hegemonize people, bourgeois people use some kinds of media to achieve their goal such as; newspaper, law, propaganda to make them, even apparatus, believe to scare the powerless people. John Steinbeck tries to give the image of the ways of how bourgeois people treating the proletariat. The richest becomes richer and the degree of the poor is lower.

1.3 The Scope of The Research

In order to make the analysis clearer, the writer focuses the analysis on the situation of apple pickers that being controlled by its owner. The concentration of analysis will be based on:

1. Hegemonizing society through ideology and repression.
2. Propaganda as medium of counter-hegemony.

1.4 The Objectives of The Research

The research is aimed to examine Steinbeck's portrays of how the haves society takes control over the have-nots people at that time. The writer wants to shows the system that currently being used in the novel. The writer intends to analyze the exploitation through hegemony that experienced by the workers and the way of Jim and Mac in seeking a solution. The writer wants to analyze how the apple farm owners hegemonize the workers and find the media that is used by upper class. The writer wants to know how bourgeois society spread the ideology and persuade the apple pickers to keep working without concern of the wages and the anti-hegemony created to fight against that ideology. The writer also intends to prove if the red party also has their secret agenda and hegemonize the workers through propaganda.

1.5 The Review of Previous Studies

In conducting the research, references from some previous studies will be used as sources. The writer uses a novel *In Dubious Battle* by John Steinbeck. In analyzing that novel, the writer needs supporting data from some critics, students, and academicians. Specifically, the writer looks at what these people say about the novel.

John Steinbeck is one of famous novelists who has published many novels in his life. To discuss Steinbeck's novel, the writer needs to attract some

researchers. The researcher who has done the research on Steinbeck's novel *In Dubious Battle* is Shawn Mark Jasinski a student of Vermont University, May, 2008. In his thesis entitled "John Steinbeck as a Radical Novelist", he analyze about Steinbeck's perspective in his three novels; *In Dubious Battle*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, and *Cannery Row*. He said that *In Dubious Battle* is a highly critique of Communist labor organizers and sets Steinbeck apart from the radical tradition by questioning rather than supporting their motivation. The labor organizers manipulate the phalanx in this novel and Steinbeck leaves the reader with the impression that the group-man is being corrupted. Together, these novels represent the evolution of Steinbeck's radical philosophy, particularly as it pertains to his vision of communal existence. While this vision of collectivity is what aligns Steinbeck with the most basic of Marxist principles, the mysticism that he surrounds it with is what serves to set him apart from the more utilitarian communist appreciation of the phalanx.

The second researcher is an academic journal by Christopher Berardino, International Journal of English and Literature, California 2013, United States of America. His journal article is entitled "Redefining Group-man: An application of the "flexible phalanx" theory". The analysis of the journal is about the application of phalanx theory in Steinbeck's work; "The Vigilante", *In Dubious Battle*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, and *Cannery Row*. Phalanx is an idea about the relationship between the individual and the group. He said that Steinbeck's earlier works "The Vigilante" and *In Dubious Battle* presents a critical view of the dangers and destructive possibilities unharnessed "phalanxes" present, while his later works *The Grapes of Wrath* and *Cannery Row* offer a more redemptive and productive

view on the potential of group-man. The writer have a similar thought in this analysis. Every individual has a different idea and knowledge. If those ideas combine together, it will create the new different idea. The workers cannot act alone to raise their voices, however when they combine forces as a new individual, they can survive in life. It is supports strength in unity rather than individualism and self reliance.

Other researcher is Chris Saliba whose article entitled “John Steinbeck's gritty, realist style novel *In Dubious Battle* shows the struggle between labour and capital in 1930s America as close to all out warfare”. Chris Saliba is a freelance writer who has analyzed many of Steinbeck’s works on his blog. In his article, Saliba analyzed the differences between novels *In Dubious Battle* and *The Grapes of Wrath*. He said that both novels deal with the hardships of life as an itinerant farm worker and the violent clashes between organized labour and capital. While *The Grapes of Wrath* was concentrating on the Joads, Oklahoma farmers driven off their land by soil erosion and forced to try their luck as fruit pickers in California. But, *In Dubious Battle* concentrates more intensely on what is basically an all out war between labour and capital. It closely examines the thought-minded ideology of labour organizers deeply influenced by communist thought, and shows how utterly unscrupulous their methods could be. His analysis quite similar to writer’s analysis in this research. The workers movements was basically triggered by the red party. Then, the story will entertain us with the battle of ideology between capitalism and communism.

The next source of works that will be used is a thesis by Stella Zavera Monica, a student of Andalas University, entitled “Tyrannical Control over the

Proletariat in George Orwell's *Animal Farm*", 2009. The writer chooses this analysis because the theory used by the researcher is the same as the writer, which is hegemony by Antonio Gramsci. Hegemony is a theory that discussed how people are able to influence and control the ideology of others through various way and supporting media such as rule of the society, propaganda, even an officer at that society. Her thesis analyzed about dictatorship and tyranny in the novel animal farm which can control the lower-class who do not have the strength to fight the system. Her analysis is about comparing the system between capitalist and communist that is not much different. They have the same goal, and the difference is only how these systems appear in society. The writer puts her thesis as the supporting sources is because of the same theory that she sows in her thesis, which is hegemony by Antonio Gramsci. Moreover the main idea of her analysis is quite similar to the writer that analyze about two ideologies; capitalism and communism.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

To identify and analyze the social control of American society in depression period, the suitable approach for the study is Marxist criticism in hegemony perspective. In Marxist criticism the writer will analyze the circumstance and the condition of the character that seen in economic problem. The lower class suffers from the economic and the upper class can achieve their goal by hegemonize people with their ideology.

The theory and practice of Marxist criticism based on the economic and cultural theory of Karl Marx. The analysis evolves of the social class relation in

the society. In Marxist, economic conditions are referred as material circumstances. The ideology, political, and social generated by material conditions. Marx represented the ideology as a superstructure which base on socioeconomic system that already state in MH. Abrams book, A Glossary of Literary Terms 9th Edition, that

Marx represented ideology as a “superstructure” of which the concurrent socioeconomic system is the “base.” Friedrich Engels described ideology as “a false consciousness,” and many later Marxists consider it to be constituted largely by unconscious prepossessions that are illusory, in contrast to the “scientific” (that is, Marxist) knowledge of the economic determinants, historical evolution, and present constitution of the social world. (182)

In analyzing the novel, the writer applies the Marxist approach. Meanwhile, in conducting the research the writer using the concept of hegemony in general. Hegemony is the concept that is introduced by the Italian Marxist, Antonio Gramsci. He explains that hegemony refers to the way bourgeois class dominate capitalist society through the ideology of political, social system and the culture. The writer founds in the novel that the upper class has more control of others.

The concept of hegemony, as developed by Antonio Gramsci can be defined as the process and state of the way of life and organising the distribution of resources and also the ways of thinking and understanding become dominant in a social formation. As being told by Mark McNally and John Schwarzmantel (2009) in their book *Gramsci and Global Politics*, in a quotation from Gramsci.

Hegemony is the introduction of ‘a new morality in conformity with a new conception of the world’ (Gramsci 1971: 366). From the point of view of hegemony as a process, hegemony combines the double supremacy of a social group, as both domination and intellectual and moral leadership.(Gramsci 1971: 55) Gramsci states that ‘hegemony is political but also and above all economic, it has its material base in the decisive function exercised by the hegemonic group in the decisive core of economic activity’ (Gramsci 1975: 461).Hegemony, for instance, is sometimes compared with domination, in which case the reference is to the process of gaining legitimate consent within the functional universe of civil society, as opposed to simply holding it together through a monopoly on the means of violence.

Thomas (2009) *The Gramscian Moment: Philosophy, Hegemony and Marxism* mention that, there are four assumptions of concept hegemony by Gramsci. The first assumption, asserts that hegemony, for Gramsci, involves a leading social group securing the (active or passive) consent of other social strata, rather than unilaterally imposing its decrees upon unwilling ‘subjects’. Second assumption argues that Gramsci viewed the proper terrain of hegemony as civil society, rather than the state. The third assumption further extends the consent-civil society/coercion-state binary opposition, in order to characterise two qualitatively distinct geographical zones of West and East. The fourth assumption argues that Gramsci’s concept of hegemony is indifferent to its class content. Both as a term of theoretical analysis and as a political strategy, this ‘consensual power’ is valid for proletarian and bourgeois leadership.

Dylan J Riley state in his journal article “Hegemony, Democracy, and Passive Revolution in Gramsci's Prison Notebooks”, he makes two arguments about hegemony. First, he suggests that hegemony is not just a form of intellectual and moral leadership in general; it is a form of rational intellectual and moral leadership. Because of its rational form, hegemony is inconceivable without pluralism and democracy. Second, he argues that hegemony is neither “secreted” by civil society, nor is it a “bottom-up” process of cultural transformation. Typically hegemony is created in a process of decisive political transformation: revolution.

1.7 The Methods of The Research

In conducting the research, the writer will use three steps. The first step is collecting the primary data and the secondary data. The primary data are taken from the literary work itself, a novel *In Dubious Battle* by John Steinbeck. The secondary data are taken from literary theory books and articles that related to this study by using library research methods, reading books, articles, the journals, and browsing the internet.

The second step is analyzing the data. In analyzing the data, the methods that will be used are hegemony theory. Historical-biographical criticism is focus on the concept of background of the author.

The last step is presenting the result of analysis. In presenting the result of analysis, the descriptive method will be applied since the research is qualitative one. The qualitative research means the words or pictures are more important than

numbers. The writer supports the analysis by writing some quotation and provided some example from the novel to support the analysis.



CHAPTER IV CONCLUSION

After doing the analysis, the writer found out the one who hegemonizes the working class in the story are the land owner and the red party, especially Mac and Jim. The characters that are being hegemonized are people in society, including the citizens and all the apple farm pickers on the farm.

In the story, the writer found that there are ideological and dictatorship (repressive) ways to control over the society. The story also can be interpreted as a clash between two superior ideologies which are capitalism that brought by the land owner and communism that brought by the red party. The capitalist system in the story will fully control the farm; the workers and the society just do what capitalists order them to do. Moreover, Mac and Jim bring communist ideology because they are members of the party. After Mac and Jim join the workers' group, soon they start to spread their ideology of fairness and rebellion. They try to do everything they need to spread their ideology.

Then the writer found that there are three mediums that are used in the oppression. The first one is the law that can make people obedience to it. In managing a group of people, they need rules to be followed to make everything under control. The second is a repressive way by using public apparatus such as cops and sheriff deputies. The landowner cannot stand by himself; he needs an apparatus to help him control the lower class people. The last effort is the apple farm owner who control the workers and society by using mass media such as newspaper to hegemonize the rest of the citizens. He did it in order to control public opinion to not participate in the strike and against the farm owner.

Then the writer also found that propaganda as a media of counter-hegemony to hegemonize the workers. Jim and Mac influence the workers through several ways. First, they try to create a good image as the savior for the workers. It can help them gain people's attention and trust toward them. Second, they encourage the workers through speech and language. Language is an important thing to influence people. If Jim and Mac have a good talent in giving a speech, the other people will easily agree with him. The third is by showing to the workers, there is an inspiring leader to follow. They need a strong figure the leader, such as London, to unite and stir the worker. The last one is the writer also showing the party's secret agenda to control the workers in order to go to strike.

The writer found that power could influence someone to control others through hegemony, even when the hegemonizers do not possess the ruling system in a place such as Mac and Jim. Even though, they still can hegemonize people around them through propaganda. In the other side, the people who possess the ruling system such as the landowner, they could do anything in getting benefits through hegemony, including killing and oppress someone who oppose them or using ideological movement to hegemonize them.

The writer concludes that Steinbeck wants to show us the exploitation through hegemony that happened in a capitalist system. He also puts other ideology such as communism to against capitalism in controlling the workers. In order to fight against hegemony, the opposing ideology (communism) also uses hegemony to counter the system in that place.

Steinbeck positions himself as neutral and explains that whatever system that are used by the government, it will change nothing. The lower class is still

being the lower class and the power class will keep controlling everything. The situation will not change just because of ideology's turnover, on behalf of every human being possessed by greediness to achieve even greater power.

There are still many shortcomings and weaknesses of this analysis because of the lack of knowledge and references. The writer will greatly appreciate if there are some students in the academy that want to continue the research of this analysis. Hopefully this analysis will be useful for the readers and the students for their research.

