

ABSTRACT

Gregorius Winarno: *Religious Aspects in The Bridge of San Luis Rey: An Analysis of The Episodes and The Setting Description*

The Bridge of San Luis Rey is one of Thornton Wilder's best works. This novel, which got a Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 1928, was a popular success. However, the fact that aroused my curiosity to know this novel more deeply is that there are religious aspects in it. These aspects are worth analyzing at the moment when most people tend to give a priority to materialism and exact sciences. It seems that the profane things dominate their life. At the same time, they neglect religious or sacred things in their life.

The first aim of this thesis is to know how the author presents the religious aspects in this novel. The second aim has been to discover the message, related to the aspects, that the author puts forward. To achieve those aims, I wish to analyze two elements of this novel: the episodes and the setting description. In my opinion, they are coloured dominantly by the religious aspects.

In the analysis of the episodes, I put my focus on the episodes which deal with Brother Juniper and the victims of the fall of the bridge of San Luis Rey.

In compiling this thesis, I conducted a library study. Besides, I used a moral approach to analyze the problems under discussion. Actually, these problems are not focused on "moral" messages of this novel, but on the religious aspects. However, I used this approach by considering that it relates to the end of literature as affecting man with literature as it takes its place in human forum of ideas and attitudes.

From the analysis, I conclude that the religious aspects are presented in the episodes, especially those

that deal with Brother Juniper, and in the setting description. While the message of the author, related to the aspects, is that there is a Divine Intention or Divine Power over human life. This Power seems to influence or interfere with the life and death of human beings. However, it cannot be explained scientifically, because there is a mystery in the Divine Intention or Divine Power. The mind of man is too small to understand that. The only thing to do is to believe or to refuse that.

This thesis also suggests the readers how to read works of literature, especially novels, deeply and critically. Besides, it suggests the implementation of the novel in teaching a reading class.

