

CHAPTER I

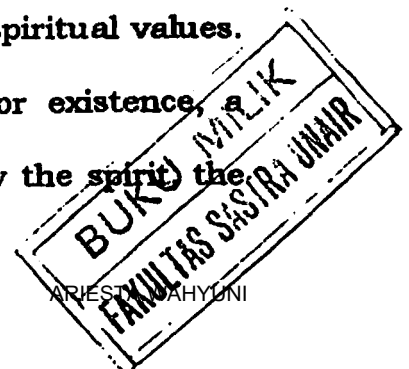
INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

The basic fact of human life is that in order to live, men must secure food, clothing, shelter. However, as the modern life begins to enter the world cycle, these material things do not only need to be sufficiently fulfilled but also be abundantly secured by men. Similarly, the desires of human being are not simply limited on the matter of availability of those basic needs. The supply of these needs then has to be sped up as men demand, which can be realized by the existence of the technology.

The developing of the technological achievement has somewhat influenced men's consciences. Those inventions, particularly on mechanical tools, with their power to multiply the most energy make people worship them. The modern proliferation and change, which dismiss the old education and values, now drag the modern individuals into new spirit of life called materialism.

Materialism is basically an obsession with material possession, bodily comforts, and so on; while neglecting spiritual values. Consequently, men translate life as a struggle for existence, a scramble for wealth and power. Having dictated by the spirit,



people are encouraged to pursue material success that intentionally signifies a state of prosperity and dignity. The first step upward in the world, it seems, must assure worldly success. Through material success, men wildly chase financial security, high status, and happiness as hopefully final destination.

A story about materialism as well as people clawing their way upward to well-established position frequently becomes the concern of Theodore Dreiser's novels. Theodore Dreiser (1871-1945) is still considered one of the great American realist, or naturalist. His novels deal with every day life, often with its sordid side. For Dreiser, it is immoral to hide, disguise or ignore the facts of life. It is hypocritical, as well as immoral, to tell less than the whole truth of human passion and desire. Similarly, in *Sister Carrie*, Dreiser also presents the truthfulness of life. There he applies his intention to express what he sees honestly without subterfuge. He uses descriptive details of city life depicted from the real life mainly concerning the metropolises with their societies.

Material success Dreiser attempts to portray in *Sister Carrie* is an elaboration of great desire of human being as the impact of modern life demand to achieve a thriving condition. Dreiser's portrayal of the phenomenon of people's primary concerns on material success is inspired by the tendency of the Americans towards the

very matter. Americans values are described as what they are seen to be materialistic to the core. The money ideal is exposed as the great motivating purpose of life in the United States, where one's affluence determines the degree of comfort one may enjoy, the measure of prestige one may claim, the extent of social power one may command. In all of *Sister Carrie* there is no characters whose status is not determined economically. Individuals climb their way upward, rising by means fair or foul.

Using two big cities in United States, namely Chicago and New York as the setting, Dreiser successfully establishes such vivid atmosphere coloring the high-spirited individuals in chasing their material success, particularly in Carrie, the main character. The huge business of the cities makes their inhabitants addicted to gain their worldly goals and shape their own values. For Carrie herself, the big cities promise the luxury that invites her to come there.

To discuss the establishing of Carrie's longing for material success under her social environment's influence comes to be an interest for the writer. Through the discussion of the intended subject it is known that the social environment has a tremendous influence in shaping or directing individual's aspirations. It is not uncommon that a young innocent woman is quite easily affected by

her surrounding, in this case the new and unfamiliar surrounding. Living amid such material-oriented society, her innate desire to live comfortably emerges strongly.

One might not realize that he is unconsciously influenced by society's aspirations. One might not have any vaguest idea of to which direction he is led, as what happens to Carrie. Yet, the society has its own ways to make such phenomenon come into being.

In Carrie's case, her desires are somewhat determined by her society's demands. She is continuously dragged by the fashionable stream of the city life standard. Being deprived is quite uneasy and unpleasant for a person with high imagination and self-interest as Carrie, who lives amid such material-obsessed society. She is extremely attracted by the glamour display of those prosperous people who walk along the street with dignified air in their faces as well as the imposing buildings of the cities.

Due to the fact that society has a powerful rule to classify its members into two completely distinctive groups; the wealthy and the impoverished, the respectable and the humble, individuals then are left to make a choice which group they would like to enter. Unfortunately, not all individuals have certain appropriate means to reach out their desirable group. Most people, therefore, tend to legalize any ways. Similarly, Carrie is apparently enforced to legal-

ize all manners in order to realize her dreams. In such great environment, she attempts to fulfil her desires by means fair or foul. Carrie considers that if she simply accepts her present humble condition that is not respectable enough within her society, she will be left behind and feel humiliated.

In *Sister Carrie* there are several certain manners how Carrie's dreams to gain glorious life are triggered by her social environment. Nice scenes or appearances of some prosperous people that always move around Carrie tend to favorably affect her. The impressive buildings that facilitate the city inhabitants' needs, particularly the well-to-do people's needs, attract her too. In fact, it is the fame of Chicago that invites her to move to the big city from her small hometown. Carrie mostly is surrounded by charming things, and on seeing them all her craving for pleasure soon consumes her thought. To Carrie, nevertheless, there are also some things that impress her less favorably which also influence her longing in their own distinct way.

B. Statement of the Problem

In regarding to the preceding discussion of background of the study above, there are several problems that appear into the following questions.

1. How is the form of Carrie's craving in *Sister Carrie*?

2. How is the craving of Carrie viewed from psychological approach?
3. How far is Carrie's craving is affected by her social environment?

C. Objective of the Study

Relating to the previous statement of the problem, the purpose of the study is to analyze the form of Carrie's craving for material success through the structure of literary work. Moreover, the study is to describe Carrie's craving toward material success through the aspect of psychology. Finally, it is meant to reveal Carrie's craving for material success viewed from sociological aspect.

D. Significance of the Study

The writer expects that this study may also enlarge the knowledge of this literary work in which there are temptations around Carrie which she cannot resist. In this regard, the better understanding over the living standard set in big cities and the hypnotic influence they create upon an individual is essentially obtained too. Hopefully, it can extend a contribution to further literary research that concerns the novel.

Eventually for the reader, there will be more interest and understanding in reading the novel.

E. Scope and Limitation

This study concerns the intended subject matter meaning the analysis of the story is performed through character, setting, and plot that is supported by the psychological and sociological background to have a better explanation.

This study reveals the influence of an imposing social environment upon a high self-interest girl, that makes her long and try to climb the social ladder upward. In this study, the writer restraints the analysis on main character's conflicts, either against herself or her environment.

F. Theoretical Background

As stated previously, this study is concentrated on the intrinsic aspects of the novel. Therefore, the writer decides to use the intrinsic approach in order to analyze the problems undergone by the main character.

Further, the writer regards the psychological and sociological background as the appropriate means to obtain better explanation of the analysis. This consideration is taken into account due to the fact that the study discusses Carrie's being influenced by her so-

cial environment. Accordingly, the writer is going to use the *Theory of Social Learning* by Rotter. Besides, the writer also necessarily applies sociological view about the *Life Style and Urban Environment*.

G. Method of the Study

The writer needs to do the research done in library, that is a process of finding and collecting information as well as references which is useful and helping her much to direct the research. The novel is the main source of the study. To come to a conclusion of Carrie's conflicts, the writer must carefully read the novel and find the essence.

Considering the subject of the study, the writer thus applies descriptive analysis to explain the problems through dialogues, actions, events, etc.

H. Definition of Key Terms

Material success : an achievement of desired goals which are mainly focused on the pursuit of worldly comfort, i.e., wealth, social position, fame, etc.

Social environment : circumstances which cover the place and the people living within, affecting people's lives.

**Real life : true phenomena commonly occuring within the society,
including the sordid side, that are seen or experienced
by the author himself.**



CHAPTER III

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RELATED STUDIES