

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### A. Background of the study

Middle class exists as a result of stratification in society. In America, especially in the twenties, the middle class takes a big part in society. They show an interesting phenomena by having their own characteristics. As they are different from the high and the lower class, the middle class' lifestyle has a significant appearance to be illustrated, since the members of the class are doctor, bussinesman, lawyer, and other bourgouisie man. Maurice Boyd in American Civilization wrote: A broad, all-inclusive, and constantly growing middle class is a basic American characteristic. (321).

The midlle class level comes up as an impact of the American dream. Those whose life is in this level are people who have got their dream. They come from poor and become rich, and

they move from lower class into the Middle class. It is stated in American Society, A Sociological Interpretation written by Robin M. William that the middle class exhibit enough examples of upward mobility to stand a concrete symbol and embodiment of the reality of opportunity. (130). They can raise their standart of living, more wealthy, and also increasing their status. They are not rich hereditary as those the noble and royal family. But they are the new money family, who got their dream because of their efforts and achievements when living in America.

One of the stories which is talking about American middle class is Babbitt written by Sinclair Lewis. It is about the life of George F. Babbitt, an American bourgeois bussinesman from middle class level who is success in achieving the American dream. He is rich and wealthy but unfortunately his life is unhappy. Although he lives in commercial culture of American bussines enterprises, but the crude of middle class level makes his life unsatisfying. The loneliness that he feels in his life shows that he succeed in gaining the

American dream only in material but not in spiritual aspect. His all day is full with activities but empty meaning. Generally Babbitt is a criticism toward the moral decay and the glamorous but empty life of American bussinessman.

This novel is interesting since it is close to real society. It picks up an American character who lives in American society, especially in the early century. The novel which is published in 1922, is a master piece; it does not only become a best seller but also adds a word to American vocabularry.

Babbitt comes into use as a shorthand term for the standart American bourgeois. The novel makes a record since nowhere in fact or fiction but Babbitt can we find a more accurate portrayal of someone who lives at the center of American life. It seems that the publication of Babbitt follows Main Street, his previous successful novel.

Sinclair Lewis wrote this novel as a satire to the middle class. It was his way in criticizing the society. He succeeded in revealing the reality of American society which has

become materialistic. By satirising the American dream achieved, Sinclair Lewis had a lesson for the readers that material success and secure life can be meaningless if it does not have any human quality.

Sinclair Lewis and Babbitt become landmark in the national consciousness. It is ironic that this criticism of America by American was made when the nation was experiencing a high point of general well-being. The works of Sinclair Lewis, whose creation of the figure of George F. Babbitt turned the mirror excruciatingly upon millions of middle class standard citizens and made them conscious of their provincial smugness and of the limited satisfaction of merely monetary success.

#### **B. Statement of the Problem**

Based on the background of the study above, the problem which is going to be analyzed in this thesis is formulated into these questions:

1. Through the life of George F. Babbitt, how is the American middle class life depicted in the story?

2. What factors of middle class society which are criticized by the author?

### **C. Scope and Limitation**

In order not to make the analysis becomes broader, and to avoid the complexity of the analysis, the topic is limited on the analysis of the American Middle class life represented by George F. Babbitt as the main character. To obtain the purpose, the intrinsic element's analysis is limited on three elements respectively plot, character and setting in which the phenomena appears through the main character.

### **D. Objective of the study**

The aims of this study are to describe the life of American middle class in the novel which is revealed by the life of George F. Babbitt as the main character. The study also purposes to show some factors of American middle class which are criticized by the author.

### **E. Significance of the study**

This analysis is generally to give something valuable in the study of literature, and to improve our capability in analysing literary works. Particularly, this analysis is expected to give a description about American middle class in the twenties.

### **F. Theoretical background**

This analysis uses intrinsic approach and sociological approach. It uses intrinsic approach because a study of literary work should be based on the interpretation and the analysis of the literary work itself. Wellek and Warren said that The first and the most prominent concentration on this study should be directed toward the work itself.(157).

As the supporting approach, The sociological approach is used because it studies about the middle class in the American society. According to Sapardi Joko Damono, Sociological approach is a kind of approach which is applied in the analysis of literary work that considers the importance of relationship between literature and society.(vii)

## **G. Method of the study**

This analysis uses descriptive analysis method. This method is chosen because the researcher tries to observe, comprehend and continuously systematize the object of the research deeply. Descriptive analysis is a method of literary research which is analysing the literary works by describing the facts of the story. The descriptive explanation can be gained through dialogues, events and actions.

This method is done by doing the library research. It is important to collect and compile all of the data which is needed in this study. The primary source of this study is the novel itself, Babbitt written by Sinclair Lewis. And the secondary source are other supporting data which are used in this analysis.

## **H. The organizing of the paper**

This thesis is divided into four chapters. The first chapter is Introduction which consists of

Background of the study, The problem statement, Scope and limitation, Objective of the study, Significance of the study, Theoretical framework, Method of the study, Organizing of the paper, and Key terms.

The second chapter is Theoretical background which consists of Related theories, which is divided into Intrinsic approach, that is about Plot, Character, Setting, and Sociological approach, which consist of Social Stratification, especially about American society. Related studies, about the previous critic of the novel.

The third Chapter is analysis which consist of analysis as seen from the intrinsic elements and analysis of the problem statement. The intrinsic and extrinsic approach which are mentioned in chapter II will be applied. From this chapter, the researcher will clarify all the problems to make solution.

The fourth chapter is conclusion which summarize all of those have been analyzed in the previous chapters. This thesis also including an appendix which consists of the author's biography and the novel's synopsis.



## I. Key Terms

*Middle class:* A group of people in society who is categorized in the middle position of social stratification.

*Lifestyle:* A way of people's life which is influenced by their material aspect and it associates with the social class.

*American dream:* A spirit of American people to have better life, both materially and spiritually.

*Satire:* A style in writing that ridicules peoples, ideas, custom, or organization in order to expose their foolies or evils, and thereby to correct them.

## **CHAPTER II**

# **THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**