

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Great Gatsby pictures the way of life of the American rich. Through the novel, we get the vivid description of the society who is corrupt. The author meant to present the actual condition of the 1920's American society which is reflected in his novel. He revealed the reality mainly through his characters. For this reason, the use of mimetic approach is applicable. Mimetic approach is proposed to relate the analysis of plot, character, and setting which belong to the internal aspect with the 1920's American society which belongs to the external aspect of universe. Before making the relation, the writer has to analyse the elements of the novel which deal with the objective of the study. In this case, the writer applies a literary theory of Rene Wellek and Austin Warren that advocates the internal aspect of literary work. To see the American society itself, the writer uses a sociology of literature theory of conformity.

II.1. Mimetic Approach

Abrams (1976) defined that mimetic approach is the explanation of art as essentially an imitation of aspects of the universe. It is apparent, however, that mimetic concept is the reference of a work to the subject matter which it imitates. The character as an imitation of human action is what defines the arts in general. Here, the main emphasis seems to be on how life is imitated, recreated, or reflected in literary works (p : 10).

Whether art is to represent a composite of scattered beauties, generic humanity, average forms, and familiar appearances, or whether unique characteristics, undiscovered particularities, and ultraviolet discriminations—all these forms and qualities are conceived to be inherent in the constitution of the external world, and the work of art continues to be regarded as a kind of "reflector" (p.p : 41 - 42).

II.2. Literary Theory of Rene Wellek and Austin Warren

Rene Wellek and Austin Warren in Theory of

Literature stated that the natural and sensible starting-point for work in literary scholarship is the interpretation and analysis of the works of literature themselves. In other words, the emphasis of literary works is the analysis of the intrinsic elements such as plot, setting, and character.

In recent years, a healthy reaction has taken place which recognizes that the study of literature should, first and foremost, concentrate on the actual works of art themselves.

Furthermore, analytical criticism of the novel has customarily distinguished three constituents, plot, character, and setting. It is needless to observe that each of these elements is determinant of the others.

As Henry James asks in his essay, The Art of Fiction, "What is character but the determination of incident? What is incident but the illustration of character?" It seems that there is close relationship between intrinsic elements of literary work, especially for three constituents, plot, character, and setting.

II.2.1. Character

According to Shaw (1972), character means the

aggregate of traits and features that form the nature of some person or animal (p.p : 70 - 71).

Any discussion of character in fiction, then, must attend to the relationships between character and the other elements of the story, and between character and the story as a whole. That is, character must be considered as part of the story's internal structure.

Simon and Schuster (1972) said that we may refer character to the real human beings who inhabit the world. More to the point than the standard of life likeness is the standard of relevance. According to this standard, the question is not whether the fictional character is like me. Rather, the question is, what has he to do with me. In other words, what is the character's relevance to me (p.26).

Steviok, 1987 stated that the author attempts to make his character understandable to, and comes alive for his readers through 1) Personal description. The author can describe a person's appearance and clothes, 2) Character as seen by another. The author can describe the character through the eyes and opinions another. 3) Speech, the author can give us an insight into the character of one of the persons in the book through what

that person says, 4) Past life. By letting the reader learns something about a person's past life the author can give us a clue to events that have helped to shape a person's character, 5) Conversation of others. The author can also give us clue to a person's character through conversations of other people and the thing they say about him, 6). Thoughts. The author can give us direct knowledge of what a person is thinking about. (p.p 161 - 171).

The foundation of good fiction is character creating and nothing else. It is generally agreed that in most good stories the events follow logically from the natures of the persons involved and characters, no mere by product, is an essential part of plot.

Characters dwell in particular fictional words which are usually modeled on reality. Because of this we may write about characters "as products of their age and environment". It is important to write about characters in the content of their age and surroundings, because these explain them in very basic ways. In longer fictional works authors have time to develop with considerable care the relationship between character and their environment.

Reaske (1970) added that there are certain basic considerations of character which we should make, and these considerations can perhaps best be approached through the formation of general questions. For example, Is a character major or minor? Is he supposed to be a believable member of human race? Is he a product of his age and his environment? Does his behaviour reflect on a place and moment in time? (p : 169).

II.2.2. Plot

Wellek and Warren (1956) defined that plot is the narrative structure of play, drama, or novel. It is composed of smaller narrative structures (episodes, incidents) (p. : 217).

According to Shaw (1972), in literature, plot refers to the arrangement of events to achieve an intended effect. A plot is a series of carefully interrelated actions (p. : 289).

Simon and Schuster (1972) stated that plot reveals events to us, not only in the temporal, but also in their causal relationships. Plot makes us aware of events not merely as elements in a temporal series but also as an intricate pattern of cause and effect. A plot

that fits the description must inevitably have unity. Any plot that has a true beginning, middle, and end and that follows the laws of plausibility, surprise, and suspense must have unity. In other words, plot is the single most important device making for unity in a particular story and it organizes events into beginning, middle, and end. Besides, the function of plot is to serve the revelation or development of character. A good plot is credible and firmly based on sound character (p.p: 13 - 22).

In fact, plot is of the highest importance in expressing the meaning of a work of fiction. We may conclude, then, that an understanding of plot is the most important factor in the understanding of fiction. Plot, says Aristotle, is the soul of tragedy. It may well be the soul of fiction, too .

II.2.3. Setting

According to Wellek and Warren (1956), setting is environment; environment especially domestic interiors, may be viewed as an expression of character. Again, setting may be the massive determinant environment viewed as physical or social causation (p. : 221).

The element of fiction which reveals to us the where and when of events we call setting. In other words, the term setting refers to the point in time and space at which the events of the plot occur.

Often the setting in a work of fiction is little more than a reflection of the truth that things have to happen somewhere. The author's principal concern is with plot or character, and he sketches in only enough of the setting to lend the requisite verisimilitude to the action.

Setting may affect events until it seems to assume the role of a major character. Like character, setting may be the element of primary importance in a particular story or even in the work of a particular author. Plot and character seem to exist primarily as a means of revealing the effects of setting on human life.

Reaske (1970) said that in discussing the relationship between character and their environment we have really, been approaching the subject of setting, a time and place in history and not, really in terms of particular setting when writing about the setting of a work of fiction a student should mention the specific characteristics of the period in which the story is

taking places. He should also describe some of the particulars of the setting and the bearing which they have on the plot and character. However, the period of time which the work of fiction covers is a large consideration (p.p : 174-175).

II.3. Sociology of literature theory

The sociology of literature theory is applied as the supporting theory due to the fact that the novel deals with social reality aspect, that is the American society in the 1920's. Sociology of literature theory will notice the theory of conformity.

Levin (1970) said that "There is no way social life could go on without a minimal amount of conformity from group members" (p. : 91). It means that if we don't know how to act in various situations, or if others do not possess of the same information, we can't count on others to act appropriately and they on us.

Robert A. Nisbet (1970) stated that "No form of institu-tionalized relationship whatever could exist without the process of interaction we call conformity". From it comes all the uniformities of human society. By conforming we receive a reward : approval,

esteem, success. (p.p : 69 - 71).

So, someone will be accepted as a useful member of social order if he shapes his lifestyle of his group, the group in which he lives, to which he belongs.

The above theory is applied in relation to the American society in the 1920's. There was a tendency of the American society in the 1920's to act the same way or having the same way of life in order to be recognized as the useful members.

According to some books about American society stated that mostly the American society in the 1920's tended to believe in materialism in order to be appreciated and accepted as the members of the American society by other members.

Besed on that belief, the American society in the 1920's competed for being rich although they sometimes had to act illegally. No matter how they got the money, whether it was legal or not, the point was they became rich.

Wyllie in "Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby, The Novel, The Critic, and The Background" : 208 said that the only principle of life propagated among the young people in the American society was to get money, and men

were only esteemed according to what they were worth. that was money they were possessed of. The only requirements for admission were money and the condition, for any member of the flock, that he or she would be respectable.

CHAPTER III

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR