

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I.1 Background of the Study

Literature is an imitation or mirror of life. In large meaning, life can be a portrait of social reality. It is possible to say that literature can explain a certain kind of relationship between the work of art and the society in which it was produced. The author was a member of society. He was impressed by important social issues that took place in his time. Those encouraged him to create a literary work. In this case, the author focused on the social reality in his own time.

According to Shipley (1962) :

"The relation between literature and society is evident that the contemporary social situation will be reflected in a literary work " (. . p : 254-255).

From the above point of view , we can say that literature can be considered as a reflection of a particular society in which characters are revealed or presented as the product of its age. The author meant to

have his characters would be believable representative of reality of his age and tried to make his characters seem real by describing the virtues or vices.

To focus on characters as members of society, the writer chooses novel . Some features of novel are that novel is greatly concerned with characters, novel is the best form to display realism of social setting and time, and the most obvious feature of novel as a literary form is its length. Based on those facts, novel will have time to develop considerable attention to the relationship between character and social setting . It will present us with vivid picture of its time and social setting.

As Beckson and Ganz (1989) said :

"Novel concerns itself essentially with the depiction of the contemporary world and the analysis of characters. It can be used as the analysis of man in society (p.181)

The quotation above explains that novel can be used to analyse the close relationship of characters and society. The picture of the characters in society which novel presents is a reflection of a certain social

reality at the time the novel was created. So, the characters that novel present are representative of certain time and also in certain place.

The writer centers her attention on American novels in the twenties and takes one of them as her object of analysis due to the fact that American novelists in the twenties had serious interest in social issues. They mainly concerned with some aspects of society as the background for their characters. The twentieth century is a time of increasing instability of society. The society lost view of life because of the influence of the developing of intellectual and material. Some discoveries of modern technology made men fail to realize a better world and the last caused the destruction. This kind of condition reflected in the twentieth century literature, especially the novel because it is the most widely - read form of literature at that time.

Francis Scott Fitzgerald is a great American novelist in the twenties. He had the ability to present the atmosphere of social reality, especially American life at his age so that he is considered by others as a

representative figure of the age. It means that most of his works deal with social reality at the time he wrote his works.

Watkins stated that :

One of the features of Scott Fitzgerald's work is an awareness of the American tradition and the excellent of his works is the brilliance to portrait American society in the 1920's (p. 201)

Scott Fitzgerald was a writer who was closely related to his own time. His advance is his imaginative skill to grasp or look at a time and a place, the condition of American society of the 1920's that he revealed in his works. He was concerned with the aspects of society as the background for his characters.

Through Scott Fitzgerald's works, we will get understanding of the American society in his contemporary time which can be a valuable achievement since he was always aware of about his time and his place. The decade of the 1920's , especially in the United States corrupted by the chaos of growing instability of society. This aroused Scott Fitzgerald's desire to portray the vision of American life expressed in his novels such as The Side of Paradise, The

Beautiful and Darned, The Great Gatsby, Tender Is the Night, The Last Tycoon.

Published in 1925, The Great Gatsby is the most brilliant work of Scott Fitzgerald. It is his masterpiece during his life time to be a writer. The Great Gatsby tells us about a portrayal of the way of life of the American rich. In this novel we can see the portrait of the society whose the way of life is corrupt. The author meant to show completely the American upper class' failure. The advance and real progress of The Great Gatsby lies in its use of first person narrator, Nick Carraway. The narrator becomes the voice of judgement especially for the major character, that is Jay Gatsby. Through the narrator, it seems that the novel presents the characters as the implication of a group of society becomes so lively since the narrator adds a further recognition of the social implication of the characters' lives.

The thesis is dealing with the 1920's American society as reflected in The Great Gatsby. The writer is attracted to relate the novel, The Great Gatsby with the American society of the 1920's since the writer

notices that the novel has social reality aspect, the American society in the 1920's.

The decade of the 1920's particularly in the United States came closer to having a sharply defined uniqueness than most recognized periods. At this time there was a shift of power from Europe to America that took place after the First World War. American rich had emerged as a distinct social group. Wealth, leisure were important. The only requirements for admission were money and the condition, for any member of the flock, that he or she would be respectable. They worshipped money. The American wasted money more recklessly than anyone ever did before. They spent more to less purpose. They had no sense of values, and they did not know what to do with their money when they got it, except to use it and to make more, or throw away. Fitzgerald gave a description of the contemporary of his decade that had begun into the dark of "violence", that were victim of murder, suicide, casual brutality, etc.

I.2. Statement of the Problem

Based on the background of the study, the statement of the problem is :

" Does the novel, The Great Gatsby reflect the American society in the 1920's ? "

I.3. Objective of the Study

The objective of the study is to prove that the novel , The Great Gatsby reflects the 1920's American society.

I.4. Significance of the Study

From the novel , The Great Gatsby we can get better understanding about American society in the 1920's.

The novel also contains valuable thoughts which hold in society and those perhaps can be applied to our society if they are useful or can be refused as teachings if they are considered to cause to lose.

The last but not least, the thesis is also hoped to give contribution to the study of Scott Fitzgerald's

works, especially for those who want to study The Great Gatsby.

I.5. Scope and Limitation

The thesis is limited on two respects :

Firstly, the thesis is emphasizing on the elements that are related to the subject of the analysis that are plot, setting, character.

Secondly, the thesis is also dealing with the American society in the 1920's as reflected in the novel, The Great Gatsby.

I.6. Theoretical Background

The approach used in analysing the thesis is mimetic approach. Mimetic approach is the explanation of art as essentially an imitation of aspects of the universe. It emphasizes on the relation between a work of art and the external aspect of universe, seeing it as a way of reproducing or recreating the character as an imitation or reflection of human action.

The writer applies mimetic approach for the thesis is dealing with the 1920's American society as reflected in the novel, The Great Gatsby. In this case, the analysis concerns with the external point reference of the work, that is the American society in the 1920's.

With respect to the objective of the study, the writer applies a literary theory of Rene Wellek and Austin Warren which advocates intrinsic elements of the literary work. It covers the close relationship of character, plot, and setting.

Besides, a sociology of literature theory is applied to the thesis as the supporting theory due to the fact that the thesis concerns with the American society in the 1920's. In this case, the writer uses the theory of conformity.

I.7. Method of the Study

To support the thesis, the writer applies library research. She collects the data and the sources from the reference books, or some printed material dealing with Scott Fitzgerald's works, especially the novel The Great

Gatsby and its criticism. The writer also finds out some information from other books which deal with theory and approach which are used in the thesis. Since the thesis concerns with the American society of the 1920's, the writer tries to get some books about American society of the 1920's. To find out the all reference books, the writer has to go to Airlangga University Library, Petra University Library, Widya Mandala University Library, and Gajah Mada University Library.

Engaged with the analysis of the novel, the writer uses the content analysis method. It is the kind of method which is based on the content of a literary work.

I.8. Definition of Key Terms

Materialism : Obsession with material possession. The belief that money is the only thing to pursue the happiness or a tendency to judge everything in monetary terms.

The established rich : In the novel, it refers to those who have had their money inherit from their family for a long, long time ago.

The newly rich : Those who get their richness in such a hurry. They live in a world of ostentatious vulgarity because of achieving too early success they find.

Ostentatious : Like to show of or to display wealth intended to impress people or make them envious.

Bootlegger : Someone who smuggles or makes and sells something (usually alcohol) illegally.

I.9. Organization of the Paper

The thesis will be divided into five chapters.

The first chapter is Introduction which is subdivided into Background of the Study, Statement of the Problem, Objective of the Study, Significance of the Study, Scope and Limitation, Theoretical Background, Method of the Study, Definition of Key Terms, and Organization of the Paper.

The second chapter is Theoretical Framework consisting of mimetic approach, a literary theory of Rene Wellek and Austin Warren, and a sociology of literature theory of conformity.

The third chapter is about Biographical Sketch of of the Author in which it focuses on the author (Scott Fitzgerald) and his personal life, his idea, and his thought.

The fourth chapter will be the Analysis. For this chapter, the writer will clarify all the problems to make solutions.

The thesis is closed by the fifth chapter, Conclusion in which the writer will summarize of all that have been analysed in the previous chapters.

CHAPTER II
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK