

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I.1. Background of the Study

Human are social beings-that is, they live in groups. This is inescapable reality. Groups are necessary to people, and without some groups most people not survive. But group life produces conflict, because as an escapable reality each people within group has some destructive character of which can be seen clearly in a group life. We disagree and quarrel with member of our own group. And groups disagree and quarrel with one another. This conflict may appear in the form of prejudice and discrimination. Almost all of history is a record of groups fighting each other. And this is also recorded in literature as it is a reflection of life.

In their book, Renne Wellek and Austin Warren say that literature can be treated as a document in the history parallels and reflects intellectual history (Theory of Literature, 1967 p.111). Literature as a reflection of life and a social reality, shows the intellectual history from which the social conflicts like prejudice and discrimination derived. It can express prejudice and discrimination as conveyed in the novel *Gentleman's Agreement*. The aspects of the related issues of prejudice and discrimination then interest my attention to be further studied.

It is a fact that differences intellectual perspectives among human beings have always been a source of comment. The issues then have been transformed into a written way, through novel, drama or poetry. Derived from

social conflicts, the issues upon prejudice and discrimination have been revealed as a main subject in many novels, for example. Some of them I can mention are *A Passage to India* by EM Forster showing about some difficulty headed in plaiting together of an intercourse by nations, *Black Boy* by Richard Wright telling about racial problem faced by black people as minority group in America, *A Doll's House* by Henrick Ibsen telling about sexual conflict within woman who is struggling toward equalitarianism, and others.

As I mentioned before, prejudice and discrimination result from the differences intellectual perspectives among human being can be transformed into written way such as novel. Through the issue upon due to prejudice and discrimination, I am interested with the author, Laura Z. Hobson due to her personality. And liberals and frankness were her style. Her words and the ideas they describe fit together from the reality to the work. Based from it, Laura Z. Hobson had a good eye for all these sometimes small but telling signs. She was caught up in the issues of her times but she never sacrificed her independence of thought.

All she wanted to tell about her life, she liked to say was already in her novels. And this was true perhaps in an unusual direct way. *The Trespasser*, telling about her friends having an indictment of the quota system that prevented the entrance into America of many refugees from Nazi oppression. *Gentleman's Agreement*, the injustice which Jews suffered as a result from anti-Semitism. Her pregnancy in forty years old unwed in *The Tenth Month*, her feelings about her son's sexuality whose admits he is a homosexual in *Consenting Adults*.

Her novels mentioned, I am interested in studying *Gentleman's Agreement* for the book is addressed to all human beings to the problem of anti-Semitism. In my opinion the book not reveals about the related issue only, but also to other problems in living together in this world. The message of brotherhood, equality has implication not only for Jews but other minority groups as well.

The social conflicts are caused not by the formal or natural differences that God has created to human beings, but due to the human destructive characters only. The conflicts among groups appear to have destructive consequences in spite of the fact that conflict can be creative and can lead to important changes in society. Prejudice and discrimination become very significant to be studied for the main point to be considered concerning prejudice within leads to discrimination is the question its inevitability. While we raise this question into such corollary issues, we still cannot provide the answer to it. Because prejudicial opinions and discrimination reactions have characterized almost every society of which we are aware (Social Psychology, 1982 p.504).

Gentleman's Agreement is made as a result from some opinions of society to American Jews. From these negative opinions lead to prejudice and then grows to such actions taken as a result of prejudicial feelings, that is discrimination. These treatments conduct the author, Laura Z. Hobson to reveal all her ideas upon those treatments. For she especially was Jewish, so she really knew what exactly that prejudice and discrimination give some impact to American Jews.

The novel *Gentleman's Agreement* for my thesis, is telling about the damaged human rights, concerning about prejudice, discrimination, and anti-Semitism in America right after the Second World War. Its principal character is a young writer who does research on anti-Semitism by saying he is Jewish when he is not. Prejudice and discrimination then follow into his life.

Based on the previous of the study upon the existence and substantial of prejudice and discrimination within the novel *Gentleman's Agreement*, then it becomes interesting to be further studied. Because the related issues basically are an attitude that could be guided positively if we really can take it objectively.

1.2. Statement of the Problems

From the background of the study above, I have already mentioned briefly all about *Gentleman's Agreement* within. It is about anti-Semitism within prejudice and discrimination revealed, in America right after the Second World War. Through this part statement of the problem, I would like to confirm the problem that I will concentrate on in orderly way to make the analysis of the study easier to understand. The problem discussed in this thesis is formulated in the interrogative statement as follows:

How does the author Laura Z. Hobson illustrate prejudice and discrimination in her novel Gentleman's Agreement?

I.3. Objective of the Study

In analyzing Laura Z. Hobson's work within, I want to reveal about prejudice and discrimination through the author's point of view. And how that treatment's prejudice and discrimination are portrayed, either covert or overt through her novel *Gentleman's Agreement*.

I.4. Significance of the Study

This thesis is expected to contribute the understanding of literature in general, and American literature especially on Laura Z. Hobson's work. Through analyzing her novel *Gentleman's Agreement*, hopefully the thesis may show some impact from prejudice and discrimination, and how those issues can be powerful and destructive determinants of interpersonal relationships.

With gaining some solid figures on prejudice and discrimination from the work, hopefully it can enable us in solving the problems dealing with it. With this study then, it hopes to be able as a remedy in recovering the damaged human rights.

I.5. Scope and Limitation

Gentleman's Agreement is about anti-Semitism, prejudice and discrimination in America right after the Second World War. Its principal character is a young writer who does research on anti-Semitism by saying he is Jewish when he isn't.

From this part of thesis, the scope will concern much upon those

prejudice and discrimination portrayed by the author, and then limit them to Gentile's treatment to the main character Philip Green and his family.

I.6. Theoretical Background

We may recall from the author's statement in the background of the study that Americans still concern much upon the ethnic differences within prejudice and discrimination derived. The difficulty then followed, for Laura Z. Hobson was Jewish. Her commitment to her novel *Gentleman's Agreement* that the book is for and about liberals finally makes me choose *The Expressive Theory* as my basis in writing this thesis, for it is considered suitable in explaining the feeling and thoughts of the author.

Through expressive theory then we will convey what she felt to prejudice and discrimination. Hopefully this theory will contribute her feeling and thoughts; as in Current Biography 1947, p.312, says that she admitted that the book she wrote is the book for and about liberals, and she commented that she had in mind descent people who never having probed their own prejudices, or profess disgust for anti-Semitism. Eventhough she was Jewish, the author who believed in liberalism and hated all nationalism opposed a Jewish State in Palestine for the same reason that she would oppose a Catholic State somewhere else.

Seen from the history of the United States with its complexity of ethnic differences, it is reasonable then that the United States has many problems dealing with related issues. The existence of the immigrants Jew to the United States of whom most of them become such a wealthy person made

the Gentile felt insecure to them. One of the things that distinguished the Jewish migration to America and get it apart from the journeys of other group was the fact that the Jews brought their intellectuals-their thinkers, their writers-with them (How We Lived, 1979 p.20). It is not surprising if they finally success in *di goldeneh medina* (the golden land) as they called, since they have worked so hard and they deserved it. The insecure of feeling then aroused in the Gentile for the Jews grew rapidly. Prejudice and discrimination toward Jewish then have been practiced. These facts have encouraged me to choose *The Mimetic Theory* as the second main theory in which presenting the natural phenomena of men to imitate what is valid in the reality of life on the world.

The most common approach to the relations of literature and society is the study of work of literature as social documents, as assumed pictures of social reality (Theory of Literature, p.102). Used as a social document, literature then can be made to yield the outlines of social history. How the author got the idea upon prejudice and discrimination, after she read the *Time* article that inspired her writing *Gentleman's Agreement*, biased the thought of encountering members of Gentile to the Jews. *The Sociological Approach* then is chosen, for this approach can depict the anti-Semitism movement leading to prejudice and discrimination in America.

Through those previous explanation, I want to clarify my theoretical approach once again, that in obtaining the aim of study needs an instruments or theories which are relevant enough. Because the aim is to convey the prejudice and discrimination through the writer's view-point, the theories as

instruments considered relevant are the expressive and mimetic. Expressive theory concentrates its study on the author's thoughts and feeling reflected in the novel so that it is very significant to explain her view-point. While the second is more concentrated on the relation between the work and its contemporary society because prejudice and discrimination which are formerly as the reality in social life, also becomes reality in the novel. The use of sociological approach to explain the social aspect is inevitable. But it does not mean that this literature based on sociological approach expresses the whole aspects of social situation precisely and exhaustively, but only depict some aspects of social reality. As Renne Wellek and Austin Warren stated:

The relation between literature and society is usually discussed by starting with the phrase, derived from DeBonald, that 'literature' is an expression of society. But what does this axiom mean? If it assumes that life, at any given time, mirrors the current social situation 'correctly,' it is false; it is common place, trite and vague it, it means only that literature depicts some aspects of social reality (Theory of Literature, 1967 p.95)

Through this approach I then take the theory of domination stated by William D. Cranos. The theory will be further analyzed in the next discussion on chapter II.

1.7. Method of the Study

Semantically method is often defined as principle or system of work or frame of work that organizes the application of theory and data analysis (The Design of Social Research Method, 1953). Thus in this thesis, I have written purely on literary research involving many sources of books about Jewish,

especially American Jewish,

Since on the previous theories and approach mentioned, and based on the objective of the study, I then use *The Descriptive Method* for it is suitable enough in analyzing the study. Meaning I analyze those data in description way, and surely the primary source used for this analysis is the work itself, *Gentleman's Agreement*. In my analysis, I sometimes quote those data in pure form, but sometimes I describe them paraphrasely when I find connotative meaning. I then analyze the data and arrange them in chronological order.

Dealing with the background of the study in analyzing the study in the novel within, I then use *Descriptive Analysis*, the analysis then is defined as an effort to give more explanation of the problem.

1.8. Definition of Key Terms

In my thesis titled **Prejudice and Discrimination toward American Jewish in regard to Human Rights (A Study of Laura Z. Hobson's Gentleman's Agreement)**, there are some words I want to expound their meanings literary in order to avoiding the misunderstanding between the reader and me. They are:

Ethnic Groups, consist of those who conceive of themselves as being alike by virtue of their common ancestry, real or fictitious, and who are so regarded by other (Ethnic Stratification, 1965 p.47)

Jew, a person whose religion is Judaism; one of a scattered group of people that traces its descent from the Biblical Hebrews or from the postexilic

adherents of Judaism (Webster's Dictionary, 1989 p.767)

Jewish, pertaining to, characteristic of, or noting the Jews

American Jewish, Jew lives in the United States and be a citizen

Discrimination, treatment or consideration of, or making a distinction on favor of or against, a person or thing based on the group, class, or category to which that person or thing belongs rather than on individual merit (Webster's, 1989 p.411)

Discrimination, actions taken as a result of prejudicial feelings (Social Web: Brief)

Prejudice, designates an attitude of which the speaker disapproves (Ethnic Stratification, 1965 p.17)

Prejudice, is negative opinion directed toward some identifiable social aggregate or out group (Social Psychology, 1982 p.488)

Prejudice, prejudgement of an individual or group based not on fact or evidence but on stereotype and hearsay, and inability to change this judgment even when confronted with evidence. (The Social Web: Brief)

I.9. Organization of the Paper

In organizing the paper I firstly make chapter I in explaining the background of the study upon prejudice and discrimination in the novel, objective and significance then follow for studying its novel. The expressive and mimetic theories and also sociological approach are chosen as theoretical approach of the study. In method of the study I concentrate in descriptive method and further be studied in descriptive analysis. The

definition of the key term upon the study then follows in understanding upon the related issues prejudice and discrimination.

In chapter II the topic will be focused on the expressive and mimetic theories chosen and also sociological approach. Through this chapter the theories and approach are written to be further discussed.

In discussing the related aspects of the novel within extrinsic and intrinsic aspects derived, I put them in chapter III. The extrinsic aspects consist of the author's biography and the history of Jews in America. And intrinsic aspects consist of the theme, characterization and plot of the novel of which as Knicherbacker and Williard Reninger say that those things are important enough in studying the literary work.

Then the theories and approach in chapter II will be applied in chapter IV in analyzing the novel. From this chapter I will show prejudice and discrimination in the novel that the treatments of gentiles to Jews.

At last the chapter V concludes the problem mentioned in chapter I. This chapter also finishing the study upon the prejudice and discrimination studied as the work of my thesis.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK