

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Research

Human life cannot be separated from literature. Literature is the expression of life in written language. Literature is an important point in our life because it raises happiness, desire, emotion and imagination. Jones (1968:1) in *An Outline of Literature* states, "Literature is simply another way that we can experience the world around us through our imagination, feeling and thought". While, another definition about literature by Hudson (1965:10) in *An Introduction to the Study of Literature* is as follows:

Literature is a vital record of what men have seen in life, what they have experience of it, what they have thought and felt about these object of it which have the most immediate and enduring interest for all of us. It is thus fundamentally an expression of life through the medium of language.

Connolly (1955:1) in *The Types of Literature* explains the reason why people read the works of literature. He says that people read literature because of a hunger of information or amusement, because of an appetite for truth that seem to grow by what it feeds on. He thinks that men read literature in order to discover them selves and their world, to assess their special roles in the universe, to learn the meaning of the personal struggles in which they are engaged.

There are three genres in literary work, namely prose, poetry and drama. In this thesis, the writer is interested to analyze novel as a part of prose entitled *The Great Gatsby* written by F. Scott Fitzgerald. The writer is more interested in a novel since she finds it easier to understand than poetry and drama. It is due to the fact that a novel has a lot of dialogues, descriptions and a long story. They give clearer and deeper explanations. Another reason why the writer chooses novel is because a novel as a prose narrative, which describes characters and situations typical of real life within the framework of plot, can entertain people as well as develop their imagination. The primary purpose of a novel is to entertain the readers. By reading a novel, the reader knows the age and the society in which the novelist lives. Kennedy (1983:179) in *Introduction to Fiction* states, "Novel is a book length story in prose, whose author tries to create the sense that while we read, we experience author life."

*The Great Gatsby* is a novel by F. Scott Fitzgerald one of the literary works that represent the American Dream best. It is considered one of Fitzgerald's best fictions that are published in 1925. The novel describes the American Dream that is corrupted by the pursuit of wealth. Mizener (1963: 126) says, "*The Great Gatsby* is an American Dream as it exist in a corrupt period, and it is attempt to determine that concealed boundary that devices the reality from the illusions."

American Dream remains in American society in 1920s. Because the 1920s, the post first world war era, is turning point that affected the American culture, in the way that American life style is much more different from the previous one before the war began. Many new inventions are found in the year of 1920s. One of which that

give many big changes in American culture is the remarkable growth of the automobile business. Carman (1952:527) in *A History of the American People* says in the following:

The automobile was not merely a convenience but brought changes in American culture. It strengthened the growing American addiction to comfort, leisure, and what Thorstein Veblen called pecuniary emulation and conspicuous consumption.

The American Dream, according to Pitt (2002) is a variety of things pertaining to ownership. In this case, if one struggles for owning a car, having a job or the pursuit of this monetary wealth, means that he is living the American Dream. Therefore, it makes the rich are enjoying a life that is full of high facility and the poor are surely only dreaming and hoping for a better life. In addition, Zimmermann (1998) thinks that this additive dream is basically related to a desire for spiritual and material improvement.

From explanation above, the thesis writer analyzes F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* because the dream and the corruption of American Dream that are represented by almost the character attract the thesis writer. She thinks that this topic has the most interesting problem to be analyzed. Moreover it is hoped that this thesis will be a description of literary work, which is not only viewed as an aesthetic entity but primarily an evidence of one aspects of the American mind in term of the American Dream in the 1920's.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Dealing with the preceding discussion, the writer presents some statements to be analyzed into these following questions:

1. What are the American Dreams in *The Great Gatsby*?
2. How are the American Dreams reached in *The Great Gatsby*?
3. What are the corruptions of the characters' in reaching the American Dream in *The Great Gatsby*?

## 1.3 Objective of the Research

The objective of this research is to find out the answer from proposed problem through the analysis. Thus, the objective of research is as follows:

1. To describe the American Dreams in *The Great Gatsby*.
2. To analyze the way of reaching American Dreams in *The Great Gatsby*.
3. To understand the corruptions of the characters' in reaching the American Dream in *The Great Gatsby*.

## 1.4 Scope of the Research

The writer analyzes the novel *The Great Gatsby* written by F. Scott Fitzgerald, published by Charles Scribner's Sons in New York in 1925. In analyzing this novel, the writer limits the problem only in the description of the American Dreams, the way of reaching American Dreams, and the corruptions of the

characters' in reaching the American Dream. The thesis writer also limits only four major characters to be discussed, that is Jay Gatsby, Tom Buchanan, Daisy Buchanan and Myrtle Wilson who represent best the American Dream without neglecting the existence of other supporting characters that colour the lives of the major characters.

### **1.5 Significance of the Research**

This thesis provides better understanding of the American Dream that can change the people's wrong perception of the American Dream. The writer also expects that the message of this thesis can give positive influence to the readers. This research is also designed to be the significant reference for the other researchers doing research on American Dream in the novel.