

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of Study

In interpreting a work of literature, the readers cannot simply define the inside context of the work itself, but should also know the context which stands outside the work of literature. Therefore, if it is applied in this study, the exposure of philosophical and social values mediated in a work of literature may become the part of the work itself. There is also significant relationship between literature and philosophy in portraying the reality of life. Both disciplines present a description of human's life condition in the world. Many works of literature become the manifestation of philosophical thoughts therefore such works might bear philosophical tendencies. Although literature and philosophy have different terms in language, both have the same intentions, that is, to highlight human's reality of life.

In conveying the relationship between literature and philosophy, Magee (1978: 150) in *Men of Ideas* states that literature is often as a sort of practical demonstration of the principals of philosophy. Furthermore, he says that literature and philosophy should have arrived at the same conclusions and almost independently to one another. Guerin (1990: 101) in *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature* says that the largest function of literature is to teach moral values and to probe philosophical issues. However, morality and humanity can be considered as an important subject to be explored.

In doing an analytical study toward a literary work, it is necessary to consider that intrinsic element becomes an integral part of the study. These intrinsic elements, such as plot, setting, character, point of view and theme, give basic knowledge in order to broaden our ideas in doing a deeper study. According to Guerin (1999: 5), the analysis of intrinsic element is usually called as *pre-analysis*. From this also, we can relate the analysis to the extrinsic element when a literary work was written. These extrinsic elements can be as social-historical condition during past time, the portrayal of society, or event an author's protest in experiencing his life toward societies condition. The author's ability to portray this social and historical condition usually becomes which he so called message. Therefore, the reader should be able to catch author's message presented in his work and a reader must be able also to give appropriate analysis of social historical analysis during the era it was written.

Bressler (1999: 221) in *Literary Criticism: An Introduction to Theory and Practice* says "a Marxism critic may begin such an analysis by showing how an author's text reflect how his or her ideology through an examination of the fictional word's character, settings, society, or any other aspect of the text". Many of event in Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* are fictional representation of his own sister's experiences. Because an author comes from a poor family, his novel reflects his view of life, a concept that holds man as the victim of such ungovernable forces as economics, biology, society, even chance. *Sister Carrie* captures the exuberance and social transformation of turn of the century in America, (1899-1900). Littered with the nation's slang and distinctive personalities, the novel traces the vagaries

of fortune in the developing capitalist society. Simultaneously, the novel confronts the reader with the vision of tragic aspect of American capitalist. According to Peter B. High (1986: 103) in *An Outline of American Literature*, at the turn of the country, the American economic system in encouraging competition in making money rather than in making products. Many people compete each other to get much money, because they become obsessed on their social status. In capitalistic society, we cannot deny that there is an inequality between the poor and rich people. The influence of social condition makes a gulf between the lower and higher classes.

Considering those opinions above, the writer then is interested to make an analytical study in Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (SC for further mention). In this research, the character that will be analyzed is Caroline Meeber or Sister Carrie (Carrie for further mention) as the main character in SC which is written by Theodore Dreiser. Carrie is the people who becomes obsessed by a desire for wealth. She lives with the conflict between human needs and the demands of society for material success and happiness. This condition of material life of society influences her to change the class status.

Having read the story the writer is interested to make an analysis in term of class struggle which is related to materialism. The role of class struggle based on materialism to the characters becomes a basic knowledge to the writer relating these to the philosophy, that is a point of Marxism.

1.2 Problem Formulation

The problem is to answer the following questions:

1. What is the general class struggle described in the novel?
2. What is Carrie's class struggle?

1.3 Objectives of Study

The objective of the study is to find the answer for the proposed problem through the analysis. Thus, this study is intended to:

1. Analyze the general class struggle in the novel.
2. Analyze Carrie's class struggle.

1.4 Significance of Study

This study is an attempt to give deeper insight into human mind that class struggle in society has become one significant problems through the observation of human character. This study also tends to enrich our knowledge about the intrinsic elements in a literary work and relates these with the extrinsic elements. Furthermore, it will be hopefully an input for other further studies concerning this work.

1.5 Scope of Study

This thesis discusses the class struggle on Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie*. Class struggle means a struggle in which one class has entered into action against the other class. In this novel, class struggle refers to social mobility.

The writer limits the scope of discussion in order to get a clearer understanding on the discussion. In short, the writer analyzes the general class struggle of the novel through the characters, and focuses on Carrie's class struggle.