

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

The phenomenon of illegal business occurs a lot in everyday human life. The causes of this occurrence are very diverse, ranging from social demands, family conditions, and the desire for getting rich quickly. According to Oxford Dictionary, the word “Illegal” means a way that is not allowed, contrary to or forbidden by law. Meanwhile, illegal business is used by economic practitioners, which are forbidden and in contrast to the law. Since breaking the law is illegal and unethical, as a result, it can put on serious consequences such as imprisonment and heavy fines. Therefore, not a few literary writers raise this issue as one of the background settings of their works. One of them is F. Scott Fitzgerald in his novel entitled *The Great Gatsby*.

One definitely knows that literature and society have a profoundly reciprocal relationship. People have known literature as a reflection of society, and it also enormously influences each other; literature reflects society, while society greatly influences literary works. This means that literary works are not only an imitation of real life. On the other hand, humans also used literary works as a corrective mirror to reference behaving and considering something. Hudson (1913) stated that literature is a vital record of what men have seen in life, what they have thought and felt about it, which have the most immediate and enduring interest for all of us. It is then fundamentally an expression of life through the medium of language (11). Literary works shall reflect all existing aspects of human life and socio-economic conditions. This is one of the most prominent aspects of human life, as it is one of the fundamental things’ humans might need to survive in order to be successful.

One of the literary works that focus on socio-economic conditions is F. Scott Fitzgerald works with the title *The Great Gatsby* novel. This novel is set in a jazz age on a prosperous long island. It was published in 1925 by Charles Scribner's Sons. The plot of the story in this novel is about a mysterious millionaire named Jay Gatsby who has a strong desire to win back his lover Daisy, who unfortunately already married a wealthy man named Tom Buchanan. Gatsby was born in poverty from a farmer family, and also his impoverished childhood in rural North Dakota made him lie about his background. Though Gatsby has always wanted to be rich, he participated in criminal organizations. The activities include distributing illegal alcohol and trading in stolen securities. Moreover, this novel also provides a critical social history of the prohibition era in the United States. According to Mark Lawrence (2020), prohibition era focused on a nationwide constitutional ban on importation, transportation, production, and sale of alcoholic beverages from 1920 to 1933.

F. Scott Fitzgerald was born on September 24, 1896. He becomes a famous American writer because of his marvelous work on depicting the flamboyance and excess of jazz, including *The Side of Paradise* (1920), *Tales of Jazz age* (1922), *Tender is the Night*, etc. Moreover, his fantastic work of *The Great Gatsby* is also famous because it portrayed his love story with his wife, Zelda Fitzgerald. Donaldson (1913) stated that Due to his lack of family wealth, Fitzgerald denied the opportunity to marry the girl of his choice as her family had an excellent background and was very wealthy.

The writer believes that the social-economic conditions set in *The Great Gatsby* novel reflect the society of the American gilded age. Collins Dictionary stated that American Gilded Age is a period in American history noted for political corruption, financial speculation, and the opulent lives of wealthy industrialists and financiers. The word Gilded Age originates from the novel *The*

Gilded Age (1873) by Mark Twain & C.D Warner. American gilded age happened after the reconstruction era, a couple of years before and after the 20th century. In his book, Mark Twain called the late 19th century the “Gilded Age”. He meant that the period was glittering on the surface but corrupt underneath. He also stated that the great burst of industrial activity and corporate growth that characterized the Gilded Age was presided over by a collection of colourful and energetic entrepreneurs who became known alternatively as “Captain of Industry” and “Robber Barons” They grew rich through the monopolies they created in the steel, petroleum, and transportation industries.

The social-economic phenomenon has always been an interesting issue to be discussed because it is part of the social problem that is very close to our society. Therefore, many writers conceive this issue in their literary work. One of the novels is *The Great Gatsby*, which captures American society's social phenomena in the late 1920s, known as the American Gilded Age era.

The writer chooses *The Great Gatsby* novel as the object of this research to expose how Fitzgerald depicts the socio-economic condition during the American gilded age and analyzes it using the Sociology of literature theory by Alan Singewood. Since the analysis regarding the illegal business in literary works brings certain social issues, it perhaps will educate the reader on how it happens and how to avoid it.

This research is also conducted in case there is rarely research examining this novel from a socio-economic perspective, especially regarding the illegal business related to the American Gilded Age era. The writer will be focused on examining the illegal business which runs by the main characters Jay Gatsby in *The Great Gatsby* novel. There is three illegal business that will be analyzed, including Bootlegging Alcohol, Drug Business, and Deception in Business. Therefore,

this research comes up with the title *The Illegal Business during American Gilded Age as portrayed in F. Scott Fitzgerald novel The Great Gatsby*.

1.2 Identification of the Problem

The Great Gatsby novel implies a social-economic condition, which has something in common with the American gilded age era. Generally, the story's plot is about Jay Gatsby, a successful billionaire who pursuit Daisy Buchanan, a girl he has loved since he was young. Yet, somehow on his way to get Daisy back, he had to experience many things and was obliged to do everything he could to run his business to be successful in this case running several illegal business activities.

The writer also wants to briefly discuss the American condition during the American gilded age as the preliminary analysis. It includes the social condition, the disorder of the economy, and the corruption in law. Afterwards, the writer wants to expose some conditions of the gilded age in *The Great Gatsby* novel. Consequently, such conditions become an allegory that reflects the society due to the social-economic condition of the American gilded age.

1.3 Review of Previous Study

The Great Gatsby, with the aid of using F Scott Fitzgerald, has a thrilling storyline containing many profound messages and consequently, many researchers are seeking to discover the abilities of some issues that exist on it.

The previous studies by Ahmad Noufal Junaidi (2014) about *The Great Gatsby* novel is published with title *Psychological Analysis of Jay Gatsby Life in F Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby viewed from Abraham Maslow Hierarchy of Needs Theory*. The research focus on analyzes the psychological problems of Jay's Gatsby as the main character which influenced his life and

the efforts of Gatsby to fulfill his psychological needs. The writer claims in his findings there are four needs of Jay Gatsby by using Abraham Maslow's theory, those are psychological need, Safety need, Love and belonging need and Esteem needs. Generally, this study has an interesting topic to be discuss and analyze. On the other hand, the result of this research is also arranged well, so that can be understood by common people in general.

Another research by Nur Aisha Lamu Sudidi (2014) entitled "*Pengaruh Masyarakat Terhadap Tingkah Laku Wanita Pada Pria dalam Novel The Great Gatsby karya F. Scott Fitzgerald*". This research analyzes the attitude of women toward men in *The Great Gatsby* novel and also analyzes how the society influences this particular attitude. It is stated in this research that women in *The Great Gatsby* are commonly full of confidence, they are free to express their opinion, modern, aggressive, extravagant, and materialist and they love big parties so much. All of these attitudes are appropriate with the society of New York at that time, when it was 1922. Finally, this research concludes that the society when *The Great Gatsby* was written really has big influence on the attitude creation of women in the novel.

In 2007 Suleman Bouti examined about aspects of the *American Dream* in *F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby*. Aspects of concern in this research are Pursuit of Happiness, Persistence, Independence, Individualism, and Path to wealth. This research assumes that the cause of the deteriorating condition of American society at that time was included in *The Great Gatsby* novel. The social conditions at that time were highly reflected in this novel. This research directs in exploring the American Dream values contained in the novel. The study results reveal those aspects of the American Dream such as the pursuit of happiness, perseverance, independence, the path to wealth, are individualistic in the novel *The Great Gats* by F. Scott Fitzgerald. This research

will become a major reference for this thesis since it has something in common with the author contents which is about reflection of social condition during Gilded Age era.

Muniroh (2014) also found out that American Dream issues in *The Great Gatsby* novel. The research focuses on the analysis of the pursuit of the American dream of its characters. Most of its characters are the people who focused mainly on the material gain of the American dream. These situations cause them to be individuals who had been so egocentric and heartless due to the fact they positioned materialism and hedonism as their ideals and principles. This research concludes that only a man who can dream wisely and balance the material gain with the spiritual values will succeed to reach happiness which is offered by the American dream. Generally, this research is easy to understand, but the lack of data presented in the research makes the results look less reliable

The following research by Bramaditya Cristoforus Sigit (2017) entitled *The Meaning of Jay Gatsby's view on Life as seen in Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby*. He reveals the meaning of life as seen in Jay Gatsby. There are two main issues formulated in this study, the first is the description of Jay Gatsby, and the second is the meaning of Jay Gatsby's view on life. This research shows that Jay Gatsby is a mysterious, untruthful, snobbish, ambitious, and self-confident character in the novel. Moreover, the literal meaning of Jay Gatsby's view on life is a desire to live with his old girlfriend Daisy. While the true meaning of Jay Gatsby's view on life is his way to seek belongingness in the world, he believes he belongs to. Bramaditya claims that his need for belongingness causes Jay Gatsby's view on life. It motivates Gatsby to seek where or whom he belongs to. This research is relatively easy to understand since it provides reliable data on his finding.

Another thesis relevant to the writer's topic is *Capitalist Domination toward the American society in Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby* by Alifa (2019). She describes how the capitalist dominates the American society and finds out its effects on the society as described in the novel. The result of the research indicates that; First, the capitalist domination towards the society can be seen through their actions in society that show their power and build a perception in people minds that they are the powerful one and of course, they become the role model since people always look up to them. The writer claims that the capitalist domination effect in society can be seen through the lifestyle of the society that tried to imitate the high lifestyle, the emergence of the American dream; where many people race to achieve their dream to be as prosperous as they can be, to reach good prosper life which they believe will bring happiness for them. The last finding in this research is about the moral decadence in society because the capitalist triggered them to reach prosperity no matter how. This research will also become a prominent reference since it uses a Sociological approach to analyze the data.

Sabariyanto (2019) on his research *Structural Analysis of F. Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby* examined the relation between setting and characterization in *The Great Gatsby* novel, and also the relation between its setting and plot. The result of this research shows that structural elements of F. Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* present a solid unity. Each element has close relation with other elements in forming the wholeness of the story. Here, there is the relatedness between setting and plot and the relatedness between plot and character in F. Scot Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*.

The researcher also found an article in journal which published by National of Teacher of English talking about the relationship of *The Great Gatsby novel and the cacophony of American dream* which written by Colleen A. Ruggeri. This article found that *The Great Gatsby* novel was starting points for those seeking to develop a thematic unit on the American Dream. Even though

this article is relatively short, it can explain how *The Great Gatsby* novel contains elements of the American dream.

Another article related to the topics is published by John H. Randall III (1967), in his article entitled *Jay Gatsby's Hidden Source of Wealth*, he shared his concerns on where does the immense wealth of Gatsby supposed to come from. Since Gatsby and Meyer Wolfsheim met each other for the first time after World War, the one possibility is that he helped Meyer Wolfsheim on fixing the 1919 World series. Since Gatsby and Meyer Wolfsheim meets each other for the first time after World War, this article also explores Gatsby's activities that enabled him to accumulate his fortune. Moreover, this article is also very strongly related to and relevant to the subject under discussion.

Regarding those nine previous studies, it can be concluded that *The Great Gatsby* is an object which can be analyzed from many different perspectives. As one could see, the previous research focuses on the characters' psychology, the life of the character, the American dream, and capitalistic issues that exist in the novel. However, the writer wants to analyze *The Great Gatsby* novel in terms of the sociology of literature to expose the depiction of the American gilded age that exists in the novel and compare it to the real society

1.4 Research Question

This research will answer the following questions:

1. How does the bootlegging Alcohol done by Jay Gatsby as seen in *The Great Gatsby* novel?
2. How does Gatsby run the drug business as seen in *The Great Gatsby* novel?
3. How do Gatsby and Meyer Wolfsheim do deception in their business as seen in *The Great Gatsby* novel?

1.5 Scope of the Research

This research focuses on Illegal Business activities, which were portrayed during the American gilded age in *The Great Gatsby* novel by F. Scott Fitzgerald. I then limit this research to two main discussions; the first focus is on illegal business set in *The Great Gatsby* novel and the second focus is how it reflects the actual conditions of American Gilded Age society. I also explore some specific conditions of the American Gilded Age which might cause illegal business, such as American social condition, the disorder of the economy, and the corruption in the law. This research will find out how far the novel's reflection to the American gilded age society.

1.6 Objective of the Study

This research aims to expose socio-economic situations in *The Great Gatsby* novel representing the American Gilded Age era. Meanwhile, the specific objective of this research is to show that the depiction of Illegal Business activities captured in the novel becomes strong evidence that represents the situation of the Gilded Age era. Furthermore, this research also reveals the allegory that reflects the actual society and how its relation to American Gilded Age.

