

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

Both novels. The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald and Heart of Darkness by Joseph Conrad, which are going to be discussed here, may have been familiar to most readers. Yet the writer of this thesis decides to make an analysis on the two novels because of some reasons.

Reading these two novels and some critics about them, the writer finds out that there are similarities between them. So, the major reason of discussing these novels is because of the similarities of those two novels that impress the writer a lot.

The first similarity is the fact that both novels are written based on the real experiences of the authors. Heart of Darkness is based on Joseph Conrad's adventure when he joined the Belgian imperialists to get ivory in the jungle of Congo, Africa (Harkness, 1960: 71). The same is The Great Gatsby in which F. Scott Fitzgerald

described his experience in life and his environment as the material for his novel (Northman, 1966: 12).

The next similarity is the point of view of the novels. Both novels are written in the first person point of view. Finally, the last similarity is in the settings of the novels. The setting of Heart⁷: of Darkness is the heart of African jungle where darkness and wilderness cannot only be found in nature, but also in the human beings because people who live there are still primitive and cannibals. The characters of The Great Gatsby also live in the "jungle" OUT; in the figurative meaning. The condition of these two jungles -are different, the former is really close to nature and the latter is full of man's sophisticated achievement, but the situation man has to face is the same. In Heart of Darkness the situation of the wild jungle is indicated by cannibalism in which the physically weak will be lost and eaten by the stronger, and the strongest will be the king. In The Great Gatsby the jungle is indicated by the competition among people in business.' The rich, powerful and clever people will manipulate, ruin and "eat" the poor and weak ones. To struggle in life and win the competition, people have to be strong not in physic but in wealth because money creates power which helps people get higher position and- social status.

Another reason why the writer is interested in writing a thesis about these novels is that by reading them, especially the narrators' comments and their commitments to be loyal to the protagonists till the end of the novels, the writer is fascinated by the narrators' belief in humanism. They lead the writer to realize that everybody has the right to decide what he will do with his life.

The humanism that Nick Carraway and Marlow believe is reflected in their attitudes toward the protagonists, Gatsby and Kurtz. Gatsby and Kurtz are interesting characters to analyze. It is because on the surface they look like bad characters since their choices of way of life seem to be bad. But the way Nick Carraway considers Gatsby as a great man and Marlow admires Kurtz show how humanism reveals truth about man and his freedom to determine his life. It really attracts the writer's interest to justify the truth of the narrators' opinion. Having found proofs that Nick Carraway and Marlow tell trustworthy narrations and give reliable comments about the protagonists and their motivations, the writer can accept why Nick Carraway and Marlow admire the protagonists. And she will convey it to the reader through this analysis.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Among the similarities between Heart of Darkness and The Great Gatsby, the writer is more interested in the first point of view used by both novels. More specifically, she is interested in the reliability of Nick Carraway in The Great Gatsby and of Marlow in Heart of Darkness as narrators and commentators, and their similarities as the main characters. This interest is inspired by her realization of the fact that in a novel using first person point of view, the quality of the narrator is important for the reader to understand the narrator-'s story as a whole. It is because in modern novel, an experienced author may make use of the advantages or the disadvantages of using first, person point of view to achieve his/her purpose. For instance, theoretically the use of first person narrator does give credibility to the story. However, an inexperienced reader must be careful in accepting the narrator's information, because a narrator is also a character and not just a spokesman, he may be limited or confused in perceiving an experience, he may even be designed to deceive the reader. Therefore, understanding the narrator himself, including his quality, can help the reader understand the meaning of the story. (Carpenter, 1974: 1341.

Problem occurs due to different opinions regarding the quality of Nick Carraway and Marlow as the narrators and commentators. Some critics say that they are reliable as narrators as well as commentators, but some say they are not. The writer, meanwhile, agrees with the idea which believes in the reliability of Nick Carraway and Marlow. Through this thesis she will reveal the proofs to make the reader also agree that Marlow and Nick Carraway are reliable as narrators and commentators. She also will reveal their similarities as the main characters.

PURPOSE

It takes a lot of considerations to decide whether a narrator, who is also a commentator, reliable or not. But because the reliability of the narrator is a significant help for the reader to understand the meaning of the story, the writer is encouraged to write an analysis on this point. Through this thesis she will show the reader why Nick Carraway and Marlow are considered as reliable narrators and commentators and also how their reliability help the reader understand their ironic admirations for the protagonists. Furthermore, this thesis will also reveal the similarities of Nick Carraway and Marlow as the main characters of the novels.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

An analysis on point of view still becomes an interesting discussion. It becomes more complex because of the fact that the reader's attitude and understanding about the events will usually be controlled by the author's technical management of point of view (Scholes, 1981: 15). This implies that studying point of view will lead the reader to the very heart of a story. The writing of this thesis is inspired by the fact that the quality of the narrator influences the reader's perception of the story. In other words, the reader has to see first the quality of a narrator before understanding his narration.

Besides, a good literary work is created not only with beauty but also with the message from the author. In this case, the first person point of view is not only a literary device which makes the story believable but also a media in which the message of the author is revealed through the narrator. Through this thesis, the reader can see that the humanism the narrators believe has affected them in judging and appreciating human's choice.

Therefore, the reader is able to behave objectively in judging the others, like what Nick Carraway has done toward Gatsby in The Great Gatsby and Marlow toward Kurtz

in Heart of Darkness.

SCOPE AND LIMITATION

In this thesis the writer will focus only on the characteristics of Nick Carraway and Marlow in relation with their reliability as narrators and commentators. According to Dietrich in The Art of Fiction, studying first person narrator includes the analysis of who the narrator is, of the material that the narrator provides and of the distance between the narrator and his material (Dietrich 1967: 148). Accordingly, in proving the reliability of Nick and Marlow as narrators and commentators, the writer will concentrate on three aspects. First, Nick and Marlow themselves including their characteristics. Second, their materials, such as: the events, the other characters, description and commentary on events and other characters. Third, the distance between Nick and Marlow and their materials, whether they are inside or outside the actions of the stories. The writer will use those Nick's and Marlow's materials as the supports and proofs of their reliability.

Besides, this thesis also discusses the similarities of Nick Carraway and Marlow as the main characters of the novels- In this part of analysis, the writer discusses

only the similarities in their actions including their relationship with other main characters, especially their encounters with the protagonists which make the adventures are important for them.

ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

This thesis will be divided into six chapters. The first chapter is Introduction which is subdivided into: Background of the Study, Statement of the Problem, Purpose of the Study, The Importance of the Study, Scope and Limitation, and Organization of the Study itself. The second chapter is Review of Related Literature.

The central analysis consists of three chapters. The third chapter discusses the characteristics of Nick Carraway and Marlow as reliable narrators. The fourth chapter accounts their characteristics as reliable commentators. And Chapter Five consists of the similarities of Nick Carraway and Marlow as the main 'characters of the novels.

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