

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Talking about literature is basically talking about life. Literature means to know about life, as Wellek and Warren said in their book *Theory of Literature*, “literature ‘represents’ ‘life’; and ‘life’ is, in large measure, a social reality, even though the natural world and the inner or subjective world of the individual have also been objects of literary ‘imitation’” (94). It means that literature, as with any art form, should hold a mirror to society and reflects what is happening in society.

In addition, beside Wellek and Warren explain about the definition of literature, they also explain about the relationship between literature and society. As they state that “The relation between literature and society is usually discussed by starting with the phrase that ‘literature is an expression of society’”. It means that the relationship between literature and society is literature an expression of society (95). From literature, the writer express his or her experience and the image of life. So, by reading the literary work, the reader will know about the author’s life. Therefore, literature cannot be separated from society, and the study of literature should be related to society.

In literature there are three genres: prose fiction, poetry, and drama, as Roberts and Jacobs state that “We usually classify literature into the following genres or classes: prose fiction, poetry, and drama (2). Poetry is a broad term

that includes a great number of separate sub-types, such as sonnet. Narrative fiction is a chronological account of a series of events. Drama or play is designed to be performed on a stage by live actor (Roberts 3-4). Moreover, these three genres have many common characteristics, they also differ in many ways. Prose generally focus on one or a few major characters who undergo some kind of change in their life. Poetry is much more economical in the use of words. Drama is the form of literature that intended to be performed by actors (Roberts and Jacobs 2-3). In addition, whatever the kind of literature, it enables us to develop a perspective on the event that occur around us (2).

In this study, the writer chooses the American drama as a literary work for object of the study, because the writer is interested in the world of theatre. Besides, it is one of the literary genres which has unique characteristics that makes it different from other form of literature. Drama, like poetry and fiction, is an art of words. In drama the words are mainly dialogue; people talking is the basic dramatic action. The talk may be interrupted by wordless activity, but such activity will derived its significance from its context of dialogue (Reinet xi). Therefore, the writer tend to use the drama as the device.

Talking about drama or play, it cannot be separated from its writer or playwright. There are some American Playwrights in the 20th century such as Arthur Miller, Tennessee Williams, Samuel Beckett, Edward Albee, Harold Pinter, and August Wilson. In this study, the writer is interested in a significant figure, August Wilson, as the African American Playwright, because the writer finds out that August Wilson is one of the prominent

playing in the major leagues. It is set just before the start of civil right movement, in 1957 in Pittsburgh, PA. The play takes place at time when organized baseball has finally become integrated, but when racial discrimination remains widespread (Koprince 349). The important issue in the play here is about the American Dream of Black family.

The idea that everyone can have successful life in America is called “American Dream”. The term American Dream, which has powerful meaning could make people believe that if they worked hard with all the potential they have, they would get a better future. The term was firstly initiated by James Truslow Adams in his book *The Epic of America* written in 1931 . He states that American Dream is the dream of land where life is expected to be better and more prosperous for everybody who has opportunity and potential on their own (qtd in Cullen 4).

The American Dream itself is based on the idea of American live which emanate from the highly valued individualism of Americans. People tend to see the American Dream as tied to the freedom and material well-being from the idea associated with it which has shifted to the American’s right. Moreover, the dream is not the same for Americans, like portrayed in the play, each of the character has different dream. in addition, the dream itself constantly change based on the individual’s circumstance (Naylor 54).

From the explanation above, the writer focuses on analyzing the character of the play, especially the main character’s family as Black people

study, there will be more reader to appreciate August Wilson's works. The writer also hopes that this study will give a contribution on the literary study, especially for the students of English Department.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

There are many interesting aspects that can be analyzed in *Fences* such as the theme, setting, point of view, symbolism, etc. but this study only focuses on analyzing the characters of The Maxsons and the American Dream, those will be analyzed by the writer as the scope and limitation for the topic.

1.6 Method of Study

The writer does a library research. Therefore, the writer uses some books including the play itself as the primary sources and reads information of some internet sources and other sources such as magazine and journal that support this study to improve the knowledge. In presenting the analysis, I mainly use descriptive method. The research follows the following steps:

1. reading the play to get the complete and well understanding on the whole story.
2. Selecting and collecting the data in form of narration and conversation from the play related to the problem.
3. Analyzing the data collected by firstly categorizing them in two points, dealing with two points of the statement of

