

**SOCIAL PROBLEMS THAT REPRESENTED
IN WILLIAM SAROYAN'S *THE TIME OF YOUR LIFE***



A THESIS

**Submitted to the Faculty of Cultural Science of Hasanuddin University in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements to Obtain a Bachelor Degree in
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THESIS
SOCIAL PROBLEMS THAT REPRESENT IN WILLIAM SAROYAN'S
THE TIME OF YOUR LIFE

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It has been examined before the Board of Thesis Examination on January 11th,
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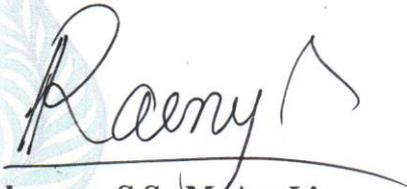
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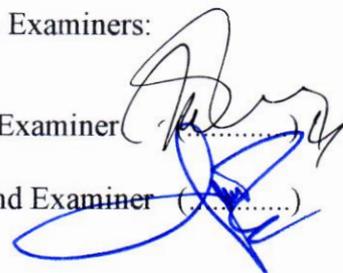
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With reference to the letter of the dean of Faculty of Cultural Sciences Hasanuddin University No. 379/UN4.9.1/KEP/2020 regarding supervision, we hereby confirm to approve the undergraduate thesis draft by Raja Muddin (F21116535) to be examined at the English Literature Study Program of Faculty of Cultural Sciences.

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Yang menyatakan,



(Raja Muddin)

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The researcher realizes that this thesis is still imperfect. Therefore, the researcher would be truthfully glad if this thesis received some suggestions or criticism that could be helpful to improve this thesis. The researcher hopes that this thesis will be useful for the readers, whether it is for literature students or non-literature students.

The research also hopes that this study would become a great source for the future researcher who wants to analyze about William Saroyan's *The Time of Your Life*.

Makassar, 25 November 2020

The researcher,

Raja Muddin

TABLE OF CONTENT

LEGITIMACY	i
AGREEMENT	ii
DECLARATION.....	iii
APPROVAL SHEET	iv
AKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	vi
TABLE OF CONTENT.....	ix
ABSTRACT	xi
ABSTRAK	xii
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Background.....	1
1.2 Identification of Problem.....	4
1.3 Scope of Problem.....	4
1.4 Research Question	4
1.5 Objective of the Study.....	5
1.6 Significant of the Study.....	5
1.7 Sequence of Chapter	5
CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW	7
2.1 Previous Study	7
2.2 Genetic Structuralism	9
2.2.1 Intrinsic Elements	10
2.2.2 Extrinsic Elements	14
2.3 Social Problem.....	15
CHAPTER III METHODOLOGY	17

3.1 Instrument of Research	17
3.2 Method of Collecting Data.....	17
3.3 Method of Analysing Data.....	18
3.4 Research Procedure	18
CHAPTER IV ANALYSIS	20
4.1 Intrinsic Element in <i>The Time of Your Life</i>	20
4.1.1 Characters	20
4.1.2 Plot.....	29
4.1.3 Setting	32
4.1.4 Theme.....	33
4.2 The Analysis of Social Problem that represent in <i>The Time of Your Life</i>	35
4.3 The Effect of William Saroyan’s Life Background in Portraying the Social Problems in <i>The Time of Your Life</i>	41
CHAPTER V CONCLUSION	46
5.1 Conclusion.....	46
5.2 Suggestion	46
BIBLIOGRAPHY	48
APPENDIX	51

ABSTRACT

RAJA MUDDIN. 2020. *Social Problems That Represent in William Saroyan's The Time of Your Life.* (supervised by **Abidin Pammu** and **Sitti Sahraeny**).

The aim of this research is to analyse the social problems that represent in William Saroyan's play entitled *The Time of Your Life*, and also to find the reason behind the representation of the social problems that happens in the play based on the Saroyan's life background itself. This research uses the theory of genetic structuralism to analyse the intrinsic and the extrinsic elements of the play in order to identify what kinds of social problems that portrayed in the play and the Saroyan's life background that influence the representation of the social problem itself. Based on the results of the analysis, the researcher found that there are several social problems that represent in the play, the social problems consist of poverty, prostitution, violence, alcoholism, and sexual harassment. All the social problems were based on certain characters and events that happened in the play. The researcher also found three events from Saroyan's life background that influence the representation of the social problems in the play. The events are the loss of Saroyan's father, his life in orphanage, and his experience during the great depression.

Keywords: *The Time of Your Life*, Social Problems, Play.

ABSTRAK

RAJA MUDDIN. 2020. *Social Problems That Represent in William Saroyan's The Time of Your Life.* (dibimbing oleh **Abidin Pammu** dan **Sitti Sahraeny**).

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis masalah sosial apa saja yang digambarkan dalam drama *The Time of Your Life* karya William Saroyan, dan untuk menemukan alasan mengapa masalah-masalah sosial tersebut digambarkan kedalam drama berdasarkan latar belakang dari kehidupan Wiliam Saroyan sendiri. Penelitian ini menggunakan teori strukturalisme genetik untuk menganalisis unsur-unsur intrinsik dan ekstrinsik yang ada pada drama dengan tujuan untuk mengidentifikasi masalah-masalah sosial apa saja digambarkan dalam drama dan latar belakang dari William Saroyan yang mempengaruhi alasan dari digambarkannya masalah-masalah sosial tersebut. Berdasarkan dari hasil analisis, peneliti menemukan beberapa masalah-masalah sosial digambarkan dalam drama, diantaranya masalah kemiskinan, prostitusi, kekerasan, alkoholisme, dan pelecehan seksual. Peneliti juga menemukan tiga aspek dari latar belakang pengarang yang mempengaruhi penggambaran masalah-masalah sosial tersebut kedalam drama, tiga aspek tersebut yaitu saat Saroyan kehilangan ayahnya, kehidupannya di panti asuhan, dan pengalaman hidupnya pada masa *The Great Depression*.

Kata Kunci: *The Time of Your Life*, Masalah Sosial, Drama.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of background of study, identification of problem, scope of problem, research question, objective of the study, significance of the study, and sequence of study.

1.1 Background

Literary work is a written work written by a human that contains an aesthetic value, because literary works frequently use some languages that are different from any other written works, some of them are figurative and imagery language, as Klarer has stated that literature is a written form of an expression, this what makes literary works are different from any other written document (Klarer, 2004). Literary works also divided into two separate categories, fiction (literary works that based on the author's mind and imagination) and non-fiction (literary works that based on the real event that converted or adapted into written works) which again divided into poetry and prose. There also different types of form in literary works such as novel, poem, plays, and short story.

One of the parts of literary works is play, play is type of literary that written using figurative language by a person called playwright, play divided into some acts and scene, play also contains character, setting, role and dialogue just like prose, the only difference that separated play from prose is that play often performed on the stage or theatre.

There are many great playwrights but the researcher decided to analyse the play by William Saroyan. William Saroyan was born in Fresno, California on August 31st 1908. He was one of the writers from US who created a notable works during the Great Depression, Saroyan is also known as a writer with his work that contains an original and irreverent sometimes reckless story that tells about appreciating the joy of living in spite living in insecurity, hunger, and poverty. Born as a son of an Armenian immigrant, at 15-years-old, Saroyan taught himself of reading and writing when he dropped out of school. *The Daring Young Man on the Flying Trapeze* (1934) was his first written work ever created and followed by another collection two years later, *Inhale and Exhale* (1936). He also had written several plays including his brilliantly produced *My Heart's in the Highlands* and his Pulitzer-winning play entitled *The Time of Your Life* (1939). A lot of Saroyan's works are based on his childhood and family like in *My Name Is Aram* (1940) and his book *The Human Comedy* (1943), also several works that were inspired by his marriage stories like *Rock Wagram* (1951) and *The Laughing Matter* (1953).

Among all of his notable and amusing works, the researcher decided to choose *The Time of Your Life* (1939) as the object of the study. *The Time of Your Life* is a five-acts American play by William Saroyan that was first released and premiered in 1939 on Broadway.

The play takes time setting during The Great Depression and the main place is in San Francisco, California or more specifically in Pacific Street Saloon, Restaurant and Entertainment Palace, a bar owned by the character Nick. The bar filled with many colorful characters but the main plot of this play focused on Joe, a

young unemployed and sometimes weird man with lots of money in his pocket. Joe helps some of the costumers in the bar with his money and his encouraging words without any second thought. He helps a man who wants to be a dancer named Harry, His errand boy Tom to fight for his love, and a prostitute who claims to be an actress in her past live named Kitty Duval. The main conflict of the play comes when a police officer Blick enters the bar and threats the owner Nick to closed his bar if Blick sees any prostitute came to his bar.

The reason behind the researcher's decision to choose *The Time of Your Life* as the objective of the study is because despite from its comedic and dramatic plotline, the researcher also found that this play contains some social problems described in this play that really shows the reality during that time and the society itself reflected by some characters in the play and the researcher thinks it is worth to analyze. *Time of Your Life* is take place during the Great Depression that happened in America about ten years from 1929 to 1939.

Based on the explanations above, the researcher is interested in analyzing this play focused on the social problems that depicted in the play *The Time of Your Life* by William Saroyan by using genetic structuralism approach. The reason behind the researcher's decision to analyze Saroyan's *The Time of Your Life* using genetic structuralism by Lucien Goldmann is because the researcher interested to find the reason behind the representation of the social problems that happens in the play based on the author's life background and by using genetic structuralism is helpful to reveal the intrinsic elements and the author's point of view about the social and historical background that influence the play.

1.2 Identification of Problem

After read the plays several times, the researcher identifies several problems related to the story in *The Time of Your Life*.

1. The conflict between main character
2. The social condition during the great depression that determined in the play
3. The great depression that described in the play
4. The social problems that happened in the play during the great depression.
5. William Saroyan's background

1.3 Scope of Problem

Based on the identification problem above, the researcher decided to limits the scope of problems to only describe the kind of social problems that happened during the great depression in the play.

1.4 Research Question

Based on the scope of the problem above, the researcher conducted three research questions that related to the social problems in the play.

1. What are the social problems that reflected in the play?
2. How William Saroyan's life background affect the way he portrayed social problems in the play?

1.5 Objective of The Study

The writer sets the objectives of this study based on a number of questions that have been raised previously, namely:

1. To explain the social problems that reflected in the play

3. To describe how William Saroyan's life background affected the way he portrayed social problems in the play

1.6 Significant of the Study

1. Theoretical

The researcher hopes this study could give a contribution and information for a larger body of knowledge, specifically for studies of literature.

2. Practical

- a. The researcher wishes that this study could become a reference for future literature study, especially for English literature and genetic structuralism.

- b. This study could become a solid reflection about the social problems that commonly happens in social life and hopefully the future researcher who will use this study as a reference could take it very seriously and find the solution regarding such problems.

1.7 Sequence of Chapter

This research is divided into five chapters. Chapter one is an introduction, consists of background of writing, identification of problem, scope of problem,

research question, objectives of the study, and the significant of the study. Chapter two is the literature review, consists of previous studies that similar with this research and some explanations used in this research. Chapter three consists of methodology which explains about what method that the researcher used in analyzing the play, including the method of collecting data, method of analyzing the data and research procedure. The fourth chapter deals with the analysis of the social problems that reflected in the play. The last chapter is the conclusions of this research which examines the whole analysis in brief.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Previous Study

The researcher finds some previous studies from different researcher who conducted a similar study about social problems in literary work. Those studies consist of three research papers and two theses:

1. Andrika Syafrona, Abdurahmanm M. Ismail Nst. In their journal of *Masalah Sosial Dalam Novel Rembulan Tenggelam Di Wajahmu Karya Tere Liye: Kajian Sosiologi Sastra* (2013)
2. Darti Muflikhah, Andayani, Raheni Suhita in their journal of *Masalah Sosial Dalam Novel Air Mata Tjitanduy Karya Bambang Setiaji* (2014).
3. Murti Wijayanti and Rusdian Noor Dermawan in their paper about Masalah Sosial Dan Kritik Sosial Dalam Naskah Drama Monolog *Sarimin Karya Agus Noor: Sebuah Tinjauan Sosiologi Sastra* (2019)
4. Muhammad Yusuf in his thesis of *Racial Issues in Jean Toomer's Novel "Cane"* (2007)
5. Nurfitriana Abd Majid in her thesis of *Social Critism in Morris West's Children of the Sun* (2011)

The similarity between the previous research mention above and this research is that the three of the research above and this research explains about social problems in particular literary work, and two of the research above and this research are using English literary works as the object of the study.

From the previous studies above, the researcher also found that three of the research from Andrika Syafrona, Abdurahman M. Ismail Nst. In their journal of *Masalah Sosial Dalam Novel Rembulan Tenggelam Di Wajamu Karya Tere Liye: Kajian Sosiologi Sastra* (2013), Darti Muflikhah, Andayani, Raheni Suhita in their journal of *Masalah Sosial Dalam Novel Air Mata Tjitanduy Karya Bambang Setiaji* (2014), and also Murti Wijayanti and Rusdian Noor Dermawan in their paper about *Masalah Sosial Dan Kritik Sosial Dalam Naskah Drama Monolog Sarimin Karya Agus Noor: Sebuah Tinjauan Sosiologi Sastra* (2019), three of these researchers were using Indonesian literary works as the object of their research. The other difference the researcher found from the research above is that two of the research from Muhammad Yusuf in his thesis of *Racial Issues in Jean Toomer's Novel "Cane"* (2007) and Nurfitriana Abd Majid in her thesis of *Social Critism in Morris West's Children of the Sun* (2011) were using genetic structuralism approach in their study same as this research but from Abd Majid in his thesis, he analyzed about Social Criticism and the other difference is that from Yusuf's thesis, he only analyzed one type of social issues which is racial issue.

Because of the differences mentioned above, the researcher is decided to filling the gap by providing a research that using an English literary work as the object of this study and focusing into the part of social problems by using genetic structuralism approach in order identify the social problems that happens in the play and to understand how the author of the play portrayed the social problems into his play.

2.2 Genetic Structuralism Approach

In order to complete the research, the researcher uses genetic structuralism approach by Lucien Goldmann to analyze the play. Genetic structuralism is part of literary research that often used to analyze literary works such novel, short story, poetry, and play. Genetic structuralism, according to Ratna (2004:123), is a type of method in literary research that analyze the structure of the literary work itself and its background. In other words, genetic structuralism analyzed a literary work intrinsically and extrinsically. Genetic structuralism was invented by Lucien Goldmann, a French-Romanian philosopher and sociologist, the theory was written in his book entitled *The Hidden God: A Study of Tragic Vision in the Pensées of Pascal and the Tragedies of Racine*, the book was first published in 1956.

Yasa, (2012:28) stated that This theory is one of the sub-part of sociology of literature that combine the text structure, social context, and the point of view by the author him/herself. Genetic structuralism is also focused on the connection between a literary work and its social environment. The similar definition of genetic structuralism itself was also mentioned by Rosyidi (2010:201) who said that genetic structuralism is a part literary research that focused on the relationship between a literary work and the social environment where that literary work was written. based on this theory, the literary works is not just a written work that was appeared by itself but also a result of a subjective thoughts from its author that came because of the interaction between the subject and its certain social conditions.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher concludes that genetic structuralism approach does not only analyze a literary work based on its intrinsic

elements, but also the extrinsic elements of a literary work itself. Genetic structuralism approach is also focused on the genetic aspect of the literary work itself such the social environment where that work was written or the social background of the author his/herself.

2.2.1 Intrinsic Elements

Based on Wellek and Warren (1990:283), intrinsic elements in literature are the aspects that form the embodiment of a literary work. Those aspects or elements consist of Plot, Characters, Characterization, Setting, and Theme. As describes below that:

1. Characters and Characterization

Characters are the individuals that present in a literary work, characters in a literary work have their own different characteristic and dialogues that can be interpret by the reader. (Abrams, 1981:20)

Abrams also stated that, characters have different category in a literary work. There are major character and minor character. A major character is a type of character that frequently appears in the story, major character is also often to involve in the major events in the story. Minor characters themselves are the type of character that barely appear in the story, they have less important roles for the story and usually involve in some events in the story. (Abrams, 1981:20)

Based on Nurgiyantoro (1995:176-177), play has some different types of characters and each of the character have different role in a

story. There are protagonist and antagonist. The protagonist described as the main character or the central character of the story. The protagonist has a role to bring the objective of the story to a conclusion or basically, the protagonist is the type of character that responsible to achieves the objective of the story message. The rival of protagonist character is called the antagonist, the antagonist is the person who brings the conflict into the story and prevents the protagonist to achieve his/her objective (Nurgiyantoro, 1995).

It concludes that character is a person or a contributor in the story, especially in the play that has a different types of personality. There are minor character and major who plays different roles in the story. some of the characters are the protagonists and some of them are antagonists.

2. Plot

Plot is one the main elements of a play and it is what the characters did in the story. Plot or sometimes referred as a storyline is the ordering events and actions that happens in the play. In other scope, plot contains beginning, middle, and ending part. Plot is often illustrated as a zig-zag line that represents the introduction, the rising and falling action (Tarigan in Waluyo, 2001). Plots are basically created into five parts; those parts consist of:

a. Exposition

Exposition is the beginning part of the story, exposition sometimes called the introduction part of the story because the settings, characters, and the main conflicts are usually introduced in this part.

b. Rising Action

Rising action is the part where the main character in crisis by facing the conflicts and the story becomes more complicated in this part.

c. Climax

In the climax part, the story becomes more tense, it happens because the scene in the story builds up into its highest point. This is where the main protagonist encounters many conflicts or sometimes having a competition with the main antagonist.

d. Falling Action

Falling action is a part where the situation in the story becomes more calm or less tense because the conflict that happens in the climax starts to die down.

e. Resolution

Resolution or sometimes called denouement, is the finishing part of the play where the story concludes, this is where the main character resolves the issues or the conflict that happened in the

story. Therefore, resolution is the concluding part that resolves the issues and leads to the end of the story.

Based on the definition explained above, the researcher concludes that plot is an element that determine the action or the decision of the characters in the story. plot has several parts called exposition that sometimes referred as the beginning or the introduction part, rising action or the part where the conflict of the story begins, climax where the story reaches its point and it becomes more tense, falling action that makes the story becomes less tense than the climax, and the resolution or denouement where the story leads to an end.

3. Setting

Setting in literary is all of the information about the time, room, and atmosphere of events that happens in a literary work (Panuti-Sudjiman, 1991:44). Based on Kenney (1966:40), setting includes the information of the geographical locations such topography, views, room, and the time where the story in the literary work takes place.

According to Hudson (in Sugihastuti, 2002:54), setting divided into two, physical and social setting. The physical setting includes the time and place while social setting is the portrayal of the state of a particular society or social group in the literary work.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher concludes that setting is the place and time that portrayed in a literary work. Setting also divided into two, the physical and the social. The physical is more

focused on the time and place that happens in the story and the social setting is more focused on the social group of people that portrayed in the story.

4. Theme

Theme based on Burton Goodman (2005) is the point or the main idea of a literary work. The whole body of a literary work represented in theme. In the book of *Introduction to Fiction*, Stanton was stated that:

A central meaning of this sort corresponds to what, in a story, we call the “Theme” or “Central idea”. Like the central meaning our experience, the of a story is both particular and universal in its value: it lends force and unity to the events described, and it tells us something about life in general. A theme may take the form of a generalization about life, a generalization that may or may not imply a moral judgement. (Stanton, 1965:5).

Based on Stanton and Goodman’s statement above, the researcher can conclude that theme is one of the important element in a literary work, because theme is basically the main point of what the author wants to share in the literary work.

2.2.2 Extrinsic Elements

Extrinsic element is also known as the factors from outside the literary works that affect the birth of the literary work itself but does not physically appears in the literary work. Based on Wellek and Warren (1956), extrinsic elements that influence literary works could be the author’s belief,

psychological state, life background, and the circumstances or events that happened during the writing of the literary work itself.

By using genetic structuralism approach that analyze both intrinsic and extrinsic elements of a literary work, the researcher could elaborate the answer to the research questions that mentioned in the first chapter of the research. The researcher's decision to choose this theory is because this theory is suitable with the focus of this research about the analysis of the social problems that represent in the play and the way the author of the play portrayed the social problem in his play.

2.3 Social Problem

Social problems are important issues to be understand and observed by humans in addition to individual problems. the fact that human cannot be separated from particular social realities is that human is a social individual and as a social individual, human must be able to create a life that is free from any particular conflicts, both individual, and conflicts related to social problems with society. Humans are expected to be able to take responsibility, protect and respect the rights or freedoms of others.

Social problem existed because of the development of the society, social change, and social dynamics itself. Social problem is also affected by some individuals who do not able to adapt with the social changes (Soekanto, 2012:310). Hornell Hart, a professor of sociology and a parapsychologist from United States of America through his journal of "American Journal of Sociology" (1923), he defined:

A social problem is a problem which actually or potentially affects large numbers of people in a common way so that it may best be solved by some measure or measures applied to the problem as a whole rather than by dealing with each individual as an isolated case, or which requires concerted or organized human action (Hart, 1923).

Steven E. Barkan, a professor of sociology from University of Maine, United States of America. according to his book of *A Primer on Social Problem* (2012), Barkan said that “*A social problem is any condition or behavior that has negative consequences for large numbers of people and that is generally recognized as a condition or behavior that needs to be addressed*” (Barkan, 2012).

Based on the explanations above, the researcher concluded that social problems are type of problems that could affect a huge numbers of people and could be seen from the behaviour from certain individuals from that group of people itself. Social problems are also considerably as serious issues that needs a serious attention from people to solve it.