

## CHAPTER II

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

New Criticism approach will be applied as a tool to analyze the two questions previously mentioned in the statement of the problems. In analyzing a literary text using new criticism approach, the text itself will be the focus of attention (Tyson: 118). The details in the novel related to the statement of the problems are necessary to be compiled since this study is focused on the literary text. This study will discuss mostly about the work's theme, setting, character, and particularly about the conflicts within the novel. The conflict aspect takes the biggest part in this study because the theme of this study is related to racial conflict between white Americans and Japanese Americans. The discussion will thus explain New Criticism theory in details.

#### A. New Criticism

New Criticism was a standard method of literary studies during 1940s until 1960s (Tyson: 117). Tyson noted that previously, biographical-historical criticism was popular among literary critics (118). Prior to the emergence of New Criticism, people analyzed a literary work based on the author's background. In other words, people did not deal with the content of the literary text to get an understanding. Instead, they learnt the author's life and social background for they believed that the literary text is the portrayal of the author's life.

Unlike biographical-historical criticism, New Criticism focuses its analysis on the literary text, instead of on the author's life and time (Tyson: 118). Further, Tyson explained that new critics believe that a literary text is sometimes more meaningful and complex than its author's intention. The text's meaning could be dissimilar with the meaning which was constructed by the author (119). Wrong impression about the literary text might be constructed if the focus of analysis is put on the author's background. A literary text and its author are basically not related to each other because what is written in the literary text is an imagination; it does not tell about the author. Then, the best way to get an understanding of a literary text is by examining its own details.

Neither the author's intention nor reader's response are discussed in a New Criticism research. Reader's emotion and attitude toward a literary text which is also known as affective fallacy might confuse the text through the reader's personal past experiences (Tyson 119). From the statement, we can take a conclusion that when a reader has an emotional bond with the literary text, his assumption will be affected by his personal life. Then, applying both the author's intention and reader's response toward a literary text does not represent the literary text itself. Tyson's opinion is in accordance with Bressler's statement that in discovering the correct meaning of a literary text, the analysis must be independent of its author's intention and reader's emotion (55).

New Criticism approach requires a scrupulous analysis of the formal elements of literary text to help us reveal its theme (Tyson: 130). Tyson mentioned that formal elements are elements which form the literary text. Those elements are: images, symbols, metaphors, rhyme, meter, point of view, setting,

characterization, and plot. The elements work together to shape an inseparable whole of literary text which is called organic unity. (119). A literary text is considered to be qualified if it has an organic unity. Without such organic unity, a story will have no structure. A story without clear structure will confuse its readers. The formal elements will be explored further below.

### **A.1. Setting**

According to DiYanni, setting is location where the story takes place and time when the story occurs. Setting does not simply illustrate place and time of a literary text, historical and cultural backgrounds are provided within the story to improve our understanding (61). DiYanni quoted Eudora Welty's statement as the compliment of his opinion. Eudora Welty said that setting of place and time keeps the characters real (62-63). Setting is essential to the literary text as it provides cultural background of the story. Cultural background of the story improves our understanding about the characters.

In a historical fiction novel, setting of place and time is required because historical fiction novel narrates story which happened in the past. X.J Kennedy wrote in his book that in a historical fiction novel, factual information is presented through the story's formal elements whether the facts could be either true or false (3). One of the formal elements is setting. In describing setting, author does not deal with place and time only, but also in both details. A good description of setting shall bring the reader to an imagination as if the reader himself was inside

the story. In other words, setting in a historical fiction novel helps the author to reconstruct the events.

## **A.2. Characterization**

Characters are imaginary people created by the author. It can be classified into major and minor, static and dynamic. Major character is essential to the literary text since he is the centre of the story's action. Major character is also called protagonist whose conflict with antagonist might spark the story's conflict. Minor character's appearance is aimed to support major character. Dynamic character experiences changes of attitude, purpose, or behaviors during the progress of the story, while static character stays the same from the beginning until the end (DiYanni: 55-56). While reading a story, beside of finding out what is happening, the reader usually follows the characters' journey in overcoming both their internal and external conflict. There is a value inside the characters' development and changes. We might take a precious lesson by examining what the characters get during the story progresses.

Characterization is how the characters are presented and revealed by the author (DiYanni: 56). The statement is supported by Roberts and Jacobs who classified five distinct ways to reveal characters: what the characters do, how the characters are described, what the characters think and say about themselves, what other characters think and say about them, and what the author says about them (140-142). In examining characters of a literary text, we need to do approaches to the characters as we approach people in real life. Characterization can be analyzed

by noticing the character's attitude, behavior, action, utterances, and also other characters' opinion about him. Those approaches are common and usually applied in real life to examining other people's personality. The characters of a literary text are similar with people in real life, but their existence is only an imagination. They are people who live in our imagination while we are reading their story.

### **A.3. Plot**

Plot is the arrangement of events in which a story is composed. Plot creates the reader's curiosity on what will happen next so the reader will want to finish reading the story. A good plot is composed in sequence which is based on causal relationship (DiYanni: 44). Every story flows in different way because each author has his own style in writing. An author might write in chronological order while another might start from the last events. However, every story is composed in structure. That is why plot plays important role in developing a story.

DiYanni illustrates plot as a diagram which shows development of the conflict. The diagram consists of: exposition or the basic information of the story (such as description of setting and introduction to major characters), complication or the development of conflict, climax or a point where conflict is in its peak in which conflict stops raising and begins falling, falling action or a moment when conflict is falling, and resolution or a moment where conflict is resolved (45). In the exposition, the author introduces setting, characters, and issues which are going to be raised. Issues rise until it hits the highest point. After reaching the

peak, the issue starts falling down into the solution. In the end of the story, all conflicts are completely resolved.

## **B. Supporting Theory**

Prejudice and discrimination is the focus of this study's analysis. Particularly, it will discuss about prejudice and discrimination of white Americans towards Japanese Americans during World War II. Racial conflict is triggered by interaction between ethnically distinct races. Parrillo mentioned that when two different groups are interacted, it might result in several kinds of relationship varying from open conflict to close cooperation (14). From the statement, we might draw a conclusion that people coming from different races do not always develop an unpleasant relationship. It is possible for them to have a good cooperation. But mostly their relationship turns bad because when they are interacted, they have a tendency to maintain their identity in the middle of society.

Parrillo analyzed that ethnocentrism is the most significant approach in examining interaction between ethnically distinct races (12). According to him, ethnocentrism is a view in which one's own group is the centre of everything means others are rated with reference to it (8). We might conclude that when dominant group members have an ethnocentric view, prejudice and discrimination toward minorities will follow. Starting by prejudice, then it will lead discrimination towards minorities. Parrillo added that dominant group members naturally have an assumption that other cultures are inferior and immoral (12).

Parillo defined prejudice as an attitude with an emotional bias (58). Parrillo's definition about prejudice is in line with Von Bakanic's who defined prejudice as a negative attitude toward a person or group which is based on stereotype or assumptions toward people in which we categorize and make sense of them quickly (6). Generally, members of dominant group develop bad attitude toward minorities because they think that they are superior to others. It is common in a multiracial country that people is categorized based on their ethnic origin. Negative attitude towards minorities will then result in discrimination. According to Parrillo, discrimination is an actual behavior or the differential practice and unequal treatment toward other groups of people (78). In other words, discrimination is the realization of prejudice.

### **C. Related Studies**

Many studies were written about the novel, *Weedflower* by Cynthia Kadohata. One of the studies was written by Sherry in 2006. In her writing, Sherry compared *Weedflower* with another novel which was also written about World War II. The novel which was compared with *Weedflower* is *Blue* by Joyce Moyer Hostetter.

There are several similarities between both novels. Both were set in United States in 1940s during World War II. *Weedflower* was set in California and Poston, while *Blue*'s setting took place in North Carolina. Both novels' main characters had an inner conflict and struggled to overcome it. The twelve year-old Sumiko fought against ignorance, prejudice, and also the imprisonment. She had

to face that her family was forced to move to the internment camp in Poston, Arizona. Anna Fay in *Blue* fought against her polio while in the same time she became the man on the family because her father was sent into the battle in Europe. She experienced another form of prejudice in hospital when she made friend with a girl originated from a minority race. Sumiko was trapped in camp, while Anna was trapped in hospital. Both girls experienced boredom and use gardening as a way out to overcome their boredom (“*Weedflower* and *Blue*”)

Another study was written by Barbara Hult. Unlike Sherry, Barbara did not compare *Weedflower* with another novel. She focuses her analysis on intrinsic element of the novel, especially about internal and external conflict found in the novel. The external conflict is triggered by Pearl Harbor bombing. The bombing was result in Japanese Americans’ imprisonment. Internal conflict developed during the imprisonment. Each character struggled against the ultimate boredom due to the alienation. Japanese Americans have several ways to overcome their boredom, such as gardening, joining sport club, having a part time job, and so on. Children even attended special school in camp. Conflict resolved when Sumiko’s cousins registered themselves to join army and the rest of the family moved out to Chicago to start a new life. All of the family member leave at the same point (“*Weedflower*”)

Racial conflict between white Americans and Japanese Americans will also become the focus of this study. The writer is interested in analyzing the prejudice and discrimination towards Japanese Americans especially as the aftermath of Pearl Harbor Bombing and their reaction toward the unequal treatment. Although examining the same subject, this study is different to both



studies which are mentioned previously. Besides examining white Americans' prejudice and discrimination, this study also analyzes Japanese Americans' reaction toward the unequal treatment.