

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Theoretical framework**

This chapter is about the theoretical explanation on the concept and other materials that are applicable for this study. Since this study aims to reveal what are the conflicts experienced by the main character and how the conflicts affect the main character, the writer decides to use New Criticism theory particularly on the formal elements which are setting, conflicts and characterization. The setting will be the factor that form the conflict experienced by the main character. The conflicts itself is divided in two which are internal conflict and external conflict. While in characterization, the writer will reveal what are the effects of the setting and conflicts toward the main character development.

##### **2.1.1 New Criticism**

The method of New Criticism is foremost a close reading, concentrating on such formal aspects as rhythm, theme meter, imagery, metaphor, etc. (Tyson, 119). New criticism occupies an unusual position, both in the text book and in the field of literary studies today. On the one hand, it is the only theory covered in this book that is no longer practiced by literary critics so it cannot really called a contemporary theory. On the other hand, New Criticism has left a lasting imprint on the way we read and write about literature (117).

New Criticism is not concerned with *context* – historical, biographical, intellectual and so on; it is not interested in the ‘fallacies’ of ‘intention’ or ‘affect’; it is concerned solely with the ‘text in itself’, with its language and organization; it does not seek a text’s ‘meaning’, but how it ‘speaks itself’ (Selden, Widdowson, Brooker 19).

### **2.1.2 Formal elements**

Rene Wellek stated on the *Theory of Literature*, the natural and rational starting point for work in literary study is the interpretation and the analysis of the literature works themselves. After all, only the works themselves justify all our interest and the life of an author, in his social environment and the whole process of literature (139). Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that the theory for practical applications are always related to the work itself. Therefore, in analyzing any kinds of literature work, the basic thing to be needed is the formal elements.

The writer wants to examine and analyze the formal elements of literature which has so many features like setting, characterization, and conflict using New Criticism theory. Furthermore, setting, conflict and characterization are the elements that will be examined in this study.

### **2.1.2.1 Setting**

In her *Mastering English Literature*, Gill stated that *Setting* deals with the places in which characters are presented, the social context of characters which covers family, friends or even social class, the costumes, beliefs and rules of behaviour of their society; the scenes which are also the background of the situation for the events and the total atmosphere, mood or feel that is created by those elements above (106).

Setting also strikes the appropriateness to other elements of the novel. The following sections explore different kinds of appropriateness. Setting can affect many things related to the character, it can influence how the character think of his/herself and his/her surrounding. Setting is also the main factor that decides whether a character can be accepted by his/her society. They can also reveal the situation of a character and, by working symbolically; they can express personality (149).

Background sets in this novel is crucial since it may become one of the basic source that may provide certain hint about the event which later experienced by the Lisbon Family. City or town where people live together may also offer certain ideology, a communal ideology shared by people there. Settings are geologically and socially located, establishment is also often concerned with aspects of time, such as when the event is taking place and what has gone before. Beginning contain important material, which the author will have carefully placed (Beard 39)

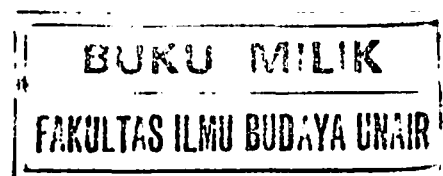
Therefore, from the time setting existing that may recorded and able to be noted from the novel, might able to depict from the existance of existing entity or condition inside the novel such as clothes, buildings, events or even vehicles. while at the very beginning at the novel that perhaps already state quite adequate information.

### **2.1.2.2 Conflicts**

Two or more different characters in a plot may confront with each other in a particular way. That confrontation may deliver a conflict which related to both of the characters. As stated by Holman that conflict is a fighting in a certain situation against which grew out of the interaction between the two main opposing forces in a plot (48).

A conflict can be formed by the interaction between characters' relationship and interaction which can be depicted through the situation descriptions of the story. Conflict can also brought by a struggle, fight and polemic described by the author of the novel.

Moreover, a conflict can not only be caused by the interaction between characters but also the interaction between a character and his/her self. The dilemma felt by the character inside his/her self depicted in the story may also bring the conflict. Therefore, conflicts can be derived into two which are internal and external conflicts.



Internal conflicts usually come from the character itself. It can be delivered by the doubt, fear or other feeling experienced by the character and usually can be connected as the psychological issue that may affect the character personality. Meanwhile, external conflicts brought by the interaction between a character and other outer aspects in the story such as other characters, society and nature.

#### **2.1.2.2.1 Internal Conflicts**

Internal conflicts are just a battle between a person and his or her self minds or temperaments or individual conflict without any interference from outside; to accomplish or maybe to overpass his or her own standards in everything. (Abrams 265)

The conflicts happen in the character's inner self seem like a struggle against the self standard to accomplish life destiny of the character in a plot. Those inner conflicts called as internal conflict. Internal conflict happens when something that is not in the rule lines is chosen to be done by the character. The character decides to do it because although that thing is bad, the character really desired to do it.

Anxiety and feeling guilty might be the barriers for the character to reach their goal of life. Moreover, there is also something called as a dilemma which might be felt when the character has to face problems and battle with his/her own mind. The chaos in the character's individual mind makes the character has to be in the middle of desire and logic.

Taken as an example is a case of a legislative official candidate who wants to win the vote because he/she wants to be a good leader. He/she wants a better future for the country. In order to pursue it he/she needs to win the vote and be the leader or at least a legislative official. It is not a secret anymore that to win the vote, a candidate has to spend a lot of money to bribe the people to support him/her.

The character has to make a difficult decision in such complicated condition. The character's moral perspective becomes the most important role in determining his/her decision. Internal conflicts appear in circumstances of good or bad decision along with the problems faced by the character in a plot.

#### **2.1.2.2 External Conflicts**

External conflict is a conflict between a character with something outside itself. External conflict is a battle between a character and an outside force such as a child has a problem with his/her parents. Cuddon states in *Dictionary Of Literary Terms* that certain outside factors can cause conflicts. Those factors can be other person or neighborhood, nature and environment. At the end of the conflict accomplishment, external conflict usually ended by the winning of the hero and the loss of the other group (256).

Thus it can be said that external conflict can be divided into two categories, which are physical conflict and social conflict. Physical conflict is about the struggle between the characters against the nature and caused the clash

between the leaders and the natural environment. For example, conflicts or problems experienced by a character due to floods, droughts, volcanic eruptions and so on. While social conflicts are conflicts caused by social contact between people in the form of murder, oppression, strife, wars, etc (Nurgiyantoro 124).

External conflict can be occurred in many aspects of a plot. It may occur when a character has to deal a problem with another character whether it is a protagonist or antagonist character. While in a larger range, external conflict may come up where a character has his/her personal thought which is different from the norm of the society and his/her lifestyle is not in accordance with what is expected and accepted in the society. Besides those two categories, external conflict can be emerged when a character has to feel the effects of the force of nature. Nature, in this case, is defined as anything surrounding a person. This can include weather, objects, and activities, basically anything outside the main character except people. (Tarigan 82)

From the explanation above, the writer concludes there are three categories of external conflict which can be analyzed in a plot, which are *Character versus character*, *Character versus society*, *Character versus Nature*. This study examines the external conflicts experienced by the character based on two of the three parts as mentioned above which are *Character versus character and Character versus society*. The writer will use both of those explanations of external conflicts as the main device to espouse the analysis.

### **2.1.2.3 Characterization**

Character is one of the intrinsic aspects that have an important role in a novel. Without the presence of any characters in a novel, there will not be a literary work, because character is the figure/actor of a novel.

The author's experiences can be reflected into the characters in his/her novel whether it is personal experiences or others' experiences watched by the author. Those experiences can be occurred in one single character, best friends, couple or even a whole family. The author of the novel has particular ways in describing the characters in the novel. This is what so called as Characterization.

Characterization is important in literary works, because they make the literary works very vivid. The way those imaginary persons are created so that they exist for the readers as real within characterization. (Holman 75)

The description of characters can be told in words used by the author of the novel. The author usually describes the physical appearance and condition of a character through certain explicit words and sentences. The author also describes the behaviour and attitude of the character in order to make a complete description of the characters. Moreover, action chosen by the character in dealing with certain situation is also explained by the author through out the story in the novel in order to make the reader understand the characteristic of a character.

To characterize means to tell and to show. To tell is the method to describe the characters by the way the characters dressed, hair colors, shoes and other physical aspects and appearances (Gill 98). Telling the characters is a matter of



physical description of a character. It is always related to anything that can be seen and understood clearly if the character is a real human in front of us. That description includes the age of the character, the height and weight of the character and other physical things which make the reader feels close with the character.

On the other hand, to understand the characterization of certain characters, we have to observe the characters more carefully. It is complicated because it is written in indirect description; through the actions taken by the characters in the certain events occur in the novel. Based on the action taken by the character and the effect of it, the reader will find anything the want to know about the character. Therefore, the reader will be able to pull the conclusion in determining the characterization for the character, whether they are the bad character or the good ones, some characters trait will be revealed indirectly, and it is also can be the standard in determining how will the character will solve their problem as it depicted in the novel (Gill 98). This long process of accomplishing literary work reading that has several ways in the method in executing it, can be called as characterization.

## **2.2 Review of Related Studies**

The writer of the study has found several works on the novel *The Virgin Suicides* by Jeffrey Eugenides. One of them is a comparison study entitled *Laboring To Uphold The Image Of Suburbia: Representations Of Deviant Sexual Desire In The Virgin Suicides and Middlesex* by Mallory Szymanski. This study

compares both novels written by Jeffrey Eugenides which are *The Virgin Suicides* And *Middlesex*. Szymanski argued that Eugenides' novels employ instances of deviant sexuality to unmask the efforts of suburbanites to define their living spaces —against the city as the locus of filth— as stable and orderly models of the American Dream (5). It is explained that the setting of *The Virgin Suicides* becomes the most important factors that lead the Lisbon girls into their final decision to end their life. That decision is also related to the oppression toward the sexual desire felt by the Lisbon girls.

Another study that is related to this study is *The Portrayal of Catalepsy Patient Reflected in Edgar Allan Poe's Short Story The Premature Burial* by Putryana Wijayanti. This journal examines the main character in Edgar Allan Poe's Short Story *The Premature Burial*. It is related to this study since it reveals the fear that experinced by the main character. In Wijayanti's journal, she stated that the conflict of the short story is the main character's fear of buried alive. While in this study, the fear experienced by the main character is regarding the changes happened in society.

Those studies above are very different studies since one of them examines the novels written by Jeffrey Eugenides as a comparisson while the other examines a short story. On the other hand, both of them are focus on the formal elements of the story.

The other study comes from the Airlangga University student journal aricle entitled *Analysis On The Role Of Conflict Inmagda's Characterizationin J.M Coetzee's Novel in The Heart OfThe Country By Ritter Albert Kandou* which

takes an important role in arranging the method used by the writer of this study. In his journal, Kandou tries to analyze the formal elements by using the theory of New Criticism by some leading experts working in the field of literary criticism such as Richard Gill and Renee Wellek and several other experts. The method of the research is adopted by Kandou in doing his study which focus on the characterization development, the physical and also mental performance development depicted by the main character. Through the analysis, Kandou learns that the main character is a typical of round character. Therefore, Kandou's study has the relation to this thesis in some linear way in describing the character against the inner and external conflicts in the plot.

This study will be a bit different from those previous studies above since the object of the analysis is Mrs. Lisbon which the main character of the novel. The previous studies about *The Virgin Suicides* mostly focus on the five girls and the factors that probably motivate them to committed suicide. While in this study, the writer is more concern on the mother of those five girls particularly on the setting, conflicts and characterization as the main factors which can lead us to reveal the fear experienced by Mrs. Lisbon.

# **CHAPTER 3**

## **ANALYSIS**