

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Theoretical Framework

This study is an attempt to analyze Claire's ambition in creating the perfect housewives. In analyzing this subject, the writer will use the intrinsic approach. It means that the writer interprets and analyzes the story from the literary work itself. The writer will also use the psychological background of the character to have a better explanation about Claire's psychological condition.

1. Intrinsic Approach

In doing the analysis, the writer will concentrate on the movie of Ira Levin, that is *The Stepford Wives*. Therefore, the appropriate approach of the analysis is intrinsic approach. Wellek and Warren in *Theory of Literature* say that the natural and sensible starting-point for work in literary scholarship is the interpretation and analysis of the works of literature themselves (1978: 139).

a. Plot

In a story, the characters must go through a series of actions or incidents, which in total make up the story. The interrelationship of incidents and character within a total design is the plot of the story (Roberts, 1989: 57). So, plot is a carefully thought-out plan in which all events, all the actions and reaction of the characters, contribute toward movement of the story.

In a plot, we will find the beginning, the middle and the end of the story. The beginning of the story is the opening portion that sets the scene by introducing the main character. It can also tell the readers what happened before the story opened or provide any other background information that we need in order to understand and care about the events that follow. Then, we will find some conflicts in the middle of the story. The suspense will lighten our attention to the story, in our wondering how it will all turn out. The movement of high tension is called the climax of the story. It is followed by the denouement as an ending of the story (Roberts, 1989: 57).

Although this study focuses on the character of the movie, the writer also needs to see the plot of the story since it helps the writer understanding the character's problems. So, the plot and the characterization are also intertwined. It means that if we are interested in the character, we can not escape from the plot of the story.

b. Character

Character in literature generally, and in fiction specially, is an extended verbal representation of a human being, the inner self that determines thought, speech and behavior (Roberts, 1989: 143)

There are several ways of catching the details for conclusions about character. We can see the personality of the character from the character's appearance or clothes, the speech, the opinions of other characters, et cetera.

According to Roberts in his book "*Literature, An Introduction to Reading and Writing*", in studying a literary character, we should determine the character's

major trait or traits. A trait is a typical or habitual made of behavior (Roberts, 1989: 144).

From the study of a character's traits, we can develop our understanding of character. Sometimes a particular trait may be the primary characteristic of a person. Thus, the character may be seen as an ambitious person, such as Claire Wellington in the movie.

Roberts also confirms that when we study character, we have to be sure not only to consider physical description, but also be sure to relate the physical to mental or psychological. We can see from the character's reaction, thinking, and manner toward various situations and events.

In the study of character, the writer focuses on the behavior of the character since the character's behavior in this movie is representative enough to recognize the importance of what is going on. The way of the character acts or reacts is one of the chief ways in which the writer can know the character's personality.

c. Setting

Setting covers the places in which characters are presented; the social context of characters, such as their families, friends, and class; the customs, beliefs and rules of behavior of their society, the scenes that are the background or the situation for the situation for the events of the novel; and the total atmosphere, mood or feel that are created by these (Gill, 1985: 106).

In analyzing the story, we should pay attention to setting because it can give a contribution to the story. It can reveal the mood and emotions of the

characters, the situation of the characters and personality of the characters. Setting also has a relationship with the events of the story.

2. Psychological Background of the Character

To come to the complete understanding about Claire's psychological condition related with her ambition, the writer uses psychological background of the character. As Wellek and Warren state in their book;

By "psychology of literature," we may mean the psychological study of the writer, as type and as individual, or the study of the creative process, or the study of psychological types and laws present within works of literature, or, finally, the effects of literature upon its readers (audience psychology) (1978: 81).

Based on the statement above, the writer sees that psychology can be used to interpret and evaluate the literary works. The characters in literary works can be judged psychologically. Situations and plots of the stories also have the power to show the psychological condition in the stories.

Although the writer uses psychological background of the character, it does not mean that this study tends to turn into other field of study. It is used only to support the analysis of Claire's ambition in creating the perfect housewives.

B. Review of Related Studies

Bunga Apricia Harris from Faculty of Letters, Airlangga University in her thesis entitled *The Portrayal Of Women In Ira Levin's The Stepford Wives* in 2006 concluded that the life of women has been deeply affected and constructed by

patriarchal system. It imposes them to be perfect women. In fact, the construction is not more than just to serve men's needs. Furthermore, this novel clearly describes the fact that women cannot do anything to have same position with men, no matter how hard they try. It is because men are believed to be stronger than women.

Katha Pollitt from said that Joanna who is played by Nicole Kidman is the brilliant, tightly wound head of a TV network who specializes in battle of the sexes reality shows, *I Can Do Better* in which the women always win.

Lilly Ann Boruzkowski said that the recreated women are narcissistic because they have been programmed into a woman's proper function is to please a man physically.

Another interesting comment is from Stacy Allen, AC Content Producer. She states that women in Stepford have perfect figures, they clean house, they are great mothers, and they are ready and willing for sex whenever the man wants it, even in the middle of the day.

However, there are more studies of this movie in which the writer finds quite difficult to get other sources completely. The writer hopes that the study on this particular movie will enrich the researches of this movie since it is based on a different point of view.