

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Comparative Literature

In the study, the writer would like to use theory of comparative literature since she wants to study the relationship between the plays Mourning Becomes Electra and Oresteia by comparing one of the major characters in each play, Christine Mannon and Clytemnestra. Furthermore, she will use the theory to find out the similarities and dissimilarities between those characters by pointing out the details about their characterization, that are stressed on their roles as wives and mothers, and discussing the similar and different things between them.

According to Rene Wellek and Austin Warren (1978) the sense of comparative literature confines it to the study of relationships between two or more literatures. Whereas due to X J Kennedy (1983) in doing comparative literature we have to use comparison, placing the two works side by side and pointing out their similarities, and/or use contrast, pointing out their differences. But, in general, the term "comparison" can be used to mean both comparison and contrast. A comparison pattern itself is used for a variety of reasons, two of them are :

1. To point out specific details

2. To help evaluate similar things .

2.2 Structural Approach

Since the study will deal with literary works and the focus of the study is the elements of drama of the works, i.e. character and characterization, the writer would like to use structural approach . The structure of a literary-text has both a formal and semantic aspects . For the writer would like to study the elements of drama of the works, she will use the formal aspect . What is meant by the formal aspect here is the narrative structure of the work (Fokkema, D.W.,1977) .

The structural approach emphasizes that a structure is more than the sum-total of its parts . Whereas the further characteristic of a structure is "its dynamic character", caused by the fact that each element has a specific function through which it is connected with the whole (Fokkema, D.W.,1977) . In the study, the writer will only discuss the character and characterization through the structural approach and it is separated from the other elements of drama . The writer does so since according to Perrine (1966) we can determine which element in any story is being emphasized and talk about it separately .

2.2.1 Drama

Since the literary works that are discussed, i.e. Mourning Becomes Electra and Oresteia, are dramas, the writer will give a further explanation about drama. The definition of drama itself has been discussed in the previous chapter. In this part the writer will discuss the dominant modes in drama. There are two modes, comedy and tragedy. Since the literary works that are discussed are not comedies, the writer will not discuss about comedy.

The simplest definition of tragedy is that a play of which hero is defeated by forces outside his control and can be ended with the death of the hero. There are two main types of tragedy according to John Peck (1984), they are :

1. The type written by Shakespeare and his contemporaries in which the readers witness terrible disorder in a society.
2. A narrower type of tragedy, established by Ibsen and Strindberg in the 19th century, which is focused on the breakdown of a family.

Besides the types above, there is a play called Greek tragedy. A Greek tragedy is a play of which main character is led into death, despair, or misery through some sort of error, either in himself

or in his action . In this case Oresteia is obviously called a Greek tragedy because the protagonism of the play is led into misery caused by his action . While Mourning Becomes Electra is grouped into the narrower type of tragedy since it is about the breakdown of the Mannons .

As a literary form that presents a story and has to be acted out before the audience, drama has some elements of drama . They are plot, character, characterization, setting, theme, and point of view . For the analysis is focused on the characters and characterization, the writer will not discuss the other elements . So, the elements of drama that will be discussed here are limited on character and characterization .

2.2.2 Character and Characterization

Drama is a literary form that does not only present a story, but also to be acted on the stage, and it represents life and character through action and dialogue . There is no doubt that characters are important in drama for it is built by action and dialogue of the characters . Character is a fictitious creation represented in a play . It is called a fictitious creation for character in a play is not the

same as a person in real life, but in some aspects, he is like a real person .

There are two types of character according to the character's development, a static character and a dynamic character . A static character, that is usually passive, is a character who changes a little or even does not change at all . A dynamic character (active), on the other hand, is a character who is modified by actions and experiences that makes him undergo a lot of changes . Besides, characters are also grouped to round character and flat character . A round character is one who is fully described to be recognizable, understandable, and individually different from all others who appear in the same work . Whereas a flat character is a person who is not fully developed and lacks of complexity .

"When we describe the nature of characters, we deal with the concept of characterization "(LP, James, 1967, p.3) . To know one's characterization, there are a number of methods of characterization which can be used . "We can see what a fictional character is like from his actions, his speech, his physical appearance, and his environment; in addition, we can see what he is like from what other says about him and from how they behave toward him . "(LP,

James, 1967, p.4).

To know one's characterization better, it is also important to know the character's motivation . "The fact remains that the larger actions which characters complete in the course of a play have identifiable motives behind them and thus we as critics have every right and duty to analyze character motivation ." (Reaske, 1966, p.41) . There are some of the motives told by Reaske that will be related to Clytemnestra and Christine Mannon . They are :

1. Hope for reward

A major character desires to bring happiness and prosperity to himself or to those whom he loves .

2. Love

Basically a particular extension of the hope for reward . A character is motivated to certain action because of the love which he has, the love which he wants, or the love which some one has for him .

3. Revenge

The desire to avenge the death of a loved friend or relative .

2.3 Review of Related Literary Works

The relation of Eugene O'Neill's "Mourning Becomes Electra" and Aeschylus "Oresteia" is shown by some authors in their critical books or essays or "Mourning Becomes Electra". According to Thomas E. Porter (1969) "Mourning Becomes Electra" is Eugene O'Neill's intention to create a modern psychological drama based on a Greek legend. O'Neill uses the sequence of events point for point and adopts character-types and relationships that the plot requires. So the drama follows the general outlines of the Aeschylean trilogy very closely that it borrows the three play division, the sequence of events and the climatic order. Whereas in Edwin A. Engel's opinion (1976) in his essay "Ideas in the Plays of Eugene O'Neill", O'Neill contrives to write an approximation of Greek tragedy which relies upon the concept of crime and retribution.

Due to Edwin A. Engel (1976), the major characters in "Mourning Becomes Electra" lack of the supreme human needs, love and peace. While Normand Berlin (1982) says that the personal emotions that O'Neill gives to the characters, including Christine Mannon, seem so natural to them, so true to their human nature that their characters are their destiny. They are victims of their psyches,

driven by their passions, haunted by the past that controls their present, they are as fated as the characters in Greek tragedy who are caught in the nets of the gods .

According to C.A. Robinson Jr. (1957), Aeschilus' Oresteia is a serious discussion of human action in its most violent, most problematic aspect, that is the crime and punishment and it is made more intense by taking place within the family . In the characters of Clytemnestra, Agamemnon, and Orestes there is the sharpest scrutiny of motive . The audience is shown the private motives and private desires with their covering surface "reasons of state" in Agamemnon, various hypocrisies in Clytemnestra, and external and internal pressures on Orestes to avenge his father by killing his mother . Furthermore, in his opinion Clytemnestra is given much more 'character' than seems to be necessary, but it turns out to be all functional . She is a woman of startling boldness and initiative, 'cunning past man's thought', and these qualities are just what were needed to plan the murder of Agamemnon . And he closes his critic by saying "Reading the Oresteia makes one afraid of one's life" .

