

## CHAPTER II

### Theoretical Framework

The aim of providing the theoretical framework in literary analysis is to help a researcher in doing such analysis mainly as the underlying foundation. Analyzing Undine Spragg in Edith Wharton's *The Custom of the Country* the writer will use intrinsic aspects such as characterization and setting. The use of intrinsic aspects will help the writer in analyzing the character. To deepen the analysis, sociological approach will be applied. Talcott Parson's *Theory of Action* and The Social Value will be used in analyzing it as well.

#### A. Intrinsic Aspects

The work of literature is composed of the five elements, they are; plot, point of view, theme, setting and characterization. Analyzing Edith Wharton's *Custom of the Country* the writer will focus only on setting and characterization. However, the setting and characterization will be inseparable part of the analysis.

##### 1. Characterization

Character in literary term is defined as fictional personage that acts, appears or is referred to as playing part in a work. A character often characterized bases on conscious and unconscious cultural assumption such as sex, age, ethnic, national identity, marital status and so on. Characters are essential part of the story since it is the characters that tell us the story and without them there would be no story.

## **2. Setting**

Setting is a place and time in which fictional character and action are embedded. As the characters in the story are embedded in the specific context, it is necessary to know of the setting and of the relationship of the character to the setting. The more we know of the setting the more we understand about the character and the story. It provides us the information of the spirit, messages, values, and so on that sometimes represent of a certain era. Setting, as well as the character, is essential element of the story.

## **B. Sociological Approach**

According to Semi in *Metode Penelitian Sastra*, the use of sociological approach in literature is based on the assumption that literature is an expression of society (73). As an expression of the society, it is influenced by the society. In *Teori Kesusastraan*, Wellek classified the relation between society and literature into three descriptions; the author background, the social content, and the effect of the work to the society (112). In this analysis, the study will focus on the social content of the novel.

## **1. Theory of Action**

Early beginning, Parson wrote a theory to analyze structure and process of social system. He termed it as the *Structure of Social Action*. Then, he developed his theory and called it the *Theory of Action*. Parson is the most important sociological theorist in America. According to Parson action is determined by

norms and social values that governed the individual (Poloma 171). In *The Structure of Sociological Theory*, Turner stated that Parson's Theory of Action was based on his concept of *voluntarism*, that involves these basic elements;

1. Actor is individual person.
2. Actor is viewed as goal seeking.
3. Actor also process alternative means to achieve his goal
4. Actor is confronted with a variety of situational conditions, such as biological make up and heredity as well as various external ecological constraints that influence the selection of goals and means.
5. Actor is governed by values, norms and other ideas such that influence what is considered a goal and what means are selected to achieve it.
6. Action involves actor making subjective decision about the means to achieve goals, all of which are constrained by ideas and situational conditions (27).

His concept of voluntarism is termed as *Voluntaristic Action*. In accordance with the statement, an actor is seen as an individual who has goal or something to reach for. In reaching the goal, an individual selects the appropriate means to achieve it. The selection is done because the act of individual is influenced by the norms and social values surround her. This is why voluntaristic action is emphasized on the norms and values that govern the action.

From this concept Parson elaborated with Shils to developed theory of action by adding "the concept of interaction and how one can conceptualize *personality, social and cultural system*" (Mitchell 28). In the concept of interaction it is stated

that actor (ego) is motivated to maximize his gratification by acknowledging the social and non-social situation (alter) that governed by certain need-disposition, drives and requirement of a shared culture of values, beliefs and norms (Mitchell 28). The act of an actor is motivated by his wants to optimize the benefit. The action is ruled and limited as there is shared culture of values, beliefs and norms. In other words, the relation between ego and alter is based on mutuality. It is done to produce the stabilization of interaction.

Once the interaction is stabilized, the social system is developed. According to Parson, social system consists of various individual actors that interact with each other which has physical or environmental aspect. Actor is motivated in the sense of optimizing his gratification. Therefore, the social system is defined in terms of a system of culturally structured and shared symbols (Parson 5-6). It implies that the main concern of social system for Parson deals with status and role. A status is structural position within the social system, while role is what the individual has in the status (<http://uregina.ca.-gingrich/n2f99.htm>. Online, Internet, November 2004).

Meanwhile, the personality system viewed the individual as oriented to his situation through a combination of motivational and value orientation (Mitchell 29). Value orientation is part of the culture system. Culture consists of beliefs, norms and morals (Mitchell 29). Culture is transferable from one generation to another; it is internalized through learning and socialization. "Once cultural items are internalized they become a set of standards or guides for individual in shaping his actions with others" (Mitchell 30). As Parson views that the three systems are

related to each other, he argued that control over motivations of individual is important; it is used to maintain an established system.

## **2. The Social Value**

According to Merrill, “values are normative beliefs pertaining to the important relationships of a society and embodied in its institutional structure” (418). Democracy, Christianity, and monogamy are the values that exist in Americans society. The social values are based on the agreement among the individual as member of the society. Each society has its own value pattern. The social values are changeable through time and place. It is as a respond to the change conditions. In Americans family many social values have changed since the turn of the century, as both the gainful employment and higher education of women have become widely accepted (Merril 419). Relevance to the statements, the value of monogamy is accepted in principle, although some person believe that their own marriage are “exception”.

The values are essential part of human life. “A treat to the values involve serious consequences for individual and society” (Merrill 419). In other words, the social problems are arisen by the social values in the sense that there will be no problem without value. “Divorce would not be a social problem if marriage were not ideally defined as indissoluble” (Merril 419).

Value does not only cause the problem but also provide solution. The solution can be in the sense of legitimate or illegitimate ways in order to avoid

**threat to one value. In avoiding divorce, the Catholic allows the annulment of marriage. This is legitimate way that is accepted by the Catholic.**

# **CHAPTER III**

## **ANALYSIS**