

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

A person's marital status indicates whether the person is married or single. In the simplest sense, the only possible answers are married or single. Some unmarried people object to describing themselves by a simplistic term "single", and often other options are given, such as "divorced", "widowed", widow or widower, "cohabiting", "civil union", "domestic partnership" and "unmarried partners". In some cases, knowing that people are divorced, widowed, or in a relationship is more useful than simply knowing that they are unmarried.

A widow is a woman who lost her husband or her husband is dead., while a widower is a man in that situation. These terms are not applied to a person after he or she becomes divorced from their former spouse, though they may sometimes be used after the former spouse has died.

In 19th century, widows had greater opportunity for social mobility than in many other societies. Along with the ability to ascend socio-economically, widows who were "presumably celibate" were much more able to challenge conventional sexual behaviour than married women in their society (Behrendt : 2010).

Sociology is the study that deals with human's life in the society (Saraswati, 2003: 2). Swingewood (in Faruk, 1994: 1) also states that sociology

is a study on people in society and on the social process and the institution embedded on it. Therefore the basis of the understanding is the society thus sociological theory is the appropriate approach in this research.

The Age of Innocence novel is written by Edith Wharton or Newbold Jones. She was born on January 24, 1862 in New York City, is perhaps a great city's greatest novelist. This novel is her twelfth novel. It is published in 1920 and released by D. Appleton and Company as a book in New York and in London. In 1921, *The Age of Innocence* novel became the first novel written by a woman to win a Pulitzer. Her other novel are *House of Mirth* (1905), *Ethan Frome* (1911), *The Custom of the Country* (1913), etc. The story of *The Age of Innocence* is set in upper-class New York City in the 1870s. It is very interesting to be read because this novel reveals some real conflict in human life, such as sex deviation, divorce, and also discrimination between upper and lower class. *The age of Innocence* describes the lives between Newland Archer, May Welland and Ellen Ollenska. It deals explicitly with themes of sexuality, that is considered taboo for woman to leave her husband and chooses to love someone else. Edith Wharton also writes about discrimination between upper and lower class that time.

The Age of Innocence tells about relationship between Newland Archer, May Welland and May's cousin. Newland is young lawyer and he is one of New York City's best families. The story began when he couldn't be more pleased with his recent engagement with May Welland, a beautiful woman. However,

his world is thrown upside down by the sensational arrival Countess Ellen Olenska, a May's cousin. Recently returned to America after separating from her husband, a philandering Polish count, Countess Olenska shocks the staid New York aristocracy with her revealing clothes, carefree manners, and rumors of adultery. Society in New York already avoid Ellen because her divorce with her husband. A divorce in New York culture is very contemptible. Archer and May feel to necessary to be friend Ellen.

Newland comes to better know Ellen and her husband, he begins to appreciate her unconventional views on New York society. He begins to see her as the manufactured product of her class: polite, innocent, and utterly devoid of personal opinion and sense of self.

The Countess Olenska soon announces her intention of divorcing her husband. While Archer supports her desire for freedom, he feels compelled to act on behalf of the Mingott family and persuade Ellen to remain married. At a friend's cottage near Hudson, Archer realizes that he is in love with Ellen, despite with his engagement. He abruptly leaves the next day for Florida, where he is reunited with May and her parents, who are there on vacation. Suddenly, May becomes suspicious and asks Newland to accelerate their marriage. But, Archer reassures May that he is in love with her. Back in New York, Archer calls on Ellen, and Archer admits that he is in love with her. Just then, a

telegram arrives from May, announcing that her parents have pushed forward the wedding date.

After their wedding and honeymoon in Europe, Archer and May settle down to married life in New York. Over time, Archer's memory of Ellen fades to a wistful image. But on vacation in Newport, he is reunited with her, and Ellen promises not to return to Europe as long as she and Newland do not act upon their love for each other. Back in New York, Archer learns that Count Olenski wants his wife to return to him and that Ellen has refused. After the stroke of her grandmother, Ellen returns to New York to care for her. She and Archer agree to consummate their affair. May hold a farewell party to Ellen and she announces that she is pregnant to Archer, but she announces her pregnancy to Ellen first, two weeks earlier. Then, Ellen announces her intention to return to Europe. She is sure to lock and delete Newland and all about Newland's fate forever.

Twenty-six years pass. In that time, the Archers have had two grown children and May has died from pneumonia, nursing a third child to health. May left Dallas, her son and her daughter Mary. Dallas become to success man. Now Archer's son convinces him to travel to France. There, they arrange to visit the Countess Ellen Olenska at her Paris apartment. However, at the last minute Archer sends his son alone to visit her, content instead to live with his memories of the past. He walks back to his hotel without seeing Ellen. In Newland's memory, their love stays to forever young in their heart. He leaves a memory

about perfect love, a sacrifice the one thing about love between Newland with her.

Moreover, based on the fact, the researcher uses the sociological approach to observe the problem in Edith Wharton's *The Age of Innocence*. In this study the researcher dares to give a title : “ *Negative Perception Over Widow's Status in Edith Wharton's The Age of Innocence (1920): A Sociological Approach* “.

B. Literature Review

The first previous research related to the study was conducted by Muhammad Nurul Furqon at Sebelas Maret University (2008) in his research paper entitled “Hegemony in Marriage in the Upper Class New York family of the 1870's as reflected In Edith Wharton's *The Age of Innocence*” focuses on the phenomenon of hegemony had been occurred in the upper class New York society of the 1870's. The emergence of hegemony in marriage could be seen from the emergence of dominant and subordinated group, the adoption of dominant values by subordinated group, the domination of economy by dominant group and the last was the confrontation between subordinated against dominant group. Hegemony controlled the way that ideas become ‘naturalized’ in process that informs notions of common sense. The dominant group could dictate the subordinated in terms of behaving to its advantage or just to regard their classic values. (<http://dglib.uns.ac.id/dokumen/detail/8911/Hegemony-in->

marriage-in-the-upper-class-New-York-family-of-the-1870s-as-reflected-In-
edith-whartons-the-age-of-innocence)

The second research is also review form that was done by Mustika Salamah entitled *The Influence of Social Norms on Individual Manners in The End of 19th Century Entitled The Age Of Innocence in Edith Whartons Novel* focused in the transition of 19th to 20th centuries that have many changes in American society. As many immigrants from many countries that come to that country make the condition of American society become more complex. By more complexity of America added by more improving industry and technology make changes of Norms that hold in American community slowly but sure happened.

The third research is also review form that was done by Lestari Maria Eka (2011) at Sanata Dharma University, A Study of Rebellion against Patriarchal Society as Seen in the Character of Ellen Olenska in Edith Wharton's *The Age of Innocence* focuses in analysis of the major character shows that Ellen Olenska is open minded, brave, independent, artistic, and eccentric. She lives in the society which still holds patriarchal system and sticks with its custom and tradition. It is the Old New York society whose members are all people that come from honored and respectable families.

Based on the previous studies above, the researcher found some similarities. The first, *The Age of Innocence* novel. Second, subject to analyze is Ellen as the main character in *The Age of Innocence* novel.

Meanwhile the difference of previous study above is the issue or the problem to analyze in the research paper. The first previous study discussed the Hegemony in marriage in the Upper Class New York family of the 1870's. The second previous studies discussed the influence of social norms on individual manners in the end of 19th Century. The third previous studies discussed rebellion against patriarchal society as seen in Ellen Olenska.

Previous studies above have similarities and differences with this research paper. The similarity here is about *The Age of Innocence* as a research object and focuses on Ellen as the main character. The difference is this research paper discusses about negative perception over widow's status using sociological perspective as a theory.

C. Problem Statement

The major problem of the study is how the negative perception over widow's status is reflected in Edith Wharton's *The Age of Innocence*?

D. Limitation of the Study

The limitation of this study is how the negative perception over widow's status in Edith Wharton's *The Age of Innocence* viewed from sociological perspective.

E. Objective of the Study

The objectives of the study are mentioned as follows:

1. To analyze Edith Wharton *The Age of Innocence* novel based on structural elements of the novel.

2. To reveal Negative Perception Over Widow's Status of the major and some minor characters by means of sociological perspective particularly Sociological Approach.

F. Benefits of the Study

The researcher hopes the result of this research will give the advantages for the readers. The readers will get two advantages, they are :

1. Theoretically Benefit

Theoretically benefit from the study is to give novel contribution on literary knowledge, especially the literary study of *The Age of Innocence* novel by Edith Wharton.

2. Practically Benefit

The study is expected to enrich the knowledge and experience of the researcher and other students especially in Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta in literary studies.

G. Research Method

In this research, the writer analyzes Edith Wharton *The age of Innocence* novel 1920. There are five elements that should be taken into account in this research, they are:

1. Type of Research

The research about this novel belongs to qualitative research. Qualitative research is a type of research that does not use enumeration and calculation. The researcher classify her research into qualitative research

because the research does not need a statistic data to analyze and explore the facts.

1. Object of the Study

The object of the study is *The Age of Innocence* novel by Edith Wharton which is published in 1920. It is analyzed by using Sociological Approach.

2. Type of the Data and Data Source

Type of the data in this research is textual data. It consists of word, phrase and sentences. The data source consists of two categories, they are primary data source and secondary data source. The primary data source is the novel itself. The secondary data source is about behaviorist and all relevant materials in the novel.

There are two types of data namely primary data and secondary data that are needed to do this research.

3. Technique of the Data Collection

The writer uses the library research in collecting the data. The techniques of data collection procedure are follows:

- a. Reading and understanding *The Age of Innocence* novel by Edith Wharton and the secondary data sources from the others books.
- b. Exploring the main data of character that will be analyzed.
- c. Classifying data into some categories.
- d. Selecting some particular parts that important and relevant for the analysis.

- e. Reading some book as reference, search using internet, and make some note which related to the analysis.

4. Technique of the Data Analysis

The technique of data analysis is descriptive technique. Descriptive qualitative technique is used to describe the elements of the novel and understand about the novel.

H. Paper Organization

This research paper is divided into six chapters. *Chapter I* is introduction, which contains background of the study, literary review, problem statements, objectives of the study, limitation of the study, the benefit of the study, research method, and paper organization. *Chapter II* is underlying theory it describes the notion of sociological approach, notion of negative perception over widower's status structural elements of the novel and theoretical application. *Chapter III* is social background of New York society in nineteenth century which covers social aspect, economic aspect, cultural aspect, and religious aspect. *Chapter IV* is structural analysis, it covers (1) The structural elements of *The Age of innocence* novel, it consist of narrative elements of the novel such as characteristics and characterization, setting, plot, point of view, style and theme, (2) Discussion. *Chapter V* is sociological analysis of *The Age of Innocence* novel. The writer will present genetic structuralist which relates human facts, collective, subject, world view, structure of work, dialectical conception between comprehension and explanation, and discussion. *Chapter VI* is the last chapter of this research paper that consists of conclusion and suggestion.