



**THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN LILY'S AND SELDEN'S OUTLOOK ON SOCIETY IN  
EDITH WARTHON'S *THE HOUSE OF MIRTH***

**An Extended Essay**

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English Department

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**PRONOUNCEMENT**

The writer truly declares that this essay is written without taking other research materials or results from other researches in a degree or diploma in any universities. In addition, the writer ascertains that she does not take the materials from other publications or someone's works except those which mentioned in bibliography.

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### **Motto and Dedication**

\* "Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication." -Leonardo da Vinci-

\* Keep your heart open to dreams. For as long? as there's a dream, there is hope, and as long? as there is hope, there is joy in living." -Anonymous-

I dedicated this essay to my beloved parents.

Love you, Bapak Ibu..

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The writer realizes that this essay is far from perfection. Therefore, critics and recommendation are openly received to make this essay better.

Finally, the writer expects that this essay will be useful to the reader who wishes to learn some things about literature.

Semarang,

The Writer

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### ABSTRAK

Sastra telah menjadi bagian dari hidup masyarakat. Dalam aspek kehidupan, novel merepresentasikan kehidupan sosial, ekonomi, maupun politik ketika karya tersebut ditulis. Dalam kesempatan penulisan projek ini, penulis mengkaji sebuah novel yang ditulis oleh Edith Warthon berjudul *The House of Mirth* dengan tujuan menjelaskan dan menganalisa perbedaan pandangan antara dua tokoh utama dalam novel tersebut tentang kehidupan sosial masyarakat kelas atas. Penulis mengkaji novel tersebut dengan metode perpustakaan dimana penulis memanfaatkan sumber-sumber dari berbagai macam buku dan artikel yang referensif. Penulis menggunakan pendekatan dari segi intrinsik yang merujuk pada karya novel itu sendiri, yaitu tentang penokohan, setting, dan konflik yang terjadi antara dua tokoh utama. Novel ini menceritakan tentang seorang wanita cantik dan menarik, Lily Bart, yang mencari seorang suami yang kaya. Sebenarnya dia mencintai temannya, Lawrence Selden, tetapi mereka tidak dapat menikah. Hal itu karena perbedaan pandangan antara mereka. Lily terobsesi dengan uang dan kemewahan sedangkan Selden memiliki hubungan jauh dengan uang. Lily juga hidup mewah sedangkan Selden merasa nyaman dengan kesederhanaan hidupnya. Bagaimanapun juga, mereka sebenarnya memiliki persamaan pandangan terhadap masyarakat kelas atas New York. Mereka merasa tidak nyaman apabila berada di lingkungan masyarakat kelas atas. Mereka menganggap bahwa masyarakat kelas atas tidak jujur dan saling memanipulasi. Maka dari itu, Lily seharusnya tidak memaksakan diri untuk tetap tinggal di kalangan masyarakat kelas atas. Jika Lily

mengesampingkan obsesinya terhadap uang, hidupnya akan menjadi lebih baik. Dia dapat hidup bahagia karena dia dapat menikahi pria yang dia cintai, Lawrence Selden.

#### ABSTRACT

Literature has become part of the society. In the daily life, novel represents social, economy, or politic condition in the time when it is written. In this opportunity, the writer studies "The House of Mirth" which was written by Edith Warthon with the purpose to explain and analyze the differences outlooks between two main characters in the novel toward upper class society. The writer studies the novel through library research method, where the writer uses many reliable books and articles as the sources. The writer also uses intrinsic approach, which concerns on the literary work itself. It is about characters, setting, and conflicts which occur between two main characters. The novel is about an attractive woman, Lily Bart who searches for a wealthy husband. She loves her friends, Lawrence Selden, but they cannot marry. It is because of the differences outlook between them. Lily is obsessed toward money and luxury whereas Selden has distant relationship toward money. Lily also lives luxuriously whereas Selden feels comfortable with his modest of life. However, they actually have similar outlooks to the New York's upper class society. They feel uncomfortable in the upper class society. They consider that the upper class people are less in honesty and manipulate one another. Therefore, Lily should not force herself to keep staying in the upper class society. She also has limited financial resources to stand. If Lily ignores her obsession toward money, her life would be better. She can live happily because she can marry the man she really loved, Lawrence Selden.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

Novel is a type of prose which is one of literature's genres besides poetry and drama. Unlike poetry or drama, a novel is able to build a life which might be very close to the reader's life through the series of events presented in it. The life, however, lives in the reader's mind. The readers can imagine the events and happening in their mind. Perrine says that novel brings imaginary experience into the reader's mind (1956:3). The reader gives response to the imaginary experience given by the novel as pleasing experience or aesthetic experience. This response makes the writer more interested in the prose, especially the novel, than the other genres. One of the functions of a novel is to give information to the readers. Although the primary function of a novel is probably to entertain its reader, it also teaches us about the value of life.

Novel is also a type of writing which tells us about experiences of the characters in their lives. As a work of literature, a novel represents life. It often represents social, economic, or political condition in the time when it is written. Wellek and Warren state that "literature 'represents' 'life'; and 'life' is, in large measure, a social reality, even though the natural world and the inner or subjective world of the individual have also been objects of literary 'imitation' (1989: 94)." As an author is a member of society who has a specific social status, a novel often shares some experiences that the author has in her or his life. Edith Warthon's *The House of Mirth* is an example of a novel in which the author satirizes social condition in her time. Warthon knows the condition of the upper class society because her family is in it. She is therefore able to show the profoundly tragic suffering that goes inside it.

*Edith Warthon's The House of Mirth* tells about an attractive woman, Lily Bart who searches for a wealthy husband. She is twenty nine years old. She has two main destinies in her life, which are marriage and wealth. It is her hope to marry a rich man, so she keeps staying in New York's upper class society even though her financial condition can no longer support her life style. She passes up many chances, always thinking she can do better. Unfortunately, Lily's true love, Lawrence Selden, does not have enough money for her to marry with. She is trapped by her obsession towards money and gambling. The obsession ruins her financially. She owes to one of her relatives. She is depressed, and finally she dies because of overdoses of the sleeping medicine.

Two main characters in this novel, Lily Bart and Lawrence Selden, have similar and different outlooks about the upper class society. Throughout the novel, Lily Bart wants to be a part of the upper class society although she has limited means to stand in the upper class society. She is obsessed towards money. It prevents her from marrying the man she really loves, Lawrence Selden who is not wealthy enough. On the other hand, Selden is comfortable with his own thought about wealth in which he believes that money is not everything. He remains a detached observer of the upper class society.

This study is to analyze and describe two main characters in this novel, Lily Bart and Lawrence Selden. The textual analysis focuses on the study of their characterizations, the setting of the story, and conflicts occurred between Lily Bart with herself and Lawrence Selden. It specifically analyzes what viewpoints they differ and what views they hold in common about the upper class society. This study is aimed to analyze and describe Lily Bart's outlooks and Lawrence Selden's outlooks about the society.

This study is a library research and employs intrinsic approach towards literature. Library research may be defined as the research is carried out in library, or the researcher tries to gather data or information

on the research object through books, papers, articles, and other written materials or audiovisual/ electronic devices (Semi, 1993:8). The writer has studied some books and other writing as references that help to study the subject and object of analysis.

According to Wellek and Warren, intrinsic approaches are those that focus their attention on text itself. It includes the analysis of the text's artistic method such as the narrative technique.

In recent years a healthy reaction has taken place which recognizes that the study of literature should, first and foremost, concentrate on the actual works of arts themselves... Similarly, many studies of the novel are not content to consider it merely in term of its relations to the social structure but try to analyze its artistic methods- its points of view, its narrative technique (Wellek and Warren 1989: 139-140).

This study analyzes Edith Warthon's *The House of Mirth* using intrinsic approach which focuses on the novel itself. It analyzes some of intrinsic elements of the novel, namely the characters, the conflict, and the setting of the novel.

## 2. THEORITICAL FRAME WORK

There are three elements of the novel that will be analyzed in this essay. They are characters, conflict and setting. Characters are persons who do the actions in the story. According to Perrine, there are four types of characters:

In proportion to the fullness of their development, the characters in a story are relatively flat or round. \***Flat characters** are characterized by one or two trait; they can be summed up in a sentence. **Round characters** are complex and many-sided; they might require an essay for full analysis... All fictional characters maybe classified as static or developing. **The static character** is the same sort of person at the end of the story as at the beginning. **The developing (dynamic)** character undergoes a permanent change in some aspect of character, personality, or outlook. The change may be a large or small one; it may be for better or for worse; but it is something important and basic: it is more than a change in condition or a minor change in opinion (Perrine 1987: 67-69).

This essay will analyze the two main characters in the novel, Lily Bart and Lawrence Selden, to find out whether they are flat, round, static, or developing (dynamic) characters.

The story might consist of conflict which develops the excitement of the reader. "Conflict is a clash of actions, ideas, desires, or wills" (Perrine 1987: 42). Conflict in a novel can happen within a character (internal conflict) or between a character and some forces outside of him (external conflict). According to Perrine, there are different types of conflicts.

The main character may be pitted against some other person or group of persons (man against man); he may be in conflict with some external force—physical nature, society, or "fate" (man against environment); or he may be in conflict with some elements in his own nature (man against himself). The conflict may be physical, mental, emotional, or moral (Perrine 1987: 42).

This essay analyzes conflicts which occur to two main characters in the novel, Lily Bart and Lawrence Selden as they argue about the roles in the upper class society.

Setting is the place, time, and social condition of the story. Meyer says that setting is the context in which the action of a story occurs. The major elements of setting are time, place, and social environment that frame the characters. These elements establish the world in which the characters act (1990: 107). *The House of Mirth* portrays social convention which deals with the world of an elite New York society. It represents the society in New York in approximately 1876 to 1901. Therefore this essay will analyze how the condition of New York's upper class society and to which class Lily Bart and Lawrence Selden belong.