

Social Life in Willa Cather's One of Ours

Muhammad Ilham Ali*

Universitas Negeri Manado, Indonesia

*Email: ilhamali@unima.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This research determining the interpretation of the quotation in Willa Cather's One of Ours focused on social situations and conditions. In conducting the research, the writer uses qualitative research because the data was collected in the form of words, quotations from the novel, and several sources that support the research. Through a sociological approach, the analysis focused on the social situation in the novel itself. The result of the study is the interpretation of social life on a farm and ranch; social life in religion or spiritual; social life including romance and marriage; social life during the influenza plague's outbreak; social life during war; and the writer adds the social life on studying at the university, the situation in the train, the situation on the ship and situation in the military that the main character experiences.

Keywords: *One of Ours, social life, sociological approach*

Article History

Received:

21 September 2023

Revised:

7 October 2023

Accepted:

10 October 2023

Published:

31 October 2023



Adjektiva: Educational Languages and Literature Studies is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International License (CC BY-SA 4.0)

INTRODUCTION

Human nature is a social being characterized by the existence of social contracts within it (Ahmad, 2010). Humans are creatures who have reason as a guide in the thought of life. However, humans still need other people around them to survive. Humans themselves cannot live their lives individually, so they must respect and maintain each other's rights. Based on this opinion, it can be understood that humans are social creatures who do not live alone and cannot carry out life personally so humans need other people around them. Based on this, humans also have relationships with other humans and in their lives must socialize with the surrounding environment with mutual respect and maintain the rights of others. Based on this statement, it can be concluded that if there is social life with others in human activities, a social situation will arise which is created by a group of humans or a group of people.

Ralph (2000) emphasizes that social understanding in its structure is an order of social relations in society that places certain parties (individuals, families, groups; groups; classes) in certain social positions based on a system of values and norms in a particular society. Based on this opinion, it is concluded that in social life there are things that occur because they are built and experienced together by every member of a group or society. In society, there are social conditions that are lived from time to time. Education issues, political issues, economic issues, health issues and employment issues are part of social condition. Various kinds of social

situations occur in society.

The social situations we experience in everyday life, such as students who go to campus and do a variety of activities together. Other examples of social situations that can be found today include social situations in agriculture because Indonesia is a country that has many resources in agriculture, and other things that occur in everyday life involving groups or communities. One of the social conditions that occur in society in the country of Indonesia is that in 2020, the country of Indonesia is experiencing a big thing in the health aspect. According to WHO in Handyani, (2019) COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by a new virus called corona virus. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected people's lives. The existence of the COVID-19 virus has had a tremendous impact on various aspects of people's lives in Indonesia. Many countries, especially in Europe, are also experiencing turbulent social situations. The social experience that occurred was the First World War which had an impact on people's lives both in terms of work and military conditions.

Social analysis is needed in analyzing literary works such as novels. Novels according to Aminuddin (2002: 38) are short stories that are poured which cannot be separated from the problems of life in the real world, thoughts and views in terms of philosophy and even religion. Based on this, the things told in the novel are a reflection of real human life then poured into literary works. Social analysis is important because the things being analyzed are things that are closely related to human life. Mahardika (2000: 122-123) states that social analysis can be used as an indicator to categorize the things that people do, whether the movement arises because of consciousness or only because of emotional impulses.

"One of Ours" is a novel by Willa Cather that was released in 1922. The novel "One of Ours" is a novel that tells about the life of a person or main character and his socially related activities and how social things happen there. "One of Ours" is a novel that discusses World War I. It also tells about the plague. This novel also tells about the disease outbreak that is related to what the writer discusses in this research. The writer is interested in discussing the social situation in the novel One of Ours because this novel from Willa Cather contains many things that have happened before but similar things happen again in the present because everything is related to history and the historical system is a repetitive event. The writer is also interested in discussing the social situation in this novel by Willa Cather because the situation in the novel is a social situation that is close to the lives of people today and has even been experienced by people today.

The purpose of this research is to reveal the social situations and conditions of Willa Cather's novel "One of Ours". It also can be used as an indicator in seeing the differences between the society in the novel and today's society so that it can take useful things such as how to behave well and what is not good not to do to be interpreted in everyday life. The fact that this research is important to study because this novel from Willa Cather is a novel that tells many interesting things experienced by the main character and also relates the story to past history that can not only occur in the past. This research is also important because it discusses humans and the things humans do in their socialization.

METHOD

In this study, the researchers mainly used the Descriptive Qualitative method to analyze the phenomena and issues presented in Willa Cather's novel "One of Ours". Researchers use qualitative research methods that are descriptive in nature. According to Arikunto (2019, p. 3) argues that descriptive research is research that investigates circumstances, conditions or other things related to it. Then, the results of the research are described or written in the form of a research report. Sugiyono (2008: 15) also argues about descriptive qualitative research. Descriptive qualitative research is a research method that makes the philosophy of postpositivism as a foundation or basis. Descriptive qualitative research is used when examining objective conditions. Based on this opinion, it can be said that research with descriptive qualitative methods is research conducted by focusing on circumstances or situations where the presentation of the research results will be written or explained in a descriptive manner instead

of using numerical or writing numbers.

The object of this research is a novel. The object used is a novel by Willa Cather entitled "One of Ours". This novel was published in 1822. The novel is the object of this research because this entire research discusses novels, especially specifically analyzing novels in the aspect of literary sociology. The methods used by researchers in collecting data are Primary Data (Researchers use primary data, namely the novel itself, the novel "One of Ours" by Willa Cather. Researchers use e-books or novels in pdf form) and Supporting Data (Researchers support data collection other than based on the novel itself, researchers use journals, articles, e-books, or sources from the internet in completing data in this study).

The method used in analyzing data is using a sociological approach. According to Ratna (2004) in finding the objectivity of the relationship between literary works and society, are: social aspects are very important for understanding literary works, another important thing is coming from the author, when the author gives totality in understanding literary works and social aspects, it supports the objectivity of the relationship between literary works and society, understanding that the background of literary works comes from the background of society as well, literary sociology is a literary approach that is an objective and scientific study of humans in society, and the quality of interdependence between literature and society is closely related in supporting the objectivity of literary sociology.

Based on this, the researcher conducts a method to analyze data by understanding social life and social situations and conditions of society both in real life and in novels. Furthermore, the researcher analyzes the data by paying attention to the relationship between society and the novel's literary works. The researcher also analyzes the data by paying attention to the background of the novel's author. Researchers also analyze data by understanding the background of Willa Cather's novel "One of Ours". Researchers also analyze how the sociology of literature supports this research. All data collection is carried out with the aim of supporting the objectivity of this writing work.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

As the title above of this article, the finding and discussion section is the core part of this article because it is the result of the author's research. The results of this research are about social situations and conditions in the novel One of Ours by Willa Cather. The results of this research are in the form of explanations of various social situations and are accompanied by supporting quotations. In the research results, there are five core points of social situations in the novel. The five points are social life in Farm and Ranch, religion or spirituality, romance and marriage, and the presence of plague. The following is a detailed explanation and substantiation of quotations regarding these various social situations:

Society Life in Farm and Ranch

Society life as a farmer and rancher is an important part of the novel by Willa Cather "One of Ours". Life as a farmer and rancher is much discussed in this novel. Society life in farm and ranch is the beginning of the opening of the story and remains closely related to social life until the end of the story. Live in a farm and ranch area is closely related to society because in the novel it not only tells about Claude's family who are farmers, but many friends and acquaintances who also work as farmers or rancher.

Related to live as a farmer in this novel, it tells about Claude who originally wanted to reach his goals by following his wishes. However, Claude's father wanted that after graduating from university Claude had to live a life by farming and ranching. Claude's father and Claude's younger brother Ralph also moved to a new place to take care of the fields so that Claude had to work on their family's farm. Social life in terms as a farmer or rancher can also be seen in Claude's friend, Ernest Havel, who also runs a farm affairs because he also comes from a family with a similar background to Claude. Ernest Havel is also an active farmer and does his job well because he likes the job, in contrast to Claude who is not really interested in handle the job as a farmer.

Social life in this aspect can also be seen in Leonard Dawson, their neighbor who also works as a farmer. Leonard Dawson and the Claude family know each other. This story also shows the social life of the farmer when the story tells about Enid who lives in the mill house. Farm life was also marked by Claude's father's activities such as going to farmer meetings, participating in trials on farmer disputes, and activities related to other farmers.

There were few days in the year when Wheeler did not drive off somewhere; to an auction sale, or a political convention, or a meeting of the Farmers' Telephone directors;—to see how his neighbours were getting on with their work, if there was nothing else to look after. Cather, W. (P.4, L.18-20).

This quote explains that at that time there were many things related to farm and ranch, such as auction sales and telephone director meetings between farmers, even when there were political conventions. This quote has a subject which is Wheeler. This quote also explains that when Wheeler has some free time, he goes to see his neighbor's work on the farm.

Perhaps Wheeler was proud of his son's business acumen. At any rate, he drove to town to see Bayliss several times a week, went to sales and stock exhibits with him, and sat about his store for hours at a stretch, joking with the farmers who came in. Wheeler had been a heavy drinker in his day, and was still a heavy feeder. Cather, W. (P.5, L.8-12).

This quote describes Bayliss, one of Mr. Wheeler's children who live in the city. He owns a farm equipment shop. This quote describes Wheeler going to the Bayliss store that sells agricultural equipment so that there are farmers who come there and meet and also joke with Wheeler. his quote describes Wheeler going to the Bayliss store that sells agricultural equipment so that there are farmers who come there and meet and also joke with Wheeler.

Claude would have liked to take Ernest to the hotel for dinner. He had more than enough money in his pockets; and his father was a rich farmer. Cather, W. (P.6, L.29-30).

This quote describes Claude and Ernest. This quote describes Claude having enough money to invite Ernest to dinner at the hotel and his quote explains that Claude's father was a rich farmer therefore, Claude also had money and it could be said that he was also a rich man.

It was beginning to grow dark when Claude reached the farm. While Ralph stopped to put away the car, he walked on alone to the house. He never came back without emotion,—try as he would to pass lightly over these departures and returns which were all in the day's work. Cather, W. (P.24, L.1-3).

The setting of the place in this quote is the Wheeler family farm. This quote also explains the time setting of the incident; when it was beginning to grow dark. This quote describes Claude and Ralph's arrival to the farm and Claude doesn't have any emotion about his leaving and coming after doing work.

The next few weeks were busy ones on the farm. Before the wheat harvest was over, Nat Wheeler packed his leather trunk, put on his "store clothes," and set off to take Tom Welted back to Maine. Cather, W. (P.38, L.1-3).

This quote makes it clear that in the coming weeks, the situation on the farm will be hectic. This quote also explains that, Wheeler will pack his suitcases and put on his shop clothes and drive for Tom Welted to go back to Maine All of that activities will be carried by Wheeler before the wheat harvest is over.

Religion or Spiritual

Social life about religion and spirituality is also found in this novel. This religious point was taken because Claude and his family live as Christians and believe in God. In the religious or spiritual aspect of this novel, much is discussing matters relating to activities or matters concerning religion, for example going to church, there are preachers, alluding to the Bible, and talking about one's life with the Savior. At the beginning of the story, we can see that there is a spiritual situation when Claude's mother wants Claude to enter a Christian university, not a state university. Claude's mother did not want Claude to meet people who were not Christians at a state university. Spiritual life in this novel is very significant where we can see that Claude's mother and even Claude's family often go to church. Claude is also a believer in God even

though he doesn't want anything to do with theologians and theology.

The social life of spirituality can also be seen in the character of Enid. Enid is a good and religious person. Enid is a missionary. Enid does a lot of ecclesiastical activities and spends a lot of time in church activities. Social life towards the spiritual aspect is found in Enid's sister. Enid's sister, Carrie is a missionary in China. Enid's spiritual life is also one of the reasons why Claude feels lonely and feels that in their marriage Enid doesn't love him anymore so that makes them separate. Enid is too concerned with her personal life, one of which is by being active in spiritual activities.

He reached the table when all the others were half through breakfast, and made his peace by genially asking his mother if she didn't want him to drive her to church in the car. Cather, W. (P.10, L.19-21).

This quote describes the conversation that took place at the dinner table. The conversation took place between Claude and his mother. This quote explains that while they having breakfast together, Claude came and asked his mother whether she would be taken to church by car or not.

"Son, don't say such things. I can't believe but teachers are more interested in their student when they are concerned for their spiritual development, as well as the mental. Brother Weldon said many of the professors at the State University are not Christian men; they even boast of it, in some cases." Cather, W. (P.13, L.10-14).

That quotation belongs to Claude's mother. This quotation depicts Claude's mother's point of view as advice to Claude. This quote shows the difference between teachers at state universities who are not Christian and arrogant men and teachers who prioritize spirituality.

Two years ago, the young man whom Mrs. Wheeler called "Brother Weldon" had come out from Lincoln, preaching in little towns and country churches, and recruiting students for the institution at which he taught in the winter. He had convinced Mrs. Wheeler that his college was the safest possible place for a boy who was leaving home for the first time. Cather, W. (P.16, L.3-6).

This quote focuses on the Weldon brothers. This quote describes Brother Weldon and the activities he has carried out such as preaching and recruiting and also convincing people to send their children to the campus where Weldon teaches. This quote also explains Weldon who managed to convince Claude's mother to send Claude to the university.

Claude's mother was not discriminating about preachers. She believed them all chosen and sanctified, and was never happier than when she had one in the house to cook for and wait upon. Cather, W. (P.16, L.7-9).

The focus of this quote is on Claude's mother. In this quote contains the nature of Claude's mother about believing in all preachers. This quote also contains what can make Claude's mother happy in her daily life.

When Claude wore his new clothes to St. Paul's church on Sunday morning, the eyes of every one he met followed his smart legs down the street. Cather, W. P.17 (L.35-37).

This quote focuses on Claude when wearing his new clothes, he becomes the center of attention when he goes to St. Mary's church. Paul. This quote has a background in the church of St. Paul and the time setting is Sunday morning.

Romance and Marriage

Social life in this novel is also related to romance and marriage. Proof of the social situation regarding marriage can be seen in Claude's parents, Mr. Wheeler and Mrs. Wheeler. They were married, and the three brothers were born: Bayliss, Claude, and Ralph. Social situations such as marriage were also encountered in Leonard and Susi who decided to marry and become husband and wife. Social life in the marriage situation is also seen in Claude and Enid who are married even though they eventually experience divorce. In the social situation towards marriage, it is found that there are struggles and challenges in marriage as experienced by Claude and Enid. However, even in marriage there is happiness that can be found as in Leonard and Susi and Mr. Wheeler and Mrs. Wheelers.

The romantic situation also happens when they were not married and still dating. At that time, they spent a lot of time together, they also did fun things together, they often traveled around, Claude complimented Enid and vice versa, a very romantic situation occurred when Enid helped take care of Claude when Claude was injured. A romantic situation is created when Claude feels unworthy to be looked at because of his wound, Enid still tries to meet Claude and takes care of Claude during his difficult times.

Romantic conditions also occur when Claude declares his love for Enid and after that they do romantic things like a kiss. Romantic things also happened when they both got married. A romantic situation is created when Claude feels his face is unworthy to be looked because of his wound, Enid still tries to meet Claude and takes care of Claude during his difficult times. Romantic conditions also occur when Claude confesses his love for Enid and after that they do romantic things like a kiss. Romantic things also happened when they both got married.

Leonard Dawson was going to marry Susie Grey. She was the girl on whose account Leonard had slapped Bayliss, Claude remembered. Cather, W. (P.25, L.8-9).

This quote is about Leonard Dawson getting married to Susie Gray. At this quote, Claude was remembering about the incident between Bayliss and Leonard. At that time, Leonard was not happy with what Bayliss had done to Susie, so Leonard slapped Bayliss because of that woman.

Claude kept his engagement with Miss Millmore. Cather, W. (P.30, L.7).

This quote takes place during Claude's college days, he meets Miss. Millmore and they become lovers. This quote comes from an incident when Erlich told Claude something about Miss Millmore, Claude still maintained their relationship although Erlich had warned Claude about something bad about Miss Millmore.

"This is an unexpected pleasure, to see you again, Miss Enid. And you, too, Claude," turning a little toward the latter. "You've come up from Frankfort together this beautiful day?" His tone seemed to say, "How lovely for you!" Cather, W. (P.68, L.1-4).

This quote takes place when Enid and Claude go to Frankfort together. This quote is about Weldon meets Claude and Enid and then Mr. Weldon greeted them. Mr. Weldon's words when asked about their arrival together suggest that Weldon seems to be paying compliments to Enid.

"Why, Claude, you are getting to be quite a ladies' man! Something in the way Enid said this made him wince a little. He felt his burning face grow a shade warmer. Even after she went downstairs he kept wishing she had not said that. Cather, W. (P.73, L.18-20).

This quote describes Claude's feeling of being very embarrassed because Enid complimented him with a beautiful words. Claude's feelings at that time were like a grimace. At that time, Claude kept wishing Enid had not said something like that because he felt awkward.

Enid came every afternoon, and Claude looked forward to her visits restlessly; they were the only pleasant things that happened to him, and made him forget the humiliation of his poisoned and disfigured face. Cather, W. (P.73, L.24-26).

This quote contains the sincerity of Enid who continues to look after Claude regardless of Claude's physique which is no longer what it used to be. This quote also contains Claude's longing for Enid's arrival. This quote also explains that Enid came every afternoon.

Presence of Plague

The presence of virus or plague outbreaks in this novel is one of the social conditions that is very interesting to explain. This social condition has a big impact ranging from illness to death in sufferers. The presence of an outbreak of this disease occurred on the ship. Here's a little story about the presence of this disease outbreak.

The virus started when a solitary marine named Albert Usher joined a ship occupied by marines with Claude included. The first few days were still fine, but on the third day the virus began to spread and made Corporal Tannhauser have nosebleeds at night. More and more people contracted the virus until they thought that their ship had been hit by an epidemic, which

they initially thought was just a guess. However, when a Virginian was exposed and treated by a doctor, the doctor immediately said that their ship had been exposed to the most virulent and dangerous type of influenza virus.

The virus spread to all of them, from children, young men and women to even the elderly. At first they still felt a little comfortable because there were painkillers, namely oranges and eggs. But because so many people were infected with the virus and even one of the doctors was also affected by the virus, they began to run out of eggs and oranges. Because of this,] there was an argument between them and it ended with Claude and his sick friend being dumped in a small boat while they slept at night.

Quotations:

Corporal Tannhauser had had such an attack of nose-bleed during the night that the sergeant thought he might die before they got it stopped. Cather, W. (P.146, L.7-8)

This quote explain that Corporal Tannhauser was the first to develop symptoms of the virus carried by marine Albert Usher. The symptoms he experienced were symptoms of nosebleeds that were affected at night and because of Corporal Tannhauser's symptoms, the sergeant thought that the corporal would die before they treated him.

Even this morning he tried to joke, and pointing to his big red face told Claude he thought he had measles. Cather, W. (P.146, L.11-13).

This quote explain about Corporal Tannhauser was already badly infected because after he had a nosebleed, he also developed an illness that caused his face to turn red and enlarged but he jokingly said that he had measles. Corporal Tannhauser said so to console himself with his illness. He felt that joking around like that would make him feel better.

There seemed to be an outbreak of sickness on board. Cather, W. (P. 146, L.14-15)

This quote explain about the doctor who examined Corporal Tannhauser suspected that there was a dangerous disease on board. But the doctor remained calm and told them to go to bed and get some sleep. However, even though the doctor told them to calm down and rest, there was indeed an outbreak of disease on their ship.

"Is there an epidemic of some sort?" Cather, W. (P.146, L.23)

This quote explain that: as more and more people were affected by the plague on board, they suspected that there was some kind of epidemic on board. But they haven't paid much attention to what's going on inside the ship because they have a lot of work to do inside the ship and it turned out that their suspicions were correct that there really was some kind of epidemic spreading on their ship.

The Doctor said they might as well face the facts; a scourge of influenza had broken out on board, of a peculiarly bloody and malignant type. Cather, W. (P.149, L.2-4)

This quote explain that the doctor who examined and treated the patients affected by the plague said that there was an influenza outbreak on the ship, which was a very virulent and bloody outbreak. So, the doctor said that they had to accept the facts.

CONCLUSION

The novel "One of Ours" by Willa Cather is a story that talks about life in society that sows many social issues. Social life in this novel covers many aspects, ranging from work life, schools, organizations, health, and others. The social life shown by the main character Claude Wheeler includes the life of the people in agriculture and animal husbandry, the life of the people in religion, romance and marriage, the life of the people in the face of epidemics, the life of the people in the military, and the life of the people during wartime. Some supporting social situations along with explanatory quotes are also included in the results. According to the author, many lessons can be drawn from the analysis of social situations and conditions in the novel "One of Ours". The lessons that can be taken from the novel can be seen from the personal life of the main character, even the social life that exists in the novel can also provide benefits in analyzing social situations, not only in the novel, but also social situations that exist in the life of the author and society in daily activities. In the future, this article hopes there will be

significant research on the new concept of disillusionment in the different forms from the literature.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer would like to express his deepest gratitude to almighty god, Allah SWT for His amazing ways in guiding his to finish this article and for His continual love, guidance, and blessing. His sincere gratitude goes to his parents, for their love, efforts, prayers, and support during the article creating. He is also grateful to all of the lecture and students at English Literature Studies Program, Faculty Languages and Arts, Univeristas Negeri Manado.

REFERENCES

- Ahmad Tafsir, (2010). *Filsafat Pendidikan Islam Integrasi Jasmani, Rohani, dan Kalbu Memanusiakan manusia*, Bandung: PT. Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Aminuddin. (2002). *Pengantar Apresiasi Sastra*. Bandung: Sinar Bandung.
- Arikunto, S. (2013). *Prosedur Penelitian Suatu Pendekatan Praktik. Edisi Revisi*. Jakarta: PT. Rineka Cipta.
- Cather, W. (1922). *One Of Ours*. Alfred A. Knopf, N.Y.
- Handayani, D., Hadi, D. R., Isbaniah, F., Burhan, E., & Agustin, H. (2020). *Corona virus disease 2019. Jurnal Respirologi Indonesia*, 40(2), 119-129.
- Linton, Ralph. (2000). *Status and Role Sociological Theory: a Book of Reading*, New York, The Macmillan.
- Mahardika Y. R. C (2000). *Perilaku Mahasiswa dalam Menyikapi Pemberitaan Hoax di Media Sosial Facebook (Studi pada Mahasiswa Ilmu Komunikasi Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang Angkatan 2013 yang Menerima Pemberitaan Hoax Terkait Isu Corporate Nasional)*, (Doctoral dissertation, University of Muhammadiyah Malang).
- Ratna, N. K. (2004). *Teori, Metode, dan Teknik Penelitian Sastra [Theory, method, and technique of literary research]*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.
- Sugiyono. (2012). *Memahami Penelitian Kualitatif*. Bandung: ALFABETA.