ABSTRACT: This study is a comparative literary study comparing existentialist view that is used as the background in the previous studies done by Cain (2008) and Witherow (2003) and sangkan paraning dumadi in viewing Newland’s motive to keep the engagement and give his wish up to be with Ellen. Through sangkan paraning dumadi, it is concluded that Newland’s motive in doing so is good and he has done what he is supposed to do a good man among the society.

Keywords: Javanese philosophy, sangkan paraning dumadi, existentialism

The Age of Innocence by Edith Wharton has attracted many experts to make a study of it. For so many years, Wharton’s The Age of Innocence has been analyzed through the theory of existentialism, like Cain (2008) and Witherow (2003) do, and through the western point of view in judging every single part of it. The novel mainly talks about three major characters, they are Newland Archer, May Welland and Ellen Olenska. Here Newland wants to be with Ellen, who is a married woman and also May’s cousin, while he is already engaged to May. So many times he happens to choose whether he wants to follow his desire to be with Ellen or keep the engagement. The novel’s main character, Newland and his motive in making decisions are the main study in this article. Newland’s decisions to choose not to be together with Ellen because he cannot go beyond his “path” (Wharton, 1996:179) are thought to be an inability because he cannot fight the superegoic voice and go with it instead,

Everything was equally easy--or equally painful, as one chose to put it--in the path he was committed to tread, and he had obeyed the flurried injunctions of his best man as piously as other bridegrooms had obeyed his own, in the days when he had guided them through the same labyrinth

The existentialist concept of self-determination which should be put above the superegoic has been underlying in the conclusions of the studies done upon Wharton’s The Age of Innocence; like the ones done by Cain (2008) and Witherow (2003). He cannot break the “settled idea” in the society that he has to “sacrifice” his desire to be together with Ellen for everyone’s sake (Cain, 2008). The “settled idea” is constructed by the society around them about how they should act and decide upon the events in their life (Witherow, 2003). Newland chooses not to be together because his union with Ellen is not favored by their families and the society around them.

Newland chooses to do what he is supposed to do which means that he has to put aside his desire to be together with Ellen. Because of this, Newland is thought to be weak-minded by Cain (2008) and Witherow (2003). He is not able to achieve what he knows he wants, because he has to go on with what the “superegoic voice” says that means a “repression to one self” (Witherow, 2003). Cain (2008) addresses that, “Newland feels frustrated that he is forced to lead a double life”. The double life here means that he has to go on with the marriage
plan to May, while he keeps imagining to be with Ellen. The use of the word repression and frustration to address Newland’s state of mind in relation to his inability to achieve his self-determination is in line with the general view of existentialism. However, according to an individual with a different cultural background, like Javanese, this issue might be seen very differently.

For Javanese, every event in the novel might mean something different from the conclusions of the previous critics; especially the major decisions Newland makes that really depict the friction between self-determination and social codes (superegoic voice), which are interpreted as something wrong when a person puts the social codes above his self-determination. The matter of choosing self-determination over the social codes can have a very different meaning for Javanese people. Javanese normally value the social conformity that emphasizes the balance between self-determination and social codes. This balance or conformity is stated in sangkan paraning dumadi as the basic value for a person to live as a part of society. A Javanese reader might not see the decisions Newland makes as an inability to put aside the social codes. A different point of view from the readers, who have a different social background, on those decisions does matter and needs to be accommodated into a form of study that will enhance the understanding toward the novel from this different point of view (Barthes, 1978).

The problem of keeping identity then becomes the matter in this case. This is why it is necessary to have another perspective, in this case, the Javanese philosophy, in viewing Wharton’s *The Age of Innocence*. Proclaiming another standpoint toward the same problems in the novel is necessary since each culture has different attitudes and values toward certain things and all of them are not worse or better than those of westerners’; each culture has the same right to proclaim theirs as the background in interpreting the text (the novel) (Bhabha, 1994:2). Thus, using the values of sangkan paraning dumadi in Javanese philosophy which deals with the matter of social conformity in interpreting the decisions Newland makes as a way of reading the novel through a certain cultural point of view as it is compared to the theory of existentialism is necessary. Reading Wharton’s *The Age of Innocence* from the Javanese perspective of sangkan paraning dumadi will help the readers understand and perceive the characters motive in a different point of view from those of the previous critics.

**THE FAILURE OF THE MAIN CHARACTER VIEWED FROM THE EXISTENTIALIST THEORY**

William E. Cain (2008) states that the failure of Newland and Ellen to be together is the conventional values in their society that they subscribe to, “New York society is regulated by rites and rules as strict as those that governed prehistoric humankind, and Newland’s adherence to its conventions is inexorable”. Everybody is entangled to the other, people in the society live in a communal society that one problem in one of the family may result in people’s prejudice toward the family that will create a scandal that is not favored by the family. Newland cannot have the life he wants, not even strive for it, and the social convention is the block. Newland “grows disenchanted, embittered by the personal cost, the loss of freedom, that a conventional marriage exacts” (Cain, 2008). Newland, and the other characters, “struggle with their particular realities as they adhere to the ideology of the society that forms and circumscribes them”
In her essay, Witherow (2003) believes that the entrapment of Newland in the circumstance which he wants to escape is because of his failure to understand the language and he is subjected to the language that has constructed him. So he does not strive for his desire to be with Ellen because he feels that he cannot. Witherow (2003) quotes some sentences in the novel to back up her argument: "…deathly sense of the superiority of implication and analogy over direct action, and of silence over rash words, closed on him like the doors of the family vault" (Wharton, 1996:339).

Newland always has choices whether he wants to be with Ellen, but he always decides to put aside his desire to be with her. One of the decisions Newland makes which does not lead him and Ellen into union that he wishes for is when May opens his opportunity to choose whether he will be with her or Ellen. May states,

I’ve wanted to tell you that, when two people love each other, I understand that there may be situations which make it right that they should—should go against public opinion. And if you feel yourself in any way pledged…pledged to the person we’ve spoken of…and if there is any way…any way in which you can fulfill your pledge…even by her getting a divorce…Newland, don’t give her up because of me! (Wharton, 1996:148).

May implicitly says that it is Ellen she is referring to, and Newland knows that. It even binds Newland even tighter to May (Cain, 2008) and he is scared of the fact that May’s perception is right (Witherow (2003). Being scared, Newland even says that he does not have any feelings for another woman,

There is no pledge—no obligation whatever—of the kind you think. Such cases don’t always—present themselves quite as simply as…But that’s no matter…I love your generosity, because I feel you do about those things…I feel that each case must be judged individually, on its own merits…irrespective of stupid od stupid of conventionalities…I mean, each woman’s right to her liberty—“ He pulled himself up, startled by the turn his thoughts had taken, and went on, you go a little a farther, and understand the uselessness of our submitting to another form of the same foolishness conventionalities? If there’s no one and nothing between us, isn’t that argument for marrying quickly, rather than for more delay? (Wharton, 1996:149).

He even says that he does not have anyone else that he cares about and whom he thinks about marriage with other than May. He sacrifices his desire to be with Ellen to avoid chaos related to the settled plan about his marriage to May (Cain, 2008).

In the next scene, Newland receives a telegram telling that finally May’s parents agree to set the wedding date earlier than it is planned before. He is going to be married in a month. Receiving the telegram gives Newland much frustration “to lead a double life” (Cain, 2008). He is frustrated to lead a life that is based on the codes in the society to not break the engagement that will bring a scandal to the family, while he keeps thinking of Ellen as the one he wants to be with. The social codes want him to be the husband of May, not to be with Ellen which will only bring a scandal to their family, since the plan of the wedding is already settled and yet Ellen is not divorced. The following scene shows the wedding of May and Newland. It clearly states that Newland goes with the social convention
to avoid the scandal to their families if he does completely the other way around, breaks the engagement and chooses to be with Ellen instead.

Cain (2008) addresses Newland’s choice to keep the engagement and put aside his desire to be with Ellen as a frustration of leading a double life. It means that Cain (2008) perceives Newland’s decision as a crisis that finally is won by the social convention. Witherow (2003) states that this decision is a result of “repression of the self” from the society through May as a representative of it.

Both Cain (2008) and Witherow (2003) address this decision Newland makes as a result of the repression performed by the society that he puts the social convention above his desire to be with Ellen. The word repression and frustration give a meaning that Newland is in sorrow in putting the social convention above his self-desire. It is concluded that putting the social convention above self-determination is a misery. It is in line with the concept of existentialism which puts the self above everything else to grasp the existence of human being. Existentialism emphasizes that it is not either moral thinking that is governed by the norms of the good and the right nor scientific thinking that is governed by the norm of truth is able to understand the human condition, and that a further set of categories, governed by the norm of authenticity, is necessary to grasp human existence (Crowell, 2010). Authenticity here means the degree to which one is true to one's own personality, spirit, or character. The idea of existentialism then leads to an understanding that people make decisions according to the meaning of each decision to them, because human being is not a rational being (Hubben, 1997). Sartre (1946) states that the life norms that exist around the society only creates boundaries for human being to find and articulate the meaning of life. It then leads to the individualist concept that it is not the moral or scientific thinking that defines whether the decisions someone makes is right or wrong, rather it is the person himself decides. It creates an idea that someone can do any effort to fulfill his need according to his authenticity, rather than the demand of the society (Wood, Linley, Mattby, Baliousis, and Joseph, 2008). Newland puts social conformity above self-determination; that means self-determination is not more important than the social codes that applied at that time when people really concern about what other people might think of what they do, like when Newland talks to Ellen to withdraw divorcing because the family does not want to have any scandal in public. This is why generally Cain (2008) and Witherow (2003) address Newland as “not able” to achieve what he wants which is to be with Ellen. Based on this concept, Cain (2008) and Witherow (2003) address the decision Newland makes as a result of being frustrated and repressed by the social convention. Newland puts the moral thinking in the social convention about not to give shame to the family and to avoid chaos that will happen if he put his self-desire in the first place. The chaos might be in the form of unhappiness that Newland might feel although he can be with Ellen, because he strives for his desire but this desire only hurts other people, especially his family and May’s. His decision makes him not exist in the way of the essence of being alive. He does not put his self-determination above the social convention that makes him lose his self-determination. It means that Newland does not have the essence of his life which is his self-determination. That is why he is not included in the state of being that exists since he does not live according to his self-determination, but he lives
according to the social convention. That is why he is addressed to be in misery, because he is physically alive but losing his essence as a human.

The state of losing his essence as a human keeps going until the end of the novel. Having been a faithful husband of May for more than thirty years, Newland cannot go beyond what he is taught to be, even after two years of May’s death. Newland refuse to see Ellen in her apartment after his son, Dallas, tells him that his mother knows about his feelings for Ellen, “...the day before she died...she sent me alone...she said she knew we were safe with you, and always would be, because once when he asked you to, you’d given up the thing you most wanted” (Wharton, 1996:359). Through this conversation with their son, May knows that he will pass this to his father and she holds Newland even from her graveyard (Cain, 2008). The bond May creates before she died last long and successfully hold Newland from going beyond the idea of faithful husband of hers. It is showed that in the next scene he does not want to see Ellen as what Dallas requires him to. By asking Dallas to tell Ellen that he is “old-fashioned” (Wharton, 1996:364), he states that he does not want to go beyond his choice to be a faithful husband of May, even after May died that means he has the choice to be free to achieve his long-postponed desire to be with Ellen, but he chooses the other way around.

SANGKAN PARANING DUMADI: A LIFE TEACHING IN SOCIAL CONFORMITY

In everyday life, Javanese have a set of rule that is called sangkan paran ing dumadi. It is a set of life teaching that is subscribed to by everybody to live in the world. It teaches about the essence of human being, the goal of life, the way to strive for the goal, and the relation of human being as an individual and social being. As a part of society, a person cannot do whatever she/he wishes, especially if it is related to other people (Suseno, 1988). As a human being, someone must have an aim in his life, which means that he has to learn about life, gain knowledge about life and live in the knowledge itself. The way to gain the knowledge is by doing lelaku ngelmu. The aim of ngelmu are divided into two stages (Tanpoaran, 1988:35). The first stage is the union between person’s self-determination with God’s plea and the second stage is the union of attained sense that is gained from lelaku ngelmu and the pure sense. These acts are the aim of ngelmu to attain eternal and pure life happiness that comes from the inner soul as the goal of the life of a human being.

In pursuing the goal of life, someone strives to attain his idea of happiness in life, one person has a different idea about happiness in life from another. The idea of happiness is closely realated to the needs of each person. However, in pursuing the happiness, everybody must have awareness as an individual and social being (Tanpoaran, 1988:28). Based on the awareness, the goal of life that is happiness should be corresponding with the society around (Tanpoaran, 1988:29). There are guidances to consider in living in harmony with the society around. The guidances are by considering wewalering bebrayan that governs the social life and considering the fundamental nature of humanbeing who has four substances and one self (sedulur papat limo pancer).

Wewalering bebrayan is social norms or codes that should be there in every awareness of humanbeing as a member of society wherever he lives. The
major norms in social life are not to steal, do adultery, drink, gamble, have drugs, kill, and blame. Human conscience will also result on the sense of wrong and right (Tanpoaran, 1988:73). Through this human conscience, every human being will achieve the core of *wewalering bebrayan* that everybody must avoid disturbing or perturbing other people in the society, that it is a disgrace to live under the control of lust, and it is vain to live inconsiderately or selfishly, “mengganggu atau merugikan sesama warga bebrayan itu supaya dihindari, hidup dengan membiarkan nafsu menguasai diri adalah tidak senonoh, hidup dengan hanya memikirkan diri sendiri adalah kesempatan yang terbuang” Tanpoaran (1988:73).

Besides *wewalering bebrayan*, there is another guidance to live in harmony among the society, it is by considering the fundamental nature of human being that is called *sedulur papat limo panjer*. This term addresses the four substances in human being, they are nafsu aluamah, nafsu sufiyah, nafsu amarah, nafsu muthmainah and one other thing that constructs a human completely, the *sukma sejati* (the self per se), or it is also called conscience.

Suwarno (interview, 7 May 2012), a traditional Javanese gamelan and dance, looking up to *Kitab Wulangreh* written by Sultan Paku Buwono IV of Surakarta, explains that nafsu aluamah is the desire that is related to the basic instinct of every human being, for example, the desire to eat, drink, live, and have sex. Nafsu sufiyah is the desire that is related to the worldly enjoyment, for example, the desire to be praised, rich, respected, and greedy. Nafsu amarah is the desire to keep the self’s dignity, have anger and emotion. And then nafsu muthmainah is the desire to do good things. The *sukma sejati* or conscience is the one that decides and manages the other four substances. It is the one who decides which one of those four substances to be stronger than the others. In social life it is good to have the balance of those four substances, and it is better if the muthmainah to be stronger than the other.

In gaining contentment in life, somebody should not put aside the life norms, or as aforementioned before as *wewalering bebrayan*, that are subscribed to by the society where that person lives, otherwise when that person tries to go against the stream he will create chaos among the society. A person should have a capacity to keep self-determination and desire and to keep the good manner in social life (Tanpoaran, 1988:121).

Everyone should be able to manage all of the substances mentioned above; to be called as to live right, in this case according to the social convention where that person lives. Keeping the society in order and avoiding chaos is what is meant by conformity in Javanese ethics. As Suseno (1988) wrote that in Javanese ethics conformity means not breaking down what has been established and avoiding social conflict by willing to commit to what has been settled. Also the understanding of "right place" means that when somebody wants to do something, then they must consider the social values, norms, tradition and *tata krama* (manner) in that certain place.

Keeping social conformity, live the life without putting aside *wewalering bebrayan* is what everyone should do in life. No matter how big is the will to complete the self-contentment which is not favored by the society, everyone should cope with it, because it will show how a good and a noble person according to society (Suwarno, interview, 7 May 2012). It does not mean that a person should be in misery to be a good person according to the society, what a
person should do is to find a way to keep the self-determination and wewalering bebrayan in conformity. By this state of self a person must have gained a self maturity in the way of his ability in grasping and applying the meaning of life among society and the goal of life to gain happiness that purely comes from the inner soul is attained.

THE DECISIONS NEWLAND MAKES VIEWED FROM SANGKAN PARANING DUMADI

First Decision Viewed from Sangkan Paraning Dumadi

The first decision Newland makes is when he chooses to cover his feelings for Ellen in front of May when they have a conversation. May states implicitly that she knows it is Ellen Newland of whom Newland is thinking,

I've wanted to tell you that, when two people really love each other, I understand that there may be situations which make it right that they should--should go against public opinion. And if you feel yourself in any way pledged . . . pledged to the person we've spoken of . . . and if there is any way . . . any way in which you can fulfill your pledge . . . even by her getting a divorce . . . Newland, don't give her up because of me! (Wharton (1996:148).

Here Newland has choices whether he wants to fulfill his pledge or stick to the marriage plan to May. However, he answers that there is no one else of whom he is thinking,

There is no pledge—no obligation whatever—of the kind you think. Such cases don’t always—present themselves quite as simply as…But that’s no matter…I love your generosity, because I feel you do about those things…I feel that each case must be judged individually, on its own merits…irrespective of stupidconventionalities…I mean, each woman’s right to her liberty—“ He pulled himself up, startled by the turn his thoughts had taken, and went on, you go a little a farther, and understand the uselessness of our submitting to another form of the same foolishness conventionalities? If there’s no one and nothing between us, isn’t that argument for marrying quickly, rather than for more delay? (Wharton, 1996:149).

Furthermore, having received the telegram several days later from May telling that her parents agree to set the wedding date earlier that it is planned before, Newland gives up his desire to be with Ellen. And finally, in the following scene Newland is married to May.

This decision Newland makes is right according to the values that everybody must not put aside the social convention in striving their desire (Suwarno, interview, 7 May 2012). In this case, the social convention is to not give a shame to the family. Newland has done what he must do as an individual and as a member of the society at the same time. He can choose to be with Ellen and give up the marriage plan, since that is also what May says as his fiancée who give him freedom to choose even if that will only jeopardize her position as Newland’s wife-to-be. Newland chooses to be with May and give up his desire because that is what he says he wants.

According the values in sangkan paraning dumadi, what Newland does is the reflection of his essence of human being who lives not only as an individual, but also a social being, who can never put aside the presence of other people and
the social convention in every decision he makes (Suseno, 1988). Everybody is to have an eternal happiness, not just a bodily one. In pursuing the goal of life, someone strives to attain his idea of happiness in life, one person has different idea about happiness in life from another. The idea of happiness is closely related to the needs of each person. However, in pursuing the happiness, everybody must have awareness as an individual and social being (Tanpoaran, 1988:28). Based on the awareness, the goal of life that is happiness should be corresponding with the society around (Tanpoaran, 1988:29). There are guidances to consider to live in harmony with the society around. The guidances are by considering wewalering bebrayan that governs the social life and considering the fundamental nature of human being who has four substances and one self (sedulur papat limo pancer).

Everybody must not disturb another people in the society, that it is a disgrace to live under the control of lust, and it is vain to live inconsiderately or selfishly, “mengganggu atau merugikan sesama warga bebrayan itu supaya dihindari, hidup dengan membiarkan nafsu menguasai diri adalah tidak senonoh, hidup dengan hanya memikirkan diri sendiri adalah kesempitan yang terbuang” (Tanpoaran, 1988:73). What it means by being vain to live inconsiderately or selfishly is that people waste the time to strive for happiness that is not real, a happiness that is attained by creating a sorrow for other people out of the lust. Newland decides to keep the engagement instead of to be with Ellen. He does not let his desire take over his conscience. He does not decide to break the engagement that will only hurt his family and May’s. He follows the value that everybody must not live selfishly and not let the lust take over his conscience.

Newland has done what he must do as a good man among the society. By giving up the idea to be with Ellen, he respects the social convention to not give the family a shame. Moreover, the fact that Ellen is not divorced cannot be put aside. The reasons of bringing family shame and Ellen who is still bound in her marriage are the main problems to be considered. Newland as the representation of his sukma sejati puts his nafsu muthmainah in the first place that leads him to do good things according to the social convention. Newland puts his nafsu sufiyah, that leads him to strive for his desire to be with Ellen, after nafsu muthmainah. He succeeds in controlling his karep and krenteg that means he can control his desire to be with Ellen and aware of the condition that holds them. He also succeeds in controlling his lamunan and gagasan, that means he can control his wish to break the engagement and to be with Ellen.

‘I loved you—’....’Nothing’s done that can’t be undone. I’m still free and you’re going to be.’....(Ellen replies) ’You’re engaged to May Welland; and I’m married....(Newland) ’Nonsense! It’s too late for that sort of thing. We’ve no right to lie to other people or to ourselves’ (Wharton, 1996:170-171).

Newland succeeds in controlling his karep, krenteg, lamunan, and gagasan by managing his pambudi in keeping the engagement with May and marry to her at the end. By putting the family sake above his desire to be with Ellen, Newland at the same time does lelaku ngelmu to gain contentment in life.

Furthermore, according to Javanese philosophy, there is no complete freedom for people to do things he wants without considering the situation around him, since Cain (2008) addresses that Newland loses his freedom by giving up his desire to be with Ellen. A mature individual has no complete freedom when it is
related to the social life. Mature people have the sense of shame and worry. Being ashamed when they do not know what their fault and being worried about *karma*; which means that once somebody hurt other people, he will be hurt in exchange (Suwarno, 2012). By his not hurting the people around him by keeping the engagement, Newland has done his role very well among the society; because if he chooses to be with Ellen instead, he might not find happiness with her or there might be a conflict between Newland’s family and May’s that might distract the harmony in the New York society at that time. The people in it live in a communal society that one problem in one of the family may result in people’s prejudice. Ellen’s case in suing her husband for divorce is one of the examples that one chaos might result in scandal for the family and bring disgrace for Ellen’s family. That is why Newland was asked to talk to her to withdraw divorcing to keep the family from scandal. If Newland chooses to be with Ellen and break the engagement, he might live in sorrow although he lives the life that he has been searching for, because his desire only brings shame and sorrow for his family and May’s.

**Final Scene in the Eye of Javanese Readers: A True Devotion**

The final scene mostly becomes the major problem for most critics in their essays. In this scene, the readers are exposed to the fact that Newland does not choose to go beyond what he believes he is, a faithful husband of May. He is bound to the words May says to Dallas before she died two years earlier, “…the day before she died…she sent me alone…she said she knew we were safe with you, and always would be, because once when he asked you to, you’d given up the thing you most wanted” (Wharton, 1996:359). In these words, May implicitly says that Newland will always be her husband and the father of their children, even after she died. May knows Dallas will pass these words to Newland. She keeps controlling Newland even from her grave (Witherow, 2003). Dallas asks him to come with him to see Ellen in her apartment in Paris more than thirty years later after his decision not to give up the engagement and be married to May. However, at the end, Newland decides not to go up with his son Dallas to see Ellen, by saying that he is “old-fashioned” (Wharton, 1996:364).

Newland still keeps his choice to be a faithful husband of May somehow, even after she died. Newland does not want to go beyond his role as May’s husband because he knows that is what May wants him to be. Newland chooses to be May’s husband and gives up his desire to be with Ellen in the first place and he keeps doing that until the end of the novel. The issue of keeping the self-desire and social convention conformed might not apply anymore in this scene, since the society in the final scene is not the same with the one in the decision Newland makes before he married to May. However, Newland has done *lelaku ngelmu* during marriage life with May. He has devoted his life to his marriage with May, by putting aside his self-desire to everything in conformity. Tanpoaran (1988:73) asserts that everybody is not supposed to let their desire over control their conscience, because by doing so it means that they live in vain. Newland has to live right according to the essence of human being in gaining contentment in life that is by not letting his self-desire take over his conscience. Newland does not let his desire to be with Ellen take over his conscience so that he does not hurt his family nor May’s. By doing that, Newland does not live in vain, because keeping the society in order and avoiding chaos is what is meant by conformity in
Javanese ethics (Suseno, 1988). Keeping social conformity, living the life without putting aside wewalering bebrayan is what everyone should do in life. No matter how big is the desire to complete the self-contentment, everybody should cope with it, because it will show how good and noble a person according to society (Suwarno, interview, 7 May 2012) and to be a good man according to the society values is what everyone should do (Tanpoaran, 1988). By this state of self, Newland has gained a self maturity in the way of his ability in grasping and applying the meaning of life among society and the goal of life.

By sticking to his choice to be May’s faithful husband that he has made long before, Newland also embodies another teaching in Javanese philosophy that once a person chooses something then there is no other choice but go for it until the last, and this attitude is the embodiment of mature individual and that is good and the thing that must be there in every human being’s conscience (Suwarno, interview, 7 May 2012). By considering the values in wewalering bebrayan and his control over sedulur papat limo pancer in keeping his desire to be with Ellen, Newland at the same time does lelaku ngelmu to gain contentment in life. He is content by keeping his imagination of his desire to be with Ellen, “It’s more real than if I went up,” he suddenly heard himself say; and the fear lest that last shadow of reality should lose its edge kept him rooted to his seat as the minutes succeeded each other” (Wharton, 1996:364-365) and chooses to be the man he remains, a faithful husband to May. The quotation shows how Newland does not want to see Ellen in person because he chooses to enjoy her image in his mind and stay sitting in front of Ellen’s apartment instead of going up to see her. The realness of Ellen’s image is a happiness Newland has been treasured. Now without him fulfilling his self-desire or determination to be with Ellen, but by devoting his life to do what is taught in wewalering bebrayan and controlling sedulur papat limo pancer to keep the society and his self-determination conformed, he finds his happiness.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

In conclusion, the major decisions Newland makes are quite justifiable, since he does not follow his desire by putting aside the value in the social convention to not give a shame to the family. Newland’s self-determination is not a matter if he has to sacrifice it for everyone’s sake. Cain (2008) and Witherow (2003) conclude that Newland cannot break the “settled idea” that is already made by the society around him, which makes the readers scornful because his choice is wrong and that is an insecurity state of mind. The conclusion is based on the idea of existentialism that emphasizes on the value that striving self-desire as the part of self-determination is the essence of human being.

Different from the existentialist theory, sangkan paraning dumadi in Javanese philosophy, the consideration about the presence of the society around him and the family’s sake are more important (Tanpoaran, 1988). This values views the decisions Newland makes as what he is supposed to do to keep both his personal desire and social codes (wewalering bebrayan) stay conformed, since keeping them conformed is the most important thing to do in one’s life that is related to the social life.

Above all, the first and final decision Newland makes are closely related to the words May says that has a powerful influence on him. Therefore, a study on
May’s character and motive viewed from the values of *sangkan paraning dumadi* is quite suggested.

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