

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents several subchapter, namely background of the study, statement of problems, objectives, significances, and scope and limitation. Those are necessary to explain because they describe this study generally.

1.1 Background of the Study

Literature is a representation of life which exhibits some social phenomena in society. Tyson (2006, p.05) proposed that literature, conceived as a “laboratory” of human life, provides examples of human experience presumably common to all readers. Besides those situation, literature is the portrait of human’s thought to pour her or his creation toward literary works according their feeling and their experience. It expresses their creative thinking in order to attract other people or the reader to consume their works as entertainment even as a knowledge.

In the same way, the readers or the consumers should be able to understand the meaning of the literary works. We can get advantages from literary work. “All literary works contain one or more such sub-texts, and there is a sense in which they may be spoken of as the ‘unconscious’ of the works itself”. (Eagleton, 1996, p.155). This statement means that reader of literary work has an ability to absorb, to filter and to investigate the literary work which has values to be used as source of data for research.

Definitely, this study chooses Lauren Oliver’s *Before I Fall* as the source of data. Because, Lauren Oliver is a 2012 E.B. White Read-Aloud Award nominee for

her middle-grade novel *Liesl & Po*, as well as author of the middle-grade fantasy novel *The Spindlers*. She is also get Goodreads Choice Award for Best Young Adult Fiction. As shown above, this research uses a theory of postmodernism which is established by Jean-Francois Lyotard. This theory concerns the signs of intellectual movement and it explains the social life, social phenomena including culture and history. Explicitly, postmodernism is a suitable theory to carry out the issues which appear in the novel. It clarifies the meaning of the novel and to emphasize that someone can experience her or his paranoia and ambiguity phenomena in her or his life. Paranoia can be defined as the belief that there is something out of the ordinary. It also can be stated as feelings which refers to imagination of something unreal. Whereas an ambiguity can be described as a content of literary works of postmodern literature which has narratives that can disturb human mind set, or will make an ambiguous meaning.

Postmodern undercuts history, reality and truth. Peter Bary (2009) stated that postmodern deconstruct the basic aim of enlighten of modernism, the idea of a unitary end of history and of a subject. Rather than agree with the narrative exemplifying the notion of disappearance of the real, postmodern foreground the concept of irony. Peter broken (in *Beginning Theory: an Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory* by Peter Barry, 2009) stated whereas modernist tries to destroy the past, the postmodernist realises that the past must be revisited, but with 'irony'. From the statement above it can be concluded that the postmodern represents the past that has been combined with irony.

Lyotard (in *International Postmodernism: Theory and Literary Practice* by Bertens and Douwe W. Fokkema, 1997) argued that:

The postmodern would be that which, in the modern, puts forward the unrepresentable in presentation itself; that which denies itself the solace of good forms, the consensus of a taste which would make it possible to share collectively the nostalgia for the unattainable; that which searches for new presentations, not in order to enjoy them but in order to impart a stronger sense of the unrepresentable (p.24)

Lyotard's statement above describes that through postmodern anything that cannot be presented can finally be revealed. The point of this action is to corroborate the sense of things that cannot be presented themselves.

Reading the novel *Before I Fall* makes the writer imagine a very complicated social phenomenon. Not about the past history that contains influential materials in the future is not about the future that is still full of question marks. But an actual event occurred around the author as well. There is a case of bullying, making others feel uncomfortable with their lives even to make others feel hopeless in life due to social conflict. The existence of a gap in a community in a school is not a new thing in life. The strong ones intimidate the weak and feel that the weak are not worth living in this life. As did the character Samantha Kingston with her friends against others around her. Call it Juliet Skyes who became a victim of bullying on the basis of things she did not know. However, in this story, the main character is the key to the unfolding of the mysteries of life around her.

The uniqueness of Lauren Oliver's novel is that readers are presented with beautiful writing that makes the reader could not guess the end of the story easily. There are parts that become obscure but make the reader curious, so it will force

them to finish the reading to completion. In every sub-chapter of the novel every reader will find the crucial ruins that will answer the big question mark in the conflict, it becomes a sensation for the reader, especially the writer.

The other reason, the writer chooses this source of data because the novel maintains about the perspective of teenager as Samantha Kingston, the main character of this novel who wants to overcome her mystery of paranoia and ambiguity which successfully makes her disconcerted in her life. Therefore, this study will analyse paranoia and ambiguity in the main character's social view. This study will analyse the character's utterances and author's narrations.

1.2 Research Problem

The focus of this study is “the main character's paranoia and ambiguity” and translated into the following questions:

1. What paranoia does the main character experience in her life in *Before I Fall* by Lauren Oliver?
2. What ambiguity does the main character experience in her life in *Before I Fall* by Lauren Oliver?
3. How the way of the main character solve her social phenomena's problem in *Before I Fall* by Lauren Oliver?

1.3 Objectives of the Research

Related to research problem above, this study is intended identify:

1. The paranoia which the main character experiences in *Before I Fall* by Lauren Oliver.

2. The ambiguity which the main character experiences in *Before I Fall* by Lauren Oliver.
3. The main character's way to solve her social phenomena's problem uity in *Before I Fall* by Lauren Oliver.

1.4 Scope and Limitation

The scope of this study is theory of postmodernism which is proposed by Jean-Francois Lytorad. Paranoia and ambiguity will be discussed as the social phenomena of postmodernism. This study will be limited by focusing on the character's utterances and author's narrations in *Before I Fall* by Lauren Oliver which can answer the research questions above.

1.5 Significances

Theoretically, this study can develop an understanding about theory of postmodernism which is proposed by Jean-Francois Lytorad in which this theory emphasize the effort of the main character in the novel to overcome her paranoia and ambiguity which turned her life into a confusing thing. Practically, it is expected that the results of this study will contribute to help the readers figure out the human's effort of resolving her or his paranoia and ambiguity and identify the phenomena or issue through postmodernism study. In addition, the writer expects that this research is able to be a reference for student of english department.