

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The first chapter contains and consists of the background of the study, research questions of the study, the research objectives of the study, the significance of the study, and scope and limitation of the study.

1.1 Background of the study

Literature is a written work that has artistic and aesthetic value, describing human experience, imagination, emotion, and life in symbolic or imaginative language (Leigh, 2008). It is broadly defined as a written work, which includes imaginative works of poetry or prose distinguished by their distinctive purpose and excellence. Literature also includes forms of human expression that go beyond mere writing to organize words in ways that give pleasure and transform the experience of the imagination. According to Wellek and Warren (1949:90), literature depicts life and social existence. They found various types of works that may contain anything that can be found in our lives.

According to Richter (2018:19), literature is divided into three basic types of literature, namely prose, drama, and poetry. All prose is either fiction or nonfiction. A novel is defined as a prose narrative of significant length and complexity that imaginatively explores the human experience, usually through a sequence of interconnected events involving characters in a particular setting. Novel is an extensive literary composition where the writer wants to create in the reader the experience that pages are his or her own life. Just like that, each novel is a small world, and the author is the one who creates it, while the story follows a kind of planned path (Hudson, 1913:218).

Novels have several important elements that can support the integrity of a novel, such as character, characterization, plot, setting, point of view, theme, tone, and language style. There are also elements of narration, description, and dialog, so that they can describe the atmosphere, setting, and conflict in depth

and complexity. As stated by Oatley (2022:9), characters are a central element in literature, providing readers with a basis for understanding and interacting. Novels also have moral, social, and cultural values that are conveyed through conflicts and changes in the fate of the characters in the story. Characters in literary works are figures presented by the author through narration, dialogue, and action, who play a certain role in the story. However, in certain traditions that we recognize as ‘novels’, this is possible because of the broader and more fundamental reliance on fiction in human society (Hawthorn, 2023:11).

Character development is a range of efforts to form an individual who is better than the previous character. Character development is one of the important elements in literary works, especially in novels. Character development refers to the process in which the characters in the story undergo changes, both emotionally, psychologically, and socially, along with the development of the storyline. This character development occurs in the storyline to be able to provide changes in a character (Asmiaty et al., 2022). In a literary context, character development serves not only to enrich the narrative, but also to create depth and complexity that allows the reader to connect with the character. Character development in a novel has a close relationship with literature because character development is also included in the elements that determine the quality of a literary work (Mbira, 2024).

Characters in literary works can also undergo significant changes in behavior, especially if the characters in the story are dramatic (Ermina et al., 2023). Character development is an important aspect of the story because through character development we can see how a character's condition changes throughout the story. Character development describes the changes that a person undergoes that can be seen through the storyline or conflicts that the character faces. In other words, character development is a change in the character of a character in a novel that is used as a plot in a story or novel.

The researcher chose character development as the topic of this study. The source used for this research topic is Matt Haig's 2020 novel, *The Midnight*

Library. The main character in this novel is a woman named Nora Seed. The novel tells the life of a woman overwhelmed by regret and despair, who finds herself in a magical library located between life and death. In this extraordinary space, Nora is given an unprecedented opportunity to experience the countless alternate lives she may live, based on the different choices she made in her past. After she lives it, she begins to realize how life is where every life must have many trials that will pass in every life.

There are four previous studies that support researchers in analyzing this novel. Three previous studies used the same data and sources, namely the novel *The Midnight Library* as the main data but used different theories. The first previous study used different data entitled *The Character Development of Isabella Linton in Emily Bronte's Wuthering Heights Novel* (Asmiaty et al., 2022). This study aims to find the development of Isabella Linton's character and what events influence Isabella Linton's character development. This research uses an objective approach, and researchers use the novel *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Bronte as a data source. This data is taken from the dialogue between characters and the narrative that describes Isabella Linton's character development based on Kenan's theory, as well as the events that influence her based on Griffith's theory, which shows that Isabella Linton undergoes character development during the exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and stable situation.

The second is *An Analysis of Imagery Found in Novel "The Midnight Library" by Matt Haig in 2020* (Al Amin, Merdeka P. K. R., Oktariza D., 2024). This article aims to analyze the imagery in the novel *"The Midnight Library"* by Matt Haig. The purpose of this study is to analyze the types of imagery based on Perrine and Thomas' Theory found in the novel and to explain the functions of imagery found in the novel. The method used to analyze the research is descriptive qualitative. The results show found 476 images consisting of 149 visual images, 44 auditory images, 144 kinesthetic images, 36 tactile images, 8 olfactory images, 12 gustatory images, and 83 organic images. The functions of

imagery in this novel have also been categorized into three functions: 1) Freshness, 2) Intensity, and 3) Evocative Power.

The third previous study related is *The Analysis of Moral Values in the Novel "the Midnight Library"* (Jufiati, 2024). This research aims to find out how the main character reflects himself and to find out the attitude of the community towards the main character. The method used to analyze this article is descriptive qualitative data analysis method. The data obtained were analyzed using the interactive model of data analysis. The researcher records the moral values in the novel under study and notes are tools used by researchers to collect data. Researchers used two sources to analyze this novel, namely, primary and secondary data. This analysis shows that there are six types of moral values: courage, honesty, perseverance, gratitude, kindness, trust, and compassion.

The fourth previous study is *The Heroine's Journey of Nora Seed in Matt Haig's The Midnight Library* (Andayani & Wijayanto, 2026). The purpose of this article is to analyze the emotional development of the female protagonist during her life journey. The theory used for analysis is Maureen Murdock's theory of The Heroine's Journey. The method used in this study is qualitative. The data was taken from the novel through close reading and interpretation based on Murdock's theoretical framework. The results of this analysis show that the protagonist's journey follows the stages of the female protagonist's cycle, beginning with separation, followed by various trials and despair, and ending with integration and self-understanding.

The fifth previous study is *Analysis of The Main Character's Development In Fredrik Backman's Novel: A Man Caled Ove* (Nabilah, 2023). This study aims to examine character development; the researcher conducted a study on the character development of the main character in the novel. The objective of this study is to examine character development; the researcher conducted a study on the character development of the main character. The theory used to analyze this study is Sutton's theory. This study employs a qualitative approach, in-depth reading, and a psychological approach. The

results of this study show that Ove is portrayed in the novel as short-tempered, stubborn, antisocial, and uninformed. The results also show that Ove's character evolves from someone who is always indifferent and hopeless into an optimistic and caring person.

The reason why the researcher chose the topic and the novel to be used as research material is because the topic is quite interesting to analyze with the topic of character development where the main character in the novel begins to have broad thoughts about how life is. Previously in the novel, the main character had problems with inner pressure so that he could not understand life. *The Midnight Library* is a fantasy novel by Matt Haig, published in New York August 13, 2020 by Canongate Books. The book has been a best seller in New York and has also been translated into 40 languages.

1.2 Research Questions

This research includes two questions, which are outlined as follows:

1. How does the main character develop?
2. What are the factors that influence her character development?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

According to research question, this study has two research aims that can be stated as follows:

- To identify the character type of the main character in the novel and analyze how the main character develops according to M. H. Abrams' theoretical framework.
- To analyze what factors influence the character development of the main character in the novel's storyline

1.4 Significance of the Study

There are two types of significance to be found in this study: namely, theoretical significance and practical significance.

1. Theoretical Significance

This research is expected to contribute to literary analysis by applying

New Criticism, which focuses on intrinsic elements such as character development to enrich literary studies, particularly in the analysis of the novel as a genre distinct from drama and poetry.

2. Practical Significance

For reading enthusiasts and literature fanatics, this research provides a clearer understanding of the complexity of characterization and the factors influencing the development of the main character, thereby helping them engage more deeply with the text. For academics and educators, this research offers valuable insights for analyzing characters in literature, while also demonstrating how New Criticism theory can be applied in practice

1.5 Scope and Limitation

The researcher focuses on analyzing character development and the factors influencing the main character's transformation in Matt Haig's novel "*The Midnight Library*" using M.H. Abrams' theory. Specifically, this study analyzes the main character's development and examines the factors that influence it. In terms of its limitations, this analysis focuses exclusively on the main character, Nora Seed, and deliberately excludes secondary characters and other literary elements not directly related to the development of other characters. This research is also limited to the novel "*The Midnight Library*" and does not cover Matt Haig's other works or adaptations of the novel.