

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter indicates five subchapters of introduction. Those are background of the study, research questions, objectives of the study, significance of the study, and scope and limitation.

1.1 Background of the study

In a family, we were born, grow, and learn a great number of things since our childhood until we die. It automatically can be considered that someone's behavior is influenced a lot by the family role from many aspects. Those are like social side, psychological side, situation conditions and others. The family role is not just influencing in the growth of behavior of an individual but also the behavior changing. When we look at the world through a psychoanalytic lens, we see that it is comprised of individual human beings, each with a psychological history that begins in childhood experiences in the family and each with patterns of adolescent and adult behavior that are the direct result of that early experience, (Tyson, 2006, p. 12).

We also can see that family's role cannot be separated from anyone. This is what then called as a family system like what Bowen (1976) said in his Family Systems Theory. According to Bowen, a family is a system that each member has a role to play and rules to respect. Members in the family should understand each other and also be able to play their role well in responding each other in a good way if there was something happen.

However, sometimes people inside a family have their difference. Some differences are understandable when the family think that it is still a normal differentiation of someone's behavior. But some people inside it may also refuse the changing because it seems like too strange thing for them. Nevertheless, a family as a system should not forget their role to care those who is considered as the strange one because we need to realize that the changing may be caused of us. It usually comes because of a great traumatic feeling after someone gets an experience and becomes depression in thinking the problem. Even though the problem happened long time ago, but those who still feel the trauma would not be easy to move on from that experience.

Similarly, with family therapies the family became the primary focus and de-emphasized individual factors. The cause of the problem "seen" by the therapist was no longer the "identified patient" but the dysfunctional family system.

(Foley, 1984, p. 108)

As what the quotation above, we can see that family is a system progress. Each of people inside a family has a special role they have to do in their life. Bowen call this system as "Family Systems Theory". Recently, this theory has been used to analyze many kinds of family condition. There are a lot of research about family using this theory based on Bowen's eight points of interlocking concepts of his theory. As the interlocking word's meaning in Oxford dictionary that it is an arrangement in which the operation of one part to another part or mechanism automatically brings about or prevents the operation of another. The interlocking concept is the stakeholder of everything happened inside a family. Each points of interlocking concepts firmly joined together. (Wylie, 1991) points out in her

biographical piece following Bowen's death that this interest in evolutionary process distinguishes Bowen from other family therapy pioneers. Bowen viewed himself as a scientist, with the lofty aim of developing a theory that accounted for the entire range of human behavior and its origins. On the other hand, the problem of family is not only happened in the real-life family but also a family condition in a literary work like in a novel for example.

To begin with, a novel entitled *The Vegetarian* that was written by Han Kang is interesting to be a part of this study. Due to some consideration that the writer intends to conduct this analysis is that the novel has won the Man Booker International Prize 2016 and the story also fits with the Murray Bowen's Family Systems Theory perfectly. This analysis is also interesting to bring up several possible reasons.

Firstly, The Family Problem that needs attention of the family's role happened toward the story of a woman from Korea who has a strange behavior in her family. It is told very clearly and obviously in "The Vegetarian Novel" by Han Kang. The novel has represented the quality of Korean Writer that today is much better than before as it won the award as it was told in one paragraph before. On a count of the award, Han Kang admitted as one of the phenomenal Korean authors in novelist world and stands on top five most influencing newcomer-author (Hahn, 2018, January 25).

The Vegetarian Novel by Han Kang tells about a family that stands for a parent and two daughters who both of them have married and live separately in different house from their parents. They are Yeong Hye and In Hye, her older sister. Their life was beautiful enough and always looks like a nice happy family. But

everything was changed since Yeong Hye got her dream. She suddenly changed her mind and choose to be a vegetarian. She threw all meats in her fridge which her husband loves to eat them and so did she before she got the dream. Yeong Hye's behavior changing as a vegetarian grows worst. She does something strange like she does not want to stay close to her husband or other people who still eat meat because she said that they smell like meat. One day, she looks so depressed because of the dream that comes to her sleep every night. She considers herself as a plant. She stands on her hand, considering that her fingers are the root and thinking that she does a photosynthesis under the sunlight. Sadly, her family do not understand her condition and blame her changing. Moreover, her brother in law exploit her as his painting subject and influence her to be his fair. It is only her sister who cares her a lot until the end of the story.

The case of Yong Hye and her family has a lot of aspects of family psychological problem that fits with the interlocking concept of Bowen's Family Systems Theory as to what the writer would explain in the next chapter of the study. Based on that point, the writer decides to analyze the novel using Bowen's family systems theory as the main focus of this research.

1.2 Research Question

Regarding the focus of the study, the main question would be foregrounded as follows:

1. How does the family's role deal with the problem of Yeong Hye's behavior based on the eight interlocking concepts of Bowen's Family Systems Theory?

1.3 Objective of The Study

Based on the research question above, the writer has an objective to follow:

1. To discover the family's role in facing and solving the problem inside The Vegetarian novel by Han Kang based on the interlocking concepts by Bowen.

1.4 Significance of The Study

This study is expected to be able to provide some significances and also contributions in theoretical and practical. Those are:

1. Theoretically, this research is expected to contribute several advantages. Those are better understanding and development for the literary theory especially in The Vegetarian Novel by Han Kang to be added as one of literary study that focuses on Family Systems Theory.
2. Practically, the writer hopes that this study would be beneficial for society to have better comprehending about family systems in a literary work. It also can be the source of other studies or analysis that use the same literary work or apply the same theory. It can contribute its discussions or explanations to the next study.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

As the scope of the study, this study uses family systems theory proposed by Dr. Murray Bowen as the approach of the analysis. The theory is used to consider the possible family systems analysis in a literary work. Generally, people study about literary work using psychoanalysis and only focus on a character inside the literary work. In this study the writer does not only focus in the main character but also her family.

The limitation of the study is the family's role based on interlocking concepts of family systems theory by Bowen for facing the problem of a woman exists in *The Vegetarian Novel* by Han Kang. There are eight points of interlocking concepts that the writer would use to analyze the story. She would explain all points clearly in the next chapter.