

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of five subchapters. Those are background of the study, statements of the problem, objectives of the study, scope and limitation of the study, and significances of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

In carrying out daily life, humans are never separated from conflict. Conflict is a problem that is not wanted by every human being, like quarrels, disputes, or contradictions. In real life, not a few people avoid conflict to minimize the problems faced. However, in literary works, conflict is always presented through characters. In a literary work, there is an introduction to conflict and themes. Both conflict and theme are intrinsic elements where this intrinsic element is important and obligatory in a literary work, especially in novels, short stories, and dramas.

Usually, the conflicts in a literary work originate from real life that humans have experienced. Therefore, it is not surprising that readers/audiences are often carried away when reading novels/short stories and watching dramas. Every literary work must have a conflict because, without a conflict, the literary work cannot be known about the plot and feel bland or unattractive to read or watch. This explanation is related to the characteristics of conflict, which are in line with Wellek and Warren's idea (1989: 85), saying that conflict is something dramatic, referring to a fight between two powers that balance and it also referring an action and revenge of action. It happens in human's outlook, not in literary works, that's why, people prefer to live in peace and avoid the conflict.

The theme is the main idea that becomes the soul or basis of the story that the author initiated. The theme is an integral part of determining the course of a story. Theme can evaluate through the presence of certain events, conflicts, and situations in a story. That explanation proves that the conflict in the story can play a role in revealing the theme.

This study will analyze the novel by Gayle Forman entitled *If I Stay*. Gayle Forman (born on June 5, 1970) is an American novelist and journalist. She had published many books and novels. Some of her novels have been bestsellers for young adults. The writer chooses the novel with the title *If I Stay* because it is topped the New York Times bestseller list of Young Adult Fiction and was made into a film of the same name. The novel "*If I Stay*" has been translated into more than 40 languages and, in 2014, was adapted and acclimated into a significant motion picture.

The novel *If I stay* was published on 2009. This novel tells about a 17 years old girl named Mia who has been involved in a tragic car accident. In that tragic accident, all her family died. Mia is the only surviving family member, and she finds herself in a coma. Mia finds herself caught between two worlds; the world of the living and the world of the dead. She is confused about whether she should choose between a happy past and an unknowable future. She should end her life to catch up with the family she loves and forget her love story and dream in the music world or live without a family. But then, she chooses to survive after awakening from a coma and remembering all conflict and memories before falling into a coma.

The writer felt interested to know the conflict that occurred before Mia fell into a coma and the cause of Mia choosing to stay alive. This issue is appropriate to be analyzed using the New Criticism theory by Charles Bressler (1994) because New Critics believed the interpretation was based solely on the context created by the text; they called their critical practice intrinsic criticism to denote that New Criticism stayed within the confines of the text itself. The New Critics, is how meaning is achieved through the various and sometimes conflicting elements operating in the poem itself. New Critics begin their search for meaning within the text's structure by finding the tensions and conflicts that are eventually resolved into a harmonious whole (Bressler, 1994:36-37).

To interpret a literary work using the New Criticism theory, we need to pay attention to its formal elements because, according to Bressler about New Criticism, "The New Critics belong to a broad classification of literary criticism called formalism. Being formalists, the New Critics espouse what many call "the text and

text alone" approach to literary analysis." (Bressler, 1994:31-32). Of course, something formal detail changed into analyzed, it had to be shown to play an important role inside the text's advancement of its subject and consequently make a contribution to the unity of the work. So, by using the New Criticism theory, it is expected that the reader can understand more profound meaning and value of the literary work they read by investigating the text itself.

In addition, *Conflicts and Revelation of Theme in If I Stay Novel by Gayle Forman* is chosen to be the title of this study. The title is chosen because the conflict is one element that helps determine the story's theme. The writer also chooses the title because the writer's interest in observing the conflict of the main character in the novel *If I Stay by Gayle Forman* can provide results or findings that can be used as the novel's theme. On the other hand, five previous studies were chosen to show that this study is different from previous studies.

The first previous study used the same source of data but has different theory. The study was written by Mega Maria Purba (2021) from University of Sumatera Utara entitled *An Analysis of Mia Hall Psychological Conflict in Gayle Forman Novel If I Stay*. The study used psychological approach in the form of a defense mechanism.

The second previous study used the same theory but used different source of data. The study written by Kartika Nurhandayani (2014) from Yogyakarta State University entitled *An Analysis of Themes and Sub-Themes in Judy Blume's Are You There God? It's Me Margaret*. The study used new criticism and childrens' literature theories and using a novel entitled *Are You There God? It's Me Margaret* by Judy Blume as the source of data.

The third previous study used the same theory but used different source of data. The study was written by MG. Lia Rosaria I (2004) from University of Sanata Dharma Yogyakarta entitled *A Study of Plot, Character, and Setting to Convey the Theme as Seen in Hemingway's The Garden of Eden*. The study used Hemingway's novel entitled *The Garden of Eden* as the source of data.

The fourth previous study used the same source of data but used different theory. The study was written by Abdul Hadiansyah (2016) from State Islamic

University of Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung entitled *A Psychological Analysis on The Main Character in If I Stay by Gayle Forman*. The study used psychoanalysis theory by Sigmund Freud.

The last previous study, written by Ismaya Adityawaty (2003) from Petra Christian University Surabaya entitled "A Study of Conflicts Which Leads the Main Character, Tommy Wilhelm, to His Downfall in Saulbellow's *Seize the Day*". The study used conflict theory to analyze the external and internal conflicts in order to learn that his character traits have triggered the conflicts that later bring him to his downfall.

The writer used New Criticism by Charles Bressler's theory to analyse this study. This theory is chosen because the issue of this study is appropriate to be analysed using the New Criticism theory and New Critics believed the interpretation was based solely on the context created by the text, they called their critical practice intrinsic criticism to denote that New Criticism stayed within the confines of the text itself.

1.2 Statements of the Problem

Based on the background of the study, this study is formulated as the following questions:

1. What are the conflicts experienced by Mia before falling into a coma in *If I Stay* Novel by Gayle Forman?
2. What are the themes hidden in the conflict of the novel *If I Stay* by Gayle Forman?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

In line with the questions above, the purposes of this study are to reveal:

1. The conflict that happen to Mia's life before falling into a coma in *If I Stay* Novel by Gayle Forman.
2. The theme hidden in the conflict of the novel *If I Stay* by Gayle Forman.

1.4 Scope and Limitation

The writer will focus on the conflict of the story in the novel *If I Stay* by Gayle Forman, which supports the theme. The theme and the conflict are the important elements that influence the whole story and make the story a good work. The writer will limit the discussion on one character, Mia, who is the main character in the novel *If I Stay* by Gayle Forman, because of her feeling that is confusion regarding her anxiety and traumatic experience and conflicts which emerge in the story and happen to Mia's life before falling into a coma until the reason why Mia chooses to stay alive.

The writer will use New Criticism theory to analyze this study. This theory is chosen because the issue of this study is appropriate to be analyzed using the New Criticism theory and New Critics believed the interpretation was based solely on the context created by the text, they called their critical practice intrinsic criticism to denote that New Criticism stayed within the confines of the text itself (Bressler, 1994:31-32).

1.5 Significances of the Study

There are two significances of the study; they are theoretical significance and practical significance.

1.) Theoretical Significance

By analyzing the theme and conflict in the novel *If I Stay* by Gayle Forman, which contains conflicts that conduce to anxiety and traumatic experience. The theoretical significance of this analysis is to enrich literary studies, especially in literature, through novels as one genre besides drama and poetry.

2.) Practical Significance

By analyzing a novel entitled *If I Stay*, the writer expects to give a contribution as a reference for further study of literary works to everyone, especially for English Study Program students at the University of Trunojoyo Madura. They are interested in the New Criticism theory and

would like to apply this theory in analyzing a literary work, especially a novel. The writer also expects this study is helpful for the readers to have an understanding of a portrayal of real-life's problem which occurs in life such as losing a beloved person which influences our lives and how to overcome our anxiety and traumatic experience and make an attempt to survive after experiencing the tragedy. Then, the writer expects this study to help a literary student understand how to reveal themes of conflict in a story.