

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of five subchapters. Those are the background of the study, the statement of the research question, the objectives of the study, the significance of the study, and the scope and limitations of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Tension and ambiguity are the formal elements that can help us understand how literary work communicates the themes. Tyson (2011, p. 71) states that the tension in a literary text arises from the interaction between two opposing concepts. The readers can improve their understanding of the meaning of literary works by finding the tension and discussing how these two opposing concepts influence one another to give complexity to literary texts. The themes that are reflected by the tension in a text may be the prioritization of one concept over another, or it may be a combination of the two opposing concepts. Ambiguity in literary works is defined as a text that has double meanings or more than one meaning. In literary works, ambiguity is often used to create complex effects that involve the reader in the process of interpreting the meaning. Ambiguity enriches the text by contributing to its depth and complexity (Tyson, 2011, p. 72). These two formal elements, tension and ambiguity, can help the understanding of the theme in the story easier.

There are two elements that develop the story in the novel: extrinsic and intrinsic elements. The most widespread and flourishing methods of studying literature concern themselves with its setting, its environments, and its external causes (Wellek & Warren, 1956, p. 73). Extrinsic elements refer to the outside factors of literary works and can influence the way the readers understand the story. Though the extrinsic study may merely attempt to interpret literature in the light of its social context and its antecedents, in most cases it becomes a 'casual' explanation, proffesing to account for literature (Wellek & Warren, 1956, p. 73). In literary works, extrinsic elements include things like the biography of the author, the historical and cultural background of the story, and the social context.

Meanwhile, intrinsic elements refer to the elements within the literary work. Intrinsic element is the interpretation and analysis of the works of literature themselves (Wellek & Warren, 1956, p. 139). In literary works, intrinsic elements include theme, character and characterization, plot, setting, symbol, point of view, and figurative language. These elements influence the readers in interpreting and understanding what is conveyed by the author in the literary work. One of the essential intrinsic elements that build the story, and interesting to discuss, is the theme.

The theme is the outline of the idea of the whole story in a novel. In a novel, theme is an essential element and must be present in a story so that the story does not lose its direction. The theme is not directly implied in a story, and the readers must read the entire story in the novel first before being able to understand and find what the theme is in the novel. The theme of a literary text is the overall meaning, or message, that the text communicates, and the New Critics believe that great works of literature have themes that contribute to our understanding of what it means to be human (Tyson, 2011, p. 71). To make it easier to find the theme in the novel, the author usually reflected the theme on the other elements, one of which is the theme reflected on the characters in the novel. The reflection of the theme on the characters is usually described by the author by how the characters behave on a daily with the other characters or the description of the character's condition in the novels' story.

Dealing with the statement above, the theory that can be used to analyze the theme reflected in the characters is New Criticism by Lois Tyson (2011, p. 71). The new critical movement adopted "the text itself" as it is the tagline in an attempt to draw attention to the literary work itself, as the only reliable source of information for it is interpretation (Tyson, 2015, p. 130). The writer used the New Criticism theory by Lois Tyson because the issue of this study is appropriate to the New Criticism theory. In the New Criticism theory, there are formal elements or intrinsic aspects of the text that can be analyzed and used to understand and make it easier to know how literary works communicate the theme in the story.

This study analyzed the novel entitled *Normal People* by Sally Rooney, published in 2018. The writer selected this novel because there are issues about tension and ambiguity in the novel entitled *Normal People*. The issues of tension and ambiguity for this novel, have not been discussed in other studies about this novel as the data source. The novel entitled *Normal People* tells about the main characters, Marianne and Connell, two young people who have complex relationships. Connell was one of the popular students and had many friends. Meanwhile, Marianne is a girl who does not have any friends at high school, and she is considered a freak person by her friends. One and only friend that Marianne has is just Connell. At the college phase, Connell and Marianne were at the same university. However, at the university, Connell had difficulty adapting to the environment and with the people at the university. In contrast, Marianne made many friends and became popular when she was at university. As time goes by, their roles are reversed, where Marianne becomes more socially isolated while Connell finds his place and identity outside of the world.

The tension that appears in Sally Rooney's novel *Normal People* is reflected when the main characters experience uncertain relationships and contradictory life stories experienced by Connell and Marianne. Then, in the story also appears ambiguity that is created by the main characters in the story. The ambiguity created in the story is also reflected in the relationship status between Connell and Marianne, ambiguity in the meaning of communication between the main characters, and ambiguity in sexuality.

There are several studies that analyze the novel entitled *Normal People* for the source of data from other perspective and theories. The first study is diploma thesis entitled "*Sally Rooney's Conversation and Normal People from the Perspective of Marxist Literary Criticism*", by Veronika Vanisova. This study analyzing *Normal People's* novel using marx's theory to know the relation to the issues of base and superstructure, power dynamics, class identify, and social status. The second study is bachelor's thesis entitled "*Hegemonic Masculinity in Sally Rooney's Novel Normal People: Subverting and Reinforcing Norms*", by Hailey Thao Hien Ngo. This study analyzing *Normal People's* novel using the hegemonic

masculinity theory by R. W. Connel and J. W. Messerschmidt. The third study is the thesis entitled “*Inner Conflict Faced by Marianne in Sally Rooney’s Normal People*”, by Dzia Ahadini, from Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. This study analyzing *Normal People*’s novel using Psychoanalytic theory by Kurt Lewin to analyse the three types of the inner conflict experienced by Marianne and how Marianne resolved her inner conflict by positive, negative, and neutral valence.

For this study, there are five previous studies used because relevant to this study including, a thesis entitled “*The Portrayal Of Regret As Seen In Adele’s Hello: A New Critic Reading*”, by Arifah Fauziah (2017) from State Islamic University of Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta. The study focused on the intrinsic elements such as ambiguity, paradox, irony, and tension of the song using New Criticism theory. A thesis entitled “*An Analysis of Themes and Sub-themes in Judy Blume’s Are You There God? It’s Me Margaret*”, by Kartika Nurhandayani (2014) from Yogyakarta State University. Using the theories of New Criticism and Children’s literature, the study focused on finding the themes and sub-themes as the ideas carried by the author of the novel. Thesis entitled “*Love as Represented in John Donne’s “Love’s Alchemy”*” by Aftiyari Nurin Nisak (2016), from State Islamic University of Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta. The study focus on analyzing the intrinsic elements of the poem using Cleanth Brooks’ New Criticism theory. Article entitled “*Marie-Laure’s Struggle As Blind Teenager In Anthony Doerr’s All The Light We Cannot See*” by Monica Herdianti, S.S (2020), from State Islamic University of Sunan Ampel, Surabaya. The study focus on analyzing characterization using New Criticism theory and the main character’s struggle to fulfill her needs based on Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory in the novel. The second article entitled “*An Analysis of Intrinsic Elements in Mama Film by Andres Muschietti*” by Dinah Indriani, Surya Sili, and Setya Ariani (2019) from Mulawarman University. The study focuses on the analysis of the intrinsic elements of *Mama* film. In this study, the intrinsic elements consist of plot, characters, setting, and point of view, and how those intrinsic elements influence the theme in *Mama* film.

This study focuses on the discussion of formal elements, tension and ambiguity in the novel entitled *Normal People*. The theory used in this study is the theory of New Criticism by Lois Tyson (2011, p. 71). The topic of this study is interesting to discuss because this topic provide knowledge to the readers to be able to find and understand the theme in the novel through formal elements, tension and ambiguity. The point of view used in this novel is third person, so the readers can explore easily and feel the experiences experienced by the main characters, Connell and Marianne.

1.2 The Statement of Research Question

Based on the background of the study, the following research questions are formulated:

1. What tensions are found in the novel entitled *Normal People* by Sally Rooney?
2. What ambiguity are found in the novel entitled *Normal People* by Sally Rooney?
3. What themes do tension and ambiguity bring in the novel entitled *Normal People* by Sally Rooney?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

Below are the objectives of the study in order to answer the research questions above:

1. To describe the tension in Sally Rooney's Novel *Normal People*.
2. To describe the ambiguity in Sally Rooney's Novel *Normal People*.
3. To identify the themes embedded in tension and ambiguity in Sally Rooney's Novel *Normal People*.

1.4 The Significance of the Study

There are two significances of this study:

1. The first one is theoretical. Analyzing the tension reflected in the main characters and ambiguity, is to enrich the literary studies, especially in

literature, through the novels as the source of data. This study can enrich theme analysis through formal elements; also, this study provides a solution to find out the right theory and method to analyze formal elements reflected in other elements to support the theme of the story.

2. The second one is practical. By analyzing the novel entitled *Normal People*, the writer hopes can make a contribution as a reference for all of the students, especially for English Study Program students at the University of Trunojoyo Madura. And also for the students who are interested in discussing and applying the same theory or literary works, especially the application to novels.

1.5 The Scope and Limitation

The scope of this study is New Criticism that concerns about formal elements, which helps in finding the theme that is reflected in other elements, especially reflected in the characters. The theory used in this study is New Criticism by Lois Tyson (2011). New criticism theory helps the writer in finding the theme in the novel through the text itself. The writer limits this study to the main characters, Connel and Marianne because the themes contained in the novel are reflected in Connel and Marianne as the main characters. In this study, the writer focused on the discussion or analysis of formal elements, tension and ambiguity, in finding the theme that is reflected in the main characters in novel entitled *Normal People*.