

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the study, problem identification, limitation of the study, statement of problem, purpose of the study, definition of key terms, and significances of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Literature is an art form of human nature that is displayed using imaginative language (Siahan & Arianto, 2020). It usually tells moral values that used as a reference on how to behave in the society (Tican & Deniz, 2018). Literature as the representation of what happens in society contains high moral values that improve 21st skills (Persulesy, Emzir, & Rahmat, 2018). Students are required to have 21st skills such as critical thinking, creativity, cooperative, and problem solving skills as the requirements of learning (Tican & Deniz, 2018). Critical thinking is used to interpret a literary work. Creativity is needed to create the literacy work. Meanwhile, problem solving skill is used on how to do a good and professional literary criticism. In addition, reading literacy work can help the students to be aware with the issue in society. The example of literacy work is novel.

Novel is one of the literacy works that provides the real problem of society. It represents the issues in daily life through sequences of events (Persulesy, et all, 2018). There are many writers who produce good novels in order to do literary criticism. One of them is Nicholas Sparks. Nicholas Sparks is

a well known writer from America. During his career as a writer, he has already written about twenty novels which some of them are adapted to film (Krisanta, 2016). Nicholas Sparks' works have been so popular and become bestseller novels. Even though almost all his works are about love but he also emphasizes more on the issues such as loneliness, struggle, sacrifice, and lost that end up with disappointing ending. *Dear John, See Me, Message in a Bottle, Every Breath, the Notebook, the Longest Ride, A Walk to Remember, the Last Song, the Choice, and the Best of Me* are some of his popular novels.

From those novels, *The Best of Me* (2011) is mostly suitable with the concept of Marxism theory as the focus in this study. Marxism approach is developing based on the development of literary work that adjusted the society (Marx & Engels, 1991). There are several primary notions that should be emphasized in order to do literary criticism through Marxism approach, such as class, socioeconomic, ideology, and capitalism (Jensén, 2016). Class differences as one of the primary notions in Marxism approach is shown in *The Best of Me* (2011) novel. It is the reason of choosing this novel as the object of this study.

The storyline of the novel shows that class differences between Dawson and Amanda bring out some problems due to their relationship. Dawson is the representation of lower class while Amanda is the representation of middle class. In addition, the storyline of *The Best of Me* (2011) puts social status issues to complete the plot of the story. Social status issues or class issues include all forms related to human situation based on different classes in the society (Bottero, 2004). This novel clearly illustrates how people treat others because of their stigma towards class differences which bring out the issues in the society.

Moreover, the focus of Marxism theory is that human's social life and economic which are defined as the result of human perspective of a phenomena (Obo & Coker, 2014). This approach discusses that society is constructed by reality and law (Panda, 2015). It indicates that Marxism approach is able to provide the authentic issues of society that may related to literary work. Therefore, Marxism is widely used in literary criticism since it is flexible to any situation between the literary work and current development.

There are some researchers who analyzed *The Best of Me* (2011) novel by Nicholas Sparks. First, Krisanta (2016) did a study about the influence of Dawson's first love toward his life in *The Best of Me* (2011) novel. The result showed that Dawson as the main character in this novel represented the true love to Amanda by sacrificing his life. Meanwhile, Etami (2016) analyzed a novel by Nicholas Spark entitled *The Best of Me* (2011) based on Marxism point of view. This study analyzed the structural elements of *The Best of Me* (2011) novel and found that the novel was about terrible relationship between Dawson and Amanda as the major characters.

According to the aforementioned studies, *The Best of Me* (2011) novel can be analyzed through different perspective. Love, the structural elements, and class struggles reflected in the novel are the common topic that being analyzed. It means that any forms related to the society are relevant to be analyzed from this novel. Looking at this point, this study was aimed (1) to describe the class issues through Marxism approach and (2) to describe the influence of class issues towards Dawson's and Amanda's relationship and their class hierarchy.

1.2 Problem Identification

Novel is considered as the reflection on how people live their life because it represents the real problem of society. Therefore, novel still has its existence even though the technology is increasingly advanced. Unfortunately, this development does not always go hand in hand with people's mindset. The way they see and react to an issue is not completely changed. For example is an issue in relationship. Most of people still think that a person should have a relationship with another person who has the same social class. Therefore, people who are in a relationship sometimes get into a problem because of their different social background.

The Best of Me (2011) is an example of a novel that tells a complicated relationship between Amanda Collier as a middle class and Dawson Cole as a lower class. This novel also shows some class issues that are related to Dawson's and Amanda's situation based on their social class. The analysis of this novel is conducted to relate the story with the reality in society. Therefore, this analysis is expected to enrich people's perception in facing the issues related to class differences.

1.3 Limitation of the Study

As the limitation of the study, it focuses on the representation of class issues that are related to Dawson's and Amanda's situation based on their social class. Moreover, this study describes the influence of class issues towards Dawson's and Amanda's relationship and their class hierarchy.

1.4 Statement of Problem

Based on the background of the research, two questions are formulated as follows:

- 1.4.1 How the class issues are represented in *The Best of Me* (2011) novel?
- 1.4.2 How do the class issues influence Dawson's and Amanda's relationship and their class hierarchy?

1.5 Purpose of the Study

Based on the problems of the study, the purposes of this study are formulated as follows:

- 1.5.1 To describe the representation of class issues in *The Best of Me* (2011) novel.
- 1.5.2 To describe the influence of class issues towards Dawson's and Amanda's relationship and their class hierarchy.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

In this sub-subchapter, the related key terms are discussed as follows:

1.6.1 Class Difference

Class difference is a term that used to point the existence of three main groups in society such as upper class, middle class, and lower class (Siahaan & Arianto, 2020).

1.6.2 Class Issue

Class issues are all forms related to human situation based on different classes in the society (Bottero, 2004). Class issues happened because of people's perceptions of different classes that make the problems in the society arise.

1.6.3 Novel

Novel is one of the literacy works that provides the real problem of society. It represents the issues in daily life through sequences of events (Persulesy, et all, 2018). Theme, plot, character and characterization, setting, and point of view are the intrinsic elements of the novel.

1.6.4 Marxism Approach

Marxism is an ideology that emphasizes on social conflicts because different classes between bourgeois and proletariat (Marx & Engels, 1991). The existence of Marxism approach is developing based on the development of literary work that adjusted the society (Marx & Engels, 1991). It means Marxism approach is able to provide the authentic issues of society that may related to literary work.

1.7 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to have theoretical and practical significances. The result of this study is aimed in giving additional information about the novel itself and its related field into the real life. Furthermore, this study is expected to provide the benefits to wide community so that the value of this study can be perceived. Specifically, the significances of this study are divided into two those are theoretical and practical significances.

1.7.1 Theoretical Significance

This study is expected to give significance in literary criticism especially for novel analysis. Novel as the one of literary works that has developed along the time is still becoming an interesting object to be read (Karnik, Sheikh, & Ahmad 2015). It is because novel can serve a whole story that represents feeling, thought,

and event in interesting ways and various genres. Novel analysis, as the one of literary criticisms provides an exposure for those who are able to reveal their thought of a novel (Soomro, Umrani, & Jabbar, 2017). Through novel analysis, the specific information of novel, whether it is implied or explicit will be discussed in detail. Novel analysis opens up a broad view of what actually happens from a novel. Therefore, novel analysis is expected to provide the detail information of the novel to the readers.

1.7.2 Practical Significance

This study is not only proposed to give significance in theoretically, but it is also expected to give practical significance. For this practical significance, there will be various targets that expected to obtain the significances of this study. Those targets will be described as follows:

1.7.2.1 Students as English Foreign Learners

The result of this study is expected to enrich students' vocabularies. By reading the analysis of this novel, EFL students will gain new vocabularies so that they know the meaning of words (Mustakim, Musthapa, Lebar, nd). The more students read literary works, the more vocabularies they will have. Indirectly, it can help the students to develop their reading habits (Soomro, et al, 2017). Therefore, students will expand their reading context not only limited in material that they usually learn but also in literary field. Besides, this analysis helps the students to give a summary of *The Best of Me* (2011) novel that help them to understand the novel more easily. This study can be used as a reference for the students before they do literary criticism. This study will help the students to give an overview on how to do novel analysis. They can use the result of this study as a

comparison for the study that they will conduct. Furthermore, the result of this study is also beneficial in giving new experience for EFL students especially in cultural field. By reading the analysis of this novel, students will be able to know different cultural forms that appeared in the novel. The students will be able to recognize different side of what actually happens in this novel. Therefore, it is such an interesting and motivational way for students to enrich their knowledge (Soomro, et al, 2017).

1.7.2.2 Teacher in Teaching English as Foreign Language

The result of this study is expected to help the teachers in teaching English as a foreign language. EFL teachers can use the result of this study as a teaching material (Soomro, et al, 2017). It will help the teachers to give an example to the students of the application of theory and practice. The teacher can teach how to do novel analysis based on the theory.

1.7.2.3 Other Researchers

This present study is conducted to give deeper explanation of the plot development in a novel. For those who would like to conduct a study of novel analysis, the result of this study can be used as a reference to enrich the data of the study that will be conducted. This study describes a fundamental explanation of plot in the novel and several issues related to Marxism. Besides, the other researchers can utilize the result of this study as a comparison of a study that will be conducted. From the analysis of this novel, the other researchers are expected to have a reflection of what will be improved and developed in their study.

1.7.2.4 The Society

The result of this study is not limited to the academic environment. Practically, this novel analysis is expected to be beneficial to the society regarding the issues presented in the novel are really close to society's experiences (Karnik, et al, 2015). People judge others value from their social status. Usually, those who are in higher class will be accepted in society and they will be treated specially. On the other hand, those who are in lower status will be the one who treat the higher status. It indicates that there is the gap between the higher and the lower status. From these reasons, the result of this study is expected to give moral value to the society. It can be used as a reflection for society to respect each other so that class issues can be avoided.

