

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In life, people face problems they cannot avoid. Life is not always peaceful. For example, war exists. It causes suffering in people. According to Cassell (2004) in Tate & Pearlman (2019: 96), suffering is the state of severe distress associated with events that threaten the person's intactness. Suffering is a loss, and loss is another instance of nothing, an absence (Frank, 2001). War has negative impacts on human beings. According to the data published by the *World Health Organization* in 2016, one in sixteen people in conflict zones had mental health problems. The problems that occur are mild forms of depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Suffering caused by war has various effects on children's development. Being dependent on caregivers and losing opportunity for education are the two examples. Barbara (2006: 891) stated that the impacts of war on children who are refugees are death, injury, disability, illness, rape and prostitution for subsistence, psychological suffering, moral and spiritual impacts, social and cultural losses, and child soldiers. These impacts cause children to be terrified.

Suffering is caused by bad experience. According to Cassell (2004), the way a person interprets phenomena determines the content and emotional valence of all first-person experience. In other words, two people having the same symptoms can experience different ways of suffering. If the symptom becomes worse, it can affect more aspects of a person. Even, suffering can loom larger than the actual physical symptom, disease, or life situation that produced suffering (Cassell, 2004: 274). Therefore, it can lead sufferers to break relationships, to lose desires, and to lose the purpose of life.

In this research, the analysis relates to the bombing happened in Japan which causes people to suffer, namely the Hiroshima bombing that used nuclear weapons. It was designed to force Japan to surrender before the Soviet Union entered the Pacific War. It happened on August 6th, 1945. As stated by Brown (1995: 2), 78.000 of the 343.000 population in Hiroshima were killed, and more than 51.000 people were injured or went missing. The buildings were severely damaged, and it made people homeless. These are few examples of people's suffering as a result of war. It also causes those victims to have prolonged trauma that is uneasy to heal.

Problems that happen to human beings are sometimes written in the form of prose. According to the *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary and Thesaurus*, "prose" is a written language in its ordinary form rather than in the form of poetry. Prose is divided into narrative and poetic prose and scientific and technical prose (Ate, 1972). Narrative prose consists of novels, stories, narratives, myths, prose metaphors, ornamental samples, poetic criticism, and writings. Meanwhile, the non-narrative prose consists of scientific knowledge, policy and morals, philosophy and proverbs, translation, history, and an encyclopedia (Ate, 1972). Novel is taken to be discussed in this research. It personifies issues and experiences that happen in life, the purpose of which is to entertain the readers.

Character is one of the elements contained in a novel. Character is the term for the people in fiction, the heroes and villains, allies and enemies, love interest, and comic reliefs (Laughlin, 1989: 375). It can be divided into two—major and minor character. The major character is the center of the story. It plays an important role in any literary work. Meanwhile, minor characters have a function to illuminate the major characters.

In relation to human suffering, in this research, the novel *The Ash Garden* is chosen to be discussed. The discussion is about the protagonist, whose role is considered more important in the novel. The novel was written by Dennis Bock in 2001. It was published in Great Britain by Bloomsbury Publishing. This research focuses on the analysis of the protagonist's condition when she experienced suffering. This suffering is caused during and after the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, which happened in Japan on August 6th, 1945. It impacts badly to the protagonist's life. This suffering is difficult to heal. It causes the protagonist to be angry, to feel worthless, and to feel isolated since she cannot take revenge on what is happening. She suffers silently. In this novel, the characters are Emiko Amai, Anton Böll, and Sophie. This research focuses on the suffering experienced by Emiko the protagonist in Dennis Bock's novel *The Ash Garden*. Novel is a form of fictional literary work, the purpose of which is to entertain the readers. Below is the reason why the topic is important to discuss.

The first reason is that it is important to know about the issue related to humanity's universal problem. In this case, suffering caused by war becomes the main issue that needs to be concerned.

The second reason is that it is important to know about the impact caused by war. In this research, the war is between the United States of America and Japan. But, the concern is the Hiroshima bombing and its impacts to the protagonist's life.

The third reason is that it is important to know the story of the protagonist, who suffered after the Hiroshima bombing. Therefore, it is important to stop war. It is hoped that by conducting this research, it can give any contribution related to the study of human suffering.

1.2 Statements of the Problem

In this research, there are two problems being discussed based on the topic. The problems are:

1. What kind of suffering does the protagonist in Dennis Bock's novel *The Ash Garden* experience?
2. How does the protagonist overcome her suffering in Dennis Bock's novel *The Ash Garden*?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Based on the problem identified, there are two points that become the objectives of the study related to the topic. The objectives are as follows:

1. To identify the kind of suffering that the protagonist experiences in Dennis Bock's novel *The Ash Garden*.
2. To inform how the protagonist overcomes her suffering in Dennis Bock's novel *The Ash Garden*.

1.4 Scope of the Study

It is important to limit the topic of this research. The limitation of this research is about the protagonist's suffering in Dennis Bock's novel *The Ash Garden*. In the fourth chapter, there are two sub-topics being analyzed. The first part being analyzed is about the kind of suffering that the protagonist experienced, according to the evidence taken from the novel itself. The second part being analyzed in this research is how the protagonist tries to overcome her suffering by herself.

1.5 Significances of the Study

This research uses Quilao's theory (2018) about suffering. The theoretical significance of this research is to give future researchers a source of information related to suffering and its kinds. This theory could be used to analyze suffering from any literary works. Meanwhile, the practical significance is to give readers lessons that can be obtained, especially related to human suffering, that they can survive after reading the analysis of a novel written by Dennis Bock *The Ash Garden*. In order to find the meaning of life, the protagonist faces many obstacles. The readers who are in similar situations can hopefully fight their hopelessness by living their lives. Also, this research can hopefully gain more knowledge related to human suffering and the prolonged negative impacts caused by war.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Protagonist

One of the intrinsic elements included in a literary work is character. As stated by Minderop (2005: 2), character can also be a person, community, race, mental and moral attitude, the quality of reasoning, and famous people and characters in literature. Characters are divided into three roles, such as protagonist, antagonist, and tritagonist (Lutters, 2006: 81). The protagonist becomes the central figure in the scene. Meanwhile, antagonist is the opposite of protagonist. It represents negativity in the story. When a protagonist is created to elicit sympathy, in contrast, an antagonist is created to elicit hatred from the audience. Another supporting character is the tritagonist. Its role can be that of a protagonist's supporter or opponent. This character is called as the mediator as it defends figure they accompany. In a literary work, the story revolves around the protagonist. It becomes more important than the other characters involved. In another words, protagonist becomes the central of the story. Those events occurred in the story are viewed according to the perspective of the protagonist.

There are some definitions of protagonist. As stated by Perrine & Arp (1988: 42), the protagonist is the central character in the conflict, whether a sympathetic or an unsympathetic person. Protagonist, according to Gagan Raj (1991: 134), refers to the first actor in a play. This definition is similar to the previous one as stated by Arthur Ganz (1990: 27), in which the protagonist is defined as the first actor who plays the leading part. Based on the definitions, it can be inferred that the protagonist is the main character who becomes the central part of a literary work.

2.2 Suffering

Suffering is an intimate experience. Meanwhile, the sufferer is often isolated from her surroundings and peers (Tate & Pearlman, 2019: 96). It can lead to frustration and withdrawal (Back, 2015). The definition of suffering is the state of severe distress associated with events that threaten the intactness of the person (Cassel, 2004). There are various causes of suffering, such as pain, humiliation, diagnostic uncertainty, constrained perceptions of the future, or the actions of the physician, and it can occur with either the threat of injury or the actual injury to a person's intactness or integrity (Cassell, 1991).

Frank (2001) stated that suffering is unspeakable and impossible to reveal. Suffering is a loss. Through the experience of suffering, the sufferer has the opportunity to find the meaning of life, even though it is challenging and painful (Quilao, 2018). This is related to what Frankl (1992) has stated that life has a meaning up to the last moment of one's life when people accept the challenge to suffer bravely.

According to Quilao (2018), suffering is not a homogenous concept. Instead, it is a diffuse term that includes innumerable ways of dealing with depression, pain, loss, and adversity.

There is an article written by Quilao (2018), it stated that suffering arouses painful isolation and the feeling of being worthless. The unbearable feeling of fear that the sufferer might burden and bring shame to their family is so unbearable that it may lead to the desire to commit suicide. In this article, it is said that suffering occurs when an impending destruction of the person is perceived. This suffering continues until the threat of disintegration has passed or the integrity of the sufferer can be restored in some other manner.

As stated by Shaygan & Jaber (2022), sufferers have different reactions to pain. In internal reactions, it is invisible to other people. For example, sufferers have terrible thoughts about their pain, thinking that it is their fault and that the suffering cannot be healed anymore. These terrible thoughts can cause sufferers to become overwhelmed with sorrow and grief. Sometime, they fear over being unable to fit in the peers. Meanwhile, other sufferers can have positive internal reactions to pain, such as trying to replace negativity with positivity in order to not become more anxious.

The other reaction to pain is an external reaction. It is observable or can be seen by people. For example, when sufferers consider that their pain lasts too long and the help that they receive is ineffective, it leads to aggression. The hormonal change causes aggression to happen. Another example of an external reaction to pain is crying, since sufferers feel that they accept less empathy from people.

2.3 The Kinds of Suffering

According to Quilao (2018), there are five dimensions of suffering namely physical, psychological, social, existential, and ethical suffering. These dimensions of suffering can be described as follows:

2.3.1 Physical Suffering

Physical suffering is a suffering experienced when a physical symptom is overlooked (Quilao, 2018). Forms of physical suffering can take the form of hunger, disability, disease, thirst, etc. As in disease, excessive pain can cause any number of symptoms, such as anxiety, depression, and dependency on family. This also can cause the relationship of sufferers with other people becomes bad. The conflict might arise when sufferers feel that their peers do not listen to what they have to say. Being ignored

by peers as they consider the pain one has is not serious impacts badly to sufferers. Being an alcoholic to numb the pain, having the desire to stab themselves to cut the pain out, and having a sense of being a burden can lead to hopelessness.

2.3.2 Psychological Suffering

Psychological suffering or psychological distress is a lasting, unsustainable, and unpleasant feeling resulting from negative appraisal of an inability or deficiency of the self (Meerwijk & Weiss, 2011). One of the reasons it can occur is when sufferers feel isolated from their families. They consider the treatment they receive is not enough for them as a human being. Therefore, sufferers feel neglected.

Depression is a consequence that sufferers might have as a result of losing good health, experiencing excessive pain, or having a traumatic life experience. Sufferers also feel embarrassed when they feel the health professionals do not listen to them. (Hagedorn & Quinn, 2004). Therefore, health professionals are required to serve with openness and an approachable attitude in order that the sufferers will not feel ashamed.

2.3.3 Social Suffering

Social suffering, as stated by Woods et al. (2019) is a collective and individual human suffering associated with life conditions shaped by powerful social forces. Family and peers are often considered a gift to sufferers. But if the support is not enough, it affects those who suffer. It can impact bad relationships, insensitive communication, and the fear of being rejected by loved ones. Therefore, family and peers have a crucial role.

2.3.4 Existential Suffering

Existential suffering is an experience that includes the following: loss of personal meaning, loss of purpose in life, fear of death, anxiety, hopelessness, fear of

burdening others, loss of dignity, and loneliness (Boston et al., 2011). Sufferers usually feel worthless, which may result in a desire for a hastened death (Quilao, 2018).

2.3.5 Ethical Suffering

Ethical suffering is a loss of dignity (Quilao, 2018). A person who faces ethical suffering feels that the respect or value of themselves is being violated. For example, according to Baumann et al. (2013) in their research, two men with Hansen's disease in Korea lived in a prison-like shelter. It violates a human's dignity. Therefore, this case is included as one of ethical suffering.

2.4 Overcoming Suffering

Pain caused by suffering takes a long time for a person to heal. Pain is an unpleasant sensory or emotional experience. Therefore, sufferers attempt to find an effective strategy to manage their pain. According to Shaygan & Jaberi (2022), there are three factors that affect pain management: gender, family education, and the subjective burden of pain.

First, gender plays a big role in managing pain. Males and females have different personality traits. When the majority of males avoid expressing their pain, females have a more difficult situation, and they try to cope with pain by crying. The way they cope with emotional pain is different than the way they cope with physical pain. Males are more impatient and aggressive, while females are calmer.

Second, family education plays a significant role in managing pain. Family is important. Based on his or her tolerance, an individual who has faced difficulties since childhood has a greater pain tolerance. A child with a father also tolerates pain better than one who does not.

Third, there is the subjective burden of pain. Sufferers' perception of pain plays an important role in managing pain. Therefore, patients are always encouraged to believe that they can overcome the pain.

To overcome suffering, according to Devik et al. (2013), each person needs to demonstrate a strong will and hope for survival. One must get used to it or accept it. People have strategies to conquer the pain and fight it. There are two attempts to overcome pain as in suffering described according to Shaygan & Jaber (2022), namely as follows:

2.4.1 Physical Strategies.

According to Shaygan & Jaber (2022), the strategies applied by sufferers to manage pain are analgesics, heat therapy, and topical ointments. The use of herbal medicine is also recommended in this strategy.

2.4.2 Psychological Strategies

There are three psychological strategies for managing pain, namely as follows:

2.4.2.1 Avoidance or Distraction

Sufferers attempt to forget the pain by thinking about other things. The activities they can do to avoid or distract themselves from pain can be watching television, singing, painting, communicating with friends, going to the beach, going on a trip, keeping pets, etc.

a. Resilience

Even though sufferers have survived the bad experiences in their lives, it does not mean that the negativity will haunt them forever. According to the perspective of

the American Psychological Association (2014) in a research article entitled by Denckla et al. (2020), resilience is defined as the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or significant sources of stress. Therefore, in developing resilience, sufferers think that their pain is trivial, so they try to tolerate it.

Resilient people consider themselves as survivors that they believe when the situation gets hard, they are still be able to keep going. They still recognize and experience strong emotions like anger, sadness, and fear. Those emotions are controlled until they pass.

Resilient people have the ability to regulate their emotions. They have good coping skills to deal with their problems. Sufferers treat themselves with kindness so that they have good self-acceptance when they face problems in life.

The availability of a support system plays an important role in overcoming suffering. It empowers sufferers to move forward and adapt to the situation.

b. Optimism.

By using this strategy, the participants involved in the research done by Shaygan & Jaber (2022) attempt to have positive thoughts that the pain or suffering would not be permanent. So, they could avoid stress, anxiety, and negative thoughts. Therefore, they are optimistic about continuing their lives.

As stated by Lyubomirsky (2007: 102), there are six approaches in increasing personal level optimism. First, imagining a bright future and setting goals. Second, looking for the good thing will happen. Third, savoring the presence. In line with this, Seligman (2002) defines savoring as focusing on thoughts or behaviors that create, intensify, and prolong enjoyment. Forth, reframing the negativity and replacing it with

positive thoughts. Fifth, contemplating the alternatives by thinking back on positive moments in life. Sixth, being grateful to help people cope with stress.

In order to overcome the suffering, support is expected by the sufferers. There are three kinds of supports namely as follows:

a. Family support.

Sufferers expect their family to provide them with sympathy or to provide them with professionals if needed. For example, talking about good memories, playing, giving massages, and telling stories are all kinds of kindness that a family member can give.

b. Peer support.

Sufferers expect their peers to never avoid them. They require their friends to give them emotional support without making fun of them.

c. Spiritual management.

Some sufferers consider resorting to spiritual or religious rituals to make them feel better. For example, a sufferer likes listening to someone recite the Holy Book.