

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

According to Suhariyadi (2014: 26), literature is multidisciplinary, meaning that literary theory can be used as a basis for understanding in any field, for example, when psychology gives its portion to explain psychological aspects in literary works, then the psychology of literature emerges. Darma (1990: 338) states that there is a very strong correlation between literature and psychology because both deal with people and their problems. These problems include misery, desire, fear, conflict, and individual or social problems. The object of literature is human life that has been abstracted in literary works.

In other words, humans are the most frequently represented objects in literary works. Writers represent human life based on their ideology, perceptions, objections, and judgments. Literary psychology is a combination of two sciences that are useful for explaining the psychological aspects of a literary work. Of course, the object under study is human psychology. Psychology can also be used as an approach to knowing the intent and purpose of literary works. Therefore, the psychology of literature can be a basis for understanding to discuss phenomena that occur in humans and their psychological aspects. Then, the researcher uses the psychological basis of literature to discuss this research, which is related to personal conflict.

Every human being must have conflicts in his life, both conflicts from within himself, with other people, or with his environment. Without having conflict, human life will be flat and uninteresting. On the other hand, conflict can make humans develop and become better human beings. As with a story, conflict is the most

important part of a literary work, especially novel works of fiction. Conflict can occur because of a problem if there is no conflict in the novel, the storyline will not develop. Therefore, fiction must contain conflict and tension, especially the conflict experienced by the protagonist so that the story becomes more interesting. In line with the statement of Purnami, et al (2016: 134-139) states that conflict is one of the most important elements in a story. We can say that the story's conflict is its heart; without it, the story lacks energy. Conflict is what makes stories interesting to read because it arises from divergent ideas or points of view.

The novel *Crying in H Mart: A Memoir* is a story from the author's real life, Michelle Zauner. Michelle Chongmi Zauner was born in Seoul, South Korea on March 29, 1989. She is a Korean-American musician and author, best known as the lead vocalist of the alternative pop band Japanese Breakfast. Her 2021 memoir, *Crying in H Mart: A Memoir*, is her debut novel. It spent 60 weeks on *The New York Times* hardcover non-fiction bestseller list. In 2022, *Time* named her one of the 100 most influential people in the world under the category *Innovators* on their annual list.

Crying in H Mart: A Memoir tells how Zauner feels growing up as a Korean-American who lost her mother at an early age, the process of finding identity in a diverse environment, finding passion through her Korean heritage, and cooking Korean food as a way to treat grief. The protagonist, Zauner experiences various difficulties that turn into conflicts. Some of the conflicts she faced were difficulties in adapting to the American environment, especially American culture because she was more attached to Korean culture and she also gets the bullying by her friends at school. As a Korean-American girl, Zauner experienced various racist acts by white

people. Another conflict he faces is depression due to the death of her mother and the pressure on his future dreams.

There are reasons why the researcher takes this novel as the subject of research. First, this novel is a memoir of Zauner, regarding her journey. It ranges from feeling racism in America because she was born as an American-Korean, plus the death of her mother which made her depressed, to the pressure to fulfill her mother's dreams about her future. Second, the discussion of Korean culture is very few. As we know, Korean culture is very popular these days, from drama, music, and food to the Korean way of life.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Based on the background of the study, this research focuses on the protagonist's conflict in Michelle Zauner's novel *Crying in H Mart: A Memoir*. Therefore, two problems will be discussed in this study, namely:

1. What are the protagonist's external conflicts found in the novel *Crying in H Mart: A Memoir* by Michelle Zauner?
2. How are the protagonist's internal conflicts described in the novel *Crying in H Mart: A Memoir* by Michelle Zauner?

1.3 Objective of the Study

Based on the statement of the study, this research has two objectives, namely:

1. To reveal the protagonist's external conflicts found in the novel *Crying in H Mart: A Memoir* by Michelle Zauner.

2. To reveal the protagonist's internal conflicts in the novel *Crying in H Mart: A Memoir* by Michelle Zauner.

1.4 Scope of the Study

This study discusses the protagonist's conflict in the novel *Crying in H Mart: A Memoir* by Michelle Zauner. Based on the objectives of the problem, this study focuses on presenting and describing the protagonist's conflicts in the novel. The researcher uses the conflict theory described by several experts, such as Stanton (1995), Sayuti (2000), and Nurgiyantoro (2007), as a reference for discussion, so that the topic under study runs systematically. In chapter IV, the researcher will discuss the protagonist's conflicts found in the novel *Crying in H Mart: A Memoir*, namely external conflict and internal conflict.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Good research is research that can give significance and help various parties. Theoretically, the researcher hopes that the theory used by the researcher in this study can contribute and provide references to other researchers who are interested in the same discussion, namely external and internal conflict. Practically, the research on this novel aims to make readers appreciate a literary work more and motivate them to create new ideas for future researchers. For the researcher, this research is useful as a mandatory requirement for graduation as a *Sarjana Sastra*, a degree in the English Literature study program, at Universitas Islam Sumatera Utara.

CHAPTER II

LITERARY REVIEW

2.1 Protagonist

A character is an imaginary person who lives in a story. The characters in the story can be divided into three parts, namely the protagonist, antagonist, and tritagonist. The protagonist is a character who plays the main role in a novel. The antagonist is the most prominent of the characters who are opposite the protagonist or hero. Meanwhile, the tritagonist is a supporting or supporting character in a story.

In line with the statement above, Lutters (2006: 81) divides characterizations into three parts, namely protagonist, antagonist, and tritagonist. The protagonist is the central character of the story, the antagonist is the person who plays the opposite role of the protagonist, and the tritagonist is the person who plays both the protagonist's and antagonist's companion roles. He adds that the role of the protagonist should represent positive things in the needs of the story. This role is likely the most hurt, either, and suffering that will cause sympathy for the audience. The protagonist is usually the central figure, the figure that determines the motion scenes.

This is the opinion of Sadikin (2011: 9), who argues that the protagonist (main character) is a very important character in taking a role in a literary work. The following opinion was conveyed by Zulfahnur, et al., (1996: 30), who argued that the main character or protagonist is a character who plays a major role and becomes the center of attention in the intensity of his involvement in the story.

The protagonist is a character represented in a dramatic or narrative work, who is interpreted by the reader as possessing particular moral, intellectual, and emotional qualities by inferences from what the persons say and their distinctive

ways of saying it—the dialogue—and from what they do—the action. Also, the protagonist (or alternatively, the hero or heroine) is a character in a plot, on whom our interest centers, and if the plot is such that he or she is pitted against an important opponent, that character is called the antagonist (Abrams and Harpham, 2009: 265).

The protagonist is a character admired by readers, one type of which is popularly called a hero, a character who embodies ideal norms and values for readers. The protagonist displays something that is by the views and expectations of the reader. Everything that the character feels, thinks, and does represents us at the same time. Therefore readers often recognize them as similarities (Nurgiyantoro, 2007: 178-179).

The protagonist always comes along with his chief motivating force and tangible objective. It is important to note that the protagonist in a novel can be singular (just the main characters). Another kind of character whose function is to hamper the protagonist in achieving his tangible objective is an antagonist (Fuadi, 2012: 12).

In a literary work, characterization is an important element because without it the story will not develop and will not be interesting. This is in line with the opinion of Altenberg & Lewis (1966: 59), which says that a protagonist character is commonly the one that faces a conflict in a story. The characters also represent the readers. These characters usually represent the same interest, hopes, and ideas as the reader.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that the protagonist is the main character in a story. The protagonist is the center of attention that can represent the views and values of the reader.

2.2 Conflict

Jones (1996: 30) in Nurgiyantoro (2007: 124), states that conflicts in works of fiction are interrelated, cause each other to occur, and can occur simultaneously, although the level of intensity may not be the same. According to Stanton (1995: 31) conflict is a physical, moral, mental, emotional, and destiny resistance between people, animals, or even within ourselves. An opposition between the protagonist's and antagonist's characters is an illustration of conflict.

A conflict is an event that is classified as important (in the form of a functional, main, or kernel event), which is an essential element in plot development. The author's ability to choose and build conflict through various events will determine the level of interest, suspense, and story that is produced. Events in a literary work are closely related to the conflict. Events can create conflicts and conflicts can trigger other events. The form of events in a story can be physical or mental events. Physical events involve physical activity, and interactions between story characters and characters outside themselves, other characters, or the environment. Inner events happen in a character's mind and heart (Nurgiyantoro, 2007: 122-124).

Wellek and Warren (1990: 285), state that conflict is something dramatic, and refers to a struggle between two balanced forces, implying action and reciprocal action. Conflict will occur if there is no agreement or regular arrangement between one desire and another. Conflict can also occur if there is no agreement between one ego and another. This usually happens in real life which most people often avoid. However, in the world of literature, conflict is needed and can even be said to be important in order to support the contents of the story. If there is no conflict in a story, then it is certain that the story will not live and attract readers to read it

because there are no events that can be felt. It's not even an exaggeration if writing literary works is building and developing conflicts because the more and more interesting the conflicts that occur, the more interesting the story will be to read.

Stanton (1995: 16) states that according to the form of events, conflict is divided into two parts, namely external conflict and internal conflict. External conflict is a conflict occurring between a character and something outside himself/herself. It could be the environment and also human beings or other characters. While internal conflict is a conflict that occurs in the heart or soul of characters. However, Stanton did not elaborate on the two types of conflict. Therefore, researchers collect explanations and understanding of external conflicts and internal conflicts through several experts as described below.

Therefore, it can be said that external and internal occurs in a character (protagonist or antagonist) in a story. This character's external and internal conflict can occur between a character and his own ego, a character and his environment, or a character and other human beings.

2.2.1 External Conflict

According to Kenney (1966: 19), fiction has many different kinds of conflicts. A work of literature, such as a novel, can also reflect internal conflict, conflicts between men, conflicts between men and society, and conflicts between men and nature. This kind of conflict is called external conflict. The conflict is described more profoundly in terms of external conflict. The conflict is more clearly described as an external conflict. Man's struggle with forces greater than himself is depicted in the tragic vision. Fate, fate, chance, and necessity are some of the other forces at work in these plays.

Stanton (1995: 16), says that external conflict is a conflict occurring between a character and something outside himself, it could be the environment and also a human being or another character. Soraya (2018: 14), states that external conflict is something outside of the person. The person may have some control over the situation or may have zero control. The conflict appears because of suspense emotion and problem. Besides, conflicts occur between the characters of the story with something outside of him, perhaps with the environment or other characters.

Coser (1913: 219) states that external conflict is the different groups involved in conflict also experience functional results especially when the conflict is more violent. When a group is involved in an external conflict, its boundaries strengthen, its members feel more united, power is used more effectively, and the group tends to form coalitions with other groups. The more violent the conflict, the stronger these effects become. There must be some people in it and some people won't be in it for any group to exist. The production and regulation of diverse behaviors, mental and emotional states, cultural symbols, and other factors are all part of the process of inclusion or exclusion.

According to Nurgiyantoro (2007: 124), external conflict is a conflict that occurs between a character and something outside himself, perhaps with the natural environment, perhaps with the human environment. He adds that external conflict is divided into two types: physical and social conflict.

1. Physical Conflict (elemental conflict)

Nurgiyantoro (2007: 124), states that physical conflict is a conflict caused by a collision between a character and the natural environment. For example, conflicts

and or problems experienced by a character due to major floods, long droughts, volcanic eruptions, and so on.

The explanation of physical conflict from Nurgiyantoro is very limited. Therefore, to clarify, the researcher takes the definition of physical conflict from Sayuti. According to Sayuti (2000: 42-43), physical conflict is also called element conflict or natural conflict. This type of conflict usually occurs when a character cannot master and/or utilize and cultivate the natural surroundings as they should. If the relationship between humans and nature is not harmonious, disharmony will occur which can cause conflict.

2. Social Conflict

Social conflict is conflicts caused by the existence of social contact between humans, or problems that arise as a result of human relations. Examples include labor problems, bullying, disputes, wars, and other social relations cases (Nurgiyantoro, 2007: 124).

To clarify the understanding of social conflict, the researcher takes the meaning of social conflict from Sayuti and Kenny. Sayuti (2000: 42-43) says that conflicts like this usually occur between characters and their surroundings. Conflicts like this usually occur between characters and their surroundings. This conflict arises from individual attitudes toward the social environment regarding various problems that occur in society.

Furthermore, Kenny (1996: 32), states that social conflict is a conflict between characters against another character. The characters have conflicts in their social life in their relationship with other characters. The conflict happens when the

actor has a problem with another. It is the struggle of one person against another. That caused to be contractions such as fighting.

2.2.2 Internal Conflict

Kenney (1996: 5-19) says that internal conflict is a struggle that takes in the character's mind and it happens within the single man. Nimran in Rachmayanti (2013) states that internal (intrapersonal) conflict is a conflict faced or experienced by an individual with himself because of role pressures and expectations from outside that differ from his desires or expectations. In addition, internal conflict can occur when a person has two desires at the same time and they are not fulfilled at once.

Internal conflict (Coser, 1913: 218) is a conflict that occurs between humans versus themselves and humans versus humans. Internal conflict is often referred to as man versus self because the struggle is in one's head. In society, this conflict is usually called low-level conflict because it often tends to release hostility. The hostility keeps the conflict from building up and becoming a disintegration of the system, the purpose of this internal conflict is usually called psychological conflict.

Noviana (2010), states that internal conflicts occur when individuals have needs, desires, realities, and values that are not in line with one another. It is impossible for both of these needs and wants to be fulfilled at the same time. The conflict that occurs can be in the form of two values or two needs that are not in line. Conflicts can occur not only in the form of actions but also in the form of perceptions. This is because expectations are not in line with reality.

Nurgiyantoro (2007: 124) states that internal conflict is a conflict that occurs in the heart or soul of a character in a story. Conflicts like this are usually

experienced by humans themselves. the type of conflict included in internal conflict is conflict within a character (psychological conflict).

Nurgiyantoro (2007: 124) also states that internal conflict is also known as psychological conflict. This conflict occurs in the heart and soul of a character in the story. So, this is a conflict that humans experience with themselves, more of an internal human problem. For example, things that happen as a result of conflicts between two desires, beliefs, different choices, hopes, or other problems.

To clarify the understanding of psychological conflict, the researcher uses explanations from various experts such as Sayuti, Soraya, Krauss, and, Morsella. According to Sayuti (2000: 42-43), internal conflict (psychological conflict) occurs within a person (character). This type of conflict usually occurs in the form of a character's struggle against himself, so that he can overcome and determine what he will do.

Furthermore, Soraya (2018: 17) says that internal (psychological conflict) is a struggle that takes place in the character's mind, because of dual desires or different wishes and choices. For example, a character may have to decide between right and wrong or between two solutions to a problem. Sometimes, a character must deal with his or her mixed feelings or emotions. Conflict Man versus Self is an internal battle that characters wage within themselves; these are internal issues that affect their actions, motivations, and interactions with other characters. Internal conflict happens inside a person. He or she is unsure about something. And yet the person needs to act. The person may have all of the resources necessary to act. And yet, the person is uncertain.