2.1 Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, the writer will explain about the theory which is applied to analyze *Rabbit Hole* play as the chosen literary work in this study. Regarding the statement of the problem, the theory which is used in this study is New Criticism; which means the approach based only on the text itself. Besides explaining about New Criticism as the main theory and several formal elements such as characterization, plot, symbol, and also the theme which is the main idea of the story, this chapter also contains related studies with the similar issue that can support this study. There will be three related studies for this study that will be discussed in the end of this chapter. First, the writer will explain about the main theory; that is New Criticism.

New Criticism is an approach which focuses on the text itself to find the meaning of a literary work. New Criticism refuses to pay attention to the external factors such as author’s background, reader’s response, and another factor which is not merely about the text of literary work. According to Tyson, the external factors such as author’s background cannot always be a guide to provide information to analyze a literary work (Tyson 136), because New Criticism focuses only on the text,
the validity of the text meaning is reasonable. Tyson stated that “Our goal is to use New Criticism to help enrich our reading of literary texts, to help us see and appreciate in new ways the complex operations of their formal elements and how those elements function to create meaning.” (Tyson 150). Because New Criticism believes that the formal elements and the meaning of the text are related, that is why in analyzing a literary work using New Criticism approach, we need to work on the formal elements to form the organic unity of the text to establish the theme.

2.1.1 Formal Elements

According to Tyson, the only way to discover the text’s meaning or the theme is by examining the formal elements of the text itself (Tyson 137). Since the language which is used to produce formal elements is literary language, and used in a literary work, the language is different from everyday language. In New Criticism, formal element is important to establish the theme of a literary text, because it is such evidence which forms the literary work itself. It means that we have to examine the formal elements in detail in order to find out the meaning of the work at the end. In order to discover the meaning of the work or the theme itself by examining the formal elements, we need to do close reading, as what was stated by Tyson that close reading is “the scrupulous examination of the complex relationship between a text’s formal elements and its theme, is how the text’s organic unity was established by the New Critic.” (Tyson 141), we need to pay attention to the text itself carefully to examine the formal elements.
A literary work has more than one formal elements, it could be: characterization, plot, setting, symbol, irony, point of view, or so forth. We can examine those formal elements by using close reading method to discover the theme at the end of the work, like what will be done in this study. The writer will be examining the formal elements such as characterization, plot, and symbol closely to discover the meaning of the work or the theme, after those formal elements work and reach an organic unity. We can know that a literary text has an organic unity after we discover the theme of the work which is built by the formal elements which work together and related to each other.

2.1.1.1 Characterization

Characterization is a representation of how the imagined person who inhabits a story or called character behaves throughout the story. It is important element since plot is strongly related to character; meanwhile character is the most important element because according to DiYanni “characters bring plays to life” (DiYanni 744). Although character in a fiction is not a real person, only an imaginary person who is created by the author to live the story, but they are the imitation of real human which have feature and characteristic. We can know character’s type or their characteristic by looking at how they look, what they say and how they act.

According to Gill, the most effective thing for us to learn about a character’s type is from the dialogue (Gill 172). What the characters say and what they say about other characters, how they say, can represent what kind of characters they are.
Besides from the way the characters say or behave through their speech in dialogue, we can define the type of the character from the way the author shows the audience or reader about what the characteristic or personality of the character is. In a fiction, not only portrays the characteristic of the character through their speech in dialogue, the author usually also tells the audience directly about the characteristic of the character towards the audience or reader. For example: the petulant man who is sitting at the corner throws the glass as soon as he is told by his friend that his neighbor stole his money. It means that the author tells the audience or reader directly that the character has petulant personality. This is called direct characterization, meanwhile the way the author shows the characteristic or personality of the characters from the way they talk or behave through the dialogue is called indirectly characterization.

According to Kennedy, there are several types of character in a fiction, they are: flat or static character and round or dynamic character (Kennedy 75). A flat character is only shown with one outstanding personality and unchanging throughout the story, meanwhile round character has more than one side, changing and developing throughout the story. The chosen character that will be analyzed in this story is considered as a round character because of her changing and developing characteristic throughout the story.
2.1.1.2 Plot

If we talk about the events in the story of literary work, the term of plot will emerge in our mind. Plot is about every events which happens in the story and related to each other, and according to Kennedy, it is constructing a conflict in a story (Kennedy 12). According to Griffith, the presence of plot in a drama should be simple and understandable for the audience due to the length of the performance, it is also noted that the amount of the characters in a story influences the plot; therefore plot would be simpler if the number of the characters is a little (Griffith 58). It is understandably if the reason that plot of a drama should be simple due to the length of the performance, because unlike novel, sometimes a play or drama has certain duration in its performance on the stage, while a novel does not have certain duration because it is not required to be performed, the reader can also review it easily by re-reading it.

According to DiYanni, there are several plot stages of a realistic drama, they are: Exposition, Complication, Climax, Falling Action, and Resolution (DiYanni 744). Exposition is the opening or introduction of the story; it introduces the audience what happened before the story begins. After introducing the beginning of the story and the main characters as well, the new conflict starts to emerge; this stage is called as complication. The conflict which is emerged starts to reach the highest tension; this stage is called as climax. The conflict which reached the highest tension then
resolved in falling action stage, which later reaches its resolution in the end of the story.

According to Griffith, the main discussion about plot is in its main conflict, the reason why the conflicts emerged, the character who faces the conflicts and to whom - because sometimes an individual is not merely faces a conflict with another individual, there are also larger conflicts which involve more than individuals - also the way the conflicts resolved (Griffith 61). There are two types of conflicts; internal conflict, which occurs in the character’s mind and there is an opposite emotion, and external conflict, which involves the characters with other characters. In this study the writer will examine these two types of conflicts, internal conflict and external conflict.

Conflicts in the play are revealed through dialogue, because unlike a novel which is more straight forward because it is written in basic prose and there are many explanations from the author in telling the story, a play or drama is written in dialogue, we must learn about what is happening in the story including about conflicts which occur, through the dialogue, which shows what the characters say or do towards the other characters. In a play, conflicts are expected can attract the audience because according to Griffith, playwrights establish conflict to make the audience involved in the story and find out the cause and effect system of the actions (Griffith 58).
2.1.1.3 Symbol

According to Kennedy, symbol is a thing in literary work which has more than literal meaning, that pointed thing does not provide one meaning only (Kennedy 206). We can take the term of ‘spring’ as a symbol for example, spring is one of the seasons which is identical with bloomed flower, it is the literal meaning of spring, but the term can have a figurative meaning when it is used in a fiction of literary work, spring can be the meaning of rebirth, the rebirth of the character or other things in that pointed fiction. The interpretation of a symbol can be different from one person to another, include the interpretation of a symbol between the reader and the author. According to Tyson, sometimes symbol has private meaning and only the author of it knows its meaning, and our analysis about symbol within the text can be different from the author’s intention, but it does not matter as long our analysis about symbol supports in finding the theme of the literary work of our study (Tyson 142).

According to Kennedy, we can know the existence of a symbol in a fiction through its mentioning, sometimes the author will mention the pointed image many times in the story, or it may be used as the title of the story, or for a crucial symbol, it will appear in the beginning of the story in its introduction or will appear in the end of the story (Kennedy 208). The symbol which is represented by the title of this play, *Rabbit Hole*, is chosen as the symbol that will be analyzed, since it has something related to the main idea of this story. The pointed image which is carried by Becca as the main character through her dialogue with another character in the third scene...
‘rabbit hole’ indicates the main idea of this story, which is about the survival attempt of a person after the death of a beloved son.

2.1.1.4 Theme

If a fiction has several elements such as character, plot, setting, to build a story, it is absolutely also has its central idea as a result from the merger of those elements. The central or main idea in a fiction such as drama which creates meaning of the story is called as theme. According to Griffith, the theme of a drama is built through the development and relation of the drama’s elements itself (Griffith 71). It means that a fiction such as drama must be contain some elements to build a story such as character, plot, setting which produce a main idea of a story or so called as theme, since those elements are developed and related. The notion of a theme of a story by the reader or audience as their response to a story they read or watch can change during working on its details such as dialogue, as what was stated by DiYanni, “As we notice details and connect them, as we discover and remember, our sense of the play’s theme changes.” (DiYanni 749).

According to Griffith, there are three methods to develop a theme, such as by: repetitions, symbols, and contrasts, and audience can choose one of them to develop a theme (Griffith 71). Since one of the formal elements which is analyzed in this study is symbol, it will be good to choose symbol to develop a theme among those three options. Griffith stated that “symbolism bears on both characterization and theme as well” (Griffith 72), in this literary text for example, it is narrated in the story that the
main character talks about a story of parallel universes symbolized by rabbit hole, that there is another version that everything goes our way and good times will come in order to replace bad times or grief we have experienced. Learning from the way rabbit hole or the parallel universes work, the character that brought it up in their talking becomes more motivated to survive along with her characteristic which turns to be better, to continue her normal life after the death of her beloved son which becomes the theme of this story.

2.2 Review of Related Studies

As what was stated in the introduction, people’s traumatic experience caused by losing their beloved person sometimes influences their life. Some people will choose to end their life in order to avoid that painful feeling, but some will choose to make attempts to survive. Those circumstances which are a reflection in a real life sometimes become a main issue in literary works, such as drama, novel, poetry, or short story.

Some literary works contain an issue about an attempt or struggle to overcome a traumatic experience, some of them using psychoanalysis or psychology approach because the issue is related to human psychology. A journal article entitled *Toni Morrison’s Beloved: A Journey through the Pain of Grief* talks about an attempt to accept a painful or traumatic experience which is the death of a daughter by the character named Sethe after experiencing the process of denial and isolation, anger, bargaining, depression and attain acceptance stage at the end by using the framework
of human emotions in response to grieving and death approach as developed by Elisabeth Kubler-Ross. Another related study was found in a journal article of phenomenological study by Paula Vega entitled *When Grief Turns Into Love: Understanding the Experience of Parents Who Have Revived After Losing a Child Due to Cancer*. The article is about the impact of a child’s death caused by cancer to the parents. Some parents try to manage their life again to overcome the grief after the death of their child and try to discover a new meaning for their life. The participants of the research who are parents who have experienced losing their child try to cope with their mourning to survive.

The next related study taken from a thesis entitled *Melinda’s Struggle to Overcome Her Sexual Abuse Trauma in Laurie Halse Anderson’s Speak: A New Criticism Study* by Donny Herdiawan with an issue about a victim of sexual abuse who battles to overcome her traumatic experience to continue her normal life. The theory which is used for the study is the same; that is New Criticism; the issue is also about an attempt or struggle to overcome a traumatic experience to continue a normal life, but the case of the traumatic experience is different, it is about sexual abuse, not about losing a beloved person because of death.

Unlike this study which is examined with the theory of literature, although contain the same issue, studies such as those related studies above were examined using psychological and phenomenological study, this is the gap between this study and those studies. For the last related study, although using New Criticism theory of literature, with the same issue which is about struggle or survival attempt after...
experiencing a traumatic experience, but the case of traumatic experience is not about grief in losing a person because of death. In this study, the writer analyzes the issue of a struggle or survival attempt after experiencing a traumatic experience in losing a person because of death using New Criticism study, not psychology or phenomenological study.