

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In the past few years, the number of people who choose to be single have been rising (DePaulo 2016, 1). More people choose to be single rather than being in a relationship. Despite the increasing number of people who choose to be single in the last few years, it does not mean there is no conflict within the history of single people. In fact, the single status is seen as an unwelcomed thing until the late of twentieth century (Schmidt, et al. 2015, 17). The reason why it is not wanted in the society back then is because the society expects everyone to be married. Therefore, people who are single back then are being stigmatized and disregarded by others who are not single.

There are various opinions regarding the idea of singlehood. These various judgments eventually lead to a paradox situation where one thing that seems to be wrong can actually be true (Lycan 2010, 1). Several opinions regarding singlehood can be seen as something absurd. It is because the opinions are not commonly found within certain society and/or culture. They are commonly seen as contradictory to the ones that people generally believed in. In spite of that, it cannot be denied that the absurdity that can be found within the statements and/or opinions regarding singlehood can still hold truth within it. Thus, in order to explain the hidden truth, it is necessary to do further examination on the statements and/or opinions regarding singlehood.

Judgments regarding single individuals are still common in the society. However, different from the past, the single lifestyle in the last few years has become something that some people desire. This is mostly because these individuals believe that in order to have a better life—for now or in the future—firstly, they need to be single (Spreitzer and Riley 2015, 4-10). This reason is not the only thing why these individuals choose to be single. There are also other reasons on why some people choose to live as a single person.

One of the reasons of why several people choose to be single is because they want to focus on their career (Spreitzer and Riley 2015). People who choose to be single because they want to focus on their career usually perceive having a relationship—in a romantic or serious way—is troublesome. Thus, making singlehood as a lifestyle that—people choose to partake in when they wanted to have another option—aims to improve certain things in their own personal life. However, it does not mean people's perceptions on individuals who are single are better.

In fact, most people still believe that individuals who are single are people who are essentially not happy with their own personal life. In addition, these people see individuals who are single as people who feel dejected by their own personal life. As a result, these judgments regarding the single status that a person lives with affect the feelings and opinions of the person who deals with single lifestyle. Furthermore, it has become a common thing in the society to perceive singlehood as something that is unhealthy (Schuetz and Morris 2007, 3)

In general, people who choose to be in a relationship believe that if they are in a relationship, especially the romantic one, their happiness will be doubled. In addition, they also believed that they will not be able to live their lives to the fullest when they are single. Despite these reasons, it cannot be denied there is also a hidden agenda behind the reason why these people choose to be in a relationship rather than being single. The hidden agenda is how the action of having romantic relationship is essentially an action that needs to be done in order to fulfill the expectation of the social norms that exist in the society (Simpson 2015, 2).

There is also other study conducted by Spreitzer and Riley (2015) where they tried to reveal the factors associated with singlehood for both females and males. The reason why men become or choose to be single is mostly because of their poor interpersonal relationship (Spreitzer and Riley 2015, 10). To put it simply, the poor interpersonal relationship affect men's status of relationship. On the other hand, the social class and the intelligence that women have are the key factors on why they are single (Spreitzer and Riley 2015, 10).

Singlehood has become one of interesting topics that people choose to do further research. However, it still becomes a rare issue to be discussed in the literary field. Despite the rarity regarding the discussion of singlehood in literary works, it does not mean there is no study that chooses to explore singlehood in literary works. For instance, a research conducted by Yodovich and Lahad (2017) can also be seen as one of the few studies that did a research on singlehood in a literary work.

The research that has been done by Yodovich and Lahad (2017, 10-12) revealed how loneliness can affect the social emotions of people who are single. In addition, they also discovered how one of the ideologies that a single individual has can overlap with a deeper feeling of intimacy (Yodovich and Lahad 2017, 10-12). In other words, people who are single—who believe that they do not need someone else in order to live their life to the fullest—are unconsciously wanted to have what people who are in a relationship have.

This kind of overlapping ideology between being independent and dependent for single people can essentially be found in Liz Tuccillo's *How to Be Single* (2008). The novel tells about five women in their 30's who navigate themselves through their single life. This novel has been adapted into a movie in 2016 with the same title (Warner Bros. Pictures 2016). In that year, the movie became one of the box office movies. In addition, both of the novel and movie choose New York City as its main setting of place (Film L.A. Inc 2017, 26). The movie also talks about how the characters live their single life.

The novel *How to Be Single* (2008) gives a different illustration of single lifestyle. This is because despite the common depiction of singlehood where people commonly have fun it also shows different kinds of single lifestyle. This type of singlehood is commonly related to significant other. In other words, these characters inside the novel wanted to have romantic partners despite the single status that they have. Consequently, it affects the meaning of singlehood within the novel.

One of the reasons why this study chooses singlehood as its main topic is because of the rarity in discussing it within the literary studies. In addition, people generally do not see single lifestyle as an important issue to be discussed. This is because people commonly perceived singlehood as a lifestyle that is non-dynamic. However, in Liz Tuccillo's *How to Be Single* (2008) people can see the dynamic that happened within the single lifestyle. Especially regarding the meaning of singlehood itself.

Thus, in order to reveal the singlehood that the main character—Julie Jenson—is living through inside the novel *How to Be Single* (2008) this study used a theory by A. J. Greimas that is called *structural narratology*. Several concepts that are used in this study are the *actantial model* and *functional model*. The *actantial model* is commonly used to analyze the actions that are done by the characters inside the literary work. Inside *the actantial model* there is a concept called the *three spheres of opposed* which includes *subject* versus *object*, *sender* versus *receiver*, and *helper* versus *opponent* (Greimas 1984, 203-207). Later on, this particular scheme presents a scheme called the *actantial scheme*, a scheme that explains the direction of the situations that happened to the *actants*.

On the other hand, the *functional model* is used in order to describe the journey that the actants needed to go through. In other words, it focuses on the plot of the story. Within this concept, Greimas (1984, 225-235) divided the journey into three situations. These situations are *beginning situation*, *transformation* which included three tests (*qualifying test*, *main test* and *glorifying test*) and the last

situation that is the *ending situation* (Greimas 1984, 225-235). These situations later on would make a scheme which is called as the *functional model scheme*.

The structural narratology theory by A. J. Greimas is chosen for this study because this theory is considered to be able to present the details of the main character's life throughout the entire story. In addition, the structural narratology theory also helps this study to do a further analysis on the structural units that builds the single lifestyle within the literary work, specifically on its characters and plots.

1.2 Statements of the Problem

In order to analyze the single lifestyle that is depicted inside the novel, the researcher of this study has formulated two statements of problem to elaborate her analysis:

1. How do the *actantial model* and *functional model* depict the main character's singlehood in Liz Tuccillo's *How to Be Single*?
2. How do the the *actantial model* and *functional model* of the novel relate to the singlehood that was experienced by the main character?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Based on the statement of the problems, the analysis of this study aims to:

1. To identify the *actantial model* and *functional model* that depicted the main character singlehood in Liz Tuccillo's *How to Be Single*.
2. To identify the relation between the *actantial model* and *functional model* related to the singlehood that was experienced by the main character.

1.4 Significance of the Study

In general, the issue of singlehood is something that people can relate in their life. Both women and men experience this kind of lifestyle. However, it cannot be denied that the ones who deal more with the stigma of singlehood are women. Almost every woman who chooses to be single are the ones who suffer from the negative judgments that are given by the society. Most people believe that women will undergo lower life satisfaction and poorer mental health if they choose to live the single life.

Despite those beliefs, singlehood can be a crucial issue when it is examined further. However, most people do not see single lifestyle as an important issue to talk about. Thus, this study is expected to give more awareness regarding the issue of singlehood, specifically on singlehood in literary works. In addition, this study is also expected to give new insight for the people who are interested in the same field of study.

Most of the previous studies regarding singlehood used feminism or psychoanalysis perspectives in their researches. Specifically for literary studies, there are only several previous studies that focused on the issue of singlehood. In addition, most studies still focused on the types of single individuals in literary works. Furthermore, previous studies also have not yet concentrated on the structures that shaped the singlehood within the literary works. Consequently, this study used structural narratology in order to reveal the narrative structures that build the singlehood within the novel and to give a better understanding on the issue of singlehood.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

- Lifestyle* : It is how people live their own life or how people want to live their own life.
- Paradox* : Paradox involves examining contradictory statements and drawing conclusions in order to reconcile them or to explain their presence.
- Ideology* : A systemic set of beliefs that commonly happens in various society.
- Judgment* : A process of forming an opinion based on the things that are taken from the environment.
- Singlehood* : Singlehood refers to a lifestyle that deals with someone who has never been married and/or not in a relationship.