

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

In literature, the way we interpret a literary work depends on our perspective which is largely determined by social and cultural conditioning or constructs that have influenced our way of seeing the world and our way of thinking. In return, our understanding of a literary work may also give us a better way of seeing life and some useful lessons to lead a better life.

The struggle of life is one of the important lessons featured in many literary works. Struggle for life as defined by Herbert Spencer in Social Darwinism theory suggests that human society, like a nature, is involved in a constant “struggle for survival” between individuals in society and each individuals are responsible for their own lives and should not look for anyone else to take care of any of their needs (Weikart). Thus, life is about struggle, and as long as there is life there will be struggle to survive, struggle to improve ourselves, struggle to cope with day to day life, and struggle to plan a better future. Life is meant to be lived as truthfully and beautifully in an accomplished way as we can, by overcoming all the obstacles that one comes across. Life changes every second, so we have to adjust and cope with multiple changes. Therefore, it can be inferred that the struggle for life is the necessary effort that people must do in order to survive and live a meaningful life.

Struggle for life can also be categorized as an inspirational issue. In literature, there are many stories that raise the struggle for life as their main focus such as *Hunger Games*, *Mocking Jay*, *Nobody's Girl*, *Street Kid*, *Girl Stolen* and one of them is *Nobody's Boy*, a novel by Hector Malot which became famous in the late 18th century. Hector Malot was born in May 20, 1830 he was a French writer born in La bouille, Seine -Maritime. Literature became his passion. He worked as drama critic for *Lloyd Francais* and as a literary critic for *L'Opinion Nationale*. In total Malot wrote over 70 books. By far his most famous book is *Sans Famille* (translated as *Nobody's Boy*, 1878), which deals with the travels of a young orphan Remi, who is sold to a street musician Signor Vitalis at age 10. The novel gained fame as a children's book although it was not originally intended as such. Malot's novels written for teenagers are particularly well known and have been translated into many languages (www.hectormalot.com). *Nobody's Boy* was awarded *Montyon Prizes* which is a series of prizes awarded annually by the *Académie Française*. They were endowed by the French benefactor Baron de Montyon. This novel was translated from the French language into English by Florence Crewe-Jones in 2008. In that story, the struggle of life becomes the center of interest because there are so many problematic events happened and so many conflicts experienced by the main character that force him to struggle for his survival.

Nobody's Boy is a story about struggle, but what makes this struggle interesting to discuss is how Remi's struggle in order to find the complete family and also what makes his struggle so special is when he reaches the peak point of

his struggle, he still does not give up to get what he wants. From Remi's struggle, it can also be explained that the struggle portrayed in this novel is taken from the point of view of a child's character. In this study, the writer would like to offer a new way of seeing a struggle, not only struggle to overcome obstacles, but here the writer would explain clearly about struggle to reveal the character development of a young boy named Remi. Remi was found by an old street musician named Signor Vitalis. There are so many conflicts and tragedies happened during his journeys, but Remi realized that life is full of adventure and struggle. Remi has to survive because he has no one to depend on. Having a life without a love from his parents makes Remi feel so lonely and it motivates him to look for his biological mother.

The story of Remi clearly portrays how the struggle for life will drive anyone to make several efforts to overcome problems and hardships in life. This story also teaches us about friendship between human and animals, and a change from a bad life into a good life. Remi's struggle for life also provides some inspirational ideas about society and environment around children. Remi's struggle also aims to bring the happiness in the end, here the writer defines the happiness of Remi as he found his biological mother that he always expected to meet. One of the main interesting points is Remi's endurance throughout the difficult times in his life. He is left alone by his master who was caught in jail by the local police. Loneliness also becomes an interesting point in this story because during his journey, Remi always looks for his biological mother in every place he visits.

Since this is a story about children, the language used by the author is simple and easy to understand especially for children. The style of writing is good and there are many moral values in this story, such as the meaning of friendship between human and animals, loyalty, and bravery. Thus, these are some of the reasons why the writer is interested in analyzing this novel for this study. Another reason is the issue of struggle of life portrayed in novel that makes the writer interested in exploring more about the main character, Remi. Throughout this story, Remi is portrayed as experiencing struggle for life that eventually develops his character. In addition, the writer will analyze the formal elements in this novel that include the plot, setting, and character. Therefore, the most suitable theory for this study is New Criticism that focuses on the analysis of formal elements in a literary work, such as the setting, plot, character, and so on. The goal of applying New Criticism is to find the Organic Unity in a literary work where all formal elements work together to establish the Unity called as Theme (Parker 27). The writer used New Criticism theory in this study to analyze about Remi's struggle for life in *Nobody's Boy* novel.

B. Statements of the Problems

The background of the study leads to statements that are going to be analyzed. The following statements are formulated to make a clear focus on the analysis.

1. How is Remi's struggle to face hardships in his life portrayed through the formal elements in Malot's *Nobody's Boy*?

2. How do these formal elements support the theme that the struggle in the beginning of life will bring true happiness in the end?

C. Objective of the Study

In organizing the analysis, there is an objective that the writer wants to reach. The objective is to answer the statements of the problems mentioned above.

The writer wants to answer those questions in order:

1. To reveal Remi's struggle to face hardships in his life as portrayed through the formal elements in Malot's *Nobody's Boy*.
2. To explain the way these formal elements support the theme that the struggle in the beginning of life will bring true happiness in the end.

D. Significance of the Study

This study is expected to give deeper understanding and serve as reference for further researches analyzing the formal elements of fiction in a literary text especially in analysis of character, setting, plot, and theme. In studying children's literature, the writer hopes that the readers will be interested in expanding the issues of children, particularly the struggle for life that children have to go through from their early childhood in order to get a better life. The writer hopes that in general this study will be able to inform readers about the precious meaning and aspect of the struggle as portrayed through literary works. Thus, this study is also expected to become beneficial for those who want to seek further vision about struggle for life. The writer also hopes that this study can give

contribution to those interested in analyzing the struggle for life through the formal elements in literary works.

E. Scope and Limitation

This study focuses on the formal elements in the novel as a means of revealing Remi's struggle to overcome his problems. The writer focuses on Remi as the main character who has experienced struggle in several places during his life throughout the plot in which the events strongly relate to the stage of struggle. Plot also plays an important role in the character's life because in *Nobody's Boy*, Remi's journeys and conflicts that happen along the way have made him learn important values that finally develop his character. Other characters like Mother Barberin, Signor Vitalis, Garofoli, Mrs. Milligan play roles to support Remi to develop and strengthen his character. Other formal elements like setting will be used as the background of plot to give clear and deep analysis.

F. Theoretical Background

New Criticism has been used largely in the range of time 1940s to 1960s and it received its name from John Crowe Ransom's 1941 book *The New Criticism*. It quickly became "the way" to read literature and poetry, and was taught in both college and high schools. The underlying idea is that the intention of the author is not important; the text itself is all that should be examined. This theory gets its fame with "the text itself" and the analysis more focuses just on the text. New Criticism theory states that the meaning of a literary text only lies in "the text itself" which means that one cannot interpret the text by looking at

author's intention or reader's feeling because in this theory the focus is only on the text and what happens in the text is based on conflicts that happen in the literary works.

This theory also prevents the reader from looking at historical, geographical and social background when the literary works were written. The New Critics totally agree that making an interpretation based on author's intention is indeed a fallacy as they agree that what we think the author intended should not govern our interpretation of a literary text (Parker 32). New Critics calls this as "the death of the author" because we live in this era that we can not ask Shakespeare about his literary works directly. Here it means that author intention and author historical background cannot be used as tools in interpreting literary works. New Critic treats a work of literature as if it were a self-contained, self-referential object rather than basing their interpretations of a text on the reader's response, the author's stated intentions, or parallels between the text and historical contexts (such as author's life). New Critic performs a close reading, concentrating on the relationships within the text that gives it its own distinctive character or form.

Others evaluate works in terms of the author's life and background, but New Criticism differs greatly from previous way of evaluating as it dismisses authorial intention, and particularly ignores biographical and historical information about an author. Instead, literature was to be interpreted based solely on the cohesiveness of the work. To a New Critic, whatever the author's intention is not relevant, as the form of the work always transforms intentions, producing new meanings. There are several terms which are related to New Criticism such as *the*

affective fallacy the notion that the reader's response is relevant to the meaning of a work and *intentional fallacy* the notion that the author's intention determines the work's meaning (Bressler 59-60).

After explaining the theory of New Criticism, the writer will analyze the formal elements of fiction which are the parts of the New Criticism theory that includes characterization, setting, plot and theme. The theory of formal elements will be used in this study based on Richard Gill's *Mastering English Literature*.

G. Methods of the Study

The method of the study is qualitative and here, the writer uses New Criticism theory for the analysis. The novel used is *Nobody's Boy* novel by Hector Malot which has become the most important source of data for the analysis. The other supporting data are taken from various books, articles, journal reviews, and M.A Thesis.

The writer uses "close reading" as the step of analyzing the novel. Close reading is done by reading more than once to give deep and sharp understanding of the novel. There are four steps or level in doing close reading. (1) Attaining first impressions – the writer reads the text and highlights any words and phrases that seems strange, surprising, important, or hard to understand. In studying the novel, the writer tries to highlight the difficult words that can be found in the novel. In particular, the writer is to be ready to notice anything that makes things difficult. (2) Getting the basics - in applying this step, the writer explains the concept of struggle portrayed in the novel because the basic issue of this study is

about struggle. (3) Looking for patterns - after the writer has marked the issues in the text and has looked up all words related with the issue, the writer then tries to organize this into a pattern to combine all of the formal elements to formulate the theme. The writer puts the highlighted pieces together and makes some connections between them. (4) Reading for meaning. Here, in term of reading for meaning, the writer's last step is to find out the meaning of the text as a whole (Johnson). The best way to develop an interpretation according to the New Critics is through close reading, which means detailed, careful attention to evidence from the text itself, with the words on the page (Parker 16).

The next step is to find the issues from the text and to analyze these issues using New Criticism theory. The first step of the analysis is to identify the characterization of Remi when he was still a child in an orphanage. The second step of the analysis is to find out Remi's characterization throughout his journey. Dealing with New Criticism means that the analysis must contain explanation about formal elements like plot, and setting of the story. The last step of analyzing this novel is to combine all the formal elements into one complete piece in order to establish the Organic Unity to support the theme.

H. Definition of Key Terms

<i>Struggle</i>	How people make an attempt to survive in life in order to have a better future.
<i>Formal Elements</i>	The parts of fiction that consist of characterization, setting, plot, the language, images, symbols, metaphors, rhyme, and point of view (Tyson 137).
<i>Organic Unity</i>	The working together as a whole from all formal elements to establish the theme (Tyson 138).
<i>Theme</i>	The interest that the author takes in certain aspects in life (Gill 190).

