

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

At some point in time, every person and all things that live will eventually face death. Whether you are talking about a human being, an animal, or a plant, every living thing comes alive will surely be dead, either their death or the death of their loved one. Everyone will experience loss throughout their life, but the death of a loved one is incomparable because the emptiness and deep sadness is the most painful thing (Kubler-Ross and Kessler 2005, 26). Death is an unsolved secret that has triggered various human reaction, such as fear. For some people, sadness can lead to depression or worsen the underlying depression (Jafari et al. 2020, 20). Therefore, the death of someone special is the most challenging thing to deal with. People's traumatic experiences caused by the loss of their loved ones can change their lives sometimes; they can be depressed, so they may isolate themselves from other people.

Literature and Psychology have a close relation because both are exposition of human life. According to Stigler (1965), Literature is a literary work that can express and communicate thoughts, feelings, and an attitude towards life and the world. Passer and Smith stated that psychology is the study that learns about human thoughts and behavior. From the definition above, it can be said that Psychology can be used to explore and explain things or phenomena of human life by applying

the principle of psychology in literary work (Passer and Smith 2004, 19). Meanwhile, Literature can be defined as the information to know the psychological background of an expression of the writer. In other words, literary works are used by authors for telling what they feel and see and what they face in social life involving human activities.

The story of the novel is one example of trauma that can be presented. In this study, the writer found that trauma can be presented in a literary work about how the main character faced the traumatic event that can affect her life. As in the novel entitled *The Woman in the Window* (2018) written by A.J. Finn, everything that happened to Dr. Anna Fox previously caused trauma, which made her undergo character changes as a form of effort for her survival. The issue of this study is about the survival attempt of the main character after experienced a traumatic event about the death of her family. From this issue, it can be seen how the main character continues to life after experienced sad event in the past. Every human being will always have problem or sad thing in life, which will lead to a traumatic experience. However, from this study, we can learn how to control it so that it does not stay too long in sadness and live again and continues it life. Every problem that comes in life is a process of life, and not the end of the life.

A. J. Finn is not only an author but also an American editor. *The Woman in the Window* was number one on the *New York Times Best Seller List* in 2018 and stayed at number one for two weeks. *The Woman in the Window* landed on the shortlist for a British Book Award in the category of *Crime & Thriller Book* in 2019. This novel was also adapted into a movie that premiered on Netflix in May 2021.

The Woman in the Window is about a child psychologist, and the main character is Dr. Anna Fox. She is middle-aged, lonely, and depressed person after being diagnosed with Agoraphobia because of her traumatic experience that made her husband (Ed) and daughter (Olivia) passed away because of a car accident. In short, Agoraphobia is about fears in open spaces, but, in reality, it is more complex than stated. People with Agoraphobia expressed their fear of being in places or situation where it might be challenging to get help if they have a panic attack and feel safer indoors (Capps and Ochs 1995, 21). According to Craske, Agoraphobia refers to the avoidance of, resistance to, and a situation where escape may be harrowing or a support might not be accessible in the event of a panic attack. Typical conditions for people with Agoraphobia emerges in specific circumstances such as being out of the house alone, waiting in line, traveling by bus, plane, or train or going to the shopping center where crowds gather (Craske, et al. 2003, 23).

Agoraphobia made her routine is changed. She spent most of her time in her house and rarely went out. She peeked at her neighborhood's activity behind her window with her camera. She looked at her neighbor's activities from morning until night, so she memorized all the routine activities that her neighbors have done. Agoraphobia also made her being a heavy drinker because she drinks wine almost every day. Her bad habit of taking medicine with alcohol also caused her hallucinating about her daughter and husband, where she feels she can hear their voices and makes her unconsciously talk to them. To socialize, Anna used Agora – a website which is filled with people with agoraphobia just like her – under the false

name of TheDoctorIsIn. Anna is also a psychologist on that website. She always gives advice and listens to people in need of her help.

The Woman in the Window is an illustration that inspired the readers with all the struggles that going on in Anna's life as the main character. There is an issue about the traumatic experience that changed Anna's life and how Anna's survival attempts after the death of her daughter and her husband. Her traumatic experience made her stay away from the environment and being more-quiet which causes Dr. Anna Fox undergo a character change. Therefore, the writer used a New Criticism theory and will analyze Anna's character change after her traumatic experience that influenced her life and her attempt to survive the death of her family members. New Criticism is a theory of Literature that used the text itself as the only reference to explain the meaning. According to Wellek and Warren (1949), in the book entitled *Theory of Literature*, the meaning of a text cannot be described in the terms of the author's intention. In using the New Criticism theory, the writer will focus on the text itself. According to Tyson, "the text itself" becomes the sole source of evidence to interpret literary work that the new critics should focus on. He also added that the life or time of the author did not deliver the literary critic with the facts that can be used to analyze the text itself (Tyson 2015, 130).

The Woman in the Window by A.J. Finn was chosen as the object of this research for several reasons. First, there is an issue about a traumatic experience because of the death of the main character's family members which has changed the main character's life and her survival attempt after her traumatic experience. Second, this novel became a best seller in the *New York Times Best Seller List* in 2018 and

was adopted into a movie that premiered on Netflix on May 2021. The readers can see love, fear, anxiety, family, and trauma in this novel. Lastly, this novel has a powerful story and can motivate someone with post-traumatic stress disorder problems, especially Agoraphobia. This novel inspired people who have agoraphobia due to losing someone's love, and also learn to move on and move forward, so people who have trauma must learn to live again.

New Criticism aimed to reveal the relation between formal elements, which build an *organic unity* and support the theme of a text (Tyson 2015, 132). To reach an organic unity, the writer needs to find out the interrelation between formal elements of the text (Davis and Womack 2002, 21). The story in *The Woman in the Window* shows how the protagonist does a survival attempt after the death of her family members due to a car accident. However, the meaning of interpretation in the text cannot be obtained without paying attention to all parts of the text. Therefore, the writer examined the work through formal elements such as characterizations, plot, setting, and symbols. While analyzing this novel using New Criticism theory, the writer has a purpose that the reader can understand the meaning and value of the literary work deeply by analyzing it based on the text itself. Furthermore, New Criticism acts as a pioneer in literary work in its encouragement of the practice of close reading. Close reading is the scrupulous examination of the complex relationship between the text of the formal elements and the theme in order to find out how the organic unity of the text was established by the New Critic (Tyson 2015, 135).

The Woman in the Window has been used as the object of the study by other researchers. The first previous study is from an undergraduate thesis by Magazen Kharisma Firdausya (2020) entitled *The Archetype of Shadow in A.J. Finn's The Woman in the Window*. The researcher used Psychoanalysis by Carl Jung (1989) as the main theory. The researcher aimed to analyze the shadow of the main character named Anna Fox in the novel and only focused on the shadow of Anna Fox to get a comprehensive explanation of the shadows that existed in this character. Her analysis showed that Anna Fox has six archetypes of shadow based on Carl Jung's theory. Furthermore, the analysis also showed that Anna Fox struggled with all shadows and began to accept all the fears that she has faced. Anna has cleared her mind and stopped getting drunk, and no longer hiding and preparing to rejoin the world again. The gap between the previous study is about the theory. The previous study used Psychoanalysis by Carl Jung as the main theory, and this study used New Criticism as the main theory.

The second previous study is an undergraduate thesis from Daniel Satria Pamungkas (2019) entitled *The Analysis of Agoraphobia on the Main Female Character in the Woman in the Window by A.J. Finn*. This research aimed to analyze the agoraphobia of the main character and found out the causes of agoraphobia. The researcher has a purpose to prove the character of Anna Fox has agoraphobia symptoms by comparing the indication of agoraphobia from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder Fifth Edition (2013)* and the traumatic experience that has caused the main character to become an agoraphobia person. In analyzing the agoraphobia of the novel, the researcher used the theories

on Psychology to analyze the causes of the main character becoming agoraphobia. In his conclusion, he found three indications of agoraphobia in Anna's personality. He also found the causes that made Anna become agoraphobic because of her trauma in the past. Besides that, the main gap of these studies is Pamungkas' study analyzed agoraphobia symptoms lead by Anna Fox by comparing the symptoms of agoraphobia from *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder Fifth Edition (2013)* and the traumatic experience that has caused the main character to become an agoraphobia person. Meanwhile, the writer of this study will analyze the main character's survival attempts after the traumatic experience after the death of her family which has been changed her character and influenced her life using a New Criticism theory. This study focused on analyzing the formal elements one by one in order to form an organic unity and to find out the theme of the story. In this study, the writer will use some formal elements that are most relevant to analyze the story, such as characterization, plot, setting, and symbols.

There is also a journal article that discusses about this issue *entitled Identity Quest between Trauma and Survival: A critical study of Margaret 2017* by Mai Batroukha. In this article, the researcher aims to find out the survival of the main characters in all possibilities and forms where they continue to try to overcome all obstacles to achieve their survival. Atwood's protagonist struggles to realize why they are dissatisfied with their lives and world. They cannot adapt easily to the society in which they live. Some go beyond the realization of victimization, others try rejection, and some miss, but most survive. They all use one common factor, which is creativity. Everyone creates their survival rituals in very creative ways. All

of them are women in typical victim situations who refuse to accept their victimization and do what they can to fight this situation. Atwood, in her novels, seeks a happy ending for the female figure who becomes her victim. So, through survival rituals, they achieve their psychological and psychically, which leads to their happiness with their new life perspective.

To analyzing this novel, the writer aimed to reveal the interaction between formal elements, such as characterization, plot, setting, and symbols. Those formal elements build organic unity and support a particular idea of the text.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

From the explanation above, the writer proposed a question to analyse this study:

How do characterization, plot, setting, and symbols reveal Anna's survival attempt after the death of the family?

1.3 Objective of the Study

From the statement of the problem above, it could be stated that the study aims to:

Analyse how characterization, plot, setting, and symbols reveal Anna's survival attempt after the death of the family.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The writer expected that the readers can understand and will not look down on people who have anxiety problems through this study. From this study, it can be assumed that people have to continue their life after a traumatic experience, such as

experiencing a sad event in the past. It is because every human being will always have problem or sadness in their life, and how to controlling the feeling from being too long in sadness and going back to life. Every problem that comes in life is a process of life, not the end of life.

This study is written as a contribution to Universitas Airlangga and expected hopes can be an inspiration and insight to other students from Universitas Airlangga, especially for those who intend to conduct the study related to novel with a New Critical approach in particular. Lastly, the writer also expected this study can help students to be more understand about the formal elements and meaning of the text, specifically in *The Woman in the Window* novel.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

Traumatic experience : is an incident that cause physical, emotional, spiritual, or psychological harm.

Agoraphobia : Fear of open spaces, feeling anxious about being in places or situations that the person may try to avoid (Craske, et al. 2003, 23).

Survival : Act of surviving. The act of of living or continuing life.

Organic Unity : As a unit to determine the theme or meaning of the work as a whole (Tyson 2015, 132).

Formal Elements : The aspects used in fictional works to give evidence provided such as images, characters, metaphors, rhyme, setting, plot, point of view, meter, theme, symbols, language, and so forth (Tyson 2015, 131).