

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Disabled women live at the corner of disability and womanhood, with two minority identities. Disabled women carry a dose of discrimination and stereotype with multiple barriers to achieving their life goals. Meanwhile, women with disabilities derive enormous strength and creativity from their multiple identities; they also face the consequences of discrimination (Barbara Faye Waxman Fiduccia 2016, 1). A study which received funding from The Equalities and Human Rights Commission in 2008 stated women with disabilities have double oppression and they experience gender-based violence from the non-disabled women. Disabled women tend to get oppressed by two things, namely because of sex (sexism) and physical disability (impairment) (Hague, et al. 2008, 1). Women with disabilities in the society have been labelled as submissive, obedient, and vulnerable (Hague, et al. 2008, 3).

An organization of *Disabled Woman and Domestic Violence* in England has conducted a study to identify disabled women's issues and disclosed important discoveries about it, reported that disabled women twice experience gender-based violence than non-disabled women. Disabled women also suffer from severe injuries for a longer period of time and experience violence from abusive partners as their caretakers, and have limited capacity to escape from the worst abuses. Disabled women must face a financial ruin because of their inability to access

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public services and support systems in working area are limited (Barbara Faye Waxman Fiduccia 2016, 6).

Mark Oliver quoting from Union of The Physically Impaired against Segregation (UPIAS) defines barriers which are experienced by people with disabilities as a result from socially disabled attitudes and practices (1990, 1). Mute is speech disorder or speech limitation. This speech limitation makes the process of delivering and understanding messages become difficult to be understood by others (Laes 2018, 144).

This study discussed about disabled women who have vocal paralysis. A mute woman experiences double oppressions. A mute used to communicate using certain symbols. In general, a mute woman does not only communicate with non-mute woman, but they asked to be able to communicate with people surround her. Sign language is a way to communicate with others so that a mute woman is able to overcome her speech disability (Danesi 2010, 7).

Guillermo Del Toro collaborates with an author, Daniel Kraus to write a novel entitled *The Shape of Water*. A novel *The Shape of Water* was released on August 31 and received A New York Times-bestselling and must-read novel of 2018, 2017 and its movie adaptation was released on February 27, 2018, won 4 Oscars, including Best Motion Picture of the Year, Best achievement in Directing for Guillermo Del Toro, Best Achievement in Music Written for Motion Pictures, and Best Achievement in Production Design. Guillermo Del Toro and Daniel Kraus have a unique style writing in their literary work of *The Shape of Water*. *The Shape of Water* is categorized as a fantasy novel. *The Shape of Water* was

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inspired by the monster Gill-Man of Black Lagoon in 1962 to make readers paying attention on the plot and characters rather than another issue which not involved in the story.

The Shape of Water tells about Elisa Esposito, a mute woman. She was abandoned by her parents in the orphanage, has peculiar scars around her neck and communicates with people using sign languages. She tries to survive in the difficult life surrounding by people who love and show respect to her, that are Giles Henderson and Zelda Fuller. Giles is Elisa's neighbour who is loveless and has no proper job to defend his life. Zelda is a black-American woman, and she is Elisa's best friend at the workplace. They both work as office girls at Baltimore's Occam Aerospace Research Center.

In 1962, the Baltimore Research Center had studied a new asset, a half of reptilian and amphibian, considered as the one and only creature who is under privileged by the scientists. The amphibious man has something magical through his body, so the scientist decided to exploit him in order to know the use of his power. Through the pain, suffering, and torture done by the scientist, the amphibious man struggle to adjust his life. That was the first time the amphibious man came in Elisa's mind. Once she visited the amphibious man, they found many similar characteristics that they were able to interact with each other. They were both voiceless, lonely, and loveless. Elisa and the amphibious man were being bullied and marginalized by society because of their deficiency in bodily function. Then they fell in love. Dr.Hoffstetler was one of the scientists, who showed respect for them. Because he believed that both amphibious man and

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Elisa were discovered to be together and lived happily. Their voiceless were able to fulfill the emptiness between them. With the help of Dr. Hoffstetler, Giles, and Zelda, Elisa was able to save the amphibious man.

The author is interested in analyzing the work because the novel contains the fact that Elisa as the main character of the novel is woman with vocal paralysis and she is able to adjust the condition in her society. This novel also portrays how a mute woman struggles for her rights and finds out a true love in the end. As we know most of the main characters discussed in the novel are protagonists with perfect bodily functions. In this case, it shows the need for a change in the reader's perception that protagonist characters must be physically perfect, represent as an attractive character, not a person with disability, thus allowing the main character to have a happily ever after story like many famous literary works have been discussed (Kelley 2001, 2).

There are five related studies which provided some significant contribution in doing the analysis. The first study entitled *Psychological Condition of Richard Strickland* written by Alberta Natasia Adji and Azis Bilbargoya, the second study entitled *In Defense of Dagon: Intertextuality In The Shape of Water* by Ben Siegel, the third study entitled *Anthropocene Gothic: The Monstrous Anthropocene Gothic of Guillermo Del Toro's Crimson Peak, The Shape of Water, and Pacific Rim* by Shannon Payne, the fourth study entitled *The Other In The Shape of Water: What It Means to Love Monster* by Marieke Kuypers. Those study analysed the same novel, but the difference between those studies and this study can be references for this object of writer's analysis. The fifth study entitled *The Struggle of An Austistic Teenager With Asperger Elisa's Struggle To Fight Against Double Oppression And Find A True Love*

Syndrome In Mark Haddon's The Curious Incident of The Dog In The Night-Time: A Character Analysis by Afni Afrida. This study analysed the same issue with the writer's study which is the formal elements working together as an organic unity to digging up the theme of the story, but the difference between those studies is on the object of the analysis and the aim of the character analysis.

The Shape of Water is interesting to be discussed in this study because it depicts the story of a mute woman who struggles to achieve her hopes. Throughout the plot, the characterization of Elisa, setting and symbolism of the story, the readers can also be taught to raise her hope and courage to achieving life. Therefore, the writer examined the work through the formal elements such as plot, characterization, symbolism and setting that build the organic unity of the text to support the theme of the text. Hence, a critical theory is employed to find the connection among the formal elements based on the evidence appearing in the text in order to get the meaning of the text.

The writer wants to analyze the organic unity in the story is using New Criticism. The New Criticism is a theory which is used to focus on critical attention on the text itself. This theory is used to examine a literary work by using close reading, in which the literary work is interpreted by the readers as a site for shaping the values and meaning of the text itself. By examining the text carefully, the readers will find the values of the text from the characterization, plot, symbolism, setting, and theme which are called as formal elements (Wellek and Warren, *The New Criticism: Pro and Contra* 1978, 78).

By applying New Criticism, the author is able to dig more meaning from the formal elements of the literary work can be analysed more deeply. Thus, the

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connection between those formal elements can be found to build an organic unity which will make the author gets the meaning of the literary work and interpret it comprehensively. Therefore, the author suggests that the struggle of Elisa to strive and establish meaningful life is worth to be analysed by using New Criticism. This study explains the formal elements of the text such as characterization, plot, symbolism and setting and the relation of those four elements with the theme of the text.

1.2 Statement of the Problems

In order to analyze Elisa's struggle to pursue the true love in *The Shape of Water*, the writer would like to formulate a research question to analyze the novel:

1. How is Elisa's double oppression portrayed in the novel?
2. How does Elisa's struggle to fight against double oppression?
3. How do the formal elements support the theme that Elisa's Struggle to fight against double oppression will lead her to find out a true love?

1.3 Objective of the Study

The objective of the study based on the statement of problems above is:

1. To analyze how Elisa's double oppression portrayed in the novel.
2. To analyze how Elisa's struggle to fight against double oppression.
3. To analyze the formal elements reveal the theme that Elisa's struggle to fight against double oppression will lead her to find a true love.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Through this study, the author hopes that the readers can understand more about Elisa's struggle to find out a true love in Del Toro's *The Shape of Water*.

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The author also hopes this study will enlighten people that physical disability doesn't force down a person to face the difficulties in life, instead the deficiency makes us able to achieve our hopes by evaluating the moral value contained there.

This study also written to contribute for Universitas Airlangga. The author hopes that this study would inspire other students in the English Department, Faculty of Humanity Universitas Airlangga, especially for those who major in Literature. This study discusses the main issue of Elisa Esposito and analyzes it by using New Criticism. The author hopes the readers will understand more about the meaning in the text, particularly the students of the English Department who want to study a novel or apply New Criticism theory will gain more knowledge from the writer shares here.

1.5 Definitions of Key Terms

Double Oppression : women's inability to defend her right; because as woman they have to achieving their life goals, and as disabled they have to struggle to adjust their life

Struggle : a part of human's learning process to achieve hopes and to be honored (Siddiqui 2016)

True Love : a person loves someone sincerely without expecting anything in return (Devlin 2019)

Disabled : someone who has physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long term effect on his or her disability to carry out daily activities (DisabledWorld 2009)

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Mental Bullying : any kind that relates with intentional and purposeful mental abuse including personal gain, vengeance, and self-esteem issues that cause emotional problems (Davies 2016)

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explain the situation, Strickland heads to Elisa's apartment only to find a note stating where she has taken the creature. When the execution of their plan is coming, Giles and Elisa are lend a farewell to the creature, but Strickland arrives and attacks them all. Strickland shots Giles first and then Elisa because they tried to save the creature. Elisa and the creature appear to die, but the creature suddenly heals himself and fight against Strickland. The police arrive with Zelda but the creature leaps into the canal with Elisa and heals her deep under the water. The wounded scars around Elisa's neck are turn into gills that make her able to breaths under the water. Elisa and the creature lived happily in the end. Elisa becomes empowered woman who able to overcome oppressions and achieves her life goals by goes beyond her disability

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