

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Research

Literature is a work which is unseparated from human's life. The influence of literary work to the advancement of the world is enormous. History, science, sociology, and many other disciplines were developed mainly because of literary works. Hence, literature is beneficial for human life. Literature developed through the ages. It is not only used for academic purposes, but also for artistic purposes as a media of entertainment, in which people express their opinions, morals, emotions, feelings, and ideas to another people.

Literature, in its essence, is a literary object. However, as history moves on, literature eventually evolved, much like other discipline such as science and even politics. One of the aspects that came to add another dimension to the evolving literature is the concept of art, moving literature to become an object of art itself. According to Prawira (2001), literature is an aesthetic object in which many people express their sense of beauty to a language. Poet seeks to communicate his ideas through literature object to the public. Public who enjoys and judge the literature give values. Thus, literature values are response to the public's aesthetic objects may appear different literature. A lot of writers produce work, but if the public literature never assumes that it's worth the work, then such work would disappear and never have the meaning anything. Therefore, it is not wrong to recognize literature as a human product which contain beauty value. To distinguish them from

other species such as morals, economics, education value, etc., the value associated with everything covered in terms of the word “beauty” is called aesthetic value. In this case the beauty of "considered" synonymous with aesthetic value in general.

As literature grows, many people tried to dissect it by using novelty approach, trying to analyze it from many different perspective. One of such perspectives is by analyzing its structure itself. One particular approach to do that is by using the Structuralism approach. It is interesting that in its earlier history, Structuralism wasn't associated as an approach for literature theory. It was used for linguistics purposes, in particular for the semantic theory. Structuralism as a literary theory in literature begins when literary criticism was considered unscientific and therefore, required the discipline of an objective system. It is because literary criticism was a matter to subjective matter at the time. According to Holub & Eagleton (1985), if literary works were to be examined closely, there were patterns that could be worked with a certain objective laws in which literary criticism could be formulated systematically by following that law. The law itself was based on various archetypes, genres, myths, and modes in which all literary works was built and structured.

Structuralism as a literary theory was considered as a challenge for the mainstream literary criticism approaches at its time. According to Holub & Eagleton (1985), structuralism was created as an attempt to review everything in linguistics terms. While Saussure was considered the founding father of structuralism theory, it was Claude Levi-Strauss who took Saussure's structuralism and using it to analyze narrative texts in a literary work. Greimas' in turn developed

the structuralism and created a new study which is named “structural semiotic”, which is taken by his own work. Structuralism does not concern about contextual matters. It only analyzes literature work based on textual matters, which means everything that is included in a literature work, without caring about the context such as history and events in real life.

In the study regarding to Greimas’ contribution of Structuralism approach, he introduced several main concepts for the theory. Four of them was the actantial scheme, functional scheme, isotopy, and semiotic square (Dowling et al. 1984). Four of them are interrelated to each other in order to analyze a story's structure as a whole. Its objectives is to find a story's meaning or intended message behind a more “objective” system, rather than a subjective one. The system is still used even in the modern days. The Greimas’ structuralism theory was already used to analyze literary works. In general, it can be used to analyze story structures (the narratives, or storylines) or characters by analyzing its actantial scheme, functional scheme, and isotopy (Dowling et al., 1984). Every novel from artistic and popular literature can be analyzed using Greimas’ theory because the theory was flexible. It was flexible because the theory acts as a “structure” rather than a rigid role.

Those theories (Greimas) were used as the foundation to analyze the novel “The Girl on the Train” in this thesis. The Girl on the Train is a psychological thriller novel by British journalist turned author Paula Hawkins. It was her first novel. It was firstly published at 13th January in USA and 15th January in UK. The novel topped the *New York Times* Fiction Best Sellers of 2015 for thirteen consecutive weeks. It has drawn comparison with another famous novel which has

similar theme, “Gone Girl” by Gillian Flynn. The story is told from three different characters in first point of view, which is Rachel, Anna, and Megan.

Set in 2012 London, the three characters have their own conflicts in the story which intertwined as the story progresses. It used an unreliable narrator technique to narrate the story. Rachel is a thirty-three-year-old alcoholic woman who tried to reel his feelings after her divorce from her husband Tom, who seeks another woman. That another woman is Anna, a housewife which is young and beautiful. Megan is another woman that Tom secretly cheated with, something that would not be discovered until the reader progresses deep into the story. The main plot itself concerns about a case where Megan is found missing. The day before, Rachel saw Megan kissed a man who she believe to be Tom. However, in the next day, she found herself awaken in bloody and injured condition after heavy drinking. These facts made herself to be questioned by the police, especially after Anna saw Rachel was drunk at night.

The story was analyzed by using structural narrative of Greimas’ actantial scheme and isotopy from A.J. Greimas (Dowling et al., 1984). Greimas structuralism was used because there are several parts of the story which fits in into Greimas’ actantial scheme, as it has been mentioned in paragraph above. One of the example is the concept of “subject”, which is one of the elements of actant, an important element to Greimas’ actantial scheme. According to Hebert (2011), the “subject” has a desire to obtain the “object”. The subject in the novel are Rachel. Rachel becomes the “subject” in the novel because she has a desire to obtain the

“object”. Here is the proof of Rachel having a desire to obtain it, which is important to the actantial scheme itself:

“The bump on my head is throbbing, and I can’t stop thinking about the argument I saw, or imagined, or dreamed about, on Saturday night. As we pass Megan and Scott’s house, I look up. I can hear the blood pulsing in my head. I feel excited. I feel afraid.” (Hawkins, 2015, p. 54)

In the passage, it has been described that Rachel was interested in Megan’s disappearance in the story. Rachel had several thoughts about theories regarding Megan’s disappearance which was shown several lines before this narrative passage. This desire to know “why Megan disappeared” is what makes Rachel in the story as the “subject”, according to Greimas’ actantial scheme. Likewise, information relating to Megan’s disappearance is one of the “objects” as the story, in which the “subject” desire to obtain or achieve (Hebert & Eveaert-Desmedt, 2011).

Greimas’ actantial scheme has already been used by several researcher as an approach to create a narrative structure of fictional stories, including novels and short stories. It has been central on many academic journals. One of the studies is done by Dzikriya and Hartono in their article “*Analysis of Actantial Model in Suzanne Collins’ The Hunger Games.*” They analyzed the plot structure in Collins’ novel *The Hunger Games*. Their objective was to identify what the elements (actant) of plot are, how do the elements compose the structure of the story, and what kind of plot was applied in the novel. For the method of research, they used qualitative method. To plot the structure, their study classified the function of each character into six actants, which are sender-receiver, subject-object, and helper-opponent. Finally, they concluded what kind of plot and how the ending of the novel is. The plot of the novel is dramatic or chronological plot because the story through

in chronological order. In addition, the novel is a closed plot story because the problem in the story has been resolved. The difference between this thesis and Dzikriya and Hartono's research was the difference between data source and also the objective, as this research also aimed to find the isotopy of the novel.

Another study is done by Hayati in her article "*Dean's Loyalty to The Earnshaw: Greimas' Structuralist Reading on Bronte's Wuthering Heights*." The research aimed to explain three main problems namely Mrs. Dean's loyalty toward the Earnshaws by analyzing the relation between actants and the functional scheme in the story. It used Greimas' approach of binary opposition and actantial scheme. She used the qualitative method in analyzing the source data. She found three main findings respectively that Mrs. Dean is a loyal maid in Earnshaw family, Mrs. Dean's loyalty is sufficiently complex, and her loyalty implicates good impacts toward Earnshaw family's members, even toward Edgar Linton family life. The difference between this research and hers is the difference of the focus of research.

Based from the statements and problems that have been shown above, it has been concluded that Greimas' approach was relevant and reliable to use in this research. It focused on two things, namely the actantial scheme which is used to structure the story and the isotopy. Another reason why this particular source of data and approach is chosen was mainly because of the theory's easiness and flexibility to be applied into many literature works. Another reason was because by an interest about a matter related to story building itself, which involves narrative structures. By identifying and dissecting the story into different parts and details, there might be some interesting ideas that can be used to identify, in hope to create

a good story. The novel “The Girl on the Train” was chosen because it is a famous novel and has been praised by critics. The story itself is not simple and it might pose a challenge to the analysis itself. In this perspective, it rises some interest on how old theory fits into contemporary story. Another reason is because the novel is not an ordinary novel in terms of story development because it uses unreliable narrator. It is also a relatively new novel, in hopes that it is not been exposed as much as any other novels in research papers or thesis.

1.2. Identification of the Problem

Based on the background, some problems could be identified. The criteria were based on how a problem can be related to structuralism theory. Those problems are:

1. Storylines that build conflicts in in the novel The Girl on The Train by Paula Hawkins.
2. The actantial scheme revealed in the novel The Girl on The Train by Paula Hawkins.
3. The functional scheme revealed in the novel The Girl on The Train by Paula Hawkins.
4. The isotopy revealed in the novel The Girl on The Train by Paula Hawkins.

1.3. Limitation of the Problem

The analysis of the research focused on the actantial scheme and isotopy by using A. J. Greimas’ theory. The limitation was intended to focus the research so it would not deviate from its objectives and goals. Based on the identification of the research, two problems has been picked as the limitation of the problem:

1. The actantial scheme revealed in the novel *The Girl on The Train* by Paula Hawkins
2. The isotopy revealed in the novel *The Girl on The Train* by Paula Hawkins.

1.4. Formulation of the Problem

In conducting the analysis, the problems above were formulated to become the focus of the research. The problems were as follows:

1. How was the actantial scheme revealed in the novel *The Girl on The Train* by Paula Hawkins?
2. How was the isotopy revealed in the novel *The Girl on The Train* by Paula Hawkins?

1.5. Objectives of the Research

The objectives are related to the formulation of the research, which is intended as the goal of the research. It is formed as follows:

1. To discover and describe the actantial scheme that was revealed in the novel *The Girl on The Train* by Paula Hawkins.
2. To identify and describe isotopy that was revealed in the novel *The Girl on The Train* by Paula Hawkins.

1.6. Significance of the Research

The significance of the research is separated between theoretical and practical significance.

1. Theoretical Significance

This research aims to deepen the study of structure in a fiction. There are two important things in particular. First, to expand and deepen the knowledge of story

building, in particular to Greimas' structuralism. It is also related to the actantial scheme and isotopy. Second, to show the relevancy of Greimas' theory to contemporary narrative fiction.

2. Practical Significance

This research is intended to provide a reference for any researcher to analyze literary works, especially related to fiction story structure research. It does not matter which approach or analysis they will use as long as they can relate this research into their own. It also provides a springboard for future researcher who may have the same interest related to the novel "The Girl on the Train" or to Greimas' structuralism approach. By applying the theory successfully into contemporary narrative fiction, it can also prove that Greimas' theory was indeed flexible and can be used to any literature works. It also serves to deepen the knowledge of the researcher itself. Especially, in regards not just for Greimas' structuralism, but the literature as a whole.

1.7. Definition of Key Terms

- Actantial Model** : A concept of narrative structure which is an important scheme in Greimas' structuralism (Dowling et al., 1984).
- Isotopy** : The coherence and homogeneity of texts in structural semantics terms (Dowling, et. al. 1984; Nöth, 1991).
- Structuralism** : Method to analyze language and literature by focusing on elements of structure and how these elements relevant to the whole structure itself (Tarasti, 2017) Holub & Eagleton, 1985).