

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of several introductory parts related to the study. The parts of this chapter include the background of the study, reasons for choosing the topic, research question, aims of the study, scope of the research, significance of the research, methodology, research procedures, and organization of paper.

#### 1.1. Background of the Study

The connection between literature and real life is inseparable. Literature talks about life and life is used as the source of inspiration whenever authors create literary works. There are two reasons why literature and real life are inseparable. According to Allan (2001), literary works are seen as the representation of real life and literary works are used as the media for the authors to express their responses to real life. In other words, literature is a medium where people can express their thoughts, feelings, and social life through language. As people do not only experience pleasant things in real life, literature also does not only consist of pleasant themes. Similar to real life, literature also consists of unpleasant themes such as child abuse.

Child abuse can be defined as maltreatment which is targeted to children. According to Rios (2006), child abuse is defined as any physical, sexual, emotional or psychological maltreatment of a child which is done by adults and causes harm to the child. The adults can be anyone who is in contact with the child; for instance, the parent, teacher, relative, guardian, and so on. According to Yaroub (2014), child abuse is divided into four types: neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse. Neglected children are those who do not receive enough attention from adults. Emotional abuse attacks children's psychology and later on will cause depression, anxiety, and stress to children. Physical abuse is an abusive action which leaves physical damages or injuries on children's body. Sexual abuse is an abusive action which forces sexual desire on children. Since child abuse is one of the issues which usually happen around the world, it is natural if child abuse also appears in literature. Some famous literary works such

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as *Oliver Twist*, *Cinderella*, and *Hansel and Gretel* contain child abuse. Child abuse does not only appear in fictional novels such as *Oliver Twist*, *Cinderella*, and *Hansel and Gretel*. Child abuse also appears as a theme in a nonfictional novel such as *A Child Called 'It'* by Dave Pelzer.

*A Child Called 'It'* is classified as an autobiographical novel, which means the content of this novel is mostly based on true story. The author of this novel has a role as the main character. This novel tells about the child abuse which happens in the main character's family. The perpetrator is his own mother, but all of his family members are also involved in their conflict. Since this novel contains the issue of child abuse in family area, this study uses Family Systems Theory in analysing the novel. The premise of Family Systems Theory is the way an individual act, think, or feel can be understood by observing his/her relationships with his/her family members. Therefore, this theory is selected to analyse the issue of child abuse that contains conflicts among family members. Some critics may think this theory is the least proper to be used in analysing child abuse because this theory makes the perpetrator escape from being blamed for his/her abusive action; however, the focus of this study is not on blaming the perpetrator or any characters.

Several previous studies have been conducted regarding the novel and the theory used in this study. The samples of the previous studies of the novel *A Child Called 'It'* are shown by Susilowati (2013), Wahyuningtyas (2014), and Hidayati (2015). Regarding previous studies that used family systems theory, the researcher found two studies: one from Schiff (2004) and another one is from Novianti (2015).

The examples of some studies on the novel are written by Susilowati (2013), Wahyuningtyas (2014), and Hidayati (2015). Susilowati explored the novel from psychological approach which focused on abused child's psychological development. The next research about this novel was done by Wahyuningtyas (2015). Her study used the theory of defense mechanism which was introduced by Sigmund Freud. Another research was done by Hidayati (2015) and she only

focused on the issue of child abuse from sociological and behaviorist theories in the trilogy of Pelzer's books.

Besides the previous studies from the novel, there are several previous studies from Family Systems Theory. The first study was conducted by Schiff (2004) in which she analyzed Family Systems Theory and figurative characters in Roth's literary works. Another study from literature major which used Family Systems Theory was conducted by Novianti (2015). In her paper, she focused on the concept of triangling from Family Systems Theory. Compared to her study, this study uses several concepts of Family Systems Theory which are found in the novel.

Thus, the researcher tries to fill in the gaps of the previous studies. The previous studies which analyzed this novel come from psychology field. Meanwhile, the previous studies in literature field which used Family Systems Theory did not analyze this novel. Considering these findings, the researcher decides to analyze a novel entitled *A Child Called 'It'* by using Family Systems Theory. The reason why the second and the third novel will not be included in this study is because the second and the third novel mostly tell about self-development of the main character after leaving his house. Moreover, the contents of two other novels do not consist of child abuse anymore.

## **1.2. Reasons for Choosing the Topic**

There are two reasons why this topic is selected by the researcher. The first reason is that the application of Family Systems Theory in literature field is considered new. This theory is usually applied in psychology field and the number of papers related to research of Family Systems Theory in literature field is still limited. The previous studies in literature field found that Family Systems Theory can be applied in analyzing literary works related to family relationship. Thus, the researcher believes that this theory can be applied as well in analyzing the connection between child abuse and family relationships in the novel entitled *A Child Called 'It'*. The second reason is the topic of family is very close in our life and also appears in many literary works. This study can be used as an example

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that literature and real life are inseparable. This study is aimed to prove that literature is able to be analyzed from various fields of knowledge. In other words, a theory which is usually applied in the real life can be applied as well in analyzing literary works.

### **1.3. Research Question**

As stated above, this study tries to portray child abuse and family relationship from Family Systems Theory perspective. Therefore, the goal of this study is framed into this research question:

How are the concepts of Family Systems Theory realised in the issue of child abuse in *A Child Called 'It'*?

### **1.4. Aim of the Study**

Corresponding with the research question above, the aim of this study is to find out the way child abuse in a family is realised from Family Systems Theory perspective in a novel entitled *A Child Called 'It'*. The relationship among family members will be observed and then will be connected to child abuse which is experienced by the main character.

### **1.5. Scope of the Study**

Since this study analyses a literary work in the form of narrative, literary elements are needed as its analysis tools. This study is analysed by focusing on child abuse from Family Systems Theory perspective with the help of several literary elements of novel which are plot, character, characterization, point of view, and setting. Those literary elements help the researcher find and relate the interlocking concepts of Family Systems Theory to child abuse. In addition, the theory of child abuse is included in this study. This study is only focused on dialogues and the descriptions of events that can be found in the novel *A Child Called 'It'*.

### **1.6. Significance of the Study**

By understanding the application of Family Systems Theory through *A Child Called 'It'*, the researcher expects students of English Department, especially literature major, to be more aware of the connection between literature and real

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life. Then, this study is expected to give enlightenment about child abuse from Family Systems Theory perspective and also to give explanation how child abuse affects family relationship. As previously mentioned, the issue which is raised in this study is about child abuse in an autobiography novel. Therefore, this study is also expected to give an example of how literature and real life are interconnected.

### **1.7. Methodology**

This study is analysed using qualitative data analysis. The most essential feature of qualitative method is text as the main focus (Kuckartz, 2013). In other words, qualitative method only gathers data or information from a specific text. According to Pope, Ziebland and Mays (2000), qualitative research provides a lot of textual data. By using qualitative method, the way researchers view the function of a text may be different depending on their own goals (Austin and Sutton, 2014). The first possibility is a text is viewed as a medium to learn about how people behave in society, for example the way they behave, think, and feel at a certain time. They look for social experiences from a text that they observe. The second possibility is a text is viewed as a final outcome which has an abstract interpretation. It means that there is no absolutely wrong or false interpretation. In this study, the novel is viewed as the medium to learn about how people behave in society and also to seek social experiences.

### **1.8. Research Procedures**

Several procedures are needed in order to complete this study. The data are collected and analysed through several procedures.

The first procedure of collecting the data is doing a close reading activity. Since the data come in the form of narrative, close reading is important for the researcher in order to grasp the messages of the novel precisely. Then, the second procedure is highlighting the important events that portray child abuse in Pelzer family. Highlighting the important plot, characters, and settings helps the researcher collect the data and organize the findings. Every utterance from any character and description of event which are related to child abuse will be highlighted and be the main source of the data in this study. The search of textual

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evidence which are related to child abuse will be focused on the plot, characters, characterization, point of view, and settings. In this step, a genogram can also be drawn when the relationship among the members of Pelzer family is already clear.

After collecting the data, the next step is analysing the data. The first procedure of analysing the data is putting in the textual evidences of child abuse into the table and classifies the textual evidences to what type of interlocking concept and child abuse they belong to. The second procedure is making a genogram. A genogram is made in order to get a clear vision of the relationships between family members. A genogram of Pelzer family will consist of different colors and line patterns depending on how the characters interact to each other. After filling in the table and making the genogram, the analysis of how child abuse is portrayed in the Pelzer family can be started.

### **1.9. Organization of Paper**

This paper is arranged into five chapters as follows:

1) Chapter I : Introduction

This chapter consists of background of the study, reasons for choosing the topic, research question, aims of the study, scope of the research, significance of the research, methodology, research procedures, and organization of paper.

2) Chapter II : Literature Review

This chapter provides theoretical bases which are used in this study. The main theory used in this study is Family Systems Theory from Murray Bowen and the analysis tools used in this study include several literary elements from Richard Taylor. There is also explanation about types of child abuse from Barton D. Schmitt.

3) Chapter III : Research Methodology

This chapter explains several procedures which are taken by the researcher in conducting the study. This chapter includes research design, data collection, and data analysis.

4) Chapter IV : Findings and Discussion

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This chapter consists of the findings of the data analysis and its discussion. The findings will be explained in details and the discussion of the data will also be presented in this chapter.

5) Chapter V : Conclusions and Suggestions

This chapter contains the conclusions of this study based on the findings which are found by the researcher. This chapter also offers the suggestions for the further studies.