

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

This chapter concludes the discussions in the previous chapter. It assembles the important points of the findings and draws suggestions for further studies on humor in children's literature.

5.1. Conclusions

The aims of this study are to construct the way humor operates in *The Floods* series by Colin Thompson and to make meanings of the humor depicted in the book series. Based on the analysis, it is found that humor in *The Floods* operates based on context. The contexts of humor operation that are identified in this study are based on Vandaele (2002). These contexts are conditioning, evaluation, (de-)normalization, and solution. It is discovered that conditioning, as a context of humor, becomes the base on which humor mostly operates in the book series, as evident in 22 out of the 56 data. Meanwhile, compared to the other humor contexts, the context of solution appears the least frequently, as apparent in nine data.

The analyses, moreover, show that there are some similarities and differences in the cognitive and social operation of humor in each context. The similarities are that in all humor contexts, humor tends to operate cognitively through narrative incongruities and socially through affirmative superiority. However, the way the incongruity and superiority operates in each context appears to be distinct from one to the other. This is because every humor context has certain features which give boundaries to the operation of humor.

To a certain extent, these analyses also demonstrate that the humor in *The Floods* series is by and large a manifestation of adult superiority over children. Colin Thompson, as an adult author, is argued to have the superiority of what is considered funny for the targeted children readers of his books. His humor, in its essence, clarifies and enforces social norms to children, commands them to perform laughter, and provides them with choices of what is considered amusing

and what is not. Thompson also appears to construct humor in the book series through his own assumptions as an adult of what children might prefer when it comes to humor.

Therefore, it can be concluded that humor in this particular children's book series is not merely about the humorous aspect for children, but it also functions to clarify the superiority of adults. Such superiority in humor can result in both positive and negative matters. If it is nurtured correctly, through humor, adults can teach children regarding the norms of the society that they live in. This learning process is argued to be effective because children, in this case, are learning about their world through things that they think funny. However, it is important to note that this educational function of humor can also be taken for granted by children. Their perceptions on who is allowed to be ridiculed and who is not can somehow lead to a social prejudice, which may ironically threaten the social order that adults try to enforce to children through humor.

5.2. Suggestions

There are several suggestions that are drawn for further studies on humor in literary works. One of the most crucial suggestions is to always be very critical in examining the humor. Although humor in general seems to be an amusing topic, studies on humor must always critically disclose what is shown in the texts. The other suggestion is to avoid personal judgments in what is considered humorous. Although it is safe to say that humor is a subjective property, in which one may appreciate it immediately whilst others do not, it is better for further researchers to begin their studies with a reader-response method.

In the specific context of *The Floods* series, moreover, further researchers are encouraged to conduct a more comprehensive analysis on the humor by not only focusing on how and why an excerpt becomes humorous and the significance of that particular humor. According to the researcher, Colin Thompson's *The Floods* is a book series that is worth researching because there appears to be an element of grotesque and absurdism in the operation of the humor. Therefore,

further researchers can analyze these aspects in details. The writer hopes that with this study, there will be more studies that recognize Thompson's humorous works.