

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Research

Laurie Halse Anderson was born October 23, 1961, in Potsdam, New York. She is a mother of four daughters. According to an article titled “Biography Laurie Halse Anderson” which published by Scholastic, Anderson was a freelance reporter and started to write all types of books. She wrote many books and some of them won awards. One of her books is *Speak*.

Speak was published on October 1999 by Farrar Straus Giroux in New York. In general, the story is about a girl who experiences sexual violence and how she encourages herself to overcome it. The novel has won many awards, some of them are National Book Award Finalist in 1999 and Top Ten Best Books for Young Adults in 2000.

Speak is based on the author’s personal experience so it is considered as a realistic fiction. As the writer cited from an online book titled *A Manual of the Art of Fiction: Everything You Need to Know to Write Fiction* by Clayton Hamilton (2009), “Realistic fiction is that which does not shrink from the commonplace or from unpleasant in its effort to depict things as they are, life as it is” (38). In my understanding, realistic fiction is a way to illustrate things in life through literary work. As *Speak* is a realistic fiction, the story is based on author’s experience in the

past when she was a teenager and she brought a new character who experiences the same thing with her.

The writer notices and wants to examine the author's efforts in order to reduce child and young adult sexual violence in society. She also wants to analyze whether the main character is the representation of the author. The writer notices these things from the novel and the contribution she keeps doing in society.

In an interview which written in an article titled “#Speak4RAINN – An Interview with Author Laurie Halse Anderson” by Becca Rose which published on April 18, 2013, Anderson said that one of the causes of child experienced sexual violence is parents. She said parents do not really pay attention to their children.

Sometimes there's censorship coming from parents who just don't know how to talk to their kids about these kinds of things, you know, and they maybe are a little bit ignorant about how they're not protecting their kids (Rose, 2013).

Anderson hopes parents can prevent their children from sexual violence by showing them the impact of it in the novel.

The main character, Melinda, has shown the readers the impact of sexual violence. She is having a hard time running her school days because of people bully and unfriend her. Some of the reasons why they do that is the silence she does and the wall she builds between her and society as a result of the sexual violence she experienced.

In analyzing the novel, the writer carries several reasons. First is the author of the novel. Anderson is a brave woman and a wise mother. Although many people

against her because some people consider her novel as a soft pornography but many people support her. As I cited from an article in Anderson's blog titled "This guy thinks SPEAK is pornography" by Laurie published on September 19, 2010, as follow:

"Wesley wrote an opinion piece in the News-Leader of Springfield, MO, in which he characterized SPEAK as filthy and immoral. Then he called it "soft pornography" because of two rape scenes."

She does not care what people say about her novel and keeps promoting it. She was being a wise mother because her daughter was stepping to adolescent time at that time. She wanted to protect her. For that, the writer respects and appreciate her work.

Second reason is the topic of the novel. The writer is interested in it because as being mentioned above, it brings up a social issue in America society. Sexual violence is difficult and uncomfortable topic to be discussed, especially to children. Many children experience sexual violence because of their less knowledge about it. The novel informs people how dangerous child sexual violence is and how to protect themselves.

The last reason is the purpose of the novel. The novel reflects American society, especially teenagers and young adult society. The novel announces the reader to raise their awareness of sexual violence, to prevent child sexual violence and to stand by the victim of sexual violence side.

In order to analyze the author's contribution to society and the main character in the novel, the writer will use Sociology of Literature proposed by Alan Swingewood. She will apply the second perspective which concerning of literature work and the author social condition. Therefore, the writer will entitle this research as Reduction Of Young Adult Sexual Violence As Reflected In Laurie Halse Anderson's *Speak*.

1.2. Identification of the Problem

Speak is a story based on the author's experience when she was a teenager. The writer notices that the main character is the representation of the author due to the same experiences that the character had with the author. She needs to compare the main character in the novel and the author in the society. In the novel, Melinda challenges herself to protect her friend from sexual violence as well as the author who keeps giving contribution in order to reduce child sexual violence in the society.

1.3. Scope of the Research

In general, this research will focus on author's social condition and the main character movement in the novel. To analyze the research problems, Sociology of literature by Alan Swingewood will be applied to the research. The research will be limited to 2 statements only, as follows:

- 1) The author's experience and her contribution to society.
- 2) The reduction of young adult sexual violence as reflected in Anderson's *Speak*.

1.4. The Research Questions

This research will answer the questions below:

- 1) What are the author's experience and her contribution to the society?
- 2) How to reduce young adult sexual violence as reflected in the novel?

1.5. Objective of the Research

The writer divides the objective of the research into two points. First, she wants to analyze the author's experience through her literary work. Second, she wants to investigate how the author reduces young adult sexual violence through her novel. After analyzing these two points, she will find out whether the main character is the representation of the author or not.

1.6. The Review of Related Studies

In order to make a legitimate research, reviewing the preview studies is necessary then it can be shown that this research is not imitating another research which already existed and also to support the writer's idea. The writer found some studies which relate to the topic.

The first study is a thesis English literature's student of Yogyakarta State University. It is entitled "The Cause and Effect in Melinda's Traumatic Experiences: A Psychosocial Analysis in Anderson's Speak" by Katrin Rahma

Pandansari (2014). In her analysis, she applies psychosocial development approach proposed by Erikson.

She explains that the main character, Melinda, has the psychosocial problem which is an identity diffusion in her adolescent period. The identity diffusion characteristics are showed from her excessive self-consciousness on some task of life such as difficulty forming a relationship. Pandansari's thesis is related to the writer's topic because the detail of the impact of sexual violence she explained in her thesis. She explained that Melinda was suffered from trauma and inability to tell anyone about what happened. As a result, she was depressed. She started to skip schools, withdraws with her parents and loses herself. This thesis is very supportive of the writer's research because in the writer's research she is investigating how to reduce child sexual violence in the novel, to prevent every child in the world suffers from those impacts.

The second study is an article by Jackett Mark, *Something to "Speak" about: Addressing Sensitive Issues through Literature*, 2007. In this article, the author describes how he organized the study of this novel with his students. He uses *Speak* as a way to talk about uncomfortable topics such as sexual violence at school. He uses a very good strategy to talk about it in teacher and students relationship. This article is contributed to the writer's research in term of author's contribution to society. It explains that *Speak* is used as a topic discussion in school where students can speak freely and question about teenage life as they are in. This is very useful for both teachers and students. For teachers, they can fulfill their role as parents in the school by warning them about sexual violence. For students, they

know the impact of sexual violence as written in the novel and take care of themselves in the future.

The third study is a thesis of English department's student, Andalas University. It is entitled "The Impacts of Social Stratification on Patriarchal Society as Reflected in Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*" by RinggaThafira. Thafira reveals the society in the story setting told and explains that patriarchal society is not fair toward women side because women lose their right in everything. Social stratification also influences people thought in making decision. In conducting the analysis, Thafira applies Sociology of literature in revealing the society condition at that time. He used first perspective which concerns about the reflection of society as reflected in the novel. This research is related to the writer's research in term of the theory. She is analyzing the social situation of the author which is one of the objects of sociology of literature. She uses second perspectives of sociology which concerns about the author social situation including her contributions to society regarding her purpose to reduce child sexual violence.

The last study is a journal by Chris McGee from Children's Literature Association 2009. It is entitled "Why Won't Melinda Just Talk about What happened? *Speak and the Confessional Voice*". McGee reviewed *Speak* and concluded it is as a lost identity and found empowerment novel. Debbie wrote that "Booklist writes that Melinda is a memorable character whose ultimate triumph will inspire and empower readers" (qtd. In C.Mcgee 174). He classifies the book as an empowerment narrative and Melinda's power does not only come from speaking but also not speaking about what happened. This journal is related to the writer's

topic regarding the object. McGee explained reading the book will empower the reader, so does this research. The writer hopes this research will encourage readers to read the novel because in the novel, she hopes people will be inspired by the main character who is struggling to gain her strength and does some steps to prevent her friend from sexual violence in the novel.

1.7. Theoretical Framework

The writer uses sociology of literature proposed by Alan Swingewood in analyzing the research because the theory is suitable to analyze the problem that the writer found in the novel. Sociology is the study of society through literary works. Swingewood on *The Sociology of Literature* says

“Sociology is essentially the scientific, objective study of the man in society, the study of social institutions and of social processes; it seeks to answer the question of how society is possible, how it works, why it persist” (11).

The theory explains that sociology is the study of society and the process whereby society changes from one type of society to another and the effects on the social structure. The theory relates to the research in term of the object of the research. She uses this theory to analyze the author’s experience in the past, her contribution to society and the main character’s movement in the novel.

The reflection of real society in specific time and place can be seen through literary works. As Abrams states in *A Glossary of Literary Criticism* as follow

“mimetic criticism views the literary work as imitation of reflection or representation of the world of human life and the

primary criterion applied to a work is the truth of its representation to the subject matter that it represents or should represent” (51).

In literary world, authors use literary works to bring her/his idea to reflect various aspects of life in society. There are three perspectives in a sociology of literature. The first perspective is the documentary aspect of literature. As Swingewood states, “the most popular perspectives adopts the documentary aspects of literature arguing that it provides a mirror to the age” (13). He also says that the documentary aspect of literature is a direct reflection of various facets of society such as social structure, family relationships, class conflict and etc. In other words, a literary work concerns with various social problems in human life. The second perspective concerns with the work of literature itself to the production side, and especially to the social situation of the writer (17). It means that writer and her literary work are related to each other. The third perspective is concerning with the reception of a particular society toward the literary works. Swingewood says, “one demanding a high level skills, attempt to trace the ways in which a work of literature is actually received by a particular society at a specific historical moment” (21). This approach will look closely of how a literary work being accepted in a society at the specific time.

From the perspectives which have been written above, the writer will use the second perspective which concerns with the author’s literary work and the social situation of the author. She will be able to trace the background of behind the scene the *Speak* writing. From the role she plays in society, the writer can trace some events in her past.

The writer's position in a mass society is extremely important as a contrast to his earlier social situation, and clearly likely to affect his creative potential in many ways; the links between this historical background and the development of literature constitute a key area in any literary sociology (18).

The author was raped when she was a teenager and her experience about it is written in her novel, *Speak*. She also does several activities related to the purpose of her novel writing in the society. The writer's social group affiliations and connecting both their structure and values with the literary texts (20). What the writer does in society, it always has connected with her literary text. By using the second perspective, the writer in this research will figure out the author experience, her social situation, and her contribution to society to reduce child sexual violence.

In analyzing the author experience and compare it with the main character, the writer will use history biographical approach. As cited from a research titled *Biography: Historical* by Birgitte Possing (2001), that Professor, Dr. Phil says "Historical biography is a reconstruction of human life, and a representation of an historical individual" (2). According to Roberts in his book titled *Biographical Research* (2002),

Biographical research is an exciting, stimulating and fast-moving field which seeks to understand the changing experiences and outlooks of individuals in their daily lives, what they see as important, and how to provide interpretations of the accounts they give of their past, present and future (1).

The approach uses to see the historical individual life and the reason why that individual has different behavior in daily life. Biographical research is divided into two, life story and life history. Life history is taken from the collection, interpretation and report writing of the life for reconstruction of individual life (3). Life story is the story that person chooses to tell about. As Roberts cited from Atkinson (1998) in his book, that life story

“is the story a person chooses to tell about the life he or she has lived, told as completely and honestly as possible, what is remembered of it, and what the teller wants others to know of it, usually as a result of a guided interview by another . . . A life story is a fairly complete narrating of one’s entire experience of life as a whole, highlighting the most important aspects” (3).

In brief, using biographical approach will allow the writer reconstruct the author life in the past through her interview and her novel she uses as a life story.

1.8. Method of the Literary Research

In conducting this research, the writer will apply the library research. According to Elmer E. Rasmuson Library in “Research, Instruction, and Library Research Process Outreach Services” (2016),

Library research involves the step-by-step process used to gather information in order to write a paper, create a presentation, or complete a project. As you progress from one step to the next, it is commonly necessary to back up, revise, add additional material or

even change your topic completely. This will depend on what you discover during your research (Rasmuson, 2016).

She will follow three steps. Those three steps are collecting data, analyzing the data, and presenting the data. In collecting data, the writer will take it from two sources, primary data and secondary data. Primary data are taken from *Speak* novel by Laurie Halse Anderson. Since the writer focuses on extrinsic elements to find out the author experience and her contribution to society and the main character movement in the novel, therefore the secondary data are any information from related materials such as books, online journals, articles which related to the topic that are available in library and the internet.

In analyzing the data, the writer reads the story extensively in order to analyze the intrinsic data. Then, the writer will identify the extrinsic elements of the novel which are author experience and her contribution to society. After that, the writer applies the theory of Sociology of Literature which is proposed by Alan Swingewood. She uses the second perspective which concerns about social situation of author and her work. To reveal author historical life, the writer will use biographical research to reconstruct the author story life.

In presenting the data, the writer uses the qualitative method. According to Hancock B., Windridge K., and Ockleford E in an online book titled *An Introduction to Qualitative*, “Qualitative research attempts to broaden and/or deepen our understanding of how things came to be the way they are in our social world” (2007). It proves the analysis by emerging arguments and opinion since the data are words, statements or paragraph and not in form of number.





