

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

The experience of losing a loved one to death is a universal phenomenon that gives pain for every person. This kind of loss called as grief. *The Gale Encyclopedia of Mental Disorders* stated that “Grief, which is also known as bereavement, is a term used to describe the intense and painful emotions experienced when someone or something a person cares about either dies or is lost (Thackery and Harris 459)”. The emotional pain of losing a loved one, whether it is a spouse, child, parent, sibling, friend, or pet, can be the most severe suffering a person must endure. The grief that caused by loss of the loved-one gives the emotional pain that every survivor has to cope with.

Sigmund Freud in “Mourning and Melancholia” has developed the mourning study and contributes the ideas about grief. It becomes the foundation of the theory of grief and bereavement (qtd. in Buglass 44). “Grief is deep mental anguish, a process of the psyche. Bereavement is an event, the loss of a valued loved-one due to death” (Maciejewski et al. 6-7). The event of loss that caused by the death creates a deep sorrow for people who experience it which gives an effect through their psychological.

Grieving is normal that every person could experience it. Cohen et al state that the process of normal grief followed by feelings of great sadness and anger, physical symptoms such as weight loss and insomnia, a preoccupation with

death, and difficulty with concentration (qtd. in Howarth 5). The normal grief involves reconciliation, which defines as “the process that occurs as the bereaved individual works to integrate the new reality of moving forward in life without the physical presence of the person who died” (5). When the process of normal bereavement is interrupted, grief reactions become much more painful and it may develop complicated grief (5). Complicated grief named Prolonged Grief Disorder (PGD) causes the symptoms of normal grief heightens. The most significant symptoms of PGD are the griever takes a long time to grieve and they grieve intensely rather than the normal grief.

In conducting this research, the writer chooses a novel by Anne Enright entitled *The Gathering* as the object of the research. The writer finds a highlight issue about the grief in this novel which gives so many problems through the character who experience it. The novel tells the story of the main character, Veronica Hegarty, who faces the death of her lovely brother, Liam, died by committing suicide. The effect of her brother's death has created a tremendous impact on her mental health. She is grieving intensely for more than five months. The deep grief gives her a trouble in accepting his death and it affects her life. She could not take her role as a mother and wife. She becomes a heavy alcoholic and does not care about herself anymore. She also has trust issue after he dies. Those reactions are suitable with the characteristics of people who suffer from PGD which later becomes my research in this novel.

In reading *The Gathering*, the writer finds that Veronica Hegarty gains development through her personality during grieving. She does not give up on her

sorrow which later she could be coped with it unconsciously. She tries to examine the cause of her brother's suicide by recalling her mind. Her purpose on doing it is to bring back the past memories in order to find the reason why he commits suicide that might be have a bottom line with the past. This effort brings her a conclusion about his reason to ends his life is because the traumatic experience always haunts him like forever. He has been sexually abused when he was nine. Veronica has sown it directly but she literally does not do anything to help, which presumably she might be terrified of it. Even after it happens, rather than try to save him by helping him to get out of his trauma, she blames him for every bad things he has done because having that trauma. He becomes a heavy alcoholic, a troublemaker, and cannot manage his life. She feels guilty for letting him to live in the miserable life without trying to save him. The writer assumes that this is the reason why she cannot accept his death because of her mistakes on him that could not be forgiven. But she later does not let herself having this guilt for so long. She realizes that there is no one who could forgive her instead of herself. She forgives herself at the end and wants to continue her life again. Through Veronica Hegarty, the writer believes, Anne Enright in *The Gathering* is trying to emphasize that people who suffers from PGD could survive and cope with it individually.

1.2 Identification of Problem

The death of Veronica Hegarty's brother brings her to the deep grief. She faces many problems because of the death and cannot cope with her life. She is grieving intensely and takes a long time for it. She fails to take her role as a mother and a wife. She becomes an alcoholic after her brother dies. She gets

insomnia for five months and sometimes she is driving all night long while she drunks. She gets the difficulty to trust anyone and just focuses on her loss of her brother. These deep grief reactions meet the characteristics of Prolonged Grief Disorder (PGD).

During facing her deep grief, the novel's plot describes that Hegarty tries to deal with it. The story shows she has an eagerness to continue her life by doing several efforts to cope with the grief. Therefore, the writer believes that the novel is about the main character's effort to cope with PGD.

1.3 Scope of the Research

The research focuses on analyzing one of the main characters in the novel *The Gathering*, named Veronica Hegarty, who presumably suffers from PGD caused by the death of her brother. The intensity of her grief is heighten and takes a long time rather than the normal grief. Those reactions are the most significant issues of PGD.

The research will be divided into two parts, first explaining the traumatic experience that Veronica Hegarty's faces which later meets the symptoms of PGD that she has. The second part is explaining all the efforts that she does in order to cope with this psychological problem. This research is basically an intrinsic analysis because it deals only with the intrinsic elements in the novel.

1.4 Research Question

This research is conducted to answer the following questions.

1. How can Veronica Hegarty be identified as a Prolonged Grief Disorder (PGD)'s patient?

2. How does the main character cope with her Prolonged Grief Disorder (PGD) in the novel?

1.5 Objective of the Research

The research has two objectives. Firstly, this research aims to examine the main character in *The Gathering* from the psychological perspective. It focuses on identifying Veronica Hegarty as PGD's patient by examining several symptoms of PGD that experienced by her and the causes of these symptoms. Secondly, this research is intended to discover the reactions of Veronica Hegarty in order to heal her PGD in the novel.

1.6 Review of Related Studies

The articles selected for this literature review are included because of their additions to the field of study about the main character's psychological reactions in *The Gathering*. An analysis of mourning and bereavement are included because this topic relates to the reaction of PGD.

The first study that the writer finds is written by Laili Alfi Arfiyatin that published in 2013 entitled: "Dysfunctional Family and Its Impacts On Veronica's Life in Anne Enright's *The Gathering*". This thesis analyzes the impact of Veronica's dysfunctional family through the main character life. She gets some problems in her life such as she becomes an alcoholic, trustless, blaming her parents, difficult to be in an intimate relationship with her husband and her close relationship with Liam, her brother who died by committing suicide, makes her cannot concern to her husband and her daughters. Arfiyatin uses Erikson's theory of psychosocial development in investigating the dysfunctional life of Veronica

Hegarty. Arfiyatin finds the dysfunctional family gives the impact through her development of individual life. She lived with ten siblings in a poor family. Her mother is weak and vague, and her father uses violence in teaching them. This dysfunctional family raises her to behave in a bad manner and have trust issues to everyone. But there is something missing in this research after the writer closely reading to this novel. The problems that Veronica Hegarty face through her misbehaviors are happened after her brother died. This gives the writer an assumption that her misbehaviors are not because of her dysfunction family, but the death of her brother.

The second study is written by Sarah C. Gardam that published in 2009 entitled: "Defaulting to the Oldest Scar": A Psychoanalytic of Subjectivity in Anne Enright's *The Gathering*. This article explores the subjectivity as described in the language in order to find the sexual trauma that experienced by the characters in this novel. According to this research, Gardam uses Jaques Lacan's idea about subjectivity within language and sexuality. The main character's brother experience sexual abuse in his childhood. This sexual abuse is seen directly by the main character and gives her a trauma. This sexual trauma affects her belief in desire, love, and words. She has the difficulty to be in an intimate relationship with her husband. She refuses to have sex with him and does not believe that he loves her whenever how much he says that and there is no fact that he has cheated her. Based on the writer investigation through this novel, the writer finds that her refusal to have sex with him happens at night in the wake of her brother. Her lack of trust through him happens years ago but it heightens after her

brother dies. The writer believes she could not be close enough with her husband is not because of the sexual trauma she has experienced but it is because of the death of her brother.

The last study is written by Liam Harte that publishes in 2010 entitled: "Mourning Remains Unresolved: Trauma and Survival in Anne Enright's *The Gathering*". This article analyzes the main character's traumatic memory of child abuse that experienced by her brother. This research is analyzed by using several theories of traumatic experience in a narrative. They are Dominick LaCapra and Laurie Vickroy's trauma fiction's truth-telling powers, Cathy Caruth's defining feature of trauma narratives, Suzette Henke's scriptotherapy, Susan Brison's the ways of traumatic experience is viscerally embedded, Slavoj Žižek's archetype of the living dead, Marita Sturken's traumatic memory, and Milan Kundera's the struggle of memory against forgetting. Harte finds that the trauma is still remained and could not be healed. But at the end of the story, the writer finds that Veronica could cope with her trauma. She has realized her life is in trouble during grieving after her brother dies and she wants to continue her life again.

Differ from those three studies before, the writer finds that the death of her lovely brother gives her the painful experience that she has to struggle with. She grieves too intense in a long time and it gives her many problems in her life. This kind of grief indicates as PGD. Therefore, the writer argues that she also has several specific symptoms of PGD itself and it affects her daily life.

Those previous researchers give the contribution to this research in studying PGD based on the main character Veronica Hegarty in *The Gathering*.

The writer presents an analysis with combining the idea from those researchers to complete the lack of the theory from each researchers. Moreover, the analysis for the changing of PGD is presented in the following section.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

The psychoanalytical criticism guides this research in analyzing the case of Veronica Hegarty. The problem that she faces after her brother dies is identified as PGD which is a part of psychological studies. This is suitable to analyze of her PGD using the psychoanalytical criticism.

Psychoanalytical Criticism (The Unconscious)

In this study, the writer applies the basic of psychoanalytical principles that established by Sigmund Freud. His theory called classical psychoanalysis is adapted to the literary criticism. In his study, Freud focuses on the individual unconscious. Guerin et al in *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature* stated "the most of individual's mental processes are unconscious" (128).

Freud argues that the notion of human beings are motivated, even driven, by desires, fears, needs, and conflicts of which they are unaware, that is called as unconscious (qtd. in Tyson 12). The unconscious is the place where the painful experiences and emotions, wounds, fears, guilty desires, and unresolved conflicts that we do not want to know or remember because it will harm us are stored in it.

The memories of the unhappy events that could not handled by the person who experiences it would be stored in the unconscious. The repression through this does not remove the painful experiences and emotions. It is actually gains strength by allowing them to be "the organizers of our current experience" (13),

that is sometimes we unconsciously behave uncontrollably and without confessing it to ourselves, which is the cause of appearance the conflicted feelings about the painful experiences and emotions we repress.²⁰

Psychoanalytical Criticism for Fictitious Character

As Bernard J. Paris states that in the study of fictitious characters, there are pros and cons in analyzing it psychologically. The cons have the belief that we could not analyze every kind of fictitious characters in ways similar to analyzing real human. There are several requirements for characterization that could make it possible. Mimetic characterization as the most the acceptable requirement for the analysis. Therefore, in analyzing the fictitious characters psychologically we have to “takes characters out of the work and tries to understand them in their own right” (Paris 5). This is not the unsupported requirement. “Mimetic characters are part of the fictional world in which they exist, but they are autonomous beings with an inner logic of their own” (7). The characters have their independent logic that the author creates into them as E.M. Foster states that “creations inside a creation”. The characters are “tend to go their own way as the author becomes absorbed in imagining human beings, motivating their behavior, and supplying their reactions to the situations in which they have been placed” (qtd. in Paris 7). The way of the characters think, their behavior, and their reactions to the situations run independently by themselves.

The critics not only disagree in analyzing the fictitious characters psychologically but also in analyzing them using modern psychoanalytic theories. This argument happens because of the earlier authors created their characters in

unconceivable terms we are using talk about them. One that we have to realize about the fictitious character or “mimetic characters is that the characters have a life independent of their creators”(6). It will change our understanding and the concept of human behavior through them.

Paris also examines the possibilities in analyzing fictitious characters in psychological ways by using Karen Horney’s theory “which explain behavior in terms of its function within the present structure of the psyche rather than in terms of infantile origins” (6). A Horneyan approach helps us to find the similarity between human experience and fictitious characters. It enables us to understand the behavior of characters in literature from the past, to enter into their feelings, and to enrich our knowledge of ourselves and others through an understanding of their inner conflicts and relationships (7). The behavior, conflicts, and relationships within the literary characters enable us to analyze them by using psychological approach.

Prolonged Grief Disorder (PGD)

Prolonged Grief Disorder (PGD) is the pathological grief based on the intensity and the duration of grief itself (Maciejewski et al. 1). The study of grief is developed by many scientists based on the origin of the ideas of grief from Sigmund Freud in his article “Mourning and Melancholia” (qtd. in Buglass 44).

Complicated Grief (CG) is the origin term of Prolonged Grief Disorder that found by Prigerson et al in 1996 (22). In developing this theory, the new term that qualifies in this study has been found to replace Complicated Grief (CG) to Prolonged Grief Disorder (PGD) in 2009 (Prigerson et al. 1). In other hand,

Maciejewski et al argue that neither the symptoms of grief itself are atypical nor pathological, but the symptoms itself remain too intense for too long that risk the PGD (1). While CG, “the pathology is attributed to factors other than grief, e.g. bereavement-related depression or trauma that interfere with otherwise normal grief processes” (2).

Prigerson et al, Horowitz et al, and Silverman et al argue that PGD is distinct from other mental disorders, including major depressive disorder (MDD), generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (qtd. in Maciejewski et al. 1). It is clear that PGD is the individual disorder and has its own symptoms that proposed by Prigerson et al (1-9). The writer uses these symptoms to analyze the condition of Veronica Hegarty for this research. There are nine symptoms of PGD that can be seen in this following.

- 1) Confusion about one's role in life or diminished sense of self (i.e., feeling that a part of oneself has died)
- 2) Difficulty accepting the loss
- 3) Avoidance of reminders of the reality of the loss
- 4) Inability to trust others since the loss
- 5) Bitterness or anger related to the loss
- 6) Difficulty moving on with life (e.g., making new friends, pursuing interests)
- 7) Numbness (absence of emotion) since the loss
- 8) Feeling that life is unfulfilling, empty, or meaningless since the loss
- 9) Feeling stunned, dazed or shocked by the loss

Therefore, the person who is diagnosed as PGD's patient must have at least five symptoms which experienced daily or to a disabling degree (9). In conclusion, the writer is going to analyze the main character's psychological problem by understanding all of these symptoms to gain a better result in this research.

1.7 The Method of the Research

In conducting this research, there are three steps will be followed. The first step is collecting the data by using the library research method. There are two kinds of data that the writer uses in this research, the primary data which is taken from the novel *The Gathering* by Anne Enright and the secondary data is taken from theory books, related journals and articles, and another related material in form of previous research.

The second step is analyzing the data. The writer uses descriptive analysis method in analyzing the data. Fraenkel and Wallen states that "descriptive method is a method used to explain, analyze, and classify something through various techniques" (23).

The analysis will begun by analyzing the intrinsic element that is the plot of the story which is related to the condition and situation of the main character, Veronica Hegarty. Then, the writer discovers what kind of psychological problem that can be found on that character by using psychoanalytical theory. After that, the writer finds the causes and symptoms of the main character's psychological problem and how she copes with it individually.

The last step is presenting the result of the analysis. At the end of the research, the writer will present several points as the result of analysis descriptively.

