

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

Violence is an evil action someone does against someone. The term "violence" means malignancy, ruthlessness, fierceness, ferocity, abuse, and even rape. The actions of violence significantly affect the human physical and psychological condition. Violence accounts for excluding behaviours like accidents and self-defence, including actions like maltreatment, sexual offences, and manslaughter (Hamby, 2017). Hamby's arguments on violence comply with what Krug et al. (2002) have mentioned. They said that violence is like the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, causing injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation. What Hamby and Krug et al. say suggests that violence has become an essential issue at this time. The impact of violence often occurs in people's lives, so it seems to have been embedded in a person to achieve his life goals. It is not surprising that the effect of violence continues to increase in various ways. The impact of violence can also disturb someone's mental health. One of the most well-known mental disorders today is a post-traumatic stress disorder. In general, post-traumatic stress disorder or PTSD is a mental health disorder that occurs to several people after experiencing or seeing a traumatic event.

Davidson et al. (2000) states that post-traumatic stress disorder is a disorder that develops in some people who have experienced a shocking, scary, or dangerous

event, include in abnormal psychology. The traumatic event is life-threatening, such as combat, a natural disaster, a car accident, or sexual assault in the past. However, sometimes the event is not necessarily a dangerous one. For example, the sudden, unexpected death of a loved one can also cause PTSD. In time, most people recover from this disorder naturally. However, people with PTSD do not feel better. They feel stressed and frightened long after the trauma is over.

Burial Rites by Hannah Kent contains some issues of violence and post-traumatic stress disorder. *Burial Rites* tells about the violence in character, in the form of physical and psychological violence. This novel is also known as the story of the last execution in Iceland by executing Agnes Magnúsdóttir, a 30s years old woman. Agnes is sentenced to death because she participates in killing two men in a night at the farmhouse in Illugastadir, Iceland. Before the execution day, Agnes should be put in jail. After one year, she is transferred to residential areas, especially in livestock areas, to help society take care of the sheep. That is a kind of another punishment that she has to face. While serving her sentence, Agnes is described as having a post-traumatic stress disorder that begins with long nightmares symptoms. The disorder happens because of her memories are filled with violence and murder. It shows us that Kent is trying to raise the issue of violence and mental disorders in *Burial Rites*.

There are some reasons why the researcher investigates this topic. First, this novel gives a piece of information to readers that violence is like a vicious circle. The researcher named it as 'violence breeds violence'. It means that people who have experienced violence will make them commit violence someday. It is

impressive because, indirectly, this novel's writer wants to warn us about the adverse impact of violence. Therefore, because of the phenomenon of post-traumatic stress disorder that has been rife, it makes the researcher interested in researching this novel.

Second, this novel shows the readers that violence can affect someone's mental health. Mental health is the standard-issue that happens around us today. Mental health has become an appealing topic to discuss because this sophisticated era has proven that many people experience mental disorders such as post-traumatic stress disorders, anxiety disorders, and personality disorders. Mental disorders usually occur due to several factors, for example, someone who had experienced deep trauma in the past, sexual violence, bullying, victims of physical or psychological violence and many more. Post-traumatic stress disorder is a mental disorder that often occurs today. A novel that contains the issue of a mental disorder called post-traumatic stress disorder is *Burial Rites*. Although mental disorder usually attacks teenagers' lives, this novel shows us that mental disorders also occur an adult in age 30s. It is interesting because the mental disorder is not only experiencing by teenagers but also afflicts adult people.

As the researcher know, the issues of violence and post-traumatic stress disorder are depicted in *Burial Rites* by Hannah Kent. Kent is a novelist from Australia who was born in Adelaide, 1985. She completed her PhD at Flinders University. In 2011, Hannah Kent won Writing Australia Unpublished Manuscript Award for the first time. *Burial Rites* is her first novel. She is a co-founder and also deputy editor of the Australian Literary Journal named *Kill Your Darlings*. *Burial*

Rites is her first novel. This novel was published in 2013 and has won three awards in 2014, such as The ABIA Literary Fiction Book of The Year in 2014, The ABA Nielsen Book data Bookseller's Choice Award in 2014, and The Booktopia People Choice Awards 2014.

Published in 2013, it does not mean this novel became popular suddenly. Up to now, this novel does not attract the attention of many researchers to investigate it. The researcher argues that this novel is so underrated, even though this novel's content is incredible. There are only a few studies of this novel, and mostly they discuss feminism rather than psychoanalysis. In several articles such as *The Guardian*, *The New York Times*, *The Telegraph*, *Bustle*, and others, some writers discuss *Burial Rites* by Hannah Kent. One of them comes from the *Bustle* article, where the writer named Claire Luchette gives her views on Kent's novel. It is tough to empathize with a convicted murderer. Kent succeeded in making the reader immersed in her writing so beautiful and filled with lyrical language that makes people who read his novel empathize with Agnes, a convicted murder. The readers might agree with this statement because Kent's expertise in narrating the story makes them feel Agnes' main character in the novel. The violence Agnes had received since she was a child, the insults and diatribes that she received even before his death, was still being tortured by correctional officers tasked to guard her.

1.2 Identification of the Problem

There are at least five problems that researcher can expose from reading this novel, as seen in the representation of violence and post-traumatic stress disorder.

They include: what impacts of violence Kent depicts in *Burial Rites*; how she exposes a violence victim undergoing and solving psychological problems; how she conveys mental disorder; and what types of violence she portrays; and how she delivers the relationship between violence and post-traumatic stress disorder.

The impacts of violence can be physical or psychological. The violence that attacks a person psychologically will make the victim of violence become a perpetrator of violence for others. That is undoubtedly a harmful impact. As mentioned earlier, violence is like a vicious circle which means that the victims can be the perpetrators if that violence leaves a mark on their body and soul. This situation is compatible with what Hannah Kent tries to disclose in the novel that the impact of violence can affect their mental health. The mental health that Kent tries to expose is a post-traumatic stress disorder. People with post-traumatic stress disorder have experienced deep trauma and stress during their life.

The second problem is the way Hannah Kent solves the psychological problem. Many writers consider that the way Hannah Kent expresses psychological issues is very artistic. If psychologists read this novel, they understand that this novel is very psychological. Meanwhile, when litterateur read this novel, they think it is very literary. It means that Kent has the expertise to mix literature with psychology so well. It is not apparent that this novel is a psychological novel for literary people, which is an academic work for psychology people. The problem is that Kent's expertise in solving psychological problems is symbolic.

The third problem is how the writer of this novel describes the issue of the disorder. Psychologists tell the disorder based on psychology. However, the fact is

that there are not many psychologists who write novels. Some novelists write stories, but the issue that they raise is a psychological issue, namely about disorders. Interestingly, the writer introduced the subject of the disorder as if she is a psychologist. The problem lies in whether the author has expressed the mental disorder correctly and follows what psychologists say or needs to be studied more deeply.

The fourth problem is how Hannah Kent portrays the types of violence that will affect the human physical and psychological state. The issue of violence has no end to be discussed. However, in this novel, Hannah Kent conveys the types of violence in a different light. She conveys it through her beautiful writing. Kent reveals that there are two types of violence; physical and psychological. The readers should know that both physical and psychological violence profoundly affects someone's life.

The last problem is the relationship between violence and post-traumatic stress disorder in *Burial Rites*. The issue of violence and post-traumatic stress disorder is quite well known in today's society. This novel is a suitable medium for explaining violence and PTSD. It turns out that there is a connection between violence and PTSD, as depicted in this novel. The relationship shows us that violence can impact our mentality. This novel reveals the relationship between violence and post-traumatic stress disorder as a cause-effect relationship.

1.3 Review of Related Literature

Some previous scholars have studies violence, and post-traumatic stress disorder in literary work they are Paramita, Yuli, Abdul, Fenita, and Christiani,

Jessica, and Novak-Marcincin et al. The researcher categorize the findings of these scholars into three different themes. The first theme is a research study that only focuses on Hannah Kent and expresses character in the novel. The second theme is the research studies that only examines post-traumatic stress disorder. The final theme is focusing on violence.

Firstly, Paramita Ayuningtyas and Yuli Astutik study the way Hannah Kent describes or expresses the characters in the novel. In her article entitled *Deconstructing the Stereotypes of Woman Through a Female Voice in Burial Rites (2013) by Hannah Kent*, Paramita Ayuningtyas discusses how Kent represents the life of someone who has experienced violence and must struggle to survive their life through a character in the novel. This article is interesting, but it uses feminist theory to analyze the female character's victims. Meanwhile, what the researcher need is a psychoanalytic theory to study the victims of violence. In this article, the researcher finds information that she did not find in other articles to complete this research. Such as how Agnes as a woman, victim and perpetrator of violence survive in her life; how this novel illustrates that violence does not look at our gender, whether they are male or female; and the fact that such violence can occur indiscriminately.

Similarly, Yuli's thesis entitled *A Study of Agnes Magnúsdóttir Struggle in Hannah Kent's Burial Rites (2015)* discusses how Hannah Kent, as the author describes the victims of violence represented by female figures who have to struggle in their lives, but the goal is to gain status from others. It can be said that this thesis only analyzes a character represented by a woman in age 30s. This thesis

is quite helpful because the researcher should explore Agnes's character, representing victims of violence that the researcher will study. Interestingly, this thesis also draws Natan Ketilsson in her analysis, where the researcher thinks that Natan Ketilsson is a depiction of a violent person. The researcher agrees with this thesis about Natan. Like even men who are good looking, intelligent, and having excellent knowledge, they can commit violence.

Paramita and Yuli have the same arguments about how Hannah Kent portrays a woman's character as a victim and a perpetrator of violence. The researcher finds that these two articles discuss women's struggle who lived as a victim of violence. In this case, the researcher gets some points that will be additional information to this research. The differences in the use of theory are not a problem for the researcher because the most important thing is that violence is also present in a woman's life, whether she is a victim or perpetrator of violence.

Secondly, Abdul Mufied Yasin, Fenita Austriani, and Christina Resnitriwati study Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder experienced by the main character. In his thesis entitled *Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Suffered by Katie in Nicholas Spark's Safe Haven (2016)*, Abdul Mufied Yasin analyzes how Katies suffers from the post-traumatic stress disorder. Some problems discussed in this study are the symptoms, causes, and impacts of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder that influenced the main character's personality and life. This study aims to help the researcher understand more about post-traumatic stress disorder experienced by the main character. The researcher gets some information about post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms because the researcher also researches post-traumatic stress

disorder. The researcher's research is in the same case as this thesis. It is about people, especially a woman around 30s years old, struggling with post-traumatic stress disorder. However, the trauma that they experience is different. The character that reveals in this thesis is facing abuse in her marriage. In the researcher's study, the trauma is about the violence that the characters do and receive.

On the other hand, Fenita Austriani and Christina Resnitriwati also analyze post-traumatic stress disorder in their thesis entitled *Traumatic Experience Resulting from Sexual Abuse in Stephen Chbosky's The Perks of Being a Wallflower* (2017). This thesis is analyzing about a traumatic experience in a novel. This thesis aims to explain a person's personality and traumatic experiences as a result of sexual violence. However, there is a slight difference between the theory of post-traumatic stress disorder discussed in this thesis and the researcher's theory in the research. This thesis uses the American Psychiatrist Association as a guide to study post-traumatic stress disorder. In contrast, the researcher uses Sigmund Freud's theory. However, there is no significant difference in opinion regarding the understanding of post-traumatic stress disorder for the American Psychiatrist Association and Sigmund Freud.

After analyzing this article and thesis, the researcher argues that both of them are trying to reveal that post-traumatic stress disorder comes from tragic memories in the past. However, the kind of memories and traumas are different from each other but still in the name of violence. The stress and trauma that both articles reveal are sexual abuse and abuse in marriage. It proves that violence is the

biggest thing that causes someone to experience a mental disorder called post-traumatic stress disorder.

Thirdly, Jessica Yakeley and Novak-Marcincin et al., discuss violence in general. Jessica Yakeley, in her article entitled *Psychodynamic Approaches to Violence (2018)*, explains the development of violence and how the psychodynamic theory is talking about violence. This article is beneficial because it revisits some of the critical psychodynamic principles and concepts relevant to understanding violence. The keys are useful for the researcher because she gets more knowledge about violence and psychodynamic theory. Unlike Jessica Yakeley, who talks about psychodynamic theory, Novak-Marcincin et al., in his article entitled *Violence and Communication (2014)*, mentioned the diversity of violence types, the education segments, the age segments who aggress, and who are aggressed, get more and more extended. This article shows us that Sigmund Freud also talks about violence in his theory. Not only that, but this article also explains and discusses violence deeply, for example, is the cause of violence, the psychological explanation of violence, classification of violence, and the triangle of violence. It is beneficial because the researcher will get some information from this article about violence itself.

Judging from all the studies above, the researcher argues that these studies discuss violence and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and how the writer of a novel expresses their character. After reviewing those different studies, the researcher then does further research from the previous examination. The scholars have examined violence, post-traumatic stress disorder, and how the writer of a novel describes their character. Still, in this study, the researcher will combine the

research from the scholars into one. The researcher will examine how the writer can bring both violence and post-traumatic stress disorder in their novel. The researcher thinks it is a new thing as a researcher.

1.4 Research Questions

Related to the background of the research, identification of the problem, and scope of the research, the research questions are formulated as follows:

1. How does Hannah Kent portray the types of violence that will affect the human physical and psychological state in *Burial Rites*?
2. How does Hannah Kent depict the relationship between violence and post-traumatic stress disorder in *Burial Rites*?

1.5 Scope of the Research

The researcher limits the discussion on violence and post-traumatic stress disorder as presented in *Burial Rites*. The researcher restricts the analysis, which focuses only on Agnes Magnúsdóttir. The analysis explores the impact of violence on Agnes's mental health.

This study wants to reveal the way Hannah Kent represents the post-traumatic stress disorder in *Burial Rites*. The researcher focuses on how violence can affect people, both physical and psychological, until they have post-traumatic stress disorder. By analyzing Agnes Magnúsdóttir, the researcher uncovers the types of violence that will affect someone's mental health by examining action and reaction towards a particular situation.

1.6 The Objective of the Study

Related to the problems that the researcher has mentioned before, this study aims to answer the problems:

1. To reveal how Hannah Kent portrays the types of violence obtained by someone as represented in *Burial Rites*.
2. To discover how Hannah Kent depicts the relationship between violence and post-traumatic stress disorder, as portrayed in *Burial Rites*.

