

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Theoretical Perspectives

2.1.1 Romance and Its Elements

The theories about romance and the elements of romance in this research become the principal theories according to the background of this study. Romance is one of the common genres in popular literature. As Fuchs (2004) has shown in the book derives from the Oxford English Dictionary, the definition of romance is a class of literature that consists of romances; romantic fiction; or love stories. As stated by the definition, romance refers to works of fiction that emphasize the love stories of the characters. Cambridge Dictionary (2020) describes romance as a story of love or exciting events; the feeling of excitement that the characters have from a particular event. According to this definition, romance defines the love excitement among the characters. Those definitions describe ‘romance’ terms in general.

In romance, there are particular elements that develop the storyline so that it triggers readers’ interest in reading romance. According to McCracken (1998), the common elements of romance are Formula, Fantasy, Fulfillment, and Feminism & Femininity. Those are the basic characteristics of romance that helps build the excitement of the story itself. McCracken (1998) states the characteristic of popular romance is “the representation of desire and the important of a fantasy setting”. As stated by the definition, elements of romance are the natural characteristics of popular romance.

Each element has its characteristic to build the story's structure. The Formula is an element that presents the journey in the storyline and how every conflict has its solution. Since this study analyzed a comic, visual elements are taken into considerations to analyze the formula. According to the study conducted by Faisal et al. (2020), webtoon has its characteristics of visual elements that adapted to online media. The author of *The Secret of Angel* webcomic has her style in presenting her idiolect on her work. The author's idiolect, the visual elements in the comic, also the characters' dialogues become components for analyzing the formula. Fantasy is readers' imagination that takes a role in order to fulfill the readers' expectations. Radway (1984) states that one of the principal goals in reading romance is to do something *different* from the readers' daily routines. According to this definition, the fantasy element in romance triggers readers' interest. Fulfillment is an understanding of the ending. This comes from both sides, the character or the reader. There are feminism and femininity sides in romance, both characteristics are portrayed as the main female character in the story. Feminism is the ordinary image of women's characters as a sensitive, compassionate, and obedient. Feminist creates the story by showing the characterization of the main female character as a powerful character, it is different from the ordinary image of women's character. "No matter how much emphasis is placed on her initial desire to appear a man's equal, she is always portrayed as unusually compassionate, kind, and understanding" (Radway, 1984). As stated by the quote, the female character is portrayed as a compassionate person no matter how much she desires to be equal to the male character. People like the romance genre because of the surprises and the enjoyment

in it. The additional ingredients of romance that make people like it are the love story, the dilemma presented in the story, and the happy ending.

A factor on the literary work that supports the elements of romance is the characterizations of the characters. The personalities of the characters become the core value which is reflected in elements romance in attracting the readers' attention. Radway states "...the relative excellence of a romance is a function of its treatment of three different aspects of the story. These include the personality of the heroine, the character of the hero, and the particular manner in which the hero pursues and wins the affections of the heroine." (Radway, 1984). The personalities of the characters take an important role in inviting the readers' attention. The characterizations build the elements of romance that make them read romance.

Another factor to support the elements of romance is the story itself. The readers want to be entertained by the story. They read romance stories because they want to escape from reality for a while. The story consists of the love relationship between a woman and a man. Radway states "I think (a romance) is a man and a woman meeting, the growing awareness, the culmination of the love---whether it's going to jell or if it's going to fall apart--- they [the heroine and the hero] have recognized that they have fallen in love [emphasis added]" (Radway, 1984). According to that, even the story does not end up happily or the love story is about to fall apart, both the characters understand that they have fallen in love or they create their own happiness in the end.

2.1.2 Webtoon and Its Audience

The webtoon as the primary literary work of this study is well-known in society. Jang & Song (2017) stated that webtoon is a ‘new genre’ of publishing Korean comics in this digital era. Jang & Song (2017) also explain that the increase of Internet users and the digital cultural consumption created the market of the webtoon. The popularity of Korean dramas and K-pop also builds the readers' interest in choosing webtoon as entertainment, particularly in the countries receiving dramas and K-pop. Indonesia becomes one of the countries that welcomes Korean cultures. LINE Webtoon is one of the digital platforms of the webtoon. It is the most famous platform in Indonesia because it is easy to access in Indonesia. According to Reid, “Webtoon’s website and application attract about 55 million global visitors monthly and about 15 million global readers daily. Some webtoon series (among them *Lore Olympus* by Rachel Smythe and *True Beauty* by Korean artist Yaongyi) attract more than a million readers a week globally” (Reid, 2019). According to that, Webtoon’s global visitors are increasing widely, more than 55 million per month. Become one of the top webcomics, *True Beauty* by Yaongyi has more than a million global readers every week.

2.1.3 Reader-response Criticism

According to the previous section, a discussion on Webtoon and its audience, the readers of Webtoon play strong roles in the popularity of Webtoon. Hence, it needs to be studied by using the reader-response criticism as the theory of the research. Reader-response criticism is one of the tools that we use to appreciate and analyze a literary work. Reader-response is the response of the readers after reading

the work. This tool focuses on two aspects, both literature, and readers. Those aspects are based on the purpose to analyze the work. It can be from experiences or expectations. Rosenblatt (1995) states that reading literature is an exploration, in which readers avail themselves of emotions and histories with the intention of meaning construction. This tool not only talks about how the readers feel about the work also where the meaning of the work is found. It can be found in the text or from the readers. We can find the meaning in the work after the readers engaged with the work. When the readers read it, they start to build expectations. Each reader might have different interpretations of the work. In this case, we can talk about what an ideal reader might do with this work. What kind of readers that intend to read the work. We can also talk about the different interpretations of different readers. The writer can put personal engagement in it. It can be related to personal experiences or personal expectations. How personal experiences create a meaning for the writer when the writer engages with the text. How the expectation of the readers happens.

The use of a linguistic approach in interpreting literature text is a key tool in this study. The main problem in interpreting literature is how to analyze it. Hussein (2006) argues that “The meaning of any text is best realized when linguistic competence and pragmatic theory of language are taken into consideration”. She also argued about important aspects of the literary pragmatics are the real reader and the interpretation of the utterances (Hussein, 2006). The focus of this study by using this approach wants to see how people reacted to the text. Sell (1995) argues that literary pragmatics is not mainly concerned with linguistic interaction between the characters which are portrayed in literary texts, “between the real

writers as speakers of literature and their real readers or listeners”. This approach is concerned with the interpretation produced by the readers that affected by it. The context for literary pragmaticists is an inference performed by the readers, listeners in their processing of the text (the character’s dramatized inferences are included) or story (Sell, 1995). The connection between the readers and the text is a primary part of literary pragmatics. According to Abrams (1953), pragmatic criticism views the work as something which is constructed in order to achieve certain effects on the audience (effects such as aesthetic pleasure, instruction, or kinds of emotion), and it tends to judge the value of the work according to its success in achieving that aim. For instance, a work can be used as a propaganda/persuasion.

2.2 Recent Studies

There are some previous studies that are related to the topic of this study. There were differences from the previous studies in this study. The first recent study is by Moondi Emsita entitled *Pragmatic Analysis on Best Selling Novel A Walk to Remember by Nicholas Sparks* (Emsita, 2013). This study focuses on looking for elements of romance to attract readers in choosing *A Walk to Remember* novel as their reading. The writer used a pragmatic approach to help find the romance formula based on the readers’ responses from internet sources. The result of this study is the readers of this novel were interested in the romance story not only because of the love story, also it represented moral values.

The second recent study is entitled *Reader-Response Theory and Literature Discussions: a Springboard for Exploring Literary Texts* by Cagri Tugrul Mart (Mart, 2019). This study focuses on reader-response theory and literature

discussions in exploring literary texts. The writer uses both reader-response theory and literary pragmatics in order to explain the correlation between the use of a linguistic approach in interpreting literary works. The result of this study is the reader did not only respond the text and create meaning also to verbalize their interpretations in real life.

The third recent study is by Maysa'a K. Hussein entitled *The Pragmatic Theory of Literature* (Hussein, 2006). This study focuses on linguistic competence and pragmatic theory of language in interpreting the meaning of any literary texts. The writer uses the implementation of the pragmatic theory in interpreting a socio-cultural context. The result of this study is the literary work produced by the author with a certain intention to be transmitted by the readers to achieve a certain perlocutionary effect of the socio-cultural context.

The fourth recent study is entitled *Self-Determination of Liz's Character in Elizabeth Gilbert's Eat, Pray, Love* by Tarwia Ulfah, and Trikaloka H. Putri (Ulfah & Putri, 2018). This study focuses on the issue concerns with the main character in order to discover the interaction among the text itself, toward the readers, and the responses in the reading process. The writer uses a reader-response theory by Wolfgang Iser about aesthetic response and it uses a phenomenology of reading. The result of this study depicted that the perspectives of the readers were influenced by the readers' backgrounds that comes from different religions.

The fifth recent study is entitled *The Language Style of LINE Webtoon Let's Play Seen from the Word Formation of Technology Terms* by Lesi Anggrid (Anggrid, 2019). This study uses one of the webcomics on the LINE Webtoon entitled *Let's Play* by Mongie. The focus of this study is on the language style seen

through the word-formation of technology terms. The approach of this study is stylistics and ways used to gain the data are data collection and data analysis. Furthermore, the goal is to find the word-formation process in the webcomic.

The sixth recent study is entitled *Webtoon as a New Korean Wave in the Process of Glocalization* by Wonho Jang and Jung Eun Song (Jang & Song, 2017). This study argues about Webtoon as one of “Glocal cultures”. It is a new way to enjoy Korean society and culture in this digitalization era. The platform for webtoon and its products develop the global cartoon market. The characterization of webtoon creates a way of cultural communication.

The seventh recent study is entitled *Visual Patterns in Webcomic the Beauty of Angel* by Dini Faisal, et al. (Faisal et al., 2020). This study develops a research in characteristics of webtoon and author’s idiolect in webtoon. They used *The Secret of Angel* webtoon to be analyzed from visual elements’ perspectives. The results are the author has her style in presenting the idiolect and the visual elements adapted to online media characteristics.

The researcher stated that this study studied over again the same topic as the first recent study still there are differences to make this study is different from the recent study. The differences are the object that is used in this study, a webcomic, and this study focused on literature analysis with reader-response theory in order to find the elements of romance in the object of the study. The fifth recent study is also using a similar object, a webcomic in a different title. The topic of the study is also different because the study focused on stylistics study. The other recent studies confirmed the theories used in this study.