CHAPTER II
THEORY AND METHOD

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework consists of narrative elements and theories used in this study to analyze Jennifer Longo's novel *What I Carry*. The intrinsic elements related to the study are character, characterization, setting, and conflict of the story. The psychological theory borrowed is Amir Levine theory of avoidant attachment.

2.1.1 Intrinsic Elements

A novel consists of several intrinsic elements. Intrinsic elements are fundamental elements that build a narrative as a whole. The intrinsic elements analysed in this study are character, characterization, setting, and conflict.

2.1.1.1 Character and Characterization

In literary analysis, understanding the elements that shape a narrative is essential. One of the most important aspects of literary works is character, as it plays a central role in developing the plot, themes, and emotional depth of the story. Abrams defines character as "the persons represented in a dramatic or narrative work, who are interpreted by reader as possessing particular moral, intellectual, and emotional qualities." (Abrams, 2009: 42). Characters are constructed by the author but brought to life through the reader's interpretation based on how the narrative presents a character's personality and emotions.

This study focuses on the main character or protagonist of the story. A protagonist is the central figure in a literary work, who serve as the primary focus

of the narrative or as the narrator and often referred to as main character. This character typically drives the plot forward through their actions, decisions, and development (Johnson and Arp, 2016: 98).

To gain a deeper understanding of a character, readers often focus on the techniques of characterization, which reveal personality traits, motivations, and development throughout the story. Barnet and Cain state that "things happen in most good fiction, at least partly because the people have certain personalities or characters (moral, intellectual, and emotional qualities)" (Barnet and Cain, 2013: 134). Throughout the story, the development of the story is shaped by the characters' traits and decision.

There are two ways to reveal what a character is like, namely direct and indirect. According to Johnson and Arp, direct characterization is when the author "tell us straight out, by exposing or analysis, what the characters are like, or they have another character in the story describe them." (2016: 143). In this method, the traits and personalities of a character are described directly, allowing readers to understand the character without deeper analysis. On the other hand, Johnson and Arp explain indirect characterization as "the author shows us the characters through their actions; we determine what they are like by what they say or do." (2016: 143). Through this method, readers are encouraged to engage more actively with the narrative by interpreting the character's traits from their actions and dialogue.

2.1.1.2 Setting

Every story takes place in a specific place and time, whether based on a real place or created through the writer's imagination. Kenney explains that setting is "the point in time and space at which the events of the plot occur." (Kenney, 1966: 38). Setting informs the reader where and when things happens, as every action takes place in a particular place and moment. Furthermore, setting refers not only to the geographical location where events take place but also to the social, historical, and cultural contexts that shape the narrative.

Setting is classified into three types. The first is setting of place, which refers to the physical location where a story take places, such as a house, a street, or a city. The second is setting of time, which can refer to a specific moment such as dawn, in the broad daylight or a broader period such as the nineteenth century. The third is setting of environments, which includes elements such as weather, climate, or political situation (Kennedy and Gioia, 2007: 112). This study will analyze setting of place, time, and environments related to the development of Muiriel's avoidant attachment.

2.1.1.3 Conflict

Conflict plays a fundamental element that generates interest and tension within a narrative. Holman explain that conflict is "the struggle which grows out of the interplay of the two opposing forces in a plot" (Holman, 1985: 98). The struggles that arise from conflict is an essential component of narrative that makes a story more exciting and realistic. Conflict increases the reader's curiosity about what will happen in a novel and persuades the reader to continue reading.

A conflict usually occurs in the middle of the novel, when the characters are confronted with problems and difficulties. Johnson and Arp (2016: 98) classified conflict into two general types, namely internal conflict and external conflict. Internal conflict happens when a character is facing a problem within himself or herself. In this conflict, the characters struggle with their conflicting desires, emotions, or aspects of their own character. On the other hand, external conflict consists of two types, which are conflict of person against person, where characters may come into conflict with another individual or a group of people, and person against environment, in which the characters might struggle against an external force such as the natural environment, societal expectations, or destiny.

The study focuses on analyzing Muiriel's internal conflict and external conflict that mostly consist of conflict between person against person to help analyze the effects of Muiriel's avoidant attachment to her relationship with other character in the novel.

2.1.2 Avoidant Attachment

Attachment theory, first introduced by John Bowlby (1969), explains that when a child grows older or becomes an adult, they still form attachments or strong emotional bonds to their caregivers. As people mature, their attachment behaviors become more complex and diverse. This complex and diverse patterns of behavior are later categorized by Amir Levine as attachment styles.

Based on attachment theory, Levine explains that there are three primary category of attachment styles or "manners in which people perceive and respond to intimacy in romantic relationship." (Levine, 2010: 15). These styles describe

how someone feels about emotional closeness and how they behave in intimate relationship. The three primary styles are secure attachment, anxious attachment, and avoidant attachment.

Levine explain individuals with secure attachment as those who feel comfortable with intimacy, while anxious attachment individuals are often preoccupied by their partner's feelings toward them and avoidant attachment individuals often see intimacy as a threat to their independence (Levine, 2010: 15-16). In conclusion, individuals with these attachment style have different view intimacy, ability to communicate in relationship, and how they deal with conflict.

Specifically, Levine explain avoidant attachment individuals as people who "feel uncomfortable when things become too close and intimate and value independence and freedom." (Levine, 2010: 44). This uncomfortable feelings with closeness affected how individual with avoidant attachment build relationship with other people.

In a healthy relationship, individuals will lean toward a secure attachment. Levine further describe secure attachment as individuals who "enjoy being intimate without becoming overly worried about relationship." (Longo, 2020: 43). However, it does not mean that individual with avoidant attachment cannot build a healthy relationship. Supportive and understanding environment can help individuals to reach a secure attachment and healthy relationship.

This study mainly focuses on the avoidant attachment experienced by Muiriel that consists of Muiriel's symptoms, causes, and effects of avoidant attachment to her relationship with other characters in the story. However, Muiriel

experiences in foster care system especially during her placement with Francine, affected the development of her attachment style which later turns her into a more secure attachment.

2.1.2.1 The Symptoms of Avoidant Attachment

Individuals with avoidant attachment tend to prioritize their independence over relationship. As a result, many of the symptoms shown by individuals with avoidant attachment are related with independence and maintaining distance both physically and emotionally from others. This study analyzes three symptoms of avoidant attachment, including positive self-image and negative view of others, emotional detachment and avoidance of dependence.

The first symptom of individuals with avoidant attachment is positive self-image, and negative view of others. Levine mentions attachment individuals as "values independence but mistrustful—fears being taken advantage of by partner" (Levine, 2010: 61-62). Avoidant attachment individuals are self-assured but perceive others as untrustworthy. They feel secure when they are in control and become hyper-independence. When other people try to approach individuals with avoidant attachment, they assume that other people has ulterior motives and will eventually leave them.

Another symptom of avoidant attachment is emotional detachment. As mentioned by Levine that avoidant individuals "uses distancing strategies—emotional or physical" (Levine, 2010: 62). Avoidant attachment individuals try to conceal their emotions and minimize the significance of interpersonal connections, viewing emotional involvement as meaningless or unwanted. They

often see emotional dependence as weakness. By suppressing their emotional needs, individuals with avoidant attachment rarely feel overwhelmed by emotions. It gives them a sense of emotional stability and confidence.

Avoidance of dependence is the last symptom of individuals with avoidant attachment. Avoidance of dependence means that they tend to be afraid of becoming overly reliant on other, therefore they seek for freedom in relationships, frequently avoiding circumstances that require emotional intimacy (Levine, 2010: 62).

2.1.2.2 The Causes of Avoidant Attachment

Avoidant attachment often stems from early experience with caregiver during childhood. This study focuses on three causes of avoidant attachment, including early separation or loss of attachment figure, frequent rejection of dependency needs, and inconsistent caregiving.

The first cause that leads individuals to develop avoidant attachment is early separation or loss of attachment figures. If children regularly lose caregivers or cannot rely on their consistent presence, they may develop avoidant tendencies to protect themselves from the pain of future loses (Levine, 2010: 46).

Another cause of avoidant attachment style is observed in children with frequent rejection of dependency needs from their caregivers. Children with discouraged emotional expression or dependence caregivers responded by reducing attachment behaviours and emotional needs. Levine shows that when children are prevented from seeking comfort or are repeatedly rejected when

displaying vulnerability, they learn to repress their emotional needs, resulting in an avoidant attachment style (Levine, 2010: 46).

The last cause of avoidant attachment is inconsistent caregiving due to frequent changes in caregivers. Levine explains that if caregivers are continuously unresponsive, emotionally unavailable, or inconsiderate of the child's needs, the child may develop an avoidant attachment as a form of defence mechanism (2010: 46). When children's emotional needs are repeatedly ignored or disregarded, they develop self-reliance and emotional detachment. This keeps children from feeling the pain of rejection or unfulfilled needs.

2.1.2.3 The Effects of Avoidant Attachment

Patterns of behavior in adult romantic relationships often reflects the attachment style they developed in childhood. Levine mentioned that "adults show patterns of attachment to their romantic partners similar to the patterns of attachment children with their parents" (Levine, 2010: 15). Early experiences play a crucial role in shaping interpersonal behavior and influencing individuals' beliefs about relationship with other people. This study analyzes three effects of avoidant attachment including struggle to form emotional closeness, emotional withdrawal when relationships become too intimate, and distancing themselves under stress.

The first effect of individuals with avoidant attachment is struggle to form emotional closeness as they prioritize independence. This discomfort with intimacy and trust can make it challenging for them to build and maintain healthy personal relationship. Another effect is individual with avoidant attachment

frequently withdraw emotionally when relationships become too intimate. Instead of opening up to other people, individual with avoidant attachment pull away to protect themselves. The last effect is seen when, under stress or during conflict, individuals with avoidant attachment are more likely to distance themselves rather than seek comfort or express vulnerability. This discomfort with expressing vulnerability leads to a reluctance to form deep connections, because individuals with avoidant attachment believe it is better to keep their feelings to themselves (Levine, 2010: 100).

2.2 Research Method

A research method is the procedure for analyzing and collecting data. This study uses two methods in this study, namely psychological approach and library research.

2.2.1 Data and Data Source

Taylor et al. (2016: 155) describes primary data as "documents or artefacts produced at the time of the event being examined, such as letters, reports, photographs, diaries, and newsletters". On the other hand, secondary data are interpretations or analyses created by individuals who did not directly involved in the event. In this study, the writer uses Jennifer Longo's novel *What I Carry* as the primary data. Meanwhile the secondary data are obtained through paper, article, books and internet references related to literary elements, attachment theory and avoidant attachment, to support the analysis.

2.2.2 Method of Collecting Data

This study gathers data for analysis by conducting library research. George explains that library research "involves identifying and locating source that provide factual information or personal/expert opinion," (2008: 6). Library research is a means of acquiring factual data, knowledge, or opinion in order to write or create something, particularly study research. The process involves finding credible sources with reliable information or expert opinions on the related research.

2.2.3 Method of Analysing Data

To conduct this research study objectively, this study analyzes the data using a variety of methodologies, including psychological approach. Abrams explain that "a psychological approach seeks to identify and present unique recurring patterns in literary work through psychological perspective" (1999: 33). The writer needs to clarify human motivation, personality, and behavioral patterns reflected in literary objects by using a psychological approach. To analyze the main character's avoidant attachment, the writer uses Amir Levine's theory of avoidant attachment.