

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Questioning sexuality is a stage that every LGBTQ+ person has to go through before they finally find out which sexual identity spectrum they fall within. During this phase, many of them struggle to identify or categorize their true sexual orientation. In the 1960s and 1980s, it was even harder for queer people to do so since sexuality and gender were taboo subjects to discuss at the time. Only heterosexuality was considered normal and acceptable in society. Therefore, most of them would rather repress their homosexual thoughts and pretend they were as normal and as hetero as everyone else than looked into or discovered their true sexuality deeper.

“Brokeback Mountain” is one of the American LGBTQ+ literary works in which the protagonist went through a sexuality crisis. The story tells about an unexpected meeting between two cowboys in the summer of 1963 in Wyoming. They later fell in love and romantically formed a strong bond together. The story ends with the protagonist’s homosexual lover passing away and leaving him with a sense of loss and regret, but also a better understanding of himself. “Brokeback Mountain” delves into themes such as forbidden love, and identity, and it portrays the real hardships of closeted queer people attempting to thrive in a heteronormative society during the 1960s and 1980s.

Annie Proulx’s short story “Brokeback Mountain” was originally published in

“The New Yorker” magazine in 1997. It was later added to Proulx's collection of short stories entitled *Close Range: Wyoming Stories* in 1999. It also got a movie adaptation with the same title, directed by Ang Lee in 2005. The short story is told in third person by an omniscient narrator (a narrator who knows it all, including each character’s feelings, thoughts, actions, and backstory).

Both the short story and the movie adaptation are very iconic that they have been subjects of many studies. The writer discovers that most of the previous studies discuss the queer aspects of the movie adaptation. In this thesis, the writer will also discuss the queer elements of the story, but he uses the original version (the short story) as the object of the study. To differ from the other study topics, the writer will analyze the sexuality crisis of the protagonist of the story, Ennis Del Mar, by using Troiden’s sexual identity confusion theory.

The reason why the writer chooses to discuss this topic in his thesis is because he has always had a keen interest in queer studies, particularly regarding human sexuality. The writer sincerely hopes that by reading this thesis, readers will begin to evaluate education concerning sexual identity with greater importance as it is a part of everyone's life, specifically adolescents and adults.

## **1.2 Research Problems**

The problems in this study are centred on the protagonist in Annie Proulx’s *Brokeback Mountain*, Ennis Del Mar.

1. What is the cause of Ennis Del Mar’s sexuality crisis in Annie Proulx’s short story “Brokeback Mountain” (1997)?

2. How is Ennis Del Mar's sexuality crisis portrayed in Annie Proulx's short story "Brokeback Mountain" (1997)?
3. What are the effects of Ennis Del Mar's sexuality crisis on himself in Annie Proulx's short story "Brokeback Mountain" (1997)?

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

Being connected with the research problems above, the objectives of this study are:

1. To reveal the cause of Ennis Del Mar's sexuality crisis in Annie Proulx's short story "Brokeback Mountain" (1997).
2. To portray Ennis Del Mar's sexuality crisis in Annie Proulx's short story "Brokeback Mountain" (1997).
3. To show the effects of Ennis Del Mar's sexuality crisis on himself in Annie Proulx's short story "Brokeback Mountain" (1997).

### **1.4 Previous Studies**

The writer finds several studies using the same literary work, i.e., "A Short Story Essay: *Brokeback Mountain*" by Yasir Arafat (Language and Creative Arts 2013). This thesis mainly discusses the plot of the story from the writer's perspective. Another paper is entitled "Shepherding Romance: Reviving the Politics of Love in *Brokeback Mountain*" by Barbara Koziak. This paper investigates the wide attraction of a recent and unexpected film rebirth of a traditional romantic love story.

From a different perspective, a thesis entitled "The Issue of Homosexuality in

Annie Proulx's *Brokeback Mountain* and Its Film Adaptation Directed by Ang Lee" by Maria Wintang Rarasati (English Language and Literature Study Program Faculty of Languages and Arts Yogyakarta State University 2014) analyzes the main characters' homosexuality and its impact on the main characters' lives. Meanwhile, in another research entitled "Ennis Del Mar's Fluid Gender in Annie Proulx's *Brokeback Mountain* Short Story" by Galih Lutvianto. (Study Program of English Department of Languages and Literatures, Faculty of Cultural Studies Universitas Brawijaya 2014) discusses the gender fluidity of the main character in the short story, Ennis Del Mar. Another similar thesis with the title "Ennis and Jack's Sexual Orientation in Annie Proulx's *Brokeback Mountain*" by Eka Dewi Sofia Putri and Hujuala Rika Ayu, S.S., MA. (English Literature, Faculty of Languages and Arts, Surabaya State University). It merely focuses on the main character's sexual orientation in the discussion. Another one is entitled "Queering the Western (2010 *Brokeback Mountain* Chapter)" by Gary Needham. This one aims at evaluating *Brokeback Mountain* in light of Western film studies. It also aims to provide information on how *Brokeback Mountain* fits into a wider history of interactions between the Western genre and homosexuality. Another research is found with the title "The Will to Masculinity in a homosexual romance: A text analysis of the Film *Brokeback Mountain* (2005) by Ang Lee" by Josephine Ng. This research aims to investigate the construction of the masculine identities of two protagonists (Ennis Del Mar and Jack Twist) from a constructionist viewpoint.

Another topic from a study entitled "The violation of masculinity myth of

American cowboy reflected in Annie Proulx's *Brokeback Mountain*" by Dimas Wulan Merdeka Basuki (English Language Education Study Program Department of Language and Arts Education Faculty of Teachers Training and Education Sanata Dharma University Yogyakarta 2014) explains the violation of masculinity and its myth in the short story through gender and cultural approaches. Another paper is entitled "A Cross-cultural Approach to *Brokeback Mountain*" by Jono Van Belle (Ghent University 2015). It explores the different viewpoints of audiences from different cultures regarding the short story and the movie. Meanwhile, a paper entitled "'I Ain't Queer': Love, Masculinity and History in *Brokeback Mountain*" by Leigh Boucher and Sarah Pinto (Monash University 2007) examines the history and political viewpoints of the movie.

To differ from previous studies above and also to this thesis's novelty, the writer decides to address the sexual identity crisis of the protagonist of the story, Ennis Del Mar by using Troiden's sexual identity confusion theory as the topic of this thesis. The theory also comes with the responses to identity confusion, which will also be used to analyze how the protagonist responds to his sexual identity crisis. Therefore, this thesis is entitled "Sexual Identity Crisis of the Protagonist in Annie Proulx's Short Story "Brokeback Mountain" (1997)".

### **1.5 Scope of the Study**

Even though there are many areas that can be investigated in this literary work, the writer chooses to focus only on the queer aspect of the story, namely, the protagonist's sexuality crisis. This chosen aspect will be analyzed by using some queer theories, namely, sexual identity confusion theory, and queer theory

from modern queer theorists such as Richard Troiden and Annamarie Jagose. Ennis's sexual identity crisis happens because of his unacknowledged bisexuality, which causes him to exhibit the following responses: denial, repair, avoidance, redefinition, and acceptance.

## **1.6 Organization of the Writing**

This research is arranged into four chapters and each chapter has its subchapters. Here is the organization of the writing of this thesis:

1. Chapter 1 (Introduction): This chapter contains the background of the study, research problems, objectives of the study, previous study, the scope of the study, and the organization of the writing.
2. Chapter 2 (Theoretical Framework and Method): This chapter contains two points: theoretical framework, and method. The theoretical framework is divided into two aspects: intrinsic aspects, and extrinsic aspects. The intrinsic aspects are character and characterization, and conflict, whereas the extrinsic aspects are: queer theory including sexual identity theory, bisexuality theory, and identity confusion theory. Whereas method contains: data and data source, method of collecting data, and method of analyzing data.
3. Chapter 3 (Discussion): This chapter is divided into two aspects: intrinsic aspects and extrinsic aspects. The intrinsic aspect discusses the short story's character, characterization, and conflict. The extrinsic aspects examine the cause of Ennis Del Mar's sexuality crisis, the portrayal of his

sexuality crisis, and the effects of his sexuality crisis on himself in the short story.

4. Chapter 4 (Conclusion): This chapter contains the conclusion of the discussion.
5. Bibliography: It contains the references used in the thesis