

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Humans experience events in certain times. Those events may include changes, evolution, and success in some epochs in humans' life. Time is a framework we impose that captures succession, change or evolution (Bennet, 2016, p.5). Time is a variable to determine when and how long the processes or events humans pass in their life. Humans always develop in both physical and psychological condition. Time is used as an indicator to show when and how long the changes of humans happen. A physical condition of humans always develops since they are infants in the uterus. Organs of humans always develop adjusting the needs of humans. At the first weeks of pregnancy, humans are only in the form of blood, then they develop forming some organs such as heart, legs, hands, head, nose, etc. After being born to this world, humans also pass development in appearance such as babies have all the body parts in small size, then they will grow into children, when they become teenagers they will pass the significant change on their psychological and physical condition for example a teenage girl will get menstruation. The girl who is in menstruation periods gets changes in both physical and psychological condition. After the teenager age, humans will pass the adult age in which their way of thinking becomes mature and their appearances also changes, for example the adults will dress adjusting their age and condition. These processes in humans' life are called as an

evolution in which time acts as an indicator to show when and how long the evolution happens.

As mentioned before changes and evolution in humans' life happen in certain events that humans pass and those events will always happen continuously in human's life without any stop as long humans still live in this world. It can be understood that events always accumulate in human's life that will finally form the history of each individual. It also happens the same to time. According to Baucom, time does not pass, it accumulates (in Tesar, 2016:9). Time always accumulates in the whole life of humans and it never stops as long that humans are still alive.

The accumulation of time brings the accumulation of events; therefore, in humans' journey in this life humans can find the two types of time travel: returning and progressing. Temporality is experienced both cyclically (returning) and consecutively (progressing) (Gould, 2016, p.10). Humans can travel back to the past experiences by remembering the past experiences but they also do this life in progressing time, in line with the principle that time always accumulates.

Supporting the perspectives of Baucom and Gould, Christensen and O'Brien (in Tesar, 2016:5) add more details about the parts of time: 'Time is a continuity that is divided, paradoxically, into three parts: the past, which is a continuity but no longer exists; the future, which is a continuity but does not yet exist; and the present, the now, the moment, which exist but is discrete. As explained before that the principle of time is accumulating, humans' time accumulates and it forms 3 parts: the past, the

present, and the future. On the other word, humans' events always accumulate and it brings humans into 3 phases of life: processes that humans experienced in the past, processes that humans experiencing in the present, and processes that humans have not experienced in the future.

Although time is an important aspect to determine when the events in humans' life happen but the role of time is not as important as space. Lefebvre (in Tesar, 2016:6) states that time has become, subordinated, detached but not separated from space. The role of space is more important in humans' life because space provides a place and the interactions inside it which then accumulated in the form of humans' history. Spaces can be both real and unreal places. When talking about real and unreal places, Foucault has his own terms, known as utopias and heterotopias. Utopias are sites with no real place while heterotopias are the opposite. To provide a better understanding of utopias and heterotopias, Foucault gave the example in a mirror. A mirror can be both utopias and heterotopias because when humans see themselves in front of the mirror, they can see their reflection in the mirror. The reflection unfortunately is unreal; therefore, it is utopia, but the mirror itself does exist in real life, it is understood as the heterotopia.

Humans practice processes or events in certain times and spaces. The events or process that humans do are often restricted by some regulations or wisdoms which tie a group of people or a community in society. That regulation is called as local wisdom. Community knowledge or local wisdom is transmitted through tradition

(Settaboosang, 2012, p.3). Local wisdom is obtained from both within and outside the community. It is used in ways that benefit the community and in ways which it can be passed on. The important thing that should be underlined from local wisdom is it is gained through the experiences of older generations which later pass to the younger generations. Local wisdom adjusts the geographical and social condition of a community. Local wisdom is used to help humans in doing their lives. The example can be seen in the life of Indonesians who live in remote villages, the older generations often create mythical story for the safety of the people around the area. For example, they may create a story that people who cut the trees in a sacred forest can get curse from the evils which live in the forest. It can actually be explained logically that the older generations create that story to preserve the existence of the plants inside the forest because if all trees are cut, people will not be able to live in balance with the nature. People can easily get natural disasters such as flood and landslide. So, the existence of local wisdom is to give benefits for humans in their life.

The practices that humans do in certain circumstances are often affected by the local wisdom that certain community believes and it will lead into a continuity which cannot be avoided. The continuity of the practices will finally affect the identity construction of each individual who lives inside certain circumstance. In Psychology, identity is self-image, personality, self-esteem, and individuation. It can be understood that identity is a personal matter which relates with someone's way of

thinking, feeling, behaving, how he/she respects him/herself, and the process of transforming into certain characteristics. Mead (in Thomas, 2008:8) stated that the self is social construction; therefore, the shaping of individual's identity cannot be separated from the social interactions that humans do. The development of identity passes some series of stage and strongly influenced by the changes of external situations/environments.

Seeing the principle of identity which is strongly affected by the environment or external stimuli, space and local wisdom are the important aspects which can strongly influence someone's characteristic in the accumulation of time. Space has interactions and some regulations inside which then finally affect the people inside the space in the way they think, feel and behave. Space also has local wisdom which regulates the people inside a community so that the people will behave in line with the regulation. The people's obedience of the regulations inside a community and their involvement in some practices through times will finally turn them into certain identity: identity construction.

Realizing the important roles of time, space, and local wisdom in the identity construction, the researcher is curious to know more about how time, space, and local wisdom affect the identity construction. In this research, the researcher chose to analyze the identity construction of Liesel Meminger in *The Book Thief* novel that is influenced by the time, space, and local wisdom. This research focuses on the main character: Liesel Meminger because this character is the central attention of the issues

in the novel. This character can also represent the other characters, relating to the issue being discussed in the novel in which there is the religion discrimination. When the other Germans hated and avoided Jews, Hubermann family chose to respect and care Jews especially Max Vandenburg.

The setting of the novel in 1939-1945 told the condition of Jews in which Jews were hated by Germans. The time Jews moved to German and became Germany citizen happened in 1937. In 1914 Jews showed their existence by helping Germany fighting in World War I, but then in 1915 a rumor appeared saying that Jews actually did not help Germany they just enriched themselves, from this thing the hatred of German appeared. The image of Jews was so bad, moreover, Jews became the main enemy that were hated by Nazi party. Only 10% of Germans could respect Jews, and the 90% Germans followed Nazi ideology to hate Jews.

Hubermann family was part of the 10% Germans who could respect Jews. Hans Hubermann was a Christian and a German but he could respect and care Jews because in World War I he was ever saved by a Jew. This thing finally becomes a mindset which Hans always had. He then applied this way of thinking to care and protect Jews in his family including to his foster daughter, Liesel Meminger. This is a special thing that finally affects Liesel's way of thinking, feeling, and behaving in treating Jews.

To support this research, the researcher takes a look on some previous studies as references. The studies that are considered on conducting this research are: Timing

Childhoods: An Alternative Reading of Children's Development through Philosophy of time, temporality, place, and space by Marek Tesar in 2016 and Space and Place in Children's Literature, 1789 to the present by Maria Sachiko Cecire, Hannah Field, Kavita Mudan Finn, Malini Roy in 2015.

Seeing the issues that are discussed in the previous studies, local wisdom is an additional finding that is never discussed before. This research will discuss about time, space, and local wisdom in one time, so the discussion will not be limited only on how time and space as a unity which affect the identity construction, but this research will also talk about local wisdom as a part of space which also has vital role on the identity construction.

To conduct the research, the researcher chose the Book Thief novel because this novel is rich with many issues especially in seeing how a little girl undergoes many events in Nazi era in Germany which finally shape her identity. The writing style of the novel is marvelous because the writer uses "death" as the narrator in the novel. The novel consists of historical facts but it does not make the readers bored to read because it is packed in the life story of a young girl who had to adapt herself in a foster family and in the horror of Nazi era. The readers will be brought into the journey of Hubermann family which had strong bond with Liesel Meminger although she was not their own daughter. The good and meaningful story makes this novel translated into more than 40 languages in all over the world. This novel also got many achievements and awards: Commonwealth Writers' Prize for Best Book (South East

Asia & South Pacific) in 2006, School Library Journal Best Book of the Year in 2006, Daniel Elliot Peace Award in 2006, Publishers Weekly Best Children's Book of the Year in 2006, National Jewish Book Award for Children and Young Adult Literature in 2006, Bulletin Blue Ribbon Book in 2006, Michael L. Printz Honor Book in 2007, and Book Sense Book of the Year Award for Children's Literature in 2007.

The Book Thief novel tells the life story of a young girl named Liesel Meminger. She was adopted by Hubermann family because her mother could not afford to ensure her life. Even in the age of 9 years old, she could not read or write. At the first months of Liesel's arrival in Hubermann family, she got difficulty to adapt herself. She could not forget the loss of her brother. Her little brother was supposed to come to the Hubermann family with her but he passed away in the train during their way. Every night Liesel got bad dreams about her brother who starred the floor of train station with horrible eyes. When getting the dreams, she always screamed and vomited. Hans Hubermann as her foster father always came to calm her. Liesel felt comfort with the appearance of Hans. One day Liesel got bad dream and again Hans came but he found a book under Liesel's bed. The title was 'The Gravedigger's handbook'. Hans asked Liesel whether she could read the book. Liesel just shook her head. Hans then taught Liesel how to read and write after her bad dreams.

Liesel became so enthusiastic in reading books after she got lesson from her papa. Every day she asked Hans to teach her more and more. This obsession finally led her to the obsession of books. She often stole books because she felt happy when reading books.

Living in a new environment was not easy for Liesel but there was one boy who obsessed with the American runner, Jessie Owens, liked following Liesel wherever she went. He was Rudy Steiner, a neighbor and a good friend of Liesel who always helped her in every situation. Rudy even helped Liesel to steal books although he wondered why Liesel had so much hunger for books.

One year after Liesel's arrival in Hubermann family, Max Vandenburg who was a Jew came to Hubermann family's house in a late night. Max's arrival shocked all family members. Liesel who knew nothing was so confused with his arrival. Hans explained to Liesel that they should help Max and let him to live in basement because Max's father ever saved Hans in World War I. It felt awkward for Liesel at first but she finally could interact with Max. Liesel felt a strong connection with Max and she treated Max like her real brother. At last, this novel is closed with a torn feeling of Liesel in which she was the only person could struggle under the World War. She lost her all loved ones included Rudy Steiner. The ending of the story can make everyone who reads the book down in tears.

Overall, the researcher focuses the analysis on the identity construction of Liesel Meminger in Nazi era in Germany which is affected by time, space, and the

practice of local wisdom by using time theory of Bennett and space theory of Michael Foucault.

1.2 Research Problems

This study will answer the following questions:

1. How do time and space affect Liesel's identity construction?
2. How does local wisdom affect Liesel's identity construction?
3. What changes does Liesel undergo in periodical phases?

1.3 Purpose of The Study

This study aims to reveal the identity of Liesel Meminger that is shaped by certain times, spaces, and the practice of local wisdom.

1.4 Limitation of The Study

This study focuses on the identity construction of Liesel Meminger through spaces, times, and the involvement of the local wisdom inside Hubermann family in Germany in Nazi era.

1.5 Significance of The Study

This study is expected to enrich the research findings in literature field, especially in how identity constructed and affected by time, space, and the practice of local wisdom. Also for a contribution and reference for future researches for the students of State University of Jakarta, who are interested about identity construction through times, spaces, and the influence of local wisdom.

