CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the research background and explains the problem that arise during the study. This chapter includes the research background, statement of problems, research purposes, research significances, conceptual framework, previous studies, and definition of terms.

1.1   Research Background

In an increasingly interconnected world, literature serves as a medium for fostering understanding and interaction among people from diverse backgrounds. It enables readers worldwide to broader access to works that were once inaccessible due to language barriers. As Goethe in Damono (2005, p. 2) argued that literature is no longer confined to introducing national identities but has entered the era of world literature, where everyone must contribute to hastening the arrival of this era. This underscores the importance of translation studies in literary studies. Bassnett (1993, p. 161) emphasizes that translation significantly contributes to the development of literary studies, particularly comparative literature. This is due to its contribution to the historical progression of literature, positioning translated works as distinct entities and new literary creations rather than mere replicas.

Furthermore, there are different perspectives regarding the identity of translated literary works. Hilaire Belloc in Bassnett, (1993, p. 138), for instance, views translated literature as a subsidiary and derivative art form, suggesting it will never attain the stature of the original work. Similarly, Nelson Goodman in Laiho (2007, p. 298) asserts that the original and the translated works are essentially the same because their words are identical, even if written by different authors. In contrast, Margolis in Laiho (2007, p. 299) argues that translated literature represents two distinct entities, as they stem from different intentions and are interpreted differently by readers. Benedetto Croce's subjective idealism in Laiho (2007, p. 303) goes further, positing that the identity of an artistic work resides in an intangible realm of the author's mind. Thus, when a literary work is

turned into a text and translated into another language, its identity as an artifact (art-proper) endures. Based on these varying perspectives, it can be concluded that a literary work's identity can be preserved despite linguistic differences.

More specifically, literary translation is a study of the process of translating literary works, such as poetry, prose, and drama, from the source language (SL) into the target language (TL). This process is complex because it not only involves literal translation but also strives to maintain the aesthetic effect and artistic value of the original work, ensuring that the message and emotional nuances are effectively conveyed to readers in the target language. Therefore, a literary translator has the responsibility to understand the cultural and ideological context of the work, as neglecting these aspects may result in significant deviations in meaning, potentially misleading readers in the target language (Bassnett, 2002, p. 85).

In literary translation studies, there is often a perception that translating prose is easier than translating poetry due to its narrative structure. However, this view is a misconception because, although prose literature may seem more straightforward in terms of storyline (narrative) and character, it poses its own challenges. As Bassnett (2002, p. 116) explains, translating prose is not merely about transferring the source language (SL) into the target language (TL) but also about preserving the essence and themes underlying the story so that they can be understood by readers in the target language. Additionally, Wolfgang Iser in Bassnett, (2002, p. 119) notes that each sentence in prose is not an isolated narrative but part of an interconnected sequence that hints at what might happen next and implies meanings or events that are not explicitly stated.

Elements of Fiction are the main basis of a novel, as shapes the storyline, portrays characters, and creates an atmosphere that captivates readers. As Abrams (2013, p. 252) explains, the novel is a type of prose fiction characterized by its long narrative form, offering greater scope for character development, complex plots, and in-depth exploration of motives and personalities. Generally, novels include five elements of fiction such as plot, theme, characters, setting, and point

of view. Plot is the main element of fiction in a literary work. Aristotle in Sholihah (2021, p. 60) argues that *mythos* (plot) is the most fundamental feature of a narrative, asserting that a good story must have a beginning, middle, and ending, and it should provide enjoyment through the rhythm of its structure.

Furthermore, Abrams (2013, p. 293) suggests that the plot does not exist in isolation but involves the actions performed by characters, including verbal discussions and physical acts, which simultaneously reflect the moral qualities and dispositions of those characters. A coherent plot creates a thread connecting the theme, enriching its meaning for readers. In the context of literary translation, the element of plot can assist translators in conveying the theme of the original work more accurately and ensuring that the message and emotions are comprehensible to readers in the target language. From the quotations, this enables translators to avoid misinterpretations that could undermine the underlying theme of the work.

According to Venuti (1995, p. 2), translations overly focused on fluency often sacrifice the cultural and aesthetic elements of the original work, reducing its identity. He terms this phenomenon the Translator's Invisibility, where the translator's presence is unacknowledged in the translation process. Thus, translators must preserve the original work's identity by employing appropriate translation strategies. Furthermore, he identifies two primary translation strategies, mainly domestication and foreignization. Domestication is adapting a text to align with the target culture (TL), and foreignization is preserving the linguistic and cultural characteristics of the source text (SL) (Venuti, 1995, p. 20). From the quotation, the choice between these strategies becomes crucial when translating fictional literary works with philosophical themes.

The roots of the relationship between literature and philosophy can be traced back to ancient Greece, with one example being Socratic dialogues in Plato's works. In these works, Socrates explores various philosophical concepts through conversations with other characters, introducing ideas about knowledge, truth, justice, and morality. This can be used as a foundation for the connection between

literature and philosophy. Similarly, Dasuki (2024, p. 68) argues that good literature is literature that speaks of logical (philosophical) truth. Therefore, educational literary works emphasize values rich in reason and humanity, while visionary literature meets the demands of a realistic future based on logical human considerations.

Regarding literary works, there is no definitive definition of philosophical literature. However, certain works qualify as philosophical as they reflect philosophical thought in unique forms. Several categories of philosophical literature are found across different literary traditions, such as *Political Novels*, which convey philosophical themes through political and social issues. Additionally, *German Philosophical Fiction* conveys Germany's deep philosophical traditions, while *Russian Philosophical Novels* focus on moral questions and life values. *French Philosophical Fiction* offers unique philosophical reflections within the French literary tradition. In Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish literature, philosophical works combine local traditions with philosophical reflections. On the other hand, *English and American Philosophical Fiction* often emphasize social criticism and reflections on modern culture. Meanwhile, *Science Fiction* has emerged as a genre that raises philosophical questions through futuristic settings, technology, and the universe (Bell, n.d.).

Fiction authors often use the narrative form of novels to convey their philosophical or social perspectives, delving into profound themes like existence, morality, or specific social conditions. Consequently, novels have significant potential to create a reflective space for readers, allowing them to ponder the philosophical issues raised by the author. As McCracken (1998, p. 16) states, the modern world is a stage of social conflict that must be confronted by popular fiction in order to succeed. Fiction can provide the narrative necessary to reposition oneself in relation to the world, so that readers of fiction are actively engaged in the process of self-reconstruction.

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One of a literary work with a philosophical theme is the science fiction novel *Never Let Me Go* by Kazuo Ishiguro, a Japanese-born British novelist, screenwriter, and short story writer. The novel has been translated into Indonesian by Gita Yuliani K. under the title *Jangan Lepaskan Aku*. It was inspired by the successful cloning experiments of Dolly the sheep and human embryos between 1996 and 2001. The novel is listed among Time magazine's 100 best Anglophone novels from 1923 to 2005 and has received several awards, including the 2005 Man Booker Prize, the 2005 National Book Critics Circle Award, the 2006 Arthur C. Clarke Award, the 2006 ALA Alex Award, and the 2017 Nobel Prize in Literature. Through this novel, the author uses fictional elements not only to critique humanity amidst the progress of biotechnology in the modern era but also to convey the philosophical idea of absurdism.

The novel tells the story of Kathy H., Ruth, and Tommy, three friends growing up at Hailsham School in 1990s England. All the students are human clones. Although they receive education and treatment similar to that of normal humans such as physical, art, and health care educations, they are created to donate vital organs to normal humans as they reach adolescence. Initially, they feel "donate" as a trivial matter, but as they grow older, they begin to quest reasons for their existence, eventually coming to terms with the reality of life and death with pleasure. Overall, the story of this novel aligns with the concept of absurdism.

Absurdism is a philosophical view proposed by Albert Camus, which addresses the conflict between rational humans and an irrational world. Simply put, absurdism posits that questing for meaning in this world is inherently conflicted, as one will ultimately face the reality that the world lacks clear meaning because it is irrational and indifferent. However, the meaninglessness of life is not a source of suffering but rather something to be embraced through revolt. In this view, revolt is as a form of happy acceptance of life as a resistance to absurdity. Therefore, humans can create their own sense of happiness and

meaning in life rather than questioning their existence, ensuring that even in a meaningless world, life still has value (Camus, 1955).

Based on the explanation above, the researcher selected *Never Let Me Go* and its Indonesian translation *Jangan Lepaskan Aku* as objects of this study for three main reasons. First, the novel is one of the most outstanding contemporary anglophone literary works, both in terms of awards and international recognition from readers. Second, the profound theme of the quest for life's meaning explored in the novel provides a relevant reflective space for exploring the concept of absurdism, even though many reviewers on social media consider the novel overrated or boring due to its slow pacing. The researcher sees this as an element that reflects the silence and indifference of the world emphasized by Kazuo Ishiguro. Third, as the novel has been translated into dozens of languages, including Indonesian, analyzing its translation becomes relevant. The researcher feels that the philosophical nuances in this translated novel can be edible while also experiencing a sense of foreignness, whether through word choice, scenes, or even culture. Therefore, this study focuses on analyzing the novel's translation, particularly its exploration of the theme of absurdism through plot elements using the domestication and foreignization translation strategies.

1.2 Statement of Problems

In this study, the researcher analyzes how absurdism as a theme in *Never Let Me Go* can be conveyed using translation strategies and how it affects the conveyance to *Jangan Lepaskan Aku*. The focus of this research is the differences in conveying absurdism in the plot development between the source language (SL) and the target language (TL), using domestication and foreignization strategies. Therefore, the researcher formulates two research questions as follows:

1. What makes Freytag's plot structure in *Never Let Me Go* reflect the elements of absurdism?

2. What effects do domestication and foreignization strategies have on the conveyance of absurdism from *Never Let Me Go* to *Jangan Lepaskan Aku*?

1.3 Research purposes

Based on the research formulation above, there are two objectives to be achieved in this research as follows:

1. To reveal the philosophical view of absurdism as a theme in the plot development in *Never Let Me Go*.

2. To find out the impact of domestication and foreignization strategies in conveying the philosophical view of absurdism from *Never Let Me Go* to *Jangan Lepaskan Aku*.

1.4 Research significances

The researcher hopes this study can contribute positively both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this research provides a deeper understanding of literary translation, particularly in conveying philosophical themes in literary work. By analyzing absurdism through the plot development, the study offers a more profound understanding of the philosophical ideas explored in *Never Let Me Go*. It also provides new insights into literary translation, demonstrating that the application of translation strategies is not only about linguistic and cultural differences but can also be applied to convey philosophical ideas so that readers can naturally understand the ideas while also experiencing the original nuances of the literature.

Practically, this research can serve as a reference for world literature readers and literature students who interested in literary translation studies. It offers an approach to conveying philosophical ideas into a different language, helping those interested in further researching cross-cultural literary studies.

1.5 Previous Studies

In conducting this research, the researcher has found several related readings that serve as secondary sources of data and information. The previous

studies used as references include one journal article and two undergraduate theses.

The first study is an undergraduate thesis by Miftahul Fikri (2020) from the State Islamic University of Sunan Ampel Surabaya entitled *Absurdism Depicted in Kazuo Ishiguro's Never Let Me Go*. This study provides an understanding of absurdism reflected in the story of the three characters in the same novel as the one in this research. However, in this research, the focus is only on the absurdity of the lives of the three main characters, while analyzing themes in a novel requires elements of fiction beyond just the characters. Many events support the development of the theme in *Never Let Me Go*, such as activities, rules, and events that occur at Hailsham School, The Cottage and the Norfolk in each plot, which play a significant role in the development of the theme of absurdism.

The second study is an undergraduate thesis by Ria Puji Lestari (2019) from the State Islamic University of Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung entitled *Foreignization and Domestication Translation of Indonesian Cultural Expressions in Mochtar Lubis' Sendja Di Djakarta in Claire Holt's Twilight in Djakarta*. In her research, she focuses on domestication and foreignization translation strategies to analyze the conveyance of Indonesian cultural expressions in the English translation of *Sendja di Djakarta*. The study shows that the foreignization strategy is more dominant in expressing Indonesian cultural expressions in order to retain the foreign nuances for the target language readers. This study has provided an understanding that domestication and foreignization translation strategies can be applied more specifically to culture in literary works when translating prose into another language.

The third study is a journal article by Maria Dita Manggarani, M.R. Nababan, and Riyadi Santosa (2019) from the University of Sebelas Maret entitled *An Analysis of Comparative Translation of Sexist Expressions Between Male and Female Characters in The Novel Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk (Analisis Perbandingan Terjemahan Ungkapan Yang Mengandung Sikap Seksis Antara Tokoh Laki-Laki Dan Perempuan Dalam Novel Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk)*. In their

research, they found that 14 translation techniques were used for female characters and 12 techniques for male characters, with results showing that the translator tended to retain the sexist attitudes present in the source language (SL), reflecting the patriarchal cultural background in both languages. The study provided an understanding that translation techniques can be applied with a focus on the ideology of a work, offering a deeper understanding of the theme explored in the context of cultural differences between the source language (SL) and the target language (TL).

This research entitled *Domestication and Foreignization in The Conveying of Absurdism in Kazuo Ishiguro's Never Let Me Go*, aims to develop and combine the studies of Miftahul Fikri (2020) and Ria Puji Lestari (2019) by analyzing the theme of absurdism in each part of the plot in *Never Let Me Go*, and analyzing the application of domestication and foreignization strategies focusing on the philosophical theme from *Never Let Me Go* to *Jangan Lepaskan Aku*. Additionally, the research by Maria Dita Manggarani, et al. (2019), which discusses the comparative of ideological narratives in different languages, shows that translation strategies can intersect with literary devices, leading to a profound discussion of the message contained in a literary work in the context of cultural differences.

1.6 Definition of Terms

The definitions of these key terms are provided to prevent any misunderstandings regarding the terms used in this research as follows:

Conveying: Based on Oxford Dictionary, "convey" means to make ideas, feelings, etc., known to somebody. In this research, the term "conveying" refers to explaining how the philosophical view of absurdism in the source language (SL), specifically in the novel *Never Let Me Go* that is translated into the target language (TL), *Jangan Lepaskan Aku*.

Dialogue: Based on Oxford Dictionary, dialogue is conversations in a book, play or film or in language teaching materials. In this research, dialogue refers to

the conversations found in the English text of Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (SL) and the Indonesian translation *Jangan Lepaskan Aku* (TL).

Narrative Text: Based on Oxford Dictionary, narrative is a description of events. In this research, the narrative text refers to the descriptive elements of the English text of *Never Let Me Go* (SL) and the Indonesian translation *Jangan Lepaskan Aku* (TL).

Philosophy: Based on Oxford Dictionary, "philosophy" is the study of the nature and meaning of the universe and human life. Quoting from the novel *Sophie's World*, Immanuel Kant argues that philosophy is the science that forms the foundation of all human knowledge. Philosophy is a critical effort to understand the limits of human reason and to distinguish between what humans can know, what they ought to do, and what they can hope for (Gaarder, 1994).

Source Language (SL): The source language is the original language of the text being translated (Newmark, 2009). In this research, the source language (SL) refers to the English narrative text and dialogue in Kazuo Ishiguro's novel *Never Let Me Go*.

Target Language (TL): The target language is the language in which the translated text is written (Newmark, 2009). In this research, the target language (TL) refers to the Indonesian narrative text and dialogue in the translated novel *Jangan Lepaskan Aku*.