

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Novel is a form of literature that is widely used by a writer to express his or her feelings and thoughts. I have decided to discuss novel as I find novel is the most interesting among the literary genres. According to Harry Shaw in his *Dictionary of Literary Terms* (1905: 257), a novel is “...a lengthy fictitious prose narrative portraying characters and presenting an organized character, action, plot, setting, and theme.” Sue Miller’s *While I Was Gone* vividly portrays the character of the protagonist, Jo Becker.

In a novel, there are more detailed descriptions of the events and characters than in a play or poem; therefore, readers can understand the story better. I also find that a novel is easier and more enjoyable to read. Those are the reasons why I decide to discuss a novel.

Sue Miller is an impeccable American writer who delivers the portraits of everyday life in her novels. One of them, *While I Was Gone*, brings up the topic about family and the conflicts that are experienced by the

protagonist, Jo Becker.

In my opinion, this novel is interesting because the story can happen in real life and it shows how hard an adult woman tries to solve her complicated conflicts in her family, career, and sometimes in her relationship with other people.

In the analysis, I would like to reveal the social and inner conflicts in Sue Miller's *While I Was Gone* because those two conflicts are the most prominent aspects in this novel to show the complexity of men's life and how they face and solve their problems. Shaw (1972: 91) defines social conflict as "a struggle between man and man" and the inner or psychological conflict as "a struggle between desires within a person."

In this novel, I use the method of formalism. My analysis will show how Jo Becker, the protagonist, tries to solve her conflicts, while she is actually doubtful and confused about her future, family, and her relationship with her husband, Daniel. She also has problems with her ex-boyfriend, Eli, and some other people around her.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Based on the reasons above, I formulate the statement of the problem as follows:

1. What are the social conflicts and inner conflicts in Sue Miller's *While I Was Gone*?
2. What has caused the conflicts?
3. How are the conflicts solved?

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

After the statement of the problem is formulated, I determine the purpose of the study as follows:

1. to show the social and inner conflicts in Sue Miller's *While I Was Gone*;
2. to show the causes of the conflicts;
3. to show how the conflicts are solved.

1.4 METHOD OF RESEARCH

In analysing the thesis, I apply the library research. First, I read Sue Miller's *While I Was Gone* as the data source of my analysis. Then, I read several references about the novel and the biography of the author, and explore some Internet sites to get some relevant information to support my thesis. Finally, I analyze the conflicts, which are social and inner conflicts, and conclude my analysis.

1.5 ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

I divide the thesis into three chapters, which are preceded by the Preface, the Table of Contents, and the Abstract. In Chapter One, I present the Introduction, which contains the Background of the Study, the Method of Research, and the Organization of the Thesis. It is followed by Chapter Two, in which I present the analysis of Sue Miller's *While I Was Gone*. In Chapter Three, I make my conclusion. The thesis ends with the Bibliography and the Appendices, which consist of the biography of Sue Miller and also the synopsis of *While I Was Gone*.