

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Mary McGarry Morris is a twentieth-century American novelist who is claimed to be “one of the most skillful new writers at work in America today” (Hubbard). She has written 6 novels, such as *Vanished*, *Fiona Range*, and *The Lost Mother*. I am interested in analyzing her second novel, *A Dangerous Woman*. The reason I choose *A Dangerous Woman* is that the author could create a unique character in her story, as stated in the following quotation: “. . . Mary McGarry Morris has created a diverse novel with many twists and turns! Accompanied by a diverse cast of characters, *A Dangerous Woman* is a novel to read!” (Budd).

Morris believes that people in real life have different characteristics from one another. She states that she is “interested in people” and that she “finds them fascinating” (Hubbard). By looking at this statement, I think that is why she likes making stories about people. In *A Dangerous Woman*, she says that, “With Martha, who is intelligent enough to understand that she is ostracized, I wanted to explore what an awful awareness that must be” (Hubbard). Morris has been

through different childhood experiences compared to any other children of her age and that makes her “often feels set apart” (Hubbard). With all her experience and observation, she is interested in making stories with mentally disturbed characters in her novels. In *A Dangerous Woman*, Martha, the protagonist is having Asperger Syndrome. Asperger Syndrome is defined as “a sociological disorder classified as a very unique and misunderstood syndrome in the autism spectrum” (“Traits, Diagnosis, and Social Aspects of Asperger Syndrome”).

In my thesis, I decide to elaborate the theme through the social conflicts because the social conflicts in this novel make me see that people with mental disabilities are often misunderstood and misjudged. According to William Kenney, “Theme, then, is the total meaning discovered by the writer in the process of writing and by the reader in the process of reading” (94) There are three types of conflicts, which are social conflict, psychological conflict, and physical conflict. Social conflict is defined as “a struggle between man and man”, psychological conflict is “a struggle between desires within a person”, and physical conflict is “a struggle between man and the physical world” (Shaw 91). This explanation helps me understand more of the meaning of theme and social conflict as I would like to analyze the theme through the social conflicts.

Statement of the Problem

In order to analyze the novel, I state the problems as follow:

1. What is the theme of the novel?
2. How do the social conflicts help to reveal the theme?

Purpose of the Study

The study is done to show:

1. The theme of the novel.
2. How the social conflicts help to reveal the theme.

Method of Research

The method I use is library research. I start by reading the novel, *A Dangerous Woman*. Then, I analyze the novel by using formalism. I take some references and resources from the Internet and books to support my analysis. Finally, I draw conclusion from my analysis.

Organization of the Thesis

I divide the thesis into three chapters. In the first chapter, I present the Introduction, which contains the Background of the Study, the Statement of the Problem, the Purpose of the Study, the Method of Research, and the Organization of the Thesis. The second chapter is the Analysis of Theme through the Social Conflicts t in Mary McGarry Morris's *A Dangerous Woman*. The third chapter is the Conclusion. The thesis ends with the Bibliography and the Appendices, which include the Synopsis of the Novel and the Biography of the Author.