

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents background of research, statement of problem, objective of research, significance of research, and definition of key terms.

### 1.1. Background

Postmodern literature is literary work which appeared in postmodern period. Postmodern literature is different from other literature such as modern literature. The reason is postmodern challenges grand narrative. According to Castle (2007: 145):

“In literary theory, Postmodernism typically embraces a set of practices, strategies, and techniques that either repudiate Modernist tendencies (i.e., expressive form, mythic structures, stream of consciousness) or develop those tendencies in extreme forms. Postmodernist thought is characterized by a principled skepticism about language, truth, causality, history, and SUBJECTIVITY.”

In postmodern literature, there are many characteristics such as irony, parody, and mode. According to Castle (2007 :146), “Many of the characteristic features of Postmodernism suggest a retreat from material social existence. The pervasive use of irony, parody, and other modes of *citation* announce Postmodernism’s radical skepticism with respect to mimetic representation and reference. Citation conventionally signifies a relation of authority within a

discourse, one in which certain statements serve a regulatory or evidentiary function: one *cites an authority* in order to advance an argument. Postmodern citation is a strategy of repetition and appropriation; texts cite each other not with the intent of invoking an authority or showing indebtedness but with the desire to create new expressive connections, new opportunities for enunciation and articulation, new models of cultural production and social action.” Meanwhile, according to Lyotard in Adams and Searle (2004: 1422-3):

“A postmodern artist or writer is in the position of a philosopher: the text he writes, the work he produces are not in principle governed by preestablished rules, and they cannot be judged according to a determining judgment, by applying familiar categories to the text or to the work. Those rules and categories are what the work of art itself is looking for. The artist and the writer, then, are working without rules in order to formulate the rules of what will have been done. Hence the fact that work and text have the characters of an event; hence also, they always come too late for their author, or, what amounts to the same thing, their being put into work, their realization (*mise en oeuvre*) always begin too soon. Post modern would have to be understood according to the paradox of the future (post) anterior (*modo*),.”

Therefore, in postmodern literature, the narrative can be changed by the author because of in postmodern literature there are characteristics of postmodern literature such as irony which could be change the narrative. In this case,

*Atonement* novel is one of the postmodern literature because there is irony which change the narrative.

One of the causes which make the change of narrative is coming from the change of point of view. Point of view is one of the important elements in a literary work and it determines how the story of a literary work itself. Without the point of view, the literary work especially novel can never be written because point of view is determined before the author write the literary work. According to Abrams (1999: 231), "Point of view signifies the way a story gets told—the mode (or modes) established by an author by means of which the reader is presented with the characters, dialogue, actions, setting, and events which constitute the *narrative* in a work of fiction."

In *Atonement*, there is the change of point of view from the third person point of view into the first person point of view. In this case, the use of two point of views in one literary work is unique because generally an author uses one of the first person point of view or third-person point of view. This is suitable with Abrams (1999: 231) says that it deals first with by far the most widely used modes, first-person and third-person narration.

There is a research conducted by Peter Mathews in 2006 from Centenary College, New Jersey entitled *The Impression of a Deeper Darkness: Ian McEwan's Atonement*. He concerned about the ethical problems that emerge from Briony's narrative. It focuses especially on the problem of the relationship

between the form and content of a secret, and the way that this transforms the act of testimony into a problematic discourse.

Nevertheless, in this case, the writer is interested in analyzing the novel by focusing on the change of point of view and narrative.

## **1.2. Statement of Problem**

From the background above, the writer found that the novel is the unique novel because there is the change of point of view and narrative. Therefore, there are two research questions will be analyzed in this research:

1. How does the point of view in Ian McEwan's *Atonement* change?
2. How can such a change of point of view in Ian McEwan's *Atonement* shows the postmodern narratives?

## **1.3. Research Objective**

The research objective of this research are:

1. To find how does the point of view in Ian McEwan's *Atonement* change.
2. To find how can such a change of point of view in Ian McEwan's *Atonement* shows the postmodern narratives.

## **1.4. Research Significance**

The significances of this research are for academic reason especially for the writer, is a challenge to improve the comprehension of literary study especially in understanding and applying postmodern concept as a literary criticism. For the reader, this research has significant to be directed to the students

of literary subjects to make further analysis of this research. Furthermore, this research is a reference for those who are interested in analyzing novel by using postmodern concept.

### 1.5. Definition of Key Terms

1. *Irony* is an event or situation which opposed to the expected or should happen, but it has become a twist destiny (Lyotard in Sarup, 2007: 226).
2. *Narrative* is a story, whether told in prose or verse, involving events, characters, and what the characters say and do. Some literary forms such as the novel and short story in prose, and the epic and romance in verse, are explicit narratives that are told by a *narrator* (Abrams, 1991: 173).
3. *Point of view* is the way a story gets told—the mode (or modes) established by an author by means of which the reader is presented with the characters, dialogue, actions, setting, and events which constitute the *narrative* in a work of fiction (Abrams, 1999: 231).
4. *Postmodernism* is a rejection of the commitment to realism behind Modernist experimentation in favor of a literature of ludic self-reference (Hassan, 1971).
5. *Self-conscious narrator* is he or she is telling something that has actually happened by revealing to the reader that the narration is a work of fictional art, or by flaunting the discrepancies between its patent fictionality and the reality it seems to represent (Abrams, 1999: 235).
6. *Unreliable narrator* is one whose perception, interpretation, and evaluation of the matters he or she narrates do not coincide with the

opinions and norms implied by the author, which the author expects the alert reader to share (Abrams, 1999: 235).

