

The Conventions of Noir Thriller in Harlan Coben's *The Stranger*
(A Structuralist Study)

A THESIS

**Presented as a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Attainment of the *Sarjana Sastra* Degree in English Literature**



By:

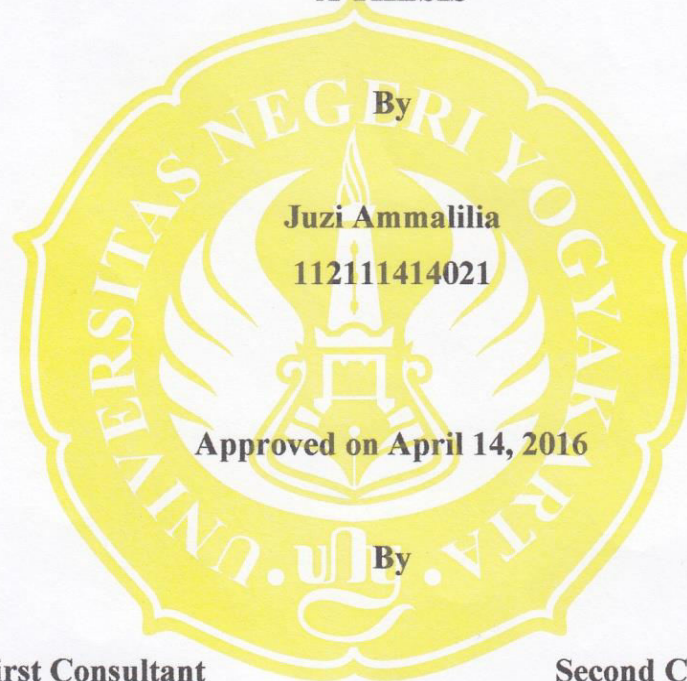
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**ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE STUDY PROGRAM
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2016**

APPROVAL
THE CONVENTIONS OF NOIR THRILLER IN
HARLAN COBEN'S *THE STRANGER*
(A STRUCTURALIST STUDY)

A THESIS



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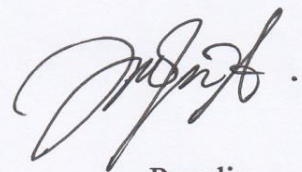
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Yogyakarta, 15 April 2016



Penulis,
Juzi Ammalilia

DEDICATIONS

You can't be hard on yourself
For these were the cards that you were given so you have to understand that
these, like...

That's not who you are
You're trying to be the best you can be but that's all you can do
If you don't give it all you got, you're only cheating yourself
Give it all you got
But if it ends up happening, it ends up happening.
(Purpose - Justin Bieber)

I dedicate this thesis for the people who have given me purposes.

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Last but not least, I realize that this work will never be perfect without any constructive suggestions, comments, and even criticism. Therefore, it will be my pleasure to welcome them. Still, I wish that this work will give a notable contribution to literature learning.

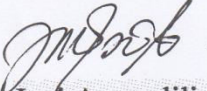

Juzi Ammalilia

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-------------|
| TITTLE..... | i |
| APPROVAL..... | ii |
| RATIFICATION..... | iii |
| PERNYATAAN..... | iv |
| MOTTOS..... | v |
| DEDICATIONS..... | vi |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS..... | vii |
| TABLE OF CONTENTS..... | ix |
| LIST OF FIGURE..... | xii |
| LIST OF TABLES..... | xiii |
| ABSTRACT..... | xiv |
| | |
| CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION | |
| A. Background of the Study..... | 1 |
| B. Research Focus..... | 8 |
| C. Research Objectives..... | 10 |
| D. Research Significance..... | 10 |
| | |
| CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW | |
| A. Structuralism..... | 12 |
| B. Identifying Literary Genres..... | 16 |
| C. Noir Thriller as A Literary Genre..... | 18 |
| 1. The Origin of Noir Thriller..... | 23 |
| 2. Noir Thriller in American Literature..... | 25 |
| 3. The Conventions of Noir Thriller..... | 26 |
| a. Having a Flawed Protagonist..... | 27 |
| b. Focusing on the Characters' Conflicts..... | 28 |
| c. Employing the Suspense-Based Plot..... | 30 |
| 1) Mystery..... | 31 |
| 2) Dilemma..... | 32 |
| 3) Cliff-hanger..... | 32 |

| | |
|---|----|
| 4) Surprised Ending..... | 32 |
| d. Revealing the Critiques of Socio-Political Milieu in the Story ... | 33 |
| e. Using the Subjective Point of View..... | 34 |
| 1) The First Person Point of View..... | 36 |
| 2) The Third Person Point of View..... | 37 |
| D. Previous Research Findings..... | 40 |
| E. Conceptual Framework..... | 42 |
| F. Framework of Thinking..... | 45 |

CHAPTER III RESEARCH METHOD

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| A. Research Design..... | 46 |
| B. The Data Type..... | 47 |
| C. The Data Sources..... | 47 |
| D. Research Instruments..... | 48 |
| E. Data Collecting Technique..... | 48 |
| F. Data Analysis Technique..... | 51 |
| G. The Data Trustworthiness..... | 52 |

CHAPTER IV FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

| | |
|---|----|
| A. Findings..... | 54 |
| 1. The General Conventions of Noir Thriller in Harlan Coben’s <i>The Stranger</i> | 54 |
| a. Having a Flawed Protagonist..... | 54 |
| 1) The kind of flaw: blackmailing people..... | 55 |
| 2) The impacts of the flaw..... | 58 |
| a) The impacts on the stranger..... | 58 |
| b) The impact on other characters..... | 60 |
| b. Focusing on the Character’s Conflicts..... | 62 |
| 1) Adam’s conflicts with other characters..... | 63 |
| a) Adam’s conflict with the stranger..... | 63 |
| b) Adam’s conflict with Corinne..... | 64 |
| c) Adam’s conflict with Tripp Evans..... | 66 |

| | |
|---|------------|
| 2) Adam’s inner conflict..... | 68 |
| c. Employing the Suspense-Based Plot..... | 72 |
| 1) Mystery..... | 72 |
| 2) Dilemma..... | 74 |
| 3) Cliff-hanger..... | 75 |
| 4) Surprised Ending..... | 78 |
| d. Revealing the Critiques of Socio-Political Milieu..... | 84 |
| 1) Critique of hypocrisy..... | 84 |
| 2) Cynicism..... | 85 |
| e. Using the Subjective Point of View..... | 88 |
| 2. The Conventions of Point of View in Harlan Coben’s <i>The Stranger</i> | 88 |
| a. Third Person Limited..... | 88 |
| b. Third Person Objective..... | 94 |
| B. Discussion..... | 97 |
| | |
| CHAPTER V CONCLUSIONS..... | 100 |
| REFERENCES..... | 103 |
| APPENDICES..... | 107 |

LIST OF FIGURE

| Figure | | Page |
|--------|-----------------------|------|
| 1 | Framework of Thinking | 44 |

LIST OF TABLES

| Table | | Page |
|-------|----------------------|------|
| 1 | The Data Sheet 1 | 48 |
| 2 | The Data Sheet 2 | 48 |
| 3 | Analytical Construct | 49 |

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to identify the general conventions of noir thriller in Harlan Coben's *The Stranger* and the conventions of point of view used in the novel. In order to prove and give information to the readers about how the conventions are employed in the novel, structuralism approach is used to answer the objectives of this research.

This research is a descriptive qualitative study. The subject of this research is a novel entitled *The Stranger* written by Harlan Coben. The data were some sentences and discourses related to the conventions of noir thriller found in the novel. To gain the credibility of the analysis, the researcher used triangulation method.

There are two results of the research. The first result shows the general conventions of noir thriller in the novel; those are first, having a flawed protagonist in which the significance is shown through two focuses. Those are the kind of flaw and the impact of the flaw on the protagonist and other characters in the story. The second convention is focusing on the character's conflicts shown through a particular character who has complex problems caused by his inner conflicts and the conflict with other characters. The third convention is employing the suspense-based plot which is supported by these plot devices: mystery, dilemma, cliff-hanger, and surprised ending. The fourth convention is revealing the critique of socio-political milieu which is shown through these two categories: the critique of hypocrisy and cynicism. The last convention is using the subjective point of view which is further explained through the second finding of this research. The second finding shows the conventions of point of view used in the novel in relation to obtain the subjectivity. It is found that the novel obtains subjectivity by using the third person limited and third person objective point of view.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of The Study

Literature is not merely an imaginative writing about a series of fictional events. Plato (in Roche, 2004: 34) mentioned that literature, as well as an artwork, delivers the portrayal of human being. Reading and understanding the series of events led by the characters in a literary text allows us to have something beyond human's experience, as also supported by Martha Nussbaum who suggested that the readers' imagination help them to experience the other's living even though it is delivered by a different role. Moreover, it challenges them to comprehend both mental and physical notions implied in the work as in the preceding literary work written in Shakespeare's *Othello*, which uncovered human's basic psychological issue through the character's experience of jealousy, anger, and disappointment. Thus, having this reading experience, human would be able to enhance a new way of thinking, deeper awareness, and emotional richness (Roche, 2004:35) which are useful and some are relatable to be the preference in everyday life.

The expanded insight taken from the reading experience was then proposed by Averill (2001: 5) as the notion of an influential literature. Thus, people are getting interested in employing a literary analysis based on the humanity issues, such as the psychological approach as what has been mentioned above; the wave of Feminism which focuses on criticizing the patriarchal culture as well as the

struggle over women's equality to men; and Post-modernism which brings the notion about the broader perspective of human being influenced by media and technology (Castle, 2007). Instead of considering the humanity issue as mentioned above, another level of reading experience is introduced by close reading technique as it focuses on how the literary elements are united to construct the idea of the story. In addition, no matter how promising it is, a story cannot be delivered as what happened, but it has been through the decision to create the tension and to emphasize the action in order to keep the readers' attention (Bertens, 1995).

Even if the situational background of the society may vary, literary texts are able to make a general agreement in enhancing a reading experience (Barthes and Duisit, 1975). In addition, the texts do not merely employ humanity issues, but are also patterned and classified in genre. It identifies the common characteristics of the texts through its literary elements which construct the idea embodied the story even if the aim and value delivered are varied as well (Lewis, Pon and Lewis; p. 1). In fact, literary elements focus not only the theme embodied the story, the character and its characterization who build up the story and the level of complexity, but also how those are united to construct the idea of the story. It is also supported by Roche (2004: 37) who suggested about how literary elements are significant in writing technique:

a work of literature interests us not because it was written by person X or Y but because person X or Y was able to write something of general interest that provides a vision, a critique, an epiphany, a mood, something of value to a broader consciousness—and yet in a style that belongs uniquely to person X or Y.

A story is not written just as how the events are happening, but it has been created through decision. Percy Lubbock (in Hoffman and Murphy, 1996: 2) mentioned that relying on point of view is one of the notable techniques used by the authors. In addition, point of view, which he termed as “the relation in which the narrator stands to the story”, also works to help the readers to understand the flow of the story, as well as to stay still until its end. Thus, point of view is not merely the representation of human being, but also the way the representation itself is presented. Even to Mark Schorer, point of view is more than just a technique as it enables the story to be intense by either limiting or developing the idea (Levitt, 1965: 3). For example, *Twilight*, the American best-selling novel, which was distributed into worldwide inspired any books related to vampire fiction to compete in catching the readers’ eye, but the result showed that nothing can break Stephen Meyers’s sequel record which gained more than 6,000 reader reviews. The characterization of vampire is neither a brand new idea nor original in narrative, but *Twilight Saga* reached its success as it is delivered by the personal perspective of Bella, as reviewed by www.lovevampires.com that “*Bella herself is a well written and realistic character, shy and lacking in confidence, her sarcastic inner voice narrates the story for the reader.*”

The example above shows that an author may not perform his wholeness to be the centre of information upon the issue embodied in the story. It develops the understanding that point of view is not merely a technique, but it invites the readers’ involvement to the story. Point of view applied by the author supports the readers to seek for meaning implied in the symbol and images that the author

employed, as well as in the dialog among the characters (Yen, Yuan-Shu: 1933: 7). An author may allow the greater space for the readers to perceive the characters' thought and feeling as transferred through the narration of their actions or words by the technique of 'telling'. On the contrary, the readers' independence may be challenged by delivering only the characters' dialog without summarizing the motives which is employed by the technique of 'showing'.

As interpreting the meaning is taken from the involved characters, point of view fulfils information about their contribution to the story through the dialog among the characters and the narration which represent their appearance, attitude, thought, and feeling. Genette (in Hessami, 2008: 13) supports the notion about how the characters' contribution could impress the readers:

Later Genette seems to define some functions for what he calls as a participant's "vision" or "point of view": narrative information can furnish the reader with more or fewer details, in a more or less direct way, to keep a greater or lesser distance from what it tells, can regulate the information it delivers according to the capacities of knowledge of one or another participant in the story.

An example can be taken from Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* whose point of view is shifted even though is narrated by the third person. This technique allows the readers to explore some perspectives among the characters as they differently experience a similar idea within a story (Al Thamery, 2009: 15). Thus, point of view allows the characterization in narrative to improve as the characters may have their own sense that would increase the readers' intimacy (Yen, Yuan-Shu: 1933: 2).

Employing point of view in the story, an author must consider how to invite the readers to stay through the up and down in the story. Unlike many classic

narratives in which the narrator has an absolute voice in characterizing, allowing an idea to be seen by each character as being mentioned above creates the tension that makes the readers stay on each page. Focusing on each character allows the readers to seek for more information as it is fragmented on several scenes; for example, F. Scott Fitzgerald delivered a great notion of employing point of view in his *The Great Gatsby*. Narrated by Nick Carraway, the story increases the readers' curiosity by the portrayal of the main focus; the life of Jay Gatsby whose information is very limited as it depends on what the narrator observed.

In addition, limiting the information through point of view to increase the readers' curiosity is often used in thriller novels as it requires higher suspense than other genres. As some are often puzzled about how thriller differs from mystery, David Morrell, a notable thriller writer who had published at least 27 books, delivered an important notion about the definition and intention of thriller. Based on several discussions among the members of International Thriller Writers; crime, action and suspense can be involved in a thriller as it is improved in several types. The main point in thriller is that the readers' emotion is intensively involved by building the tension, agitation, anticipation, enthusiasm and breath-taking action rather than focusing on the contribution of the mythical creatures. Thriller concerns on the emotional mixing and explores the battle of good against the bad deed. Moreover, thriller intends to drive the readers' mood and fulfil their curiosity (Morrell, 2014).

Thriller is a work of fiction which is highly structured as well. What makes it challenging as a serious work of fiction is, taken from *The Literature of the*

Thriller: A Critical Study by Grella (1965: 6), the modern American thriller portrayed the dark side of life which contrast to the human's expectation. It is like the fight of human consciousness in fighting their desire which draws a very slight line between bad and good deed. In his analysis, it is also found that the challenge on thriller leaned on the characters that can have much, nothing, or puzzle information about the issue (Grella, 1965:9-10). This is why the line is very slight since they may have the same chance to deliver their motive into the story. Even though he found out that it is undeniably repetitive in literature, thriller with its characters explained above, is getting wider as it is still peaked as the best-selling novel.

However, the discussion among thriller as a genre gradually created some developed arguments since it is difficult to define. The term 'thriller' is associated with many other genres such as mystery, suspense and detective fictions. They shared some similar characteristics but of course, thriller has its own conventions to notice. Thus, it is what makes thriller itself is challenging to be identified structurally. Many literary texts are considered great as they convey mimetic orders which can influence people's way of thinking. Instead, thriller is sophisticated in its way as the meaning conveyed is constructed through the conventions (Barret, 2011). Moreover, it is necessary not to leave literature messed up by subjective approach, so that giving more scientific and objective approach a chance is essential as well (Frye in Eagleton, 1996: 79).

Thriller is varied into several sub-genres, such as psychological thriller, legal thriller, political thriller, etc (Rzepka and Horsley, 2010: 187). The most notable

sub-genre which is recently discussed among the popularity of thriller is noir. The term noir is early flourished in French in association with the popularity of American hard-boiled fiction. Noir refers to the 'blackness' as it entangles the character into an accidental criminal situation. In addition, taken from the relation among the internal elements, noir thriller is formulated by (1) having a flawed protagonist, (2) focusing on the character's conflicts, (3) employing the suspense-based plot, (4) revealing the critics upon socio-political milieu of the story, and (5) using the subjective point of view.

One of best-seller novels which employ the conventions of noir thriller is Harlan Coben's *The Stranger* (2015). Theguardian.com once awarded him as the master of suburban thriller as he commonly delivers the portrait of modern people in fulfilling American Dream. His novel entitled *The Stranger* is praised as the most breath-taking thriller as it delivers the big lie embodied in the characters' vision of living American Dream. The story tells about a city attorney named Adam Price who seeks for the mystery of her wife's disappearance which is triggered by the stranger (who is later known as Chris Taylor). The stranger also provokes Adam to leave her wife as she lied to him by faking her pregnancy. However, in the middle of Adam's attempt in seeking from the truth about the lie, his wife is suddenly gone. It is Adam's battle then, to gain and gather the stranger's real identity and his relation to her missing wife. In this novel, Harlan Coben crafted the suspense through the essential role of each character which created a domino effect. Each character in the story presents his/her own motives which make the bad and good deeds are difficult to judge. The stranger, whom in

progress is revealed as a hacker, admits doing good deed to save the people from the lies which shake their happiness. Being traced through the victims, it is found that in relation to Adam's wife disappearance, the stranger is actually hired by Adam's friend namely Tripp Evans. Tripp Evans wants to bring Adam's life down by evoking the secret about Adam's wife and by manipulating the affair which results in a murder. It sounds a puzzling story, but the point of view employed attracts the readers to stay in each chapters and it raises the suspense through each characters' contribution. It invites the readers to walk in Adam's shoes as well, for being puzzled in looking for her wife and being surprised to find his wife's death.

B. Research Focus

Among the popularity of thriller as a literary genre, the focus on the structure itself is not yet much discussed. As the conventions which construct thriller are focused, the close reading technique proposed by Structuralist approach would be applied. In fixing the affective and intentional fallacy from New Criticism as the predecessor in focusing on the unity of literary elements, Structuralist approach proposes 'intertextuality'—the ability to relate the structure of a text with other texts in the same genre. "Structuralism often investigates the system where by individual texts are related to each other, because they believe that they are only expressing agents of a superior social and cultural system (Taghizadeh, 2013:4)." In addition, the construction of meaning is not regarded through the content but the structure itself.

However, the research focuses on the sub-genre of thriller, namely noir thriller as its characteristics are much discussed than thriller in general. Yet Harlan Coben's *The Stranger* is a challenging work as well to be identified. The novel shows about how a single crime committed by a person had caused domino effect. The crime does not only ruin people's life, but also motivates another person to commit a more painful crime. It is also uneasy for the readers to leave a single page as the problems faced by the characters are getting intense and are only able to be revealed by the end of the story. Thus, as the research focuses on the conventions of the work, the researcher will identify how the conventions of noir thriller construct those interesting ideas in the story.

Additionally, among the conventions of noir thriller employed in the novel, the use of point of view is taken as the second focus. Point of view is not merely an element employed in the story to deliver the idea, but it also contributes to guide the readers in creating meaning in the story through either the narration or dialog among the characters. In addition, point of view creates the suspense to increase the readers' curiosity and invite them to get involved to what the characters experience. Generally, thriller is a genre which explores the use of point of view to build the mood and create the excitement. Harlan Coben's *The Stranger* is a work of which the tension is created through the way each character perceives the issue in the story. It is also supported by Steven James in *How to Write Thrillers that Actually Thrill* (2011) who proposed that the information about the characters is deeply explored to invite the readers in experiencing the suspense. In addition, the characters involved may have the same chance in

perceiving the same issue in the story through their own perspectives. Thus, as the various employment of point of view is getting explored in thriller writing, Steven James also noted that the switching point of view showed a great result in exploring the suspense.

C. Research Objectives

According to the research focus above, the objectives of the research are,

1. to identify the general conventions of noir thriller in Harlan Coben's *The Stranger*, and
2. to identify the conventions of point of view in Harlan Coben's noir thriller *The Stranger*.

D. Research Significance

The study is expected to give the following contributions:

1. Theoretically

It is expected to enrich both the researcher and the readers as the English Literature students to explore more about literary criticism. Employing close reading in a text might be once regarded as the old-fashioned way, but the researcher expects that the English Literature students should not be stuck in one's perception. As structuralism is regarded as the most objective approach to literature through its focus on the structure of the works, it is expected that as they are not only able in criticizing but also creating the works.

2. Practically

It is expected that this research delivers a deeper understanding about a genre construction, especially in thriller. It is one of great genres as most of the conventions are meticulously crafted, such as in the use of point of view. It does not necessarily about whose vision used to guide the readers, but also about creating plausible actions in order to make the readers stay until the end of the story.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Structuralism

The term Structuralism was influenced by a French theorist Ferdinand de Saussure, who proposed the study of structural linguistics. His works are compiled in *Course General in Linguistics* (1916) which focuses on the study of language system at a particular time, rather than the diachronic study which considers its historical development. He also distinguished language into “langue”, which focuses on the system operates the language and “parole”, which views language as an individual utterance. In addition, Saussure proposed that the production of meaning upon an object is not referential to its appearance in the real world. Meaning for him is a structural conception. It can be created through the structure operates in the object itself. He then made another influential distinction upon ‘sign’. Each object spoken or written is ‘signifier’ referred by ‘signified’. The relation between ‘signifier’ and ‘signified’ is arbitrary for having no natural bound but being taken from its difference among the underlain system, such as in the meaning of uniforms worn by the students in Indonesia. The elementary school students wear a white shirt and red skirt/pants, the junior high school students wear a white shirt and blue skirt/pants, while the senior high school students wear a white shirt and grey skirt/pants. The system shows the

difference of education level and the similarities to define which level they belong to.

Structuralism in literature was developed through the interpretation of myth held by an anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss. He was inspired by Saussure's initiation in examining the associated structure employed in language. Myths are like language which can be separated into units (parole). They can only construct meaning when they are gathered through some particular principles as the extension of a single basic rule which defines myths, such as the system of kinship among the characters. The rule is regarded through the units which are shared among the particular themes (langue) (Eagleton, 1996).

In literature, Structuralism challenged the previous critics who put literature as the expression of the authors' perception of the everyday life. Since it had been messed up by subjective approach, the more scientific and objective approach is needed. In 1950s, the American literature history left its scientific approach under New Criticism, which views literary texts as the autonomous objects. Perceiving a text as its own reference is the basic notion of New Criticism. It focuses on the internal elements of the works as it rejects the notion that the author is the centre of the meaning production. Looking back at the demand of the analysis, New Criticism cannot fulfil the notion of systematic and structural analysis as it views text as an independent work. A text cannot be left independently, but to be looked at as a system through its relation to the other texts (Taghizadeh, 2011: 57). This notion is supported by a Canadian theorist, Northop Frye through *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957) in which he argued that literary works are not merely random

objects written through periods, but they needed to be looked closer in order to find the orders which can be modes, archetypes, myths, and genre (Eagleton, 1996: 79).

To employ 'scientific' approach in literature, Frye (in Tyson, 2006: 222) distinguished literary works based on four *mythoi* of summer, winter, autumn, and fall. The human's process of imaginary writing is figured through their perception about ideal and real world. They see ideal world as an experiential area for them to explore, represented by the *mythos* of summer which then inspired the writing of romance narrative. On the other hand, real world is where experience is learnt through doubt and fault as represented by the *mythos* of winter. The irony narratives are inspired by this *mythos* in which the protagonists cannot overcome the problematic life, such as in Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* (1973). Quite similar to irony, satire views the world as a fault itself but it delivers the critique through a comic lens. One of the notable satire narratives is George Orwell's *Animal Farm* (1945).

The other two categories derived from the transition of those two worlds. Tragedy is the representation of autumn. It is the transition from ideal world to the real world, from naivety to awareness, from *mythos* of summer to winter. Tragedy is the clash between expectation and reality as the consequence of naivety, such as the fall of Oedipus. On the contrary, the transition from the real world to the ideal world generates comedy. It puts the protagonist in the complexity of life but focuses on how he overcomes it in twisted and surprising way.

Through Frye's classifications, it can be concluded that 'scientific' approach in literature is obtained as it focuses on how the construction of the texts due over time, instead of the historical development of how the texts are constructed. A particular text is created through the structure which remains the same and influenced by one another. In addition, in aiming an objective approach to literature, Structuralism focuses more on the 'deep structure' than on the meaning of the texts which are seen on the surface. It is an analytical methodology which avoids the interpretation of the meaning. The content of a work is the structure of the work itself. The elements related within are able to create its meaning (Eagleton, 1996).

Being quite similar to Formalism as its predecessor in employing systematic analysis of literature, Structuralism differs by the way it focuses on the structure of the texts as its own referential, rather than the literariness employed in an individual text. Instead of perceiving literary texts as the aesthetical objects, Structuralism viewed poems and narratives as the system of codes, signs, and rules which run human social and cultural being (Taghizadeh, 2011: 57-59). All texts are potentially the same to be approached structurally. An independent approach cannot be employed as texts always refer to each other. In Structuralism, it is called *intertextuality*. The shared system among texts is how the meaning is created (Bressler, 1995: 95). In literature, the basic approaches held through Structuralism focuses on: classifying literary genres, describing narrative operations, and analysing the literary interpretation (Tyson, 2006: 221).

B. Identifying Literary Genres

Identifying literary genres is one of the focuses of Structuralism in literature which mostly deals with narrative texts. According to Frye, this attempt is obtained through *intertextuality*. The meaning of a text is perceived through its deep structure which is internally related to the other similar works. In doing so, Frye distinguished narratives into the four *mythoi*: summer, winter, autumn, and spring.

In Frye's distinction of narrative genres, each of them is constructed through particular characteristics. Romance is basically characterized by conflict experienced by the leading characters as it employs the world of adventure. Catastrophe is the basic feature of tragedy which exposed the fall of the leading characters. On the other hand, irony and satire are structured by disorder and confusion, whereas comedy is constructed by triumph as the leading characters could overcome the problem by their unexpected way.

The distinctions are then regarded as *archetypal criticism* as it focuses on identifying a particular pattern (the character and characterization, the sequence of actions, and the formulation of plot) which construct narratives among the period of Western literature. Even though the patterns are the basic construction, they are able to invent a number of different contents, such as the basic of tragedy which can be found in the story of Oedipus and Hamlet (Tyson, 2006: 222-223).

The literary canon does not merely affect the creation of various contexts as the extension of a particular structure. Nineteenth century is the most notable period of the canonical works. Literary genres are varied as the view upon the works is getting wider. There is a shift on the literary knowledge which emerged every ten years, such as the age of *vers libre*, the age of Eliot, and the age of Auden which extend American poetry. In narrative itself, the people are introduced to the period of Gothic novels as the extension of *The Castle of Otranto*. Even though the theme may be limited, the literary devices are able to extend the interpretation of a particular genre, such as Gothic novels which cover any stories in which the sensation of horror and terror are delivered to the readers.

After all, among the literary canon and the development of genres, one to note is that the people should look at the distinction between traditional and modern theory. As generated in Frye's archetypal criticism, the traditional method is strict to a particular structure. It is only the contents which are able to extend. The devices cannot be mixed to keep the 'purity' of the structure, such as being concerned on a certain theme and plot. The social rules in the characters are also apparent, such as in tragedy where the conflicts are mostly experienced by the noble men whereas in satire, the ordinary people (the working class) are mostly put as the leading characters. On the other hand, modern theory does not restrict the rules and the devices mixing in order to create a new blended genre, such as romantic-comedy. It is interested in the 'uniqueness' of each works which are constructed through the shared devices. In order to support this notion, Henry

Wells (in Wellek and Warren, 1948: 242-245) mentioned that no matter the works are associated they are still affected by the others.

C. Noir Thriller as a Literary Genre

There are some interesting topics related to the development of literary genre and its ability to redefine the meaning of literary works by enacting close reading upon its devices. In the previous discussion, it is mentioned that the traditional literature believes in the consistency of the structure, in which only the contents are able to extend. Besides the historical reasoning which regarded a great literary work based on its obedience from the structure, the traditional concept felt obliged to create a formula which enables the future to produce a masterpiece based on clues in the past. The result of this attempt was compelling as detective fictions became popular.

However, the examination upon the structure of detective fictions resulted in its own development—which was also the perfect time for modern theory to prove that a new genre emerged as the works can be affected by one another. The development was initiated by Tzvetan Todorov in *The Typology of Detective Fiction* (1966). He categorized the detective fictions into three categories: whodunit, thriller, and suspense. Generally, whodunit consists of two stories, the story of crime (the discovery of the crime) and the story of investigation (the discovery of the criminal) as seen in the classic detective stories such as Agatha Christie's *Murder on the Orient's Express*. Thriller contains two stories as well, but take an emphasize more on the second story. The last is suspense. It is the

combination of those two previous genres. Among those three genres, the one explained further is thriller as it is the focus of this research.

Thriller contains two stories as well but it focuses much on the second story. Among those three genres, thriller is developed more in United States. Thriller puts the story of investigation as the priority and almost abandons the first one. It does not mean that the act of crime is not presented, but thriller puts it along with the progressive plot so that the series of actions enacted by the characters could be explored more (Todorov in Howard, 1980: 47).

Besides Todorov's definition which puts thriller under detective fictions, the focus on the series of actions had categorized thriller into one of crime fictions. The emergence of crime fiction as a genre was started in 1960s when a great literary work was considered based on its ability to fulfil the readers' curiosity and explore their anxiety. Literary works were worth for its technique so that close reading was mainly employed around the year. In 1980s, the approach was mostly focused on detective stories as they employed a highly conventional structure such as in Allan Poe's work and Arthur Conan Doyle's series of *Sherlock Holmes*. As crime became the most anticipated topic in the period, the writing formula was developed as well, such as the emergence of women and black detectives. Their presence was able to heighten the quality of investigation as gender, race, and class were also being considered in the act of crime. However, another level was brought into focus by the elimination of detective elements—which also lead crime fictions to emerge. Crime fictions concern more about the act of crime of which the protagonist is not necessarily a detective. In addition, through the most

notable works of Raymon Chandler and Dashiell Hammet, the focus on finding the criminal is shifted by the interest in the reason of why the crime is committed (Priestman, 2003: 1-3).

Thus, thriller was then brought under crime fictions as its recent works are dare to explore the thicker ambience by specifically describing the character's behaviour (which can be the motive of the crime) and the themes. It was early represented by Marcel Duhammel's works around 1945 in which he described various kinds of violence, such as punching and killing; and explained the characters' flaw or sin as well (Todorov in Howard: 1980: 48).

Thriller was also defined through the word it conveys, 'thrill' which relates to emotion as it creates suspense, excitement, and inner rush (Watson, 2014: 3). Even though thriller was once underestimated as an unsatisfying genre as it was stuck much in the structure of detective stories, *The New York Times Book Review* (Glover in Priestman 2003: 135) stated that the sophistication of thriller leans on its 'intense literary effect'. It is employed in Thomas Harris's work entitled *Red Dragon* (1981) in which readers are invited to have an advanced experience of reading through the sequence of plausible actions. Dorothy L. Sayers described how the plausibility works in thriller,

thrill . . . on thrill and mystification on mystification; the reader is led on from bewilderment to bewilderment, till everything is explained in a lump in the last chapter. This school is strong in dramatic incident and atmosphere; its weakness is a tendency to confusion and a dropping of links – its explanations do not always explain; it is never dull, but it is sometimes nonsense (Glover in Priestman, 2003: 136).

It is important for thriller to emphasize the conflict among the characters. The protagonist is even given a series of obstacles which is getting complex in order to

show his resistance, such as pathological psyche and physical danger. The plausibility can also be supported by the plot which is based on the suspense—the excitement that the readers feel in waiting an event that about to happen, mostly leave them in uncertainty (*Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary*), such as whether the protagonist will find his victory or the criminal will be free (Simpson in Rzepka and Horsley, 2010: 188).

The rise of thriller after being separated from detective fictions are noticed through the works of Edgar Wallace's *The Four Just Men* (1905) which presents bewildering crime and cliff-hanger plot. The novel also made a notable characteristics of protagonist in thriller, that is the person who is attempted to take the risks, sometimes letting them to be done several times to prove that he can make it better by his own way. However, it is less noticeable that thriller is not merely about the protagonist who can resist and overcome the problem. Thriller is also referred as the obstacle itself, terror, and uncontrolled danger (Glover in Priestman, 2003: 138).

Meanwhile, in the twentieth-century, thriller is popular for exposing the sexual affair and aggressive murder (Glover in Priestman, 2003: 143) as inspired through the work of James M. Cain, *The Postman Always Rings Twice* (1934). The crime in the story is committed by the characters that are driven by sexual lust. In addition, the act of crime is intensely explained as well, such as how the characters planned their every mission as clean as possible so that it would be preferred as an accident caused by human error rather than a murder.

Looking at the examples which present different themes in thriller, David Glover (Simpson in Scaggs, 2005: 187) noted that thriller does not always strictly convey those characteristics as it is also varied into several focuses, such as legal thrillers, spy thrillers, political thrillers, and so on according on the issue brought. Psycho thriller for example, it focused on either the criminal's or the protagonist's psyche. However, Priestman (in Scaggs, 2005: 108) shortened them into two major focuses: noir and anti-conspiracy thriller.

The most notable characteristic shared among the works of thriller is the concern on how the crime is committed in the story rather than on finding the criminal. The general conventions of thriller are the protagonist who is not necessarily a detective and demonstrates his resistance upon the obstacles—in which his attempt is deep explored; the vast scale of danger faced by the protagonist, and the plot which is based on suspense. However, thriller is also varied into some sub-genres, such as spy thriller, legal thriller, etc. Even though they shared similar conventions as thriller, each of them also has some more specific conventions so that they can be differentiated from one another.

Among the wide range of thriller, Priestman (in Scaggs, 2005: 108) categorized them into two major discussions: noir thriller and anti-conspiracy thriller. He argued that noir thriller is recognized through the protagonist who 'consciously exceed(s) the law'. He also made such reflection of noir's protagonist through some Shakespeare's leading characters who are under their consciousness, breaking the law and social rule for their personal traits whether sexual, material, or authority. Some of them are Macbeth (murders committed by

Macbeth were caused by his obsession with a prophecy about being The King of Scotland, but then it doomed his life) and Richard III (the jealousy of King Edward IV's brother upon his throne).

1. The Origin of Noir Thriller

In the early period of noir thriller, the term 'noir' was more associated with style rather than a genre, referring to the stories about criminals which were published in pulp magazine around the nineteenth century. Noir thriller was getting more specifically defined through W.R. Burnett's *Little Caesar*. Besides presenting 'the protagonist who consciously exceeds the law', the social and economic contexts were portrayed in the story as well since the work was strongly influenced by Wall Street Crash. It narrated how crime (which was mostly committed by urban gangsterism) was easily to emerge as caused by economic depression. Cruelty, harassment, and society's moral breaker were then noted by John G. Cawelti (in Scaggs, 2005: 109) as the main focuses of noir thriller.

On the other hand, the development of noir thriller was also much associated with psycho thriller. Before noir was defined, psycho thriller was popular as being the influence of American hard-boiled to emerge. It is one of the sub-genres of detective fictions which explore more about the investigating process. It is interested in the way the detective finds out the suspects' motive or their psychological state related to the crime committed. It gained popularity in around 1920s to 1940s and were mostly represented through the works of Dashiell Hammet and Raymond Chandler (Jalova, 2007).

American hard-boiled stories were also popular in France, so that Marcel Duhamel translated them in *Serie Noire* (1946), including Dashiell Hammett's works. *Serie Noire* was also noted as the emergence of *roman noir*—the French words of black novels. Jean Jacques Schleret, a literary scholar who first officially used the term 'noir', argued that among its development, the word has different referential in France and America. Since 1946 in France, 'noir' is referred to as the hardboiled novels. However, America adapted 'noir' as the concept in literature after it was used in film criticism by Charles Higham and Joel Greenberg in their book *Hollywood in Forties* (1968). Inspired by Jim Thompson's novels (*The Getaway*, *Pop 1280*, and *A Hell of a Woman*), 'noir' in America was then associated with 'blackness', representing the crime in the story and how Thompson delivered the crime in a more intense way than the hardboiled genre. Gifford (1984) argued that 'noir' is also the best word to describe the world of the stories (despair, devastation, and bad luck) which is tougher than the characters of hard-boiled novels live in (Tuttle, 2006).

Thus, this research is focused on the American's development in defining noir thriller. Even though the definition of noir thriller was influenced by the hard-boiled detective stories, it is important to look back that the genre was firstly influenced by psycho thriller. It is no wonder that noir thriller has the characteristics as what thriller also does (Simpson in Rzepka and Horsley, 2010). Noir is less interested in the role of a detective as written in *Little Caesar* (1929) by W.R. Burnett in which he put a gangster as the protagonist of the story. Martin Rubin (in Chapman, 2000: 144) also identified that the works of noir thriller are

able to produce the feeling and sensation which are not occupied in the casual detective stories. Noir thriller shows the intense involvement of the protagonist—who is not necessarily a detective—in decision making. Moreover, rather than leaning much on the detective's procedures, it deeply explores the characters' fear and anxiety. It figures out how the people face their low and high points in live. It narrates how the people behave and how their habit may lead them into unluckier fate.

2. Noir Thriller in American Literature

The most popular work which employs the characteristics of noir thriller based on American concept is James M. Cain's *The Postman Always Rings Twice* (1934). It is also the biggest influence of noir works to emerge. It shows the fragility of the characters' feelings. Using the first person point of view, Frank Chambers narrates how at first he does not intend to commit the murder, but he and Cora—his friend's wife—cannot resist from their desire to live together, so they need to get rid of Cora's husband. Instead of achieving their intention, their attempts to murder Cora's husband has doomed themselves. Their very single decision brings them into worse and worse state. Cora ends up dead and Chambers himself is jailed.

Besides Cain's ironic characters, the development of American noir thriller in the first-three decades is collected in the *Library of America in Crime Novels: American Noir of the 1930s and 1940s* and *Crime Novels: American Noir of the 1950s* (Davenport, 1999). Edward Anderson's *Thieves Like Us* was praised for its excellent writing technique. The existentialist heroes were presented through a

group of gangsters set in the era of American Great Depression. The gangsters delivered a critical view about people's misconception in perceiving 'thieves'.

The other notable noir work is Horace McCoy's *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?* (1935), telling about the flashback of a big dreamer, Robert Syverten. As he is not so rich to be a movie director, he participates in a dance marathon contest with a young woman named Gloria to afford a big amount of money. Instead of winning and getting the money, he ends up killing Gloria. He memorizes about the reason why the murder is committed. He grants Gloria's own wish. She wants to die as being tired of her pessimism upon living in Hollywood during the Great Depression era.

3. The Conventions of Noir Thriller

It has been explained above that structuralism approach focuses not on the historical development of the structure, but on how the structure defines the meaning of the work. In addition, the people should look at other works as they may share the same elements in order to define its characteristics. The theorists of genre also believe that some basic rules are essentials for a genre construction. The production of meaning itself is based on the series of conventional and highly organized elements that a genre employs (Richardson, 2009).

Among the origin of the term and the examples of noir thriller, it can be concluded the works of noir are straight to the principle of genre theory. The meaning of 'noir' is produced through some particular devices—such as theme, character, and characterization—which construct the work.

Besides the definition, there are several opinions from the scholars in summarizing the conventions of noir thriller. Lee Horsley (2001) summarized the conventions of noir into four: the shifting roles of the protagonist, the lack of relationship between the protagonist and society, the ways in which noir functions as a socio-political critique, and the use of the subjective point of view.

On the other hand, George Tuttle (2006) argued that noir thriller is mostly noticed through these two characteristics: first, the protagonist who is not a detective and he can be either a criminal, a victim, or someone who is directly related to the crime; and second, the protagonist is described as having self-destructive qualities.

However, to have a clearer and more specific explanation, this research made a summary from both scholars above, as well as the previous scholars mentioned in the previous discussion. Thus, the conventions of thriller will be further discussed below.

a) Having a Flawed Protagonist

Besides being mentioned by George Tuttle (2006), it is also stated in the core theory of thriller that presenting a non-detective as the leading character is what differentiates thriller from detective fictions. He also mentioned that the protagonist has either self-destructive qualities or lack of morality which brought them into inevitable despair. To be simpler, taking from Barbara De-Marco Barret's essay *Noir: The Dark Side* (2009), no matter how hard the characters tried to pursue a better life, they always ended up making a bad decision which leads them into an unhappy ending. It is best represented by James M. Cain's

characters in *The Postman Always Rings Twice* (1934). Frank Chambers and Cora Papadakis kill a Nick Papadakis because they are greedy for money and lust of love. In the end, Cora Papadakis dies in a car accident, while Frank Chambers is jailed.

The interest in presenting a flawed protagonist is also supported by Priestman (2003) who argued that noir thriller is noted through the protagonist who is ‘consciously exceeds the laws’. The person has a cruel intention for the sake of his personal traits, such as money, sexuality, authority, etc. The cruelty does not only affect him, but also brings an unexpected fatality into someone else’s life.

b) Focusing on the Character’s Conflicts

In order to emphasize the bleakness of noir thriller, it is important to deliver the characters’ specific and detailed reactions in facing the thread. (Simpson in Rzepka and Horsley, 2010: 192). Besides being influenced by psycho thriller, deeply exploring the characters’ conflict is getting interesting as the flawed protagonist is brought into focus. This attempt, according to James M. Cain (in Scaggs, 2005: 109), is a kind of critique of the classic pattern of detective fictions in which the villain is always caught or punished. He wants to show the fragility in the world of noir thriller by focusing on the flawed protagonist.

According to Michael Walker (Simpson in Rzepka and Horsley, 2010: 190), there are three kinds of conflicts which are typically presented in noir thriller.

- 1) The first one is still much influenced by psycho thriller (and hard-boiled detective stories) in which the story focused on the vast crime influenced by the corrupt world and the psychological state of the characters who commit

the crime. It is represented in Raymond Chandler's *The Big Sleep* (1939), which shows how murders were easily committed for revenge (Brody's murder committed by Carol Lundgren) and the characters who were easily driven by money (Joe Brody who demanded money from Vivian by spreading her sister's scandalous photo).

- 2) The second conflict is sexual allure. The protagonist is usually a male which is lack of relationship as being blinded by the vision of love or broken-hearted. In order to heighten the story, a *femme fatale*—an attractive woman who leads the protagonist into destruction (*Cambridge Advanced Dictionary*) is usually presented. It is best represented by James M. Cain's *The Postman Always Rings Twice* (1939).
- 3) The last conflict which is typically presented in noir thriller is the protagonist who is being trapped in an unexpected and uncontrollable despair. Both his own actions and other characters' are only meant to keep bringing him down. The example of this conflict can be found in Cornell Woolrich's *The Black Angel* (1943) in which it upholds the sense of hopelessness and fatality. The story tells about Alberta who is obsessed in taking revenge for her husband who was sentenced death. As she believed that it was an unfair judgement, she looked for some people who were influential in that judgement. However, at the end she was guilty about being a criminal and ruining other people's life.

c) Employing the Suspense-Based Plot

The plot of a story is constructed through its events and actions, being rendered and ordered to achieve particular artistic and emotional effects. There are various forms of plot, depending on the genre's goals (Abrams, 1999: 224). The form of plot which is commonly used in the works of fiction are ordered into these sequence of events: 1) exposition, the introduction of the characters and setting; 2) rising action, the protagonist's attempt in overcoming the conflicts; 3) climax, the result of the protagonist's attempt which results in either solving or not solving the problems; 4) falling action, the clash between the protagonist and the antagonist which are getting redeemed. It results either in the protagonist's victory or failure in fighting against the antagonist; and the last is 5) resolution or denouement, the result of the climax is elaborated, and the readers will either feel happy or feel sorry with the protagonist.

As thriller aims to fulfil the readers' curiosity and explore their anxiety upon the characters' struggle in overcoming the threat, as well as the degree of threat itself, it is important for thriller to have the form of plot which is beyond the common. Thriller needs a plot which can both create artistic and strong emotional effect in order to be different from detective fictions. Simpson (in Rzepka and Horsley, 2010: 188) noted that the plot of thriller is structured based on the principles of suspense. In relation to a literary context, suspense is a state of mind created when the readers (a) do not know what is coming next in the story or what the result of a sequence of events in the story will be, but (b) they want to know and (c) care about what happens (Sutherland, 2009: 1). On the other hand,

Junkerjürgen (in Bayer, 2013: 14) in the simpler way argued that suspense is created through these contrasting elements: danger (faced by the characters in the story) and attraction. The danger opposes the readers' desires, whereas attraction refers to the readers' expectation in having positive outcome upon the danger.

The method of suspense creation is quite debatable until this research is conducted. Lara Bayer (2013) noted that the suspense creations are shown at (1) a text level as influenced by time (order and duration), narrative situation, and language; and (2) the readers' involvement. However, Lara Bayer's definition does not necessarily show how those elements influence the plot in text. It is more like the definition of suspense as a whole text. That is why it is quite debatable since thriller and suspense (as literary genres) are closely related and affected one another. Furthermore, as this research focuses on the structural context, the researcher looks for literary devices which are specifically related to plot. After collecting from various sources, there are some common plot devices which are commonly helpful to create suspense in thriller works.

1) Mystery

Mystery as a plot device is different from mystery as a literary genre. It is a set of unusual circumstances for which the readers crave for explanation. Different from conflicts, it is more like a question that both the readers and the protagonist should look for the answer along with the story (Arp and Greg Johnson, 2005). The most typical mystery emerged in noir thriller is the criminal's motive in committing the crime.

2) Dilemma

Dilemma is another common device used to create suspense besides mystery. It is where the protagonist faced two choices in which his/her decision is influential for the next actions in relation to break the mystery (Arp and Greg Johnson, 2005).

3) Cliff-hanger

Cliff-hanger in general means a story or situation which is exciting because the ending or result is uncertain until it happens (*Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary*). According to Simpson (in Rzepka and Horsley, 2010: 189), cliff-hanger aims to keep the story intense. Important information in the story is held so that no one knows what happens next. It will be revealed only when it is done. It also usually aims to conclude the chapters within a story, by hanging the information related to the mystery, so that the readers will keep reading until it resolved (Lukens, 1999: 117).

4) Surprised Ending

There are two kinds of ending which is commonly used in the novels, including thriller. They are happy and sad ending. However, in order to aim the significance of suspenseful plot, a surprise ending is best used. A surprise ending is one that employs unexpected turn and twist (Arp and Greg Johnson, 2005). Even though the readers are driven along with the protagonist's attempts in breaking the mystery and overcoming the obstacles in the story, a good noir thriller surprises the readers the most by a final act which is beyond their anticipation.

d) Revealing the Critique of Socio-Political Milieu of the Story

The interest in exposing the social and political critique is one of the strongest characteristics of noir thriller. It was first noted by the early noir thriller work, W.R. Burnett's *Little Caesar* (1929) of which the writing was inspired by the ambience of Great Depression Era. However, it is also important to look back at how noir at first came from pulp fiction, in which it depicts pessimism, personal and societal failure, urban paranoia, the misunderstanding between individual and social connection, and cynicism (Simpson in Rzepka and Horsley, 2010: 189). Those kinds of bleakness strongly affect the characters' state of mind and actions.

Cain's *The Postman Always Rings Twice* represents well the bleakness of noir world. Similar to *Little Caesar* (1929) which was influenced by Great Depression Era, it shows the fragility of people's obsession upon money. Cain showed how their protagonists had a false belief that money would make their life better. Besides being blinded by the lust of love, there is also another reason why Chambers and Cora committed the murder. They wanted to take the money from the insurance policy. However, once again, their decision did not lead them into happiness but inevitable doom.

In *Thieves Like Us*, the robberies are enacted as the protest upon capitalization and the corrupt government. The most Anderson's phenomenal statement in the novel adapted from *Hungry Men* is "the difference between a bank president and a bank bandit is that the robbery of the banker is legal. The bandit has more guts" (Hauptfleisch, 2007).

Horace McCoy's *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?* (1935) also delivered a bold notion about people's fragility in perceiving the American Dream in modern life. Both the characters were turned down by their own attempt in affording a big amount of money in order to survive in the fancy life of Hollywood.

e) Using the Subjective Point of View

According to Sherley (in Scaggs, 2005: 106), a successful thriller leans on delivering the intense dreadful actions in order to heighten the readers' experience of reading. Thriller also focuses on the reason why the murder is committed and how it is committed rather than finding who commits the murder. Thus, to aim those senses, the protagonist's state of mind is essential to be brought into account. Among the literary devices, point of view is the one which is able to access information from the characters' mind. Point of view is in which side the narrator stands to the story (James in Templin, 1964: 4). In addition, the use of the subjective point of view enables the author to present any information either in limited or unlimited way, depending on the specific effect intended. Yuan-Shu (1967) also argued that without the guide of point of view, the meaning of a story cannot be perceived.

According to Wayne Booth, point of view in narrative is not merely a thematically but also technical consideration,

perhaps the most overworked distinction is that of "person". To say that a story is told in the first or the third person and to group novels into one to the other kind, will tell us nothing of importance unless we become more precise and describe how the particular qualities of the narrators relate to specific desired effects.

However, as a story cannot be wholly dramatic, the use of point of view should be used consistently to create the effects (Hoffman, Michael J. *et al*, 1996: 173-5).

According to Silver and Ward's analysis of film noir, the two aspects which are essentially taken into account in noir are first, the representation of the protagonist's subjectivity. It includes his state of mind, his view about the world, his fear, anxiety and so on. The second is protagonist's role, whether he is the victim, the criminal or the investigator. In film, it can be obtained through the camera focus. Instead, in narrative text, those are obtained through point of view which is subjective one (Horsley, 2001: 8). Subjective point of view is able to emphasize the characters' action and struggle. The closer it gets to the readers' sense, the closer it gets to success.

Furthermore, subjectivity is best to show the irony on how he/she either differently or wrongly perceiving the world. The idea is captivated through his/her thought, feeling, and pretension as well (Horsley, 2001). In addition, subjectivity is essential to support noir's concern on whydunnit—the reason to commit crime and howdunnit—how the crime is committed, instead of whodunit—the person who commits crime.

However, in order to obtain subjectivity, noir works do not necessarily use the same point of view as they depend on the effect intended. Noir works tend to use either the first person point of view or the third person point of view.

1) **The First Person Point of View**

The characteristic of the first point of view is the use of 'I' as the narrator in which 'I' is always character of the story. Any information related to the story can only be accessed through the narrator's experience, such as thought, feeling, and knowledge. It has been explained above that subjectivity is aimed to put the readers closer to the protagonist's experience related to the crime—whether he is the victim or the criminal—through his personal narration. Thus, the first person point of view is mostly employed in the works (Horsley, 2001).

The tension would also be heightened as any information related to the crime is strictly viewed from a single character only. It is also best in highlighting the irony of how the protagonist view the world and how conquering the obstacles, such as the lack of morality or the clash between his personal view and the society's common belief. In addition, as noir is also interested more in examining the reason of why the crime is committed rather than finding the criminal itself, the first point of view would help much on digging the protagonist's motive related to the crime committed.

For example, James M. Cain's *The Postman Always Rings Twice* (1934). The story is narrated by the protagonist, Frank Chambers, who is both the criminal and the victim in the context. The readers are not given the access to enter Cora's mind who is also influential in helping Frank Chambers committing the crime as well as making himself a victim. Frank's motive and action in committing the murder to Cora's husband can only be accessed through his narration (confessional).

He went in, and I let everything come up. It was like hell the lunch, or the potatoes, or the wine. I wanted that woman so bad I couldn't even keep anything on my stomach (Cain, 1934: 3).

The passage above is Frank Chamber's own narration, using his personal point of view in confessing of how much he is attracted to Cora, which is then become the motive of getting rid of her husband to have her. It also shows that the movement in the story is delivered through what Chamber saw.

She would wait till the water began dripping down in the kitchen, and call me. We would break the door down, find him, and call the doctor. In the end, we figured it would look like he had slipped in the tub, knocked himself out, and then drowned. I got the idea from a piece in the paper where a guy had said that most accidents happen right in people's own bathtubs (Cain, 1934: 6).

The passage above shows how Frank Chamber personally explained how he attempted to kill Cora's husband and how Cora herself helped him to make it seemed like an accident.

2) The Third Person Point of View

The third person point of view is characterized by referring the narrator in 'he', 'she', 'it' or 'they' and is not participating in the story. The third person point of view is categorized into three according to its narrative voice.

- a) The objective third person, in which the story is delivered through the external view. The writer does not access the characters' personal feeling and thought. The scenes are only perceived through the characters' physical movements (Lukens, 1999: 183).

- b) The limited third person, in which the story is told from the eyes of one character. The writer delivers not only what the characters see and hear, but also what the characters feel and believe (Lukens, 1999: 181).
- c) noir The omniscient third, in which the writer can access any information about each character, including their thoughts, ideas, and feelings about themselves and other characters. The writer can also track their records in the past and in the future. Different from the other two kinds of third point of view, the omniscient narrator is not limited into a certain character's observation. It delivers anything that the characters may not know (Lukens, 1999: 180).

Besides creating the tension by strictly delivering the information through a single character only, many noir thriller works are interested in crafting the story by creating some unreliable narrators. In the works of Jim Thompson, *The Criminals* (1953) and *The Kill-Off* (1957), the multiple narrators control the stories to raise the readers' curiosity in figuring out the truth (Horsley, 2001: 9). Thus, in order to aim the tension, among the kinds of third point of view, the omniscient one is best employed. In addition, Horsley (2001: 10) argued that is interested more on the complexity of the characters rather than the fixed one. For him, each character on the story has the same chance either to reveal the crime and contribute to it.

For example, Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent* (1907) used third person point of view (specifically the omniscient one) as the points of view are gradually shifted from the leading characters (Verloc) into the least character which

unexpectedly committed a crime (Winnie). In the beginning, the story focuses on Verloc, a Londoner businessman who also affords his living by being a secret agent for a foreign agency. He is involved in a bombing mission to threaten the British government. Unfortunately, the mission killed Verloc's retarded brother-in-law which was then found by Winnie (Verloc's wife). As Winnie is strongly affectionate to his brother, she takes a revenge on Verloc by stabbing him to death. In the end, Winnie commits suicide as she gets depressed over two murders (his brother's and his husband's). The shifting focus using third point of view in *The Secret Agent* supports the notion of noir in focusing the unstable position of the protagonists. It also shows that there is no single guilt in noir.

Mr Verloc, going out in the morning, left his shop nominally in charge of his brother-in-law. It could be done, because there was very little business at any time, and practically none at all before the evening. Mr Verloc cared but little about his ostensible business. And, moreover, his wife was in charge of his brother-in-law (Conrad, 1907: 6).

The paragraph above is the opening sentences in Conrad's *The Secret Agent* in which the narrator who is outside the story introduced Mr Verloc as the leading character. The point of view used is the omniscient one as it also has information about Mr Verloc's wife.

Winnie after the death of her father found considerable consolation in the feeling that she need no longer tremble for poor Stevie. She could not bear to see the boy hurt. It maddened her. As a little girl she had often faced with blazing eyes the irascible licensed victualler in defence of her brother. (Conrad, 1907: 21)

The passage above focuses on Winnie's point of view, explaining the reason why she is so affectionate to his mentally retarded brother, Stevie, which also become the reason why she took a revenge on his death.

D. Previous Research Findings

Even though thriller is the most anticipated genre in the history which also gains commercial success, the analysis on the construction has not yet been much conducted especially in Indonesia. The early research on thriller that the researcher found is *The Literature of The Thriller* conducted by George J. Grella from University of Kansas in 1965. He examined the natural characteristics, the pattern and the value among several branches of thriller such as hard-boiled thriller, the sensational and realistic spy novels which are much influenced by their historical, social, and cultural background. Grella concluded that thriller conventionally employs these kinds of traditional literature form: the comedy of manners (exposing the tragedy more than the crime), the romance (the hero's or the detective's victory in accomplishing the mystery), the mythic and the ironic (exposing the characters' tension and frustration) modes.

Moreover, the research which focuses on specifically noir thriller is *Dark Side of the American Dream—Reinventing Noir Fiction for the 21st Century: An Introductory Essay and a Work of Original Fiction* conducted by William F. Carter from Harvard University in 2013. It examines the development of noir from Hammet's works to Dennis Lehane. He correlates his own novel to the character, setting, and point of view in classic noir. However, he showed that his

writing deviates from the conventions which once he examined from the classic works.

On the other hand, the previous researcher who focuses about point of view in narrative is Putri Dewi Nurhidayah from Yogyakarta State University. Through his thesis entitled *The Significance of Point of View in Jodi Picoult's My Sister Keeper*, she found out some kinds of points of view and focalisation used in the novel. She also employed reader response theory so that how the readers perceived the points of view can be accessed. However, she did not concern on the significance of point of view as the conventional device.

A similar concern is examined by Yuan Shu Yen from University of Winconsin through her thesis entitled *Katherine Mansfield's Use of Point of View*. She found that in every works of Katherine Mansfield, point of view is the device which is mostly concerned about. Among various subjects that Mansfield used, she examined the simplest one, the dramatic mode as in *Two Tupenny Ones*. On the other hand, the use of multiple points of view is also found, such as in *At The Bay*. She also found how the proper points of view chosen are able to create the best effect. Even though point of view is only a particular kind of literary devices, it is able to take over the characterization, the use of language and the thematic consideration in the story.

Another researcher, whose study is more specific and covered both the genre and point of view, is Juliana Tomkova through *Construction of Narrative in American Gothic Fiction: Focalisation in The Works of Edgar Allan Poe*. The research is focused on finding the point of view through the kinds of focalisation

used in Allan Poe's three works, figuring whether they are consistently used, and examining how the focalisation used is related to the elements of Gothic stories. It is found that some kinds of focalisation are applied, but the most consistent one is internal focalisation. In the association the structure of American gothic, internal focalisation is essential to build the tension of the story as the readers could only feel or see the events through what the character perceived. This research employed some theorists' suggestion both about the characteristics of American gothic and the concept focalisation which makes it seems unreliable since the theorists may have different perception upon the focuses. In addition, the conventions of American gothic are much different from thriller.

It seems that the discussion upon thriller as literary genre has been much held. However, the popularity of enjoying thriller does not really affect its study upon the structure. It can be seen that it was difficult to find the example of its recent works in the previous studies above. They were still stuck in its early works as the preferences. Thus, this research is going to extend the analysis upon the structure of thriller and its sub-genre—which is not really concerned among those previous research—in a popular thriller novel, *The Stranger*, which was published in 2015. This research is going to find out whether the same old theories still works over time. Moreover, even though there are already many studies on the use of point of view, its specific use on thriller is not yet popular. This research is going to show that point of view is significant to support the conventions to work as a whole.

E. Conceptual Framework

This research is aimed to find the general conventions of noir thriller and more specifically, the conventions of point of view in noir thriller in Harlan Coben's *The Stranger* using Structuralism approach as the guideline. In literature, the theory focuses on classifying the literary genre.

Overall, Structuralism focuses on the deep structure, in which the content of a text is constructed through the structure itself and *intertextuality*, in which the meaning of a text is fundamentally derived from the shared system among the texts under the same genre. As this research is focused on thriller, David Glover's essay in Priestman's *The Cambridge Companion to Crime Fiction* (2003) is referred to comprehend the definition and characteristics of thriller.

Among Priestman's proposal about two major topics of thriller, noir is regarded as the focus of this research. Thus, to answer the question about the conventions of Harlan Coben's *The Stranger*, the research used John Scaggs's *Crime Fiction Guide* (2005) and Charles Rzepka and Lee Horsley's *A Companion to Crime Fiction* (2003). In addition, George Tuttle's essay entitled *What is Noir?* (2006) and Lee Horsley's preface from her book *Noir Thriller* (2001) are also added as the main references. Taking from some theories proposed by the scholars above, the researchers summarized noir thriller is constructed through some conventions as follows: 1) having a flawed protagonist, 2) focusing on the character's conflicts, 3) employing the suspense-based novels, 4) revealing the critique of social milieu, and 5) using the subjective point of view. This research examined whether Harlan Coben's *The Stranger* employs the conventions of noir

thriller as noted above or shows some deviations. Meanwhile, among the literary devices which construct noir thriller, point of view is the most significant one to create the effect intended. Thus, the conventions of point of view employed in Harlan Coben's *The Stranger* are also regarded as the focus of this research. It will be also examined through those references above which deliver the representation about the use of point of view in the previous works of noir thriller. It is found that mostly, noir thriller used either first person or third person point of view to obtain the characters' subjectivity. The significance of point of view used in Harlan Coben's *The Stranger* in making a specific effect is explained as well.

F. Framework of Thinking

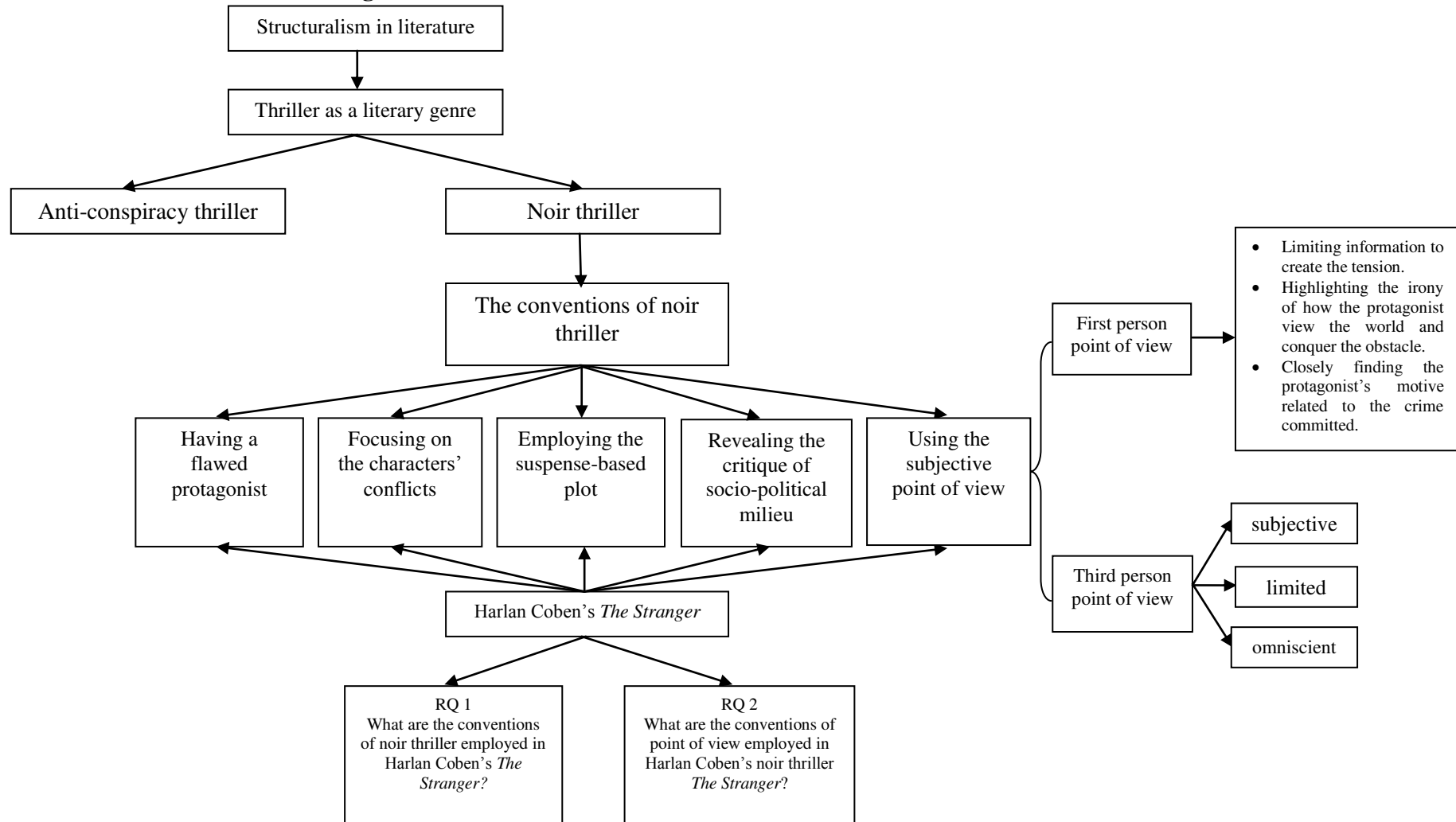


Figure 1. Framework of Thinking in The Conventions of Noir Thriller in Harlan Coben's *The Stranger*

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHOD

A. Research Design

This research used qualitative research design. Qualitative research focuses on naturally approaching the phenomena within a particular context instead of getting through some statistical procedures. Vanderstoep and Johnston (2009: 7) mentioned that qualitative research focuses on producing the textual description from the research participant's experience, so that the data taken are in the form of words or pictures rather than numerical.

As the data in qualitative research are not be in the form of statistical data, the methods of this study solve the actual problem by collecting, classifying, analysing, and interpreting data. (Vanderstoep and Johnston, 2009: 7). Thus, the researcher only describes or explains the phenomena found in the objects of the study based on the core theory employed.

Furthermore, content analysis is used to analyze the data. According to Krippendorf (in Denscombe, 2007: 237), content analysis is basically used to examine the 'hidden' aspects of what is being delivered through the written text. There are ideas which are deeper than what the writer has consciously intended. The data are used to examine the phenomena in this study, those are: 1) the conventions of noir thriller in Harlan Coben's *The Stranger* and 2) the conventions of point of view employed in the novel.

B. The Data Type

Qualitative researches tend to be associated with words or images as the unit of analysis. It works by transforming any information from observation, reports, and recordings into data in the form of written word. Thus, the data of this research are some clauses, sentences, and expressions related to: 1) the conventions of noir thriller in the novel, and 2) the conventions of point of view in the novel.

C. The Data Sources

The data source of this research is a PDF version of Harlan Coben's novel entitled *The Stranger* published by Penguin Group (USA) in 2015.

In order to analyze the work, the researcher also used some additional references to help supporting the information related to the topics being discussed in the research which are taken from books, journals, and articles from the websites in the internet. The collected data are analyzed using the theory of genre as the branch of Structuralism approach. The genre focused in this research is noir thriller. The references used to support collecting the information about noir thriller are *A Companion to Crime Fiction* (Rzepka and Horsley, 2010), *The Cambridge Companion to Crime Thriller* (Priestman, 2003), *Crime Fiction Guide* (Scaggs, 2005), *Noir Thriller* (Horsley, 2001) and so on.

D. Research Instruments

This research involves the researcher as the instrument. According to Lincoln and Guba (in Vanderstoep and Johnston, 2009: 188), the best instrument for qualitative research is the human as they enable to comprehend the experience. In addition, human instruments can also respond and adapt to the research encounter. As the main instrument, the researcher has several roles in this research such as collecting the data, analysing data, interpreting the data related to the conventions of noir thriller employed in Harlan Coben's *The Stranger* and the conventions of point of view employed in the novel. Finally, the researcher reported the findings of the research.

E. Data Collecting Technique

The data collection in this research was processed through these four steps: reading, note taking, interpreting and categorizing. As the first two steps are the most fundamental ways in collecting the data, the researcher comprehensively read Harlan Coben's *The Stranger* to obtain a clear understanding about the content of the text. Then, the researcher wrote down the phrases, clauses, sentences, and expression related to the topic and made into simple notes. After that, the researcher carefully read the data to have a clear interpretation. Finally, the researcher categorized the data into first, the general conventions of noir thriller, consisting of four points: the flawed protagonist, focusing on the characters' conflict, the suspense-based plot, and revealing the critics upon socio-

political milieu of the story; and second, the conventions of point of view employed in the novel (as a noir thriller).

The data sheet was presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1. **The Data Sheet 1**

| No. | Categories | Page | Data | Explanation |
|-----|---------------------------------------|------|--|---|
| 1. | The flawed protagonist | 67 | The stranger had given Heidi the link to FindYourSugarBaby.com as well as her daughter's user ID and password. With a heavy heart, Heidi signed in as Kimberly and found out all she needed to confirm that everything the stranger had told her was true. | The Stranger finds Heidi's daughter's secret of having sugar daddies. He also hacks the account to prove it true. |
| 2. | Focusing on the character's conflicts | 18 | Thomas looked like Adam. Everyone said so. He had the same walk, the same laugh, the same second toe bigger than the first toe. No way. No way he wasn't Adam's. Even though the stranger had said that . . . <i>Now you're listening to a stranger?</i> | Adam starts to get provoked by the stranger as he doubts his biological child. |

Table 2. **The Data Sheet 2**

| No. | Quotation/Data | Page | Point of view | | | | Explanation |
|-----|---|------|---------------|--------------|---------|------------|--|
| | | | First person | Third person | | | |
| | | | | objective | limited | omniscient | |
| 1. | As the stranger entered the garage, he thought, as he did nearly every time he came here, about all the famous companies that purportedly started | 138 | | | ✓ | | The stranger's personal thought about his operation. |

| | | | | | | | |
|----|--|-----|--|--|---|--|---|
| | in just this way. | | | | | | |
| 2. | Chris had known that what they were doing was dangerous, that they were making enemies, that some would not understand the good and want to retaliate or continue to live in their “secrets” bubble. | 169 | | | ✓ | | The stranger’s personal feeling about his operation which now was like a boomerang for him. |

The data were then arranged based on their category, and the researcher checked and rechecked the data to obtain the validity.

Table 3. **Analytical Construct**

| The Conventions of Noir Thriller | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Having a flawed protagonist. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The protagonist is not a detective b. The protagonist is whoever related to the crime. c. The protagonist is the person who has a cruel intention for his personal traits. |
| 2. | Focusing on the characters’ conflicts. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Focusing on the motive of why the crime is committed. b. Focusing on the impact of the crime. |
| 3. | Employing the suspense-based plot. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Showing more than one obstacle faced by the characters. b. Showing the characters’ attempt in overcoming each obstacle. c. Showing the conflicts which are getting intense until they are accomplished. |
| 4. | Revealing the critique of socio-political milieu. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Exposing the social or political background in the story, such as Great Depression, American Dream in modern life, or capitalism. b. Social paranoia. c. The social or political milieu is influential to the reason why the crime is committed. |
| 5. | Using the subjective point of view | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The use of ‘I’ as the narrator. b. The narrator is one of the characters in the story, mostly the protagonist |

| | | | |
|--|--|--------------------------------|---|
| | | The third person point of view | <p>a. The use of ‘he’, ‘she’, or ‘it’, or ‘they’ as the narrator.</p> <p>b. The narrator does not participate in the story.</p> |
|--|--|--------------------------------|---|

F. Data Analysis Technique

Given (2008: 186) argued that a good qualitative research relies on the data analysis which includes collecting and associating the data to be a particular concept. Creswell (2009: 185) proposed data analysis in qualitative research consists of six sequences: organizing and preparing the data, reading through all the data, coding the data, giving a description, interrelating description and interpreting the meaning of the description. Those six sequences are,

1. identifying the data from the novel along with making some notes.
2. reading and rereading the whole data and organizing the data into a topic: the conventions of noir thriller employed in the novel and the point of view used in the novel.
3. coding and categorizing the data in the data sheet into some categories related to the conventions of noir thriller.
4. sorting the data by selecting the relevant data and eliminating the irrelevant data.
5. categorizing and interpreting the selected relevant data according to the topics being discussed in this research.
6. making the interrelation between the descriptions of the data and the theory to get the findings based on the objectives: the identification of

the conventions of noir thriller in the novel and the conventions of point of view in the novel; and

7. making interpretation of the findings based on the theory.

G. The Data Trustworthiness

The report resulted from a qualitative research may produce a small representation upon the topics being discussed in a research. Thus, to emphasize and ensure the research findings, Vanderstoop argued that triangulation can be conducted. It is a method which established validity and reliability of the data.

Triangulation expects that the use of different sources of information will help both to confirm and to improve the clarity of precision of a research finding (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003: 275). The basic types of triangulation are distinguished into four,

1. by method: employing different technique to collect the data,
2. by sources: using different sources to collect the data,
3. by multiple analysis: using different researcher to check the data collection and interpretation, and
4. by theory: employing different theoretical perspective to interpret the data.

The data in this research were collected from some particular references related to noir thriller. In addition, this research was triangulated by two English Literature students to gain more credibility. They are Puguh Hariyanto and Shinta Yuliani Alvingrum (alumnus) who are both the students of English Literature

department in Yogyakarta State University year 2011. Finally, the results of the triangulated data findings were discussed and consulted with the researcher's thesis advisors.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A. FINDINGS

This chapter aims to identify the general conventions of noir thriller in Harlan Coben's *The Stranger* and the conventions of point of view in the novel. To begin with, the novel consists of several plots, the plot of the stranger (Chris Taylor) as the protagonist, the plot of the stranger's victims (Adam Price and Heidi Dann), the plot of Johanna Griffin, a police officer who ran an investigation upon Heidi Dann's murder; and the plot of John Kuntz as the character who opposed the stranger's operation. However, this research is focused mostly on two plots, the plot of the stranger and the plot of Adam as their actions dominate the story and aim the most on the story's goals. Those two plots are also helpful to show the significance of the conventions of noir thriller in the novel.

1. The General Conventions of Noir Thriller in Harlan Coben's *The Stranger*

a. Having a Flawed Protagonist

Many narratives are interested in showing the protagonists who are kind-hearted, heroic, and having other good manners. It sometimes brings a misconception upon the readers that it is impossible to have the bad one to be the leading character. Yet it is important to note that noir thriller is interested in

putting the bad one as the protagonist in order to create the darker ambience (Tuttle, 2006).

Regarding the definitions above, it is quite easy to decide the protagonist in Harlan Coben's *The Stranger*. In order to have a deep understanding on the flawed protagonist, this section is divided into two focuses, the kind of flaw possessed by the protagonist and the impacts of the flaw, both for the protagonist and other characters.

1) The kind of flaw: blackmailing people

The stranger, whose name later known as Chris Taylor, is the protagonist in the story. He runs an illegal operation through blackmails. He traces the people's secret on the internet and approaches those who have the secrets. He also demands a big amount of money from them. If they do not pay, he will use the secret to threaten them. He will make the secret go public or pass it to their close relatives.

The stranger had given Heidi the link to FindYourSugarBaby.com as well as her daughter's user ID and password. With a heavy heart, Heidi signed in as Kimberly and found out all she needed to confirm that everything the stranger had told her was true (Coben, 2015: 67).

It is the stranger's attempt to approach his victim. He does not merely tell Heidi Dann about the secret of her daughter. He can even make it stronger by delivering the evidence. In this case, he persuades Heidi Dann that her daughter is working as a sugar baby by letting her signs in to the website through her daughter's account that he had hacked.

The stranger had not just told her out of the kindness (or emptiness) of his heart. He made money demands, of course. Ten grand was the amount. If she didn't pay it in three days, the news of Kimberly's "hobby" would go viral (Coben, 2015: 67).

As stated by Priestman (2010) that the protagonist of noir thriller has a cruel intention for the sake of his personal traits, the protagonist's attempt in this novel is shown through the stranger's action in demanding a big amount of money from Heidi Dann. The stranger also threatens Heidi Dann that he will spread the secret if she does not pay the money. In order to convince the victims, the stranger also delivers the proofs related to the secret.

"His weight was, what, two thirty last year," the stranger said. "He put on fifty-five pounds and no one noticed?"

Dan frowned, even as he felt his heart drop. "It's called puberty, asshole. It's called working out hard."

"No, Dan. It's called Winstrol. It's called a PED."

"A what?"

"Performance-enhancing drug. Better known to the layman as steroids."

Dan turned and moved right up into the little stranger's face. The stranger just kept smiling. "What did you say?"

"Don't make me repeat myself, Dan. It's all in that manila folder. Your son went to Silk Road. You know what that is? The Deep Web? The online underworld economy? Bitcoin? I don't know if you gave Kenny your blessing or if your son paid for it on his own, but you know the truth, don't you?"

Dan just stood there (Coben, 2015: 117).

The passage shows that the stranger not only knows about the person's secret, but also observes his victim's habit as he knows well about Dan Molino's feeling upon his son. In order to successfully provoke the victim, the stranger always puts his smile, leaving an impression that his attempt to reveal the secrets is a good

deed and undeniably true. However, he always ends up making the money demand from the secret.

Dan put his finger on the little guy's chest. "Are you threatening me?"
"No, Dan. I'm asking for ten thousand dollars. A one-time payment. You know I could demand a lot more, what with how much college costs nowadays. So consider yourself lucky." (Coben, 2015: 117).

It always works well for the stranger to get the money from the people through the secret he revealed because the people basically have an instinct to protect their family, such as in Dan Molino's case. As the story goes by, it is known that Dan Molino finally pays the money demand to the stranger.

The stranger, whose real name was Chris Taylor, nodded. Chris was the founder of this movement, even if this was Eduardo's garage. Eduardo had been first in with him. The enterprise started as a lark, as an attempt to right wrongs. Soon, Chris realized, their movement could be both a profitable company and a source for doing good. But in order to do that, in order to not let one take over other, they all had to stick to their founding principles.
"So what's wrong?" Gabrielle asked him.
"What makes you think something's wrong?"
"You don't come here unless there's a problem."
That was true enough.
Eduardo sat back. "Were there any issues with Dan Molino or his son?"
"Yes and no."
"We got the money," Merton said. "It couldn't have been that bad." (Coben, 2015: 139).

The stranger's operation is finally revealed through the narration of his own perspective. It is admitted that the company was once used purely for setting the people free from living the lie. However, the stranger, whose real name is Chris Taylor, develops the company and uses its good deed as an excuse to take more

money from the people. In addition, to make the operation run smoothly, the stranger has to keep the company's protocol. He should stay being anonymous, so that it is hard for the people to trace his operation.

The normal protocol was simple: You know a terrible secret about a certain person via the web. That person has two options. He or she can pay to have the secret kept or he can choose not to pay and have the secret revealed. Chris felt satisfied either way. The end result was either a profit (the person paid the blackmail) or cathartic (the person came clean). In a sense, they needed people to choose both. They needed the money to keep the operation going. They needed the truth to come out because that was what it was all about, what made their enterprise just and good. A secret revealed is a secret destroyed (Coben, 2015: 168).

However, being anonymous is not enough. The stranger's job is only blowing the people's secret, without taking care of the impact on the victims. He is the controller of the secret. He had nothing to lose as there are only two things he knows for sure, he gets the money and he will make an excuse that at least, he did people a favour.

2) The impacts of the flaw

This section explores the impacts of the stranger's operation in blackmailing people. It is found that it is not only destructive for his victims, but also his attempt in keeping his identity anonymous.

a) The impact on the stranger

As the stranger focuses only on hiding his identity and taking the money from the people, he does not really aware of the impact of his operation until his friend delivers information that there is one of his victims who try to reveal his operation.

Chris read Adam Price's business card and Gabrielle's short message again: HE KNOWS

In a sense, the shoe had been put on other foot. Chris now had a secret, didn't he? But no, his was different. His secret was not for the sake of deception but protection—or was that just what he told himself? Was he, like so many of the people he encountered, simply rationalizing the secret? (Coben, 2015: 169).

It has never been in the stranger's thought that there will be his victim who runs an investigation to find him. Even though he shows up in front of his victims, it is uneasy for them to find his real identity since he keeps the protocol in being anonymous unless the they are as good as him in accessing the IP address. Thus, when the stranger sees the text about his operation which is getting revealed, it troubles him. He is attacked back without getting prepared. He is so worried of being revealed as his identity has a big impact for his company as well.

Chris had known that what they were doing was dangerous, that they were making enemies, that some would not understand the good and want to retaliate or continue to live in their "secrets" bubble (Coben, 2015: 169).

Before thinking about being revealed, the stranger realizes that his operation is a bad deed after all, no matter how many times he says that he does it to set the people free from living the lie. It is only an excuse until he finds out that he becomes a public enemy as the consequence of not thinking about the impact of his operation.

"They have nothing new on Chris Taylor," she said. "He's still on the run. But in the end, he's not exactly Public Enemy Number One. All he did

was blackmail some people who don't want to press charges because their secrets will be revealed. I doubt he'd get more than probation, even if he was caught. Would you be okay with that?" (Coben, 2015: 204)

The passage above shows that there is no further explanation about the stranger's final fate. In his final scene, it is described that he runs away after being caught by Adam—his victim who runs an investigation to find him. It is also explained that his operation will not give him a heavy punishment. However, the next section explaining about the impact of the stranger's operation on the victims shows the interesting point about this novel. It shows how much the victims are devastated by his operation.

b) The impact on other characters

The previous section shows that the stranger not only just approaches and threatens one single victim. The feelings of the stranger's several victims are explored as well in the novel.

"Not even close," she said. "I don't know when or how the guy told Harold. But he did. He gave Harold some web link so he could see all the stuff I ordered from that pregnancy-faking website. Harold went ballistic. I thought it would open his eyes to my pain, but really, it did the opposite. It played into all his insecurities. All that stuff about not being a real man—it all came roaring to a head. It's complicated, you know. A man is supposed to spread his seed and if the seed isn't any good, well, it goes right to his core. Stupid." (Coben, 2015: 106)

The stranger approaches Suzanne Hope and tells her that he finds out her attempt to fake her pregnancy. However, different from Dan Molino who pays the money to make the stranger close the case, Suzanne Hope cannot afford it. As the consequence, the stranger tells Suzanne's husband about her fake pregnancy.

Staying on the company's protocol, he gives the strong proof about the secret. Suzanne's husband is very mad after knowing from the website that Suzanne had bought the fake pregnancy stuff. The secret had made their marriage at risk. The similar impact is also experienced by Adam Price. He is also approached by the stranger and told that his wife had faked her pregnancy.

But it's useless. The dream dissolves, gone forever. And standing there, watching his son play the game he loved, Adam couldn't help but feel that since the stranger's visit, they were all on the verge of waking up (Coben, 2015: 161).

After knowing that his wife had lied to him, Adam starts to doubt anything in his marriage life. It is uneasy for him to see straight upon his life. He even believes the stranger who says that he needs to check his boys.

Besides mentally affected the victims, the stranger's operation also lets some people murdered. Heidi Dunn, who finds out that her daughter works as a sugar baby from the stranger, is murdered by a person who works for a company which opposes the stranger's operation. The person named John Kuntz is the security of sugar baby website. Kuntz finds out that the stranger hacked the website (in order to prove that Heidi Dann's daughter's affair), so he is afraid that his client's identity (the sugar daddy) will be revealed as well. Thus, Kuntz looks for the stranger's information from Heidi Dann but he kills her as she cannot give the proper answer (by the fact that Heidi is just the stranger's victim).

"Heidi was murdered first," Adam continued. "Then Ingrid. And on top of that, my wife is missing. That's what your revealing of secrets got you." (Coben, 2015: 184)

Besides Heidi Dann, Kuntz's attempt to look for the stranger also leads into Ingrid's murder. Ingrid is the stranger's partner. In addition, Adam's wife is missing. Adam concludes that those series of disasters are caused by the stranger's operation.

James M. Cain (in Scaggs, 2005: 109) stated that noir thriller wants to criticize the pattern of detective fictions in which the villain is always caught or punished, so that the flawed protagonist is presented to show the fragility of noir thriller. It had been discussed before that the quality of the flawed protagonist in Harlan Coben's *The Stranger* is enhanced by the stranger (Chris Taylor) as his operation in blackmailing the people had ruined the life of his victims. On other hand, his own operation is ruined as well, as Adam Price starts to look for his identity and the security of the sugar daddy website threatens him back as the revenge for hacking the website due to Heidi Dann's daughter secret. Thus, it has no doubt to put the stranger as the protagonist, based on the kind of flaw he committed and the degree of impact he created.

b. Focusing on the Character's Conflicts

According to the theory, the stranger is the protagonist in Harlan Coben's *The Stranger* as he has a bad intention in harming the people for the sake of money. He not only blackmails people to get the money, but also runs away from the responsibility to take care of the impact of his operation on his victims. Simpson (in Rzepka and Horsley, 2010: 192) argued that in order to emphasize the

bleakness of noir thriller, it is important to deliver the characters' specific and detailed reactions in facing the threat.

Even though the impact of the stranger's flaw both on himself and on other characters had been shown before, there is a particular character whose conflicts are more deeply explored than the stranger. It is Adam Price, one of the stranger's victims who are told that his wife had faked her pregnancy. The secret delivered by the stranger has a big impact on his marriage life. In order to reach the significance of the conflicts faced by Adam, this section is focused on two issues: Adam's conflict with other characters and Adam's inner conflict, in which both of them are started by the stranger's appearance.

1) Adam's conflicts with other characters

a) Adam's conflict with the stranger

Adam's conflict with the stranger started since the beginning of the story in which the stranger approaches Adam in American Legion Hall, telling him about Adam's wife who faked her pregnancy.

"I'm the stranger," he said. "The stranger with important knowledge. She lied to you, Adam. Corinne. She was never pregnant. It was all a ruse to get you back." (Coben, 2015: 10)

The stranger not only tells Corinne's fake pregnancy, but also provokes Adam to leave her. The stranger says that Adam had been fooled. Adam is told that Corinne did that in order to keep Adam on her side. Since it is convincing to Adam, he starts to ask about the stranger and his motive in telling him the secret. However, Adam cannot accept any single information about it.

Adam had realized that he could no longer afford to sit back and wait for Corinne's return. There were enough lies and deception to go around, he thought, but whatever it was that had gone terribly wrong in the past few days had started here, at the American Legion Hall, when the stranger told him about that damned website (Coben, 2015: 119).

The fake pregnancy told by the stranger not only makes Adam doubts his wife, but also brings Adam's marriage life into despair. Adam is told to check his visa and Novelty Funsy by the stranger to find the truth about the fake pregnancy. It is then proven true that Adam's wife had paid an amount of money to Novelty Funsy for the fake pregnancy test, fake silicon belly, and fake sonograms. Worse than that, Adam's wife is missing after being confronted to speak about the fake pregnancy. The passage above shows that Adam is frustrated to think about his wife's absence. He puts the stranger as the one to blame. He thinks that his marriage life is ruined because of the stranger.

b) Adam's conflict with Corinne (Adam's wife)

In the previous section, it is explained that Adam is devastated to think about Corinne's fake pregnancy. He is not ready to ask her about the truth. However, after passing through the doubt and thinking that he cannot leave her, he finally asks it.

He knew everything about her.

There had been, he thought, no surprises. He even knew her well enough to know that what the stranger had alleged was indeed possible. Yet he hadn't seen this. He hadn't realized that Corinne could read him too, that she had known, despite his best effort to hide it, that something serious had upset him, that it wasn't just a normal thing, that it was something big and maybe life-altering.

Corinne stood there and waited for the blow. So he delivered it.

"Did you fake your pregnancy?" (Coben, 2015: 43)

The passage above shows that besides the fact that Adam loved Corinne so much so it is hard for him to leave, Adam himself cannot hide his jumbled feeling from her. He admits that he is disappointed, but it is killing him more if he does not make her speak about the fake pregnancy. He needs to hear it from her side.

He knew the truth, didn't he? Did he really have to wait for her to confirm that she'd faked a pregnancy and a miscarriage? If she hadn't, he would have heard the denials by now. She was stalling—perhaps to come up with a reasonable rationale or perhaps to give him time to calm down and consider his alternatives (Coben, 2015: 53-54).

However, Adam is getting paranoid. The facts he gets from his visa and the website have broken his trust. He can no longer believe Corinne as he did before.

She stepped close to him. "I can't tell you what you want to know yet."
He almost punched her. He almost reared back his fist and . . . "What's your strategy here, Corinne?"
"What's yours?"
"Huh?"
"What's your worst-case scenario?" she asked. "Think about it. And if it's true, are you going to leave us?"
"Us?"
"You know what I mean."
It took a second for him to get the words out. "I can't live with someone I can't trust," he said.
She tilted her head. "And you don't trust me?"
He said nothing.
"We all have our secrets, don't we? Even you, Adam."
"I've never kept anything like this from you. But clearly, I have my answer."
"No, you don't." She moved close to him and looked up into his eyes. "You will soon. I promise." (Coben, 2015: 55).

Adam's doubt is finally answered. Corinne admits that she faked her pregnancy. However, she does not explain about the reason. It makes him almost

lose his temper until he can no longer think straight about Corinne. He keeps being suspicious to her.

David brought back the wine. Corinne still wasn't there. David opened the bottle and poured two glasses. Corinne still wasn't there. At seven fifteen, Adam started to get that sinking feeling in his gut.

He texted Corinne. No answer. At seven thirty, Janice came over to him and asked if everything was okay. He assured her that it was, that Corinne was probably just caught up in some parent-teacher conference.

Adam stared at his phone, willing it to buzz. At 7:45 P.M., it did.

It was a text from Corinne:

MAYBE WE NEED SOME TIME APART. YOU TAKE CARE OF THE KIDS. DON'T TRY TO CONTACT ME. IT WILL BE OKAY.

Then:

JUST GIVE ME A FEW DAYS. PLEASE (Coben, 2015: 61).

Adam and Corinne make a promise to talk further about the fake pregnancy and how they will overcome the problem in their marriage. However, Corinne does not show up. Being worried, Adam sends her a text. She replies it, but it says that she needs to be away from Adam. She even asks him not to call her. However, it does not show any progress. She does not come home after several days. Thus, instead of being resolved, another case emerges. Adam is sure that Corinne is missing.

c) Adam's conflict with Tripp Evans

Tripp Evans is Corinne's co-worker in the lacrosse board. It seems like he does not have any specific relation to Adam's plot. In his first appearance, he is always described as the one who advises Adam about living the dream in Cedarfield—the town they are in. However, he starts to give a significance effect on Adam's life when he approaches Adam, telling that Corinne had stolen the lacrosse money.

“Come on, Adam. You used to be a prosecutor. I don’t think Corinne started out to steal. You know how it is. When you hear about the sweet old lady stealing from the church tithing or, heck, the sports board member embezzling, it isn’t like they set out to do it. You come in with the best of intentions, right? But it creeps up on you.”

“Not Corinne.”

“Not anybody. That’s what we always think. We’re always shocked, aren’t we?” (Coben, 2015: 129).

Tripp Evans tries to provoke Adam to believe that it is possible for Corinne to steal the money. However, Adam assumes that it is just an accusation that Tripp made.

“You got most of it right. I did take the money, but I had every intention of paying it back. I won’t go through the justification again. Corinne found out. I begged her not to say anything, that it would ruin my life. I was trying to buy time. But really, there was no way I could repay that money. Not yet. So yeah, I have a background in bookkeeping. I did it at my dad’s store for years. I started to change the books so the finger pointed more at her. Corinne didn’t know about it, of course. She actually listened to me and kept quiet. She didn’t even tell you, did she?”

“No,” Adam said. “She didn’t.” (Coben, 2015: 200).

Adam’s assumption about the lacrosse money is proven true. Corinne is innocent. Tripp Evans admits that he is the one who corrupted the money and he is caught up by Corinne. He says that he convinces her to keep it in secret as he will try to pay the money back. However, without her knowing, he takes the blame on her by manipulating the bookkeeping and spreading the rumour that she stole the money.

Tripp hadn't just killed her. He had stolen the diamond studs off her dead body (Coben, 2015: 200).

After listening to Tripp's confession about the lacrosse money, Adam asks for Corinne's current position. Adam is getting sure that Tripp Evans is related to Corinne's absence. However, Adam has to face the bitter truth that Corinne is murdered by Tripp Evans.

2) Adam's inner conflict

After being told about his wife's fake pregnancy by the stranger, Adam cannot see straight on his marriage life. He is not only told about the secret, but he is also provoked that he should check his boys.

Thomas looked like Adam. Everyone said so. He had the same walk, the same laugh, the same second toe bigger than the first toe. No way. No way he wasn't Adam's. Even though the stranger had said that. . Now you're listening to a stranger? (Coben, 2015: 18).

The passage above shows that Adam starts to doubt whether his boys are really his biological children even though he sees that both of them are almost physically similar to him. Worse than that, he starts to doubt his wife.

When the horn blew, ending the first quarter, Adam looked back toward his wife. She was chatting away with Becky, both women animated. He just stared for a moment, lost and scared. He knew Corinne so well. He knew everything about her. And paradoxically, because he knew her so well, he knew that what the stranger had told him had the echo of truth (Coben, 2015: 38).

The passage shows how much Adam is mentally affected by the news about his wife's fake pregnancy. He cannot believe that no matter how well he knows Corinne, he finds himself being fooled.

Because what could he do here? Was he ready to walk out the door? Was he ready to divorce her? He didn't know the answer. Adam stood over the bed and stared down at her. How did he feel about her? He told himself, right now, without thinking about it, answer this: If it was true, did he still love her and want to be with her for the rest of his life? His feelings were jumbled, but his gut reaction: Yes (Coben, 2015: 53-54).

In his every thought about Corinne, Adam is questioning himself whether he should get rid of the problem or should make her speak about it. Before asking the truth about the fake pregnancy, he is over thinking the consequence. He is the one who is not ready to leave. However, deep inside of him telling that later when the fake pregnancy is proven true, he decides to stay still with her.

Something about the texts was off, but he couldn't figure out what. Suppose Corinne was in real danger. He again wondered whether he should go to the police. Kristin Hoy had asked him about that right away, hadn't she? She asked him whether he had called the police if his wife was missing. Only she wasn't missing. She had sent that text. Unless she didn't send that text. His head started spinning (Coben, 2015: 72).

The passage above is taken after Adam receives a text from Corinne in the night when they promises to meet and talk about the life after the fake pregnancy secret is told. However, Corinne does not show up since that night. Adam is desperate to think about his wife who does not come home for several days. He is

confused to figure out whether she is really just away or is missing. He does not even dare to tell this to somebody else.

Confirming to himself that Corinne is missing, he tries to look for her through the fake pregnancy site which possibly gives him a clue. He starts from the stranger as he is the first one who delivers the news. Later when finally he meets the stranger, it is confessed by the stranger that he is hired by a third party. It is then found that the third party are Bob Baime and Tripp Evans. It is explained in the previous section about how Tripp Evans finally confesses about manipulating the bookkeeping to put the blame on Corinne and about the bitter truth that he had killed her. Right after hearing the confession, without having too much doubt within him, Adam shoots Tripp Evans to death.

He had killed a man. You don't get a free pass on something like that. It haunted him at night, robbed him of sleep. He understood that he had had no choice. As long as Tripp Evans was alive, he was a threat to Adam's family. And something primitive in him even took satisfaction in what he'd done, in avenging his wife, in protecting his boys (Coben, 2015: 204).

The passage above shows how much Adam indeed feels guilty for killing Tripp Evans. He cannot even sleep well, both because of thinking about Corinne's tragic death and taking a revenge for it. However, he feels that he will be guiltier if he lets Tripp Evans to laugh over his family after what he had done to him. It is evil, but he is agreeing Tripp Evan's attempt that he will do anything, even killing people, as long as his family are safe.

It had been mentioned that the discussion on the conventions of noir thriller in Harlan Coben's *The Stranger* is focused on two main influential plots, the

stranger's plot and Adam Price's plot. Moreover, in the discussion about focusing on the character's conflict, it can be seen that it concerns more about Adam Price's plot. It creates an interesting point for the novel that it is possible to put Adam Price as the protagonist. It can be supported by his development, that at the end he ends up being a murderer for the sake of revenge. If it has not been strong enough to support that he is qualified as being flawed protagonist, it can be taken from the complexity of conflicts he faced. According to Michael Walker (Simpson and Rzepka and Horsley, 2010: 190), one of the typical conflicts which is presented in noir thriller is the protagonist who is being trapped in an unexpected and uncontrollable despair. Both his own actions and other characters' are only meant to keep bringing him down. Thus, it can be seen from the discussion that there is no action which leads Adam's life into happiness. He always puts himself into doubt and guilty in facing the obstacles. He cannot even see straight to his life after knowing the secret of his wife's fake pregnancy. On other hand, his attempts to find the stranger and his wife only brought him into bitter and worse conditions, such as his wife's death and Tripp Evan's murder as his revenge.

In order to make it stronger that Adam Price can also be regarded as the protagonist in Harlan Coben's *The Stranger*, it is important to look at the identification of the suspense-based plot below.

c. **Employing the Suspense-Based Plot**

Suspense-based plot in noir thriller means that the characters' series of actions in facing the inevitable despair should be presented. In addition, the obstacles faced are getting complicated in each scene. In Harlan Coben's *The Stranger*, Adam Price is the character whose struggle in overcoming the problems is deeply explored. He brings the readers into bewilderment to bewilderment, until the problems are resolved (Glover in Priestman, 2003: 136). In addition, to create a suspense-based plot, some devices are added. It is found that the novel employed these plot devices:

1) **Mystery**

Mystery sets the story's goal. It is one or more extraordinary states that arises the readers' curiosity to look for the explanation in the story. It is more like problems that should be resolved by the characters. In Harlan Coben's *The Stranger*, the mystery is put since the very beginning from the story and along with the introductory passages of the characters and the setting. The first paragraph concerns about showing Adam's surprise of being approached by the stranger who tells about Corinne's fake pregnancy.

Adam chewed on his lower lip. He didn't get it. A stranger comes up to him and tells him that his wife lied to him—elaborately, it seems—about being pregnant. Who was he? Why would he do it? Okay, forget those two questions for now and let's get to the one that matters most: Is it true? (Coben, 2015: 21)

The passage above implies that there is no further description given about the stranger. It leaves the question to Adam and the readers in figuring out who the

stranger is for being out of nowhere telling that Corinne had faked her pregnancy. From the passage, it is also taken that there are two main problems that should be resolved: the stranger's identity and the truth about Corinne's fake pregnancy as told by the stranger.

Adam sent several desperate texts to try to get Corinne to reply. They included: "this isn't the way to handle this," "please call me," "where are you," "how many days," "how can you do this to us"—stuff like that. He tried nice, mean, calm, angry.

But there was no reaction (Coben, 2015: 62).

It is an interesting part of the novel for treating the readers the same as Adam—the character who pursued the goals of the story, by giving equal information. It creates more plausible plot since the readers should tag along Adam's every single actions. The passage above is Adam's first attempt to solve the problems. However, in the middle of his discussion with Corinne, she immediately leaves. Corinne does not even show up in their dinner time. She only sends him a text saying that she needs time to be away from him without any further explanation. She even asks him to not worry. However, she does not come home after several days. Since she does not give any answers, Adam gets into more curiosity and suspicion that she is giving another denial of her fake pregnancy.

Why? If she'd been blackmailed, wouldn't she have at least suspected that the stranger would tell Adam?

She had also reacted by, what, running away? Did that make sense? She had run so quickly and haphazardly, barely contacting him and the school and, most surprising of all, just leaving the boys in the lurch.

That wasn't Corinne.
Something else was going on here (Coben, 2015: 107).

Adam tries to gain any information about Corinne through Suzanne Hope, Corinne's friend who introduced her fake pregnancy site. From the site, Adam finds the correlation between Corinne's and Suzanne Hope's case. Both of them are caught up by the stranger for accessing the site and having transaction for the fake pregnancy stuff. Adam assumed that they both are blackmailed, but this clue is still confusing for Adam and blurred for the readers to decide who should be accessed later regarding to Corinne's absence. Adam gives this scene a tension by being not sure that Corinne will be that easy to believe in a stranger. It is also emphasized by Adam's feeling upon Corinne by regarding that she is not that kind of woman who will run away from the problem. Even though Adam is not really sure, he is being open for the possibility that Corinne's absence is related to the stranger. He comes into conclusion that it is important to find the stranger first, as he possibly knows about Corinne's recent position.

2) Dilemma

The most significant dilemma in the story is faced by Adam as he is the character who resolves the two main problems. His decisions are also strongly influential to his next steps. It either enlightens him or brings him into despair.

He knew everything about her.
There had been, he thought, no surprises. He even knew her well enough to know that what the stranger had alleged was indeed possible. Yet he hadn't seen this. He hadn't realized that Corinne could read him too, that she had known, despite his best effort to hide it, that something serious had upset him,

that it wasn't just a normal thing, that it was something big and maybe life-altering.

Corinne stood there and waited for the blow. So he delivered it.

"Did you fake your pregnancy?" (Coben, 2015: 43).

The passage above shows that besides the fact that Adam loves Corinne so much so it is hard for him to leave, Adam himself cannot hide his jumbled feeling. He admits that he is disappointed, but it is killing him more if he does not make her speak about the fake pregnancy. He needs to hear it from her side. However, he finally delivers the question to Corinne. As the consequences, he ends up confronting Corinne as she keeps making excuses instead of admitting that she had faked her pregnancy. The next day after being confronted, she leaves home. Even though the dilemma had brought the truth that Corinne admitted the fake pregnancy, it brought Adam into an extended mystery. He has to find where she goes.

3) **Cliff-hanger**

As the mysteries faced by Adam are getting complicated, there is more hanging information found in the plot as well.

She looked up into his eyes. "How did you find out, Adam?"

"It doesn't matter."

"You have no idea how much it matters," she said in a soft voice. "Who told you to look at the charge on the Visa bill?"

"A stranger," he said.

She took a step back. "Who?"

"I don't know. Some guy. I'd never seen him before. He came up to me at the American Legion and told me what you'd done."

She shook her head as though trying to clear it. "I don't understand. What guy?"

"I just told you. A stranger." (Coben, 2015: 52).

The passage above shows that the story employs what a cliff-hanger intends to. The story leaves the end of each chapter with hanging information which makes the readers want to dig in more about the events. The passage above concludes chapter 8 where Corinne and Adam argues about the fake pregnancy and the stranger whose the identity is not known by both of them. In the conversation, Adam expects that besides admitting the fake pregnancy, he can figure out the stranger's motive from Corinne's confession. However, Corinne's reaction is quite surprising as she does not have any memory about the stranger. Thus, in order to find the real identity of the stranger, the readers should go on with the plot, together with Adam's next unpredictable attempts.

"It isn't what you think, Adam. There's more to this."

That was what Corinne said, but he couldn't imagine what. He slipped under the covers and closed his eyes for a moment (Coben, 2015: 54).

The passage concludes chapter 10 where Adam is having a clash with his own self for trying to figure out about Corinne's confession. Reacting to Adam's confrontation, Corinne gives her best shot by saying that there are more reasons than just faking her pregnancy for an attention. It is also important to look at her statement which is written in italic. The statement implies that there is important information that should be anticipated by both Adam and the readers. It will be found along with the plot.

"Can you cut the crap and tell me why you're all so anxious to find my wife?"

Len looked over at the three monkeys on the couch. Bob's face was set in stone. Cal was busy cleaning his glasses. That left it up to Tripp Evans. Tripp cleared his throat and said, "There seems to be some discrepancies with the lacrosse financials."

Boom.

Or maybe the opposite of boom. The house grew even quieter. Adam was sure that he could actually hear his own heart beating in his chest. He found the seat behind him and lowered himself onto it.

"What are you talking about?"

But of course, he already knew, didn't he?

Bob now found his voice. "What do you think we're talking about?" he half snapped. "There's money missing from the account."

Cal nodded, just to do something.

"And you think . . . ?" Adam didn't finish the thought. First off, it was obvious what they thought. Two, it would not do to even voice such a ridiculous accusation (Coben, 2015: 113).

It is the conversation between Adam and some people from lacrosse board where Corinne worked. They deliver the news that Corinne is found corrupting the lacrosse board money. It is another surprise for both Adam the readers since it is the first context telling about Corinne's bad reputation in lacrosse board. In the last sentence, Adam makes a conclusion that it is an accusation. However, it is not information which distracts the readers from the main problems. It is quite noticeable that the news is also the next clue which leads Adam to find Corinne.

On the other hand, when it comes to Adam's attempts to break the mystery about the stranger, the readers are introduced to the characters that Adam thinks have relation to Corinne's fake pregnancy. Starting from Suzanne Hope, he gets an information that she is approached by the stranger because of the same fake pregnancy site that Corinne accessed. From the site, Adam finds Gabrielle Dunbar whose facebook page shows him that she knows the stranger.

Gabrielle Dunbar stood alone in the clearing. She was staring right at him. He felt the rage build up inside him. He took a step closer, expecting her to run off or say something. She didn't. She just stood there and watched him.

"Where's my wife?" he shouted.

Gabrielle kept staring.

Adam took another step into the clearing. "I said—"

Something smacked him so hard in the back of the head that Adam could actually feel his brain jarring loose from its moorings. He dropped to his knees, seeing stars. Working on pure instinct, Adam somehow managed to turn and look up. A baseball bat was coming down on the top of his skull like an axe. He tried to duck or turn away or at least lift a protective arm.

But it was much too late.

The bat landed with a dull thud, and everything went dark (Coben, 2015: 176).

When Adam visits Gabrielle Dunbar, he constantly asks about the stranger, but Gabrielle does not tell him that she knows the stranger. Being upset, Adam decides to directly ask about Corinne. However, in the middle of his confrontation, Adam is fainted because of being hit by someone. The passage concludes chapter 48, the scene between Adam and Gabrielle Dunbar. Since the readers need to have further information about Adam's investigation on Gabrielle—whether it will be successful or not, the passage shows the significance of cliff-hanger since it leaves the readers unsure about Adam's condition after being hit. It leads the readers to keep moving to the next chapters.

4) Surprised Ending

Besides giving clues that lead the readers into a single bewilderment to other bewilderments, Harlan Coben's *The Stranger* also put the twisted ending as the final of the suspense-based plot.

"Did you steal the money, Bob?"

“No. But who’d believe me? And then Tripp confided in me what Corinne was doing—that she was trying to pin the whole thing on me.”

And then the niggling in Adam’s brain stopped.

The boys . . .

Adam’s throat went dry. “Tripp?”

“Yeah.”

“Tripp said Corinne was trying to pin it on you?”

“Right. He said we needed something, that’s all.” (Coben, 2015: 194).

It is the final answer for Adam’s attempts to find the truth about Corinne’s fake pregnancy and Corinne’s position for suddenly missing. In the end, it is all clear for Adam that it is really more than just a fake pregnancy. His life might be ruined because of the secret. However, it opens up another bitter truth. His life is actually threatened by someone who is unexpectedly close to him. They are Bob Baime and Tripp Evans.

“So I went to Bob and Cal and then, with great pretend regret, Len. I told all of them Corinne had stolen the lacrosse funds. Strangely enough, Bob was the one who didn’t really buy it. So I told him that when I confronted Corinne, she said it was him.”

“And then Bob went to his cousin.”

“I didn’t count on that.”

“Where is Corinne now?”

“You’re standing right where I buried her.”

Just like that (Coben, 2015: 200).

The suspense continues as Adam tries to have Tripp’s own confession. It is then admitted that Tripp made the accusation to cover up his sins. He was the one who stole the money and manipulated the fact by taking the blame on Corinne. However, Tripp’s confession does not satisfy Adam at all since he faced another bitter truth, that after being frustrated of looking for Corinne, he found Corinne was dead.

Besides Corinne's unexpected death, another surprise in the ending is shown through Adam's revenge.

"And one more thing," Tripp said.

Adam looked up at him.

"If you ever go near my family or threaten them," he said, "well, I've already shown you what I will do."

"Yes, you have."

And then Adam lifted the gun, aimed it at the centre of Tripp's chest, and squeezed the trigger three times (Coben, 2015: 202).

It is the best surprise among the plot in this story, since there is no any anticipation upon Adam's final act that can be read by the readers—by the fact that Adam is always put as the victim. After all, those two last passages above show the significance of suspense-based plot by how one surprise into other surprises are put in each character's attempts in order to break the mysteries in the story.

Moreover, in order to keep the plausibility of the plot, the surprise ending in the novel is supported by the clues hidden which indicate to the readers that Tripp Evans is the right person to blame besides the stranger. The clues also show that Tripp Evan's confession is not a sudden case emerged to merely solve the conflicts. Even though they are not really significant in creating suspense and even putting a little bit predictability in the plot, they are important as well to avoid the readers' disappointment.

But more important, especially now that he thought about it: How did Adam recover so quickly from the devastating news that he had received just minutes earlier at the American Legion bar?

Jerry still talked. Bob still smiled. Smiled and smiled. Smiled like an idiot, and when he finally said,

“Well, I appreciate you calling me and letting me know,” Bob bet that he sounded like a truly confident idiot.

He hung up.

“Bob, you ready?”

“Come on, man, we need you.”

And they did. Maybe, Bob thought that was what the other night had been with Adam. In the same way Bob would go back on the court and find an outlet for his rage, maybe Adam had attacked him for picking Jimmy because he, too, needed the outlet.

What, Bob wondered, would be Adam’s reaction if he knew the full truth about his wife? Not the betrayal stuff he thought he knew now. But the full truth. Well, Bob thought as he jogged back toward the court, he’d find out soon enough, wouldn’t he? (Coben, 2015: 96)

The most significant clue is shown on the scene which presents Bob Baime, the lacrosse’s coach and Corinne’s working partner in lacrosse board. The scene shows Bob’s insecurity as he thinks about Adam. It has not been mentioned before that there is anybody else knowing about the stranger’s visit to Adam. However, in this scene, Bob Baime admits that he expects something to happen after the stranger’s operation to Adam. Thus, it implies that Bob Baime knows something about the stranger, Corinne’s secret, and something about the full truth which cannot be traced. Yet it does not really give any directions to the readers to suspect anybody else than the stranger.

Another significant clue implying the involvement of third party is also shown in the scene performing the stranger’s (whom later known as Chris Taylor) perspective in perceiving about his operation to Adam.

Chris Taylor read the message and wondered yet again how and where this had all gone wrong. The Price job had been for hire. That might have been the

mistake, though in most ways, the jobs for hire—and there had been only a handful—were the safest. The payments came from an emotionless third party, a top-level investigation firm. (Coben, 2015: 168)

The passage gives a strong clue that the stranger is not merely the one who should be responsible for Adam's ruined life. Even though the story's goals are finding the stranger's real identity and finding the truth about Corinne's fake pregnancy, the passage explains that there is something beyond as also told by Corinne. It is about the fact that Corinne knows about the person who steals the lacrosse money and she is threatened by the person because of it. Even though the third party is not traced yet, the passage is supposed to give a clearer clue for the readers to relate it to Bob Baime's scene mentioned before.

A significant clue also comes from Adam's attempt to trace Corinne's last calls right before her absence. To be Adam surprise, he finds Tripp Evan's phone number in Corinne's. Tripp Evans and Corinne talked on the phone, right in the morning before she is gone.

Tripp placed his hands on the sticky table. "You want to tell me what's going on?"

"My wife called you."

"How do you know this?"

"I checked the phone records."

"You checked . . ." Tripp's eyebrows jumped up a bit at that. "Are you serious?"

"Why did she call you?"

"Why do you think?" Tripp countered.

"Was it about this whole stolen-money thing?"

"Of course it was about this stolen-money thing. What else would it be?"

Tripp waited for a reply. Adam didn't give him one.

"So what did she say to you?"

The waitress came by, dropping the coffees with a thud that caused some to splash onto the saucer.

“She said that she needed more time. I told her I’d stalled long enough.”
(Coben, 2015: 128)

After having the record, Adam looks for Tripp Evan’s confirmation. It supposed to be Adam who gets surprised for Tripp Evan’s explanation, but it is Tripp Evans who looks surprised even more, right after knowing that Adam has gone too far by tracking Corinne’s phone records. Tripp Evans admits that the call is about Corinne who needs more time to pay back the lacrosse money, but it gives Adam more suspicion since he still believes that it is just an accusation. Besides being the one who tells the accusation, Tripp Evans is also the one who keeps persuading Adam that Corinne is not as good as they always think. However, it is difficult enough to put the suspicion to him.

The difficult thing to put the passage above as the significant clue for the readers to suspect Tripp Evans as the third party, by the fact that it is only Bob Baime’s and the stranger’s perspective performed, is that Tripp Evans admits his bad attempts by the end of the story. Yet it also makes the surprise ending as there is no noticeable expression showing Tripp Evan’s guilty in his every scene. His actions are described in a strong plausible way so that it is in the end, the readers can find that his statements are mostly lies.

After all, finding who the criminal is in the novel is not the significance of noir thriller. Noir thriller is interested in exploring the characters’ conflicts and the attempts to overcome the threat. The works of thriller in general even let the readers know the criminal. In addition, it is intended to differentiate the works from detective fictions which concerns about the story of investigation.

d. Revealing the Critique of Socio-Political Milieu

The characters in Harlan Coben's *The Stranger* lived in Cedarfield, the town which had its best for the people to afford their American Dream. The good life in Cedarfield is presented through the wealthy people who love to hang around the American Legion Hall. It is also a particular thing to be proud of if the people can afford their children to be in the town's school's lacrosse team, such as Adam's son. However, the story shows that no matter how hard the people have to work for their dreams, they are always biased, both by the money and by the desire of always being under the spotlight. The dreams are not as beautiful as it seems. This section is distinguished into three parts based on the kinds of critique presented, such as the critique of hypocrisy and cynicism.

1) Critique of Hypocrisy

Hypocrisy is the state when someone pretends to believe something that he/she does not really believe or when he/she showing an attitude which contrasts to what had been said other times (*Cambridge Advance Learner's Dictionary*).

They were in the American Legion Hall in Cedarfield, New Jersey. Cedarfield was a town loaded up with wealthy hedge fund managers and bankers and other financial masters-of-the-universe types. They liked to drink beer in the American Legion Hall because it was comfortable slumming, a way to pretend that they were salt-of-the-earth good ol' boys, like something in a Dodge Ram commercial, when they were anything but (Coben, 2015: 9).

Cedarfield, the setting of the story, is at first admitted as the promising city to live with a strong financial state, but it does not merely make it the good place to run the living. American Legion Hall, for example, represented the people's

hypocrisy. They follow the lifestyle (drinking beer in the building) to show that they are able to fit in the society instead of willing to enjoy it.

“Look around you, my friend.” Tripp spread his arms. “This town, these schools, these programs, these kids, these families—I sometimes sit back and can’t believe how lucky we all are. We’re living the dream, you know.” (Coben, 2015: 15).

The passage is another example of how the people in Cedarfield have much effort to be socially accepted. Tripp Evans captures the life around him as fulfilling the American Dream. However, as he states that he and Adam are lucky, it shows that the dream in the context is not about running the life as they want to be in. It is more being able to fit into the society’s steady and arranged standard. It is supported by the fact that it is a prestige when the kids are the part of the school’s lacrosse team so that the parents could come to the game and praise how great their kids were.

“Some women love being pregnant. Not because of the hormonal rush or because they have a baby growing inside of them. Their reasons are much more base. It is the one time in their life they feel special. People hold doors for them. People ask them about their day. They ask them when they’re due and how they’re feeling. In short, they get attention. It’s a little like being famous. Suzanne was nothing special to look at. She didn’t strike me as being particularly smart or interesting. Being pregnant made her feel like a celebrity. It was like a drug.” (Coben, 2015: 51).

Faking pregnancy is the main issue in the story which is destructive for some characters as they are found living the lie. The dialogues above take place when Adam confronts her wife to ask what her reason to fake her pregnancy is.

Surprisingly, it is not merely to gain Adam's attention or tighten her marital bound, but it is more her pleasure in being approved in social circle even though she knows that her attempt is wrong. She also tries to criticize Suzanne's intention for keeping the lie and making the wrong into right just because she wants to stay under the spotlight.

But Adam could feel his body start to quake from the truth. "We're living the dream, right? Isn't that what you always say, Tripp? How lucky we all are, how thankful we should be. You married Becky, your high school sweetheart. You have five wonderful kids. You'd do anything to protect them, wouldn't you? What would happen to your precious dream if it got out that you're nothing but a thief?" (Coben, 2015: 197).

The passage shows the strongest notion about hypocrisy represented in the story. It is when Adam finally finds that Tripp Evans is the root of his ruined life. In the beginning of the story, Tripp Evans always puts himself as an innocent man by delivering an advice about living the dream and how fragile the dream is. He is also the one who told Adam that they should be thankful for the life they could afford in Cedarfield. However, it is found that it is his entire attempt to cover his sins.

2) Cynicism

Cynicism is an attitude of perceiving that the people are only interested in themselves and are not sincere (*Cambridge Advance Learner's Dictionary*). Basically, cynicism is a person's negative perspective upon something. Influenced by the tendency of fulfilling the dreams which were based on the social agreement

rather than personal standard, the characters in Harlan Coben's *The Stranger* easily judge others' attempts even though they do not really know them.

"It's perspective, Adam." Tripp smiled at him. He took off his cap, smoothed down the receding wisps of hair, put it back on his head. "We humans can't see straight. We are always biased. We always protect our own interests."

"One thing I notice about all those examples . . .," Adam said.

"What?"

"Money."

"It's the root of all evil, my friend." (Coben, 2015: 16).

The conversation takes place when Adam is so curious of why Bob Baime wants Jimmy Hoch so bad to be in the lacrosse team even though his score does not let him. It is such a surprise for Adam that Bob Baime does it because Jimmy's father helps him to find a new job. Tripp Evans makes it clear for Adam about the fact that Bob, and even other people, have been manipulated by money. He tries to criticize that the life now is about impression. People are nowadays measuring the people's existence through the things they have rather than how they behave. It then influences Adam in perceiving Bob Baime. In the story, it is narrated about how much Adam does not really respect him even though he is the lacrosse team's coach.

The world doesn't give even the slightest damn about us or our petty problems. We never quite get that, do we? Our lives have been shattered—shouldn't the rest of us take notice? But no. To the outside world, Adam looked the same, acted the same, felt the same. We get mad at someone for cutting us off in traffic or for taking too long to order at Starbucks or for not responding exactly as we see fit, and we have no idea that behind their facade, they may be dealing with some industrial-strength shit. Their lives may be in pieces. They may be in the midst of incalculable tragedy and

turmoil, and they may be hanging on to their sanity by a thread. But we don't care. We don't see. We just keep pushing (Coben, 2015: 32).

The passage shows Adam's feeling when his problem is getting complex but nobody helps him. In the past, he had to struggle hard after his father had died, but he found nobody who really cares about it. This left him a bad impression upon people. He always thinks that they are not sincere and even takes the blame upon their actions. He knows that no matter how hard it may take; the people will only notice that he can fit into them even though it means faking it. The people will keep moving on and trying to fulfil the dreams (career and family goals).

e. Using the Subjective Point of View

Using subjective point of view is a considerable matter in order to support the significance of noir thriller. It either employs the first person point of view or the third person of view. As the use of point of view in the novel is important to support the conventions of noir thriller to work, it will be further discussed in the next section.

2. The Convention of Point of View in Harlan Coben's Noir Thriller *The Stranger*

Among the two ways of using subjective point of view which are typically used in the works of noir thriller, the first person point of view and the third person point of view, Harlan Coben's *The Stranger* employs the second one. Using the third person point of view means that the narrator of the novel does not

take part in the story, but the readers are able to access the characters' feeling and thought through the outside voice.

The guy was younger than most of the fathers, thinner, almost gaunt, with big, piercing blue eyes. His arms were white and reedy with a hint of a tattoo showing beneath one of the short sleeves. He was wearing a baseball cap. He wasn't quite a hipster, but there was something of a wonk attitude coming off him, like some guy who ran a tech department and never saw the sun. The piercing blue eyes held Adam's with an earnestness that made him want to turn away. "She told you she was pregnant, right?" Adam felt his grip on the bottle tighten. (Coben, 2015: 9)

The passage above shows that there are two characters who participate in the scene, the stranger and Adam. From the passage, the readers can access both the stranger's physical appearance and Adam's feeling upon the stranger. However, none of them are delivered through the mind of a particular character in the story. The scene is narrated through an outside voice which can move its focus from one character to other characters. The significance of the third point of view in the novel is further explained through the use of limited and objective third person point of view.

a. Third Person Limited

Harlan Coben's *The Stranger* is narrated through a different focus. The most perceived perspective is Adam's as his thought, feeling, and action are strongly influential for the plot. He is also the one who pursues the story's goals, those are finding the stranger's real identity and his motive, and finding the mystery about Corinne's absence.

For the first time, the man smiled. It was, Adam couldn't help but notice, a kind smile, the smile of a healer, of a man who just wants to do the right thing. (Coben, 2015: 10)

It is the first scene between Adam and the stranger. It shows that the point of view is limited only on Adam's perspective. On the other hand, the readers cannot access the stranger's thought about Adam and about the fake pregnancy news. The readers will only know the stranger's action through Adam's opinion about him. The limited point of view in the context above also aims to create the mystery upon the stranger's real identity.

After being approached by the stranger who delivers the news that Corinne had faked her pregnancy, Adam is getting provoked. He starts to have mixed feelings whenever he thought about her.

Now she only took them off at night and to swim because she worried the chlorine might eat away at the setting. Her other earrings sat untouched in that small jewellery box in her closet, as if wearing them in lieu of the diamond studs would be some kind of betrayal. They meant something to her. They meant commitment and love and honor and, really, was that the kind of woman who would fake a pregnancy?

Corinne had her eyes on the field. The ball was down at the offensive end, where Thomas played. He could feel her stiffen whenever the ball came anywhere near their son. (Coben, 2015: 36)

In the beginning of the passage, it is possibly to be misunderstood that the narration about Corinne's earrings is presented in omniscient way as the narrator can access the past experience which follows the scene. However, the past experience is actually delivered through Adam's memory instead of Corinne's. The last sentence of the passage is the strongest proof that the passage is accessed

through what Adam thought about Corinne. In addition, the big influence of Adam's perspective is found in the scene where he has a conversation with Corinne about the fake pregnancy.

“She said that she really lives in Nyack, New York.”

That was about thirty minutes from both Bookends and that Starbucks, Adam figured.

“She told me a story about having a stillborn. I don't think it's true, but it could be. But in many ways, Suzanne's story is simpler. Some women love being pregnant. Not because of the hormonal rush or because they have a baby growing inside of them. Their reasons are much more base. It is the one time in their life they feel special. People hold doors for them. People ask them about their day. They ask them when they're due and how they're feeling. In short, they get attention. It's a little like being famous. Suzanne was nothing special to look at. She didn't strike me as being particularly smart or interesting. Being pregnant made her feel like a celebrity. It was like a drug.” (Coben, 2015: 51)

The context of the passage above is Adam's attempt to investigate the truth from Corinne. The dialogues mostly show Corinne's confession about the fake pregnancy. It gives the scene a tension as if the confession is delivered through the first person point of view. However, it cannot be said that the passage is subjectively perceived from Corinne's point of view as her internal emotion is not shown in the form of narration. It is still an event which is seen from Adam's perspective by the way he implies information during her explanation. In addition, after the conversation, the narration does not focus on each other feelings'. It focuses back on Adam's personal thought and feeling.

What could he do?

Corinne simply shut down. Later, alone in their bedroom, he tried anger, pleading, demanding, threats. He used words of love, ridicule, shame, pride. She wouldn't respond. It was so frustrating. (Coben, 2015: 54)

The passage shows that Adam's thought and feeling are much focused than other characters. The repetition of adjectives shows that his perspective becomes ironic. It fits to noir thriller's goal in presenting an inevitable despair faced by the character.

Besides presenting Adam's perspective, the third person limited also focuses on several other characters, they are the stranger and his victims.

The stranger had given Heidi the link to FindYourSugarBaby.com as well as her daughter's user ID and password. With a heavy heart, Heidi signed in as Kimberly and found out all she needed to confirm that everything the stranger had told her was true. (Coben, 2015: 67)

The passage above is the second scene performing the stranger and Heidi Dann. It came to the truth that she is his next target (after Adam Price). Besides showing Heidi's reaction upon the news delivered by the stranger, the passage also shows that the stranger's operation is delivered through Heidi's perspective so that the readers do not have any idea about how the stranger feels about her.

Okay, she thought, what do I do about this?
Heidi's first decision was almost the simplest: Don't tell Marty. She didn't like to keep secrets from her husband, but then again, she didn't hate it either. It was part of life, wasn't it?

As the stories goes by, the passage shows more about Heidi's both mental and physical reactions upon the stranger's operation.

Dan faced the stranger straight-on now. Screw this guy. This was one of the greatest moments—maybe the greatest—of Dan's life and he'd be damned if he'd let some dork get in that way. "Do I know you?" (Coben, 2015: 117)

The passage shows the dialogues between the stranger and another victim. The point of view used is limited on the victim's side (Dan Molino) in order to show how much the victim is shocked and affected by the stranger's actions. Besides putting the irony on the victim, it strengthens the stranger's characterization in being the public enemy.

The stranger hated to do this one.
But Michaela Siegel, who was now weaving her way into view, deserved to know the truth before she made a terrible mistake. The stranger thought about Adam Price. He thought about Heidi Dann. They may have been devastated by his visit, but this time, in the case of Michaela Siegel, it would be much, much worse. (Coben, 2015: 79)

After some scenes which do not involve his perspective, this passage shows how the stranger thinks about his operation. His personal feeling is finally revealed. This passage helps the readers to collect the information in order to figure out who the stranger and what his motivation is. Presenting the stranger's point of view delivers a notion that there is something important to tell to the readers without the other characters' knowing as the scene is only focused on the stranger's action.

Chris. It was almost odd to hear someone speak his name. The past few weeks, he'd been anonymous, the stranger, and no one called him by name. Even with Ingrid, the protocol had been clear: No names. Anonymous. There was irony in that, of course. The people he approached had assumed and craved anonymity, not realizing that in truth, it didn't exist for them. For Chris—for the stranger—it did. (Coben, 2015: 139)

The passage narrates the stranger's personal feeling upon his operation through an outside voice instead of confessional. Same as Adam's case, in this passage, his point of view is ironic as he is having a clash with the protocol used in the operation.

After all, the great thing in using the third person point of view in this novel is that the focus of narration can keep shifting. Even though it is not in the form of confession—by referring the narrator as an outside voice instead of 'I', the passages above show that third person point of view has an authority to access feeling and thought. However, it depends on the character that is being focused. Thus, it is possible for the story to have different focuses in each chapter. Using the limited point of view can avoid head-hopping as if the narrator spills out the whole information to the readers. In addition, the key points of the story are fragmented to support the suspense-based plot as each character's perspective is influential to the story's goals.

b. Third Person Objective

In this section, the third person objective means that narrator acts like a camera in which it only perceives the events through the characters' physical movements and what actually happened in the scene.

The stranger sat at a corner table at the Red Lobster in Beachwood, Ohio, just outside of Cleveland. He nursed his Red Lobster “specialty cocktail,” a mango mai tai. His garlic shrimp scampi had started to congeal into something resembling tile caulk. The waiter had tried to take it from him twice, but the stranger had shooed him away. Ingrid sat across the table. She sighed and checked her watch. (Coben, 2015: 44)

The passage above explains right exactly like what actually happened, describing the participants and the setting of the scene without an elaboration about the characters’ mind as there is no words explaining about emotion. The significance of using third person objective point of view in this passage is showing the characterization of the stranger. The readers are being left wondering about what the stranger’s next attempt will be.

Tripp shrugged and walked past him. Adam kept the gun on him, trying hard to not even blink. Tripp pierced the dirt with the shovel, scooped up the dirt, tossed it to the side.

“Tell me the rest of it,” Adam said.

“You know the rest of it, don’t you? After you confronted her about faking the pregnancy, Corinne was furious. She’d had enough. She was going to tell what I’d done. So I told her, okay, fair enough, I’ll come forward. I said, let’s just meet at lunchtime and go over it, so we’re on the same page. She was reluctant, but hey, I can be persuasive.”

The shovel dug into the earth again. Then again.

“Where did you meet?” Adam asked. (Coben: 2015, 200)

It is unusual to present a scene in which Adam Price takes part in an objective way. Most of his scenes are limited on his focus. This passage used the objective point of view to be more neutral. It is because Tripp Evans is the most surprising character who is responsible for Adam’s conflict. Thus, the both Adam and the readers, who are both curious about the truth of Corinne’s absence, are taken as the witness upon Tripp Evans’s confession. The writer can only deliver what is

going on in the scene, as well as presenting the direct speech of the characters which takes part in the scene in order to heighten the suspense by making the readers (and Adam himself) surprised to find out that Corinne is murdered by Tripp Evans.

Moreover, the significance of using third person objective point of view in Harlan Coben's *The Stranger* is that it is important to deliver more surprises to the readers as they cannot anticipate the plot from the characters' actions.

Even though it is not really significant, the novel also employs a third person omniscient point of view in order to deliver important information which can only be accessed by the readers.

The stranger, whose real name was Chris Taylor, nodded. Chris was the founder of this movement, even if this was Eduardo's garage. Eduardo had been first in with him. The enterprise started as a lark, as an attempt to right wrongs. (Coben, 2015: 139)

The real identity of the stranger is the most anticipated information in the story. Before being found by Adam's investigation, it has already been revealed through the authority of omniscient narrator. This notion supports the creation of foreshadowing in the plot as it makes the readers more aware than the leading character (Adam) who pursues the story's goal (finding the real identity of the stranger).

B. DISCUSSION

In this section, the researcher discusses and argues the findings on the conventions of noir thriller in Harlan Coben's *The Stranger*. Even though thriller in general is regarded as a formulaic work, it is quite uneasy for the researcher to find the patent theory regarding about the conventions of thriller (especially noir thriller) in such archetypal way as in its predecessor, detective fictions. Yet Priestman argued (2003), thriller wants to criticize the repeatable genre format of detective fictions by presenting the non-detective and often anti-hero as the protagonist of the story without declining the suspense.

The findings show that as a work of noir thriller, Harlan Coben's *The Stranger* focused on exploring the main character's conflicts. Yet the main character's attempts to overcome the problems are likely a plot of investigation. A detective is not presented, but there is a help from legal officers. Sometimes those notions are quite risky for the novel to be regarded more as detective fictions than noir thriller. However, that is what close reading is significant to employ in this research. As the researcher looked deeper on the structure, it is found that the presence of legal officers is not significant in the story.

After all, thriller and detective fictions have a notable similarity in being able to fulfil the readers' curiosity and explore their anxiety (Priestman, 2003). Genres are not always clear-cut and the terms are often used loosely. Even recently, genre distinctions are often seen as arbitrary (Lukens, 1999: 13). There is always different way in classifying a work into which genre it belongs to as did by the researcher of which the conventions of noir thriller are concluded from the

theories and examples of the similar works mentioned by various scholars. In addition, it is important to look at structuralism notion that the construction of the work defines its own meaning. Thus, the overlaps between genres can be avoided by looking deeper on the work's structure.

As it is arbitrary, the structure of a work does not necessarily due over time as found in Harlan Coben's *The Stranger*. The theory mentioned that flaws are the quality that should be enhanced by the protagonist. It is true that the novel employs such protagonist (The stranger who blackmailed people for his personal trait), but he is not the character who pursues the story's goals. It is found that there is another character whose struggle is more significant to the story's goals (Adam Price). Even though his character development (not the struggle) is not really significant as well, by the end of the story, Adam Price enhances the quality of what a flawed protagonist should have. He ends up being a murderer as a revenge for his wife's death. The way the characters are presented is actually not an unusual thing in developing the idea. Both of them can be regarded as the protagonists due to their quality (characterizations and actions). Thus, it is not necessarily about the disobedience to the conventions since the story still keeps the genre's goals in general.

Besides the arbitrariness of the protagonist in the novel, it is also found that there is a risky misunderstanding about the plot construction. Thriller is not necessarily strict to the theories about the type of plots. Simpson (in Rzepka and Horsley, 2010) only mentioned that the plot of thriller is based on the principle of suspense. On the other hand, there is its own definition about suspense as a

general device. It will lead into a risky misunderstanding as well, if the readers do not enhance the difference. In general, suspense is the emotional pull that keeps the readers on following the story. This kind of suspense can be found in the implied questions or in the use of repetitive adjectives to heighten the sentence's meaning (Lukens, 1999: 114). However, when it comes to plot, the researcher regards suspense as a process rather than just a quality.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

Taking the principle of structuralism that the meaning of a text is constructed through its structure and considering on the findings, the researcher can draw a conclusion that Harlan Coben's *The Stranger* is having the quality to be regarded as the work of noir thriller. It is shown through the general conventions of noir thriller employed in the novel.

1. The Conventions of Noir Thriller in Harlan Coben's *The Stranger*.

There are five general conventions of noir thriller, (1) having a flawed protagonist, (2) focusing on the character's conflicts, (3) employing the suspense-based plot, (4) revealing the critique of socio-political milieu, and (5) using the subjective point of view. The protagonist in noir thriller is a person who has bad intentions in harming people for the sake of his own personal traits.

The significance of having a flawed protagonist in Harlan Coben's *The Stranger* is shown through the data which are focused into two, the kind of flaw possessed by the protagonist and the impacts of the flaw on both the protagonist and other characters in the novel.

Noir thriller focuses more on the character's conflicts instead of the investigation in order to be different from detective stories. It is also intended to show the character's resistance in struggling from the obstacles. In the novel, the character whose conflicts are deeply explored is not the protagonist. Yet the

researcher found that there is another character whose conflicts and struggle are explored more than the protagonist's. In order to show the significance of the character's conflicts upon the goals of the story, the researcher focused on his inner conflict and his conflicts with other characters in the story, including with the protagonist.

The suspense-based plot in the story is intended to rise the readers' curiosity so that they can stay from pages until the story is done. The suspense-based plot also supports the significance of the character's struggle in overcoming the obstacles. The novel employs these several plot devices in order to make the suspense-based plot: mystery (the problems that should be resolved throughout the story), dilemma (decisions made by the main character which affects the problem solutions), and cliff-hanger (information which leave the reader hanging and craving more explanation. It is revealed only then the events are done), and surprised ending (the mysteries are resolved in twisted way yet it still fulfils the readers' crave for explanation).

Noir thriller is interested as well in delivering the critique of social or political surroundings in the novel. There are two forms of critiques shown in the novel. They are the critique of hypocrisy and cynicism.

The last convention of noir thriller is using the subjective point of view. The significance of point of view used in the novel is explained further in the second research objective below.

2. The Conventions of Points of View in Harlan Coben's Noir Thriller *The Stranger*.

The use of subjective point of view in noir thriller aims to show the plausible actions. It also supports the notion that noir thriller is interested in exploring the crime and conflicts faced by the characters. The conventions of point of view in noir thriller are either shown by the use of first person or third person point of view. Yet the novel used the third person one. In order to show each character's subjectivity in contributing to the conflicts, the novel used third person limited and third person objective point of view.

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Appendix 1

THE SYNOPSIS OF HARLAN COBEN'S *THE STRANGER*

The novel shows the reason why Harlan Coben was once regarded as the master of urban thriller. In this novel entitled *The Stranger* (2015), he evokes the fragility of American Dream in modern life. Adam Price looks around the American Legion Hall and cynically perceives the life in Cedarfield. Adam Price may have the complete list of life goals that the people in Cedarfield may afford: marrying the beautiful, highly maintained Corrine who gave him two sons and mostly, positing a promising career as a city attorney. Those are worth the dream—American Dream until he becomes agitated as being out of nowhere approached by a person who tells him that Corinne had faked her pregnancy. It supposed to be nothing for Adam regarding that Adam does not even know the person. Yet the person provokes Adam to leave Corinne. It has been too far, but Adam really has no idea about the person who ironically knows more than Adam thinks he does. The person, who regards himself as the stranger with important knowledge, then leaves Adam with more provoking notions. Adam is suggested to look for a charge to Novelty Funsy from his Visa card and worse than that, to run DNA tests on Adam's two sons.

The worse thing than thinking about Corinne's lie for Adam is that he starts to believe the stranger's every word as he decides to run his own investigation through the clues given by the stranger. He calls the customer service to trace about the payment to Novelty Funsy which is made about two years ago. It is to be his surprise as he gets an email saying that Novelty Funsy is a billing name for

Fake-A-Pregnancy.com. He thinks that the truth is getting cracked, but he is not rushing to ask for Corinne's confession. He is getting agitated to think about his life. It is surprising that he is no longer able to straight see Corinne as he imagines that there will be so much to lose. Even so, he comes into a conclusion, that among the random luck in this life, he will do anything to guard his family.

After encouraging himself, Adam is able to make Corinne speak about the fake pregnancy. Yet Corinne does not make it clearer. She keeps making excuse that she did not merely fake her pregnancy for wanting Adam's and people's attention. As it is getting uncomfortable for them, they decide to discuss the problem in the next day. However, the problem is not even resolved. Corinne never shows up. She does not give any explanation instead of a text saying that she needs time to be away from Adam. The worse is, she does not even come home after several days.

Adam has tried to contact Corinne but there is no respond. He starts to put his suspicion regarded to Corinne's absence to the stranger. He thinks that the whole problems are started by the stranger's provocation on the day in American Legion Hall.

The next chapter focuses on Heidi Dann, the stranger's next target. The stranger finds out her daughter's secret of being a sugar baby. To prove it, the stranger lets Heidi to sing in to the account. Besides telling the secret, the stranger also demands an amount of money from Heidi. If she does not pay it, the stranger will reveal the secret to public. However, after being approached by the stranger, Heidi is killed. Besides Heidi, the novel also presents the scene performing the

stranger's other victims, such as Michaela Siegel and Dan Molino. Those scenes are significant to show the stranger's motives, one because of what he considers as the good deed by making right the wrong and the second is money by which he hacked their target's data online.

The interesting part about the shift of focus in the novel is the presence of the characters that are unexpectedly significant to trace the stranger's operation which creates a domino effect. They are Bob Baime, Adam's children's coach who knows about Adam's problems; Suzanne Hope who suggests the fake pregnancy website to Corinne and who is also the stranger's victim; and Johanna Griffin, a police chef who runs an investigation to look for Heidi Dann's murder. Each character's roles are significant to break the mystery of Corinne's absence.

As the next attempt in looking for the stranger and Corinne, Adam contacts the people who are suspiciously related to Corinne's absence. He starts from Suzanne Hope as he remembers that she is the person who suggests the fake pregnancy website to Corinne. It is found that Suzanne Hope is once blackmailed by the stranger for the same case. It strengthens Adam's suspicion that the stranger is the root of his problems. However, he is not really sure that Corinne leaves him just because being blackmailed by the stranger. Then, he gathers information about the stranger with the help of Old Man Rinsky.

Tripp Evans is the next suspect who is possibly related to Corinne's absence as Adam finds his number in Corinne's phone records. Adam is suspicious since the call is made in the morning right before Corinne's gone. Tripp Evans is Corinne's partner in lacrosse board members. Prior to this suspicion, Tripp Evans

once approached Adam to tell about Corinne's involvement in stealing the lacrosse money. However, Adam thinks that it is just a strange suspicion since Corinne has never made any bad records in her work. When Adam comes to Tripp Evans for asking the call, Tripp Evans admits that it was about the stolen money. He told Adam that Corinne begs him for giving more money to pay the money back. Drawing a conclusion from Tripp's statement, Adam speculates that Corinne possibly stole the money to avoid the stranger for telling her fake pregnancy to Adam. Yet it is suspicious for Adam since the secret has already told and Corinne is still missing.

After having no further information from Suzanne Hope and Tripp Evans, Adam tries to gain information through the fake pregnancy website. He points a name, Gabrielle Dunbar, and traces her through her Facebook page. He expects to have something from her account. When he scrolls down Gabrielle's photo albums, he finds a photo with the stranger's face in it.

Adam finally meets the stranger after spying on Gabrielle Dunbar. Adam can no longer control himself to ask for Corinne. Yet the stranger accuses him back for killing his partner namely Ingrid Prisby. The stranger also admits that Corinne's absence has no relation with his action as he is only hired by a third party namely CBW Inc. It is to be Adam's surprise that he knows about the company. It is where Bob Baime works. However, the stranger quickly runs away after hearing the police's car.

Adam uses the stranger's clue to approach Bob Baime. To be Adam's surprise, Bob Baime admits that Tripp Evans is the one who provokes him to

threat Corinne, so that he decides to use the stranger's operation. Adam finds himself being fooled by Tripp Evans as he has to face a bitter truth that Tripp Evans admits the whole sins. It is true that Tripp Evans has accused Corinne for stealing the lacrosse money. Tripp Evans also manipulates the bookkeeping to convince other members. Worse than that, he also admits that he has killed Corinne.

Adam is devastated to see Corinne's dead body lies beneath him. Tripp Evans does not only kill her but also steals her jewellery. Being unable to bear the pain, Adam shoots Tripp Evans to death. However, in the last scene, Adam is free from the charge as Johanna Griffin helps to erase his trace so that the scene will be like a suicide. Adam cannot deny that the sin haunts him every night, but he believes that he has done the right thing to protect his family.

APPENDIX 2

The General Conventions of Noir Thriller in Harlan Coben's *The Stranger*

| CATEGORY | | DATA NO. | PAGE | QUOTATION/DATA | EXPLANATION |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|----------|---------|--|---|
| Having a Flawed Protagonist | | | | | |
| The kind of flaw | Black-mailing people | 1. | 10 - 11 | <p>“You felt obligated to stay, am I right?” the man asked.</p> <p>“I don’t know who the hell—”</p> <p>“She lied, Adam.” The younger man spoke with such conviction, not just as though he knew for certain but that, at the end of the day, he had Adam’s best interest at heart. “Corinne made it all up. She was never pregnant.”</p> | The stranger finds out Adam’s wife’s fake pregnancy and provokes Adam to leave her. |
| | | 2. | 67 | The stranger had given Heidi the link to FindYourSugarBaby.com as well as her daughter’s user ID and password. With a heavy heart, Heidi signed in as Kimberly and found out all she needed to confirm that everything the stranger had told her was true. | The stranger finds out Heidi’s daughter’s secret of having sugar daddies. He also hacks the account to prove it true. |
| | | 3. | 67 | The stranger had not just told her out of the kindness (or emptiness) of his heart. He made money demands, of course. Ten grand was the amount. If she didn’t pay it in three days, the news of Kimberly’s “hobby” would go viral. | The stranger threatens Heidi Dann to pay an amount of money. If she does not pay it, he will spread the secret to the public. |
| | | 4. | 81 | <p>“David Thornton didn’t put that tape online.”</p> <p>“Are you a friend of his or something?”</p> | The stranger finds out Michela Siegel’s fiancée’s secret in putting |

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| | | | | <p>“I’ve never seen or spoken to him.”</p> <p>Michaela swallowed. “Are you the one who posted the video?”</p> <p>“No, of course not.”</p> <p>“Then how can you—?”</p> <p>“The IP address.”</p> <p>“What?”</p> <p>The stranger took a step closer to her. “The site claims to keep the user’s IP address anonymous. That way, no one can know or prosecute the person who put it up.”</p> <p>“But you know?”</p> <p>“Yes.”</p> <p>“How?”</p> <p>“People think a site is anonymous because the site says so. That’s a lie by definition. Behind every secret site on the Internet, there is a human being monitoring every keystroke. Nothing is really secret or anonymous.”</p> <p>Silence.</p> | her porn video online. |
| | | 5. | 106 | <p>“He asked me if my husband knew about my lie. I asked him who he was. He didn’t say. He just said something about the stranger who reveals truth, something like that. He says he has proof I’ve been lying about being pregnant.</p> | The stranger knows about Suzanne Hope’s fake pregnancy. |

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| | | 6. | 106 | <p>Suzanne Hope took another sip. He took one too. The wine tasted like fish ass.</p> <p>“So the guy says that he wants five thousand dollars. He says if I pay it, he’ll go away and I’ll never see him again, though—and this was really odd—he said that I couldn’t lie again.”</p> <p>“What did he mean?”</p> <p>“That’s what he said. He said, here’s the deal. You pay me five thousand dollars and stop faking the pregnancy, and I’ll go away for good. But if I kept up the deception—that was the word he used, <i>deception</i>—he would tell my husband the truth. He also promised it was a one-time payment.”</p> | The stranger demands money from Suzanne Hope as he knows her secret of faking pregnancy. If Suzanne does not pay it, he will tell the secret to Suzanne’s husband. |
| | | 7. | 117 | <p>“His weight was, what, two thirty last year,” the stranger said. “He put on fifty-five pounds and no one noticed?”</p> <p>Dan frowned, even as he felt his heart drop.</p> <p>“It’s called puberty, asshole. It’s called working out hard.”</p> <p>“No, Dan. It’s called Winstrol. It’s called a PED.”</p> <p>“A what?”</p> <p>“Performance-enhancing drug. Better known to the layman as steroids.”</p> | The stranger knows the secret of Dan Molino’s son who used illegal drugs. |

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| | | | | <p>Dan turned and moved right up into the little stranger's face. The stranger just kept smiling. "What did you say?"</p> <p>"Don't make me repeat myself, Dan. It's all in that manila folder. Your son went to Silk Road. You know what that is? The Deep Web? The online underworld economy? Bitcoin? I don't know if you gave Kenny your blessing or if your son paid for it on his own, but you know the truth, don't you?"</p> <p>Dan just stood there.</p> | |
| | | 8. | 117 | <p>Dan put his finger on the little guy's chest. "Are you threatening me?"</p> <p>"No, Dan. I'm asking for ten thousand dollars. A one-time payment. You know I could demand a lot more, what with how much college costs nowadays. So consider yourself lucky."</p> | The stranger demands money from Dan as he gets the secret of Dan's son who used illegal drugs. |
| | | 9. | 139 | <p>The stranger, whose real name was Chris Taylor, nodded. Chris was the founder of this movement, even if this was Eduardo's garage. Eduardo had been first in with him. The enterprise started as a lark, as an attempt to right wrongs. Soon, Chris realized, their movement could be both a profitable company and a source for doing good. But in order to do that, in order</p> | The stranger's operation in revealing the people's secret is admitted profitable. He can easily make the people pay by threatening them with the secrets he has. |

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| | | | | <p>to not let one take over the other, they all had to stick to their founding principles.</p> <p>“So what’s wrong?” Gabrielle asked him.</p> <p>“What makes you think something’s wrong?”</p> <p>“You don’t come here unless there’s a problem.”</p> <p>That was true enough.</p> <p>Eduardo sat back. “Were there any issues with Dan Molino or his son?”</p> <p>“Yes and no.”</p> <p>“We got the money,” Merton said. “It couldn’t have been that bad.”</p> | |
| | | 10. | 168 | <p>The normal protocol was simple: You know a terrible secret about a certain person via the web. That person has two options. He or she can pay to have the secret kept or he can choose not to pay and have the secret revealed. Chris felt satisfied either way. The end result was either a profit (the person paid the blackmail) or cathartic (the person came clean). In a sense, they needed people to choose both. They needed the money to keep the operation going. They needed the truth to come out because that was what it was all about, what made their enterprise just and good.</p> | <p>The stranger blackmails people by accessing the people’s secret on the website. He threatens people by spreading the secret to the public if they do not pay the money that he demands.</p> |

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| | | | | A secret revealed is a secret destroyed. | |
| The impacts of the flaw | a. On himself | 1. | 169 | Chris read Adam Price's business card and Gabrielle's short message again: HE KNOWS In a sense, the shoe had been put on the other foot. Chris now had a secret, didn't he? But no, his was different. His secret was not for the sake of deception but protection—or was that just what he told himself? Was he, like so many of the people he encountered, simply rationalizing the secret? | The stranger's operation is traced and revealed by Adam. The stranger is getting worried that soon his own identity will also be revealed. |
| | | 2. | 169 | Chris had known that what they were doing was dangerous, that they were making enemies, that some would not understand the good and want to retaliate or continue to live in their "secrets" bubble. | Rather than being considered saving people from lies, the stranger realized that his attempt in blackmailing people has made him a public enemy. |
| | | 3. | 169 | He found a few like-minded people in similar businesses, all with the same access to secrets that he had. Some were much more interested in the moneymaking side of the venture. Others understood that what they were doing was right and just, and while Chris didn't want to make it into some kind of religious crusade, there was an aspect of his new operation that felt like a moral quest. | Beyond his bad deed for blackmailing people, the stranger wants to set people free from lies. He is dilemma to think those two sides. |

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| | | 4. | 185 | He thought about that. Was there any chance that the group knew they were under threat? By now, they almost certainly knew Ingrid had been murdered. He had counted on that to draw them together. It'd worked. He had also counted on the fact that they were rank amateurs, all high on trying to help the world by revealing secrets or some such nonsense. | The stranger's attempt in hacking accounts in the sugar daddy website is found by John Kuntz, the security of the website. As the consequence, Ingrid, the stranger's partner, is murdered by Kuntz as a threat to the stranger. |
| | | 5. | 204 | "They have nothing new on Chris Taylor," she said. "He's still on the run. But in the end, he's not exactly Public Enemy Number One. All he did was blackmail some people who don't want to press charges because their secrets will be revealed. I doubt he'd get more than probation, even if he was caught. Would you be okay with that?" | The stranger is threatened with penalties for blackmailing people. |
| | b. On other characters | 1. | 67 | Heidi signed out and sat on the couch. She debated pouring herself a glass of wine and decided against it. Then Heidi had a good, long cry. When she finished, she headed to the bathroom, washed her face, and sat back on the couch. Okay, she thought, what do I do about this? Heidi's first decision was almost the simplest: Don't tell Marty. She didn't like to keep secrets | Heidi Dann is shocked to know that the stranger finds her daughter's secret of having sugar daddies. Heidi is even more devastated as she has to keep the secret from her judgemental husband. |

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| | | | | <p>from her husband, but then again, she didn't hate it either. It was part of life, wasn't it? Marty would absolutely lose it if he found out what his little girl was up to while she was supposedly studying at NYU. Marty was prone to overreaction, and Heidi could see him hopping in his car, driving to Manhattan, and dragging his daughter back by the hair. Marty didn't need to know the truth. Come to think of it, neither did Heidi.</p> <p>Damn those two strangers.</p> | |
| | | 2. | 106 | <p>"Not even close," she said. "I don't know when or how the guy told Harold. But he did. He gave Harold some web link so he could see all the stuff I ordered from that pregnancy-faking website. Harold went ballistic. I thought it would open his eyes to my pain, but really, it did the opposite. It played into all his insecurities. All that stuff about not being a real man—it all came roaring to a head. It's complicated, you know. A man is supposed to spread his seed and if the seed isn't any good, well, it goes right to his core. Stupid."</p> | <p>Suzanne Hope's husband was extremely angry at Suzanne after being told about Suzanne's faked pregnancy by the stranger. Suzanne had lost her husband's sympathy.</p> |

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| | | 3. | 184 | “Heidi was murdered first,” Adam continued. “Then Ingrid. And on top of that, my wife is missing. That’s what your revealing of secrets got you.” | The stranger’s operation is not only devastating but also letting some people murdered. |
| | | 4. | 161 | But it’s useless. The dream dissolves, gone forever. And standing there, watching his son play the game he loved, Adam couldn’t help but feel that since the stranger’s visit, they were all on the verge of waking up. | After the stranger told Adam about his wife’s fake pregnancy, Adam started to doubt anything in his marriage life. |
| | | 5. | 169 | In the end, the core group had been five—Eduardo, Gabrielle, Merton, Ingrid, and Chris. Eduardo had wanted to do everything online. Make the threat online. Reveal the secret via an untraceable e-mail. Keep it completely anonymous. But Chris didn’t agree. What they were doing, like it or not, was devastating people. You were changing lives in a flash. You could dress it up all you wanted, but the person was one thing before his visit, and something entirely different after. You needed to do that face to-face. You needed to do that with compassion and with a human touch. The secret protectors were faceless websites, machines, robots. | People are shocked after knowing the secrets revealed by the stranger. They would never see straight on their life as they did before. |

Focusing on the Character’s Conflicts

| CATEGORY | DATA NO. | PAGE | QUOTATION/DATA | EXPLANATION |
|-----------------------|----------|---------|---|--|
| Adam's inner conflict | 1. | 18 | <p>Thomas looked like Adam. Everyone said so. He had the same walk, the same laugh, the same second toe bigger than the first toe. No way. No way he wasn't Adam's. Even though the stranger had said that . . .</p> <p><i>Now you're listening to a stranger?</i></p> | Adam is unconsciously provoked by the stranger as he starts to doubt his biological child. |
| | 2. | 38 | <p>When the horn blew, ending the first quarter, Adam looked back toward his wife. She was chatting away with Becky, both women animated. He just stared for a moment, lost and scared. He knew Corinne so well. He knew everything about her. And paradoxically, because he knew her so well, he knew that what the stranger had told him had the echo of truth.</p> | Even though Adam loved his wife so much, he can no longer think objectively about her after knowing that she had lied to him. |
| | 3. | 53 | <p>What could he do? Corinne simply shut down. Later, alone in their bedroom, he tried anger, pleading, demanding, threats. He used words of love, ridicule, shame, pride. She wouldn't respond. It was so frustrating.</p> | Adam is devastated to think about the fight he had with his wife. |
| | 4. | 53 - 54 | <p>Because what could he do here? Was he ready to walk out the door? Was he ready to divorce her? He didn't know the answer. Adam stood over the bed and stared down at her. How did he</p> | Adam is uncertain about his own feeling whenever he thinks about his marriage after knowing that his wife faked her pregnancy. |

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| | | | <p>feel about her? He told himself, right now, without thinking about it, answer this: If it was true, did he still love her and want to be with her for the rest of his life? His feelings were jumbled, but his gut reaction: Yes.</p> | |
| | 5. | 54 | <p>Take a step back. How big a deal was this deception? It was huge. No question about it. Huge.</p> <p>But was it something that should destroy their lives—or was it something that they could live with?</p> <p>All families ignore the elephants in the room. Could he one day ignore this one?</p> <p>He didn't know. Which was why he would have to be careful. He would have to wait. He would have to listen to her reasoning, even if that seemed almost obscene to him.</p> | <p>Adam thinks that his wife's pregnancy is a thing that can easily be forgotten. He is afraid that it will bring his marriage down. However, he tries to convince himself that his wife may have a logical reason.</p> |
| | 6. | 72 | <p>Something about the texts was off, but he couldn't figure out what. Suppose Corinne was in real danger. He again wondered whether he should go to the police. Kristin Hoy had asked him about that right away, hadn't she? She asked him whether he had called the police if his wife was missing. Only she wasn't missing. She had sent that text. Unless she didn't send</p> | <p>Adam is desperate to think about his wife who does not come home for several days. He is confused to figure out whether she is really just away or is missing. He does not even dare to tell this to somebody else.</p> |

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| | | | | that text. His head started spinning. | |
| | | 7. | 204 | He had killed a man. You don't get a free pass on something like that. It haunted him at night, robbed him of sleep. He understood that he had had no choice. As long as Tripp Evans was alive, he was a threat to Adam's family. And something primitive in him even took satisfaction in what he'd done, in avenging his wife, in protecting his boys. | Adam is guilty for killing Tripp Evans. Yet at the same time he feels obliged to do it for the sake of getting rid of whoever tries to threaten his family. |
| The conflict with other characters | Adam with the stranger | 1. | 10 | "I'm the stranger," he said. "The stranger with important knowledge. She lied to you, Adam. Corinne. She was never pregnant. It was all a ruse to get you back." | Adam is provoked by the stranger that Adam's wife had faked her pregnancy in order to make Adam stay on her side. |
| | | 2. | 119 | Adam had realized that he could no longer afford to sit back and wait for Corinne's return. There were enough lies and deception to go around, he thought, but whatever it was that had gone terribly wrong in the past few days had started here, at the American Legion Hall, when the stranger told him about that damned website. | Adam feels that the stranger is the one who has to be responsible to Adam's wife's disappearance as everything is started by the stranger's arrival. |
| | | 3. | 169 | HE KNOWS And so the response was obvious: He had to be stopped. | Adam will be threaten back by the stranger as Adam finds out the stranger's operation. |

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| | | 4. | 192 | <p>“Chris Taylor exposed my wife’s most closely held and painful secret. We all know what that does to a person.”</p> <p>“It messes you up,” Johanna said.</p> <p>“Right. But more than that, a revelation that big—it strips you bare. It tears you down and takes away how you look at your life.” Adam closed his eyes again. “You need time after something like that. To rebuild. To figure out what’s next.”</p> | Adam’s marriage life is ruined since the stranger told the secret about Adam’s wife’s fake pregnancy. |
| | Adam with Corinne | 1. | 43 | <p>He knew everything about her. There had been, he thought, no surprises. He even knew her well enough to know that what the stranger had alleged was indeed possible. Yet he hadn’t seen this. He hadn’t realized that Corinne could read him too, that she had known, despite his best effort to hide it, that something serious had upset him, that it wasn’t just a normal thing, that it was something big and maybe life-altering.</p> <p>Corinne stood there and waited for the blow. So he delivered it.</p> <p>“Did you fake your pregnancy?”</p> | Adam does not believe that his wife, whom he knows very well, could lie to him. As he is so mad, he pulls himself together to make her speak about the truth of her fake pregnancy. |
| | | 2. | 48 | <p>“How about the boys?”</p> <p>That puzzled her. “What about them?”</p> | Adam confronts his wife with the fake pregnancy secret and takes the |

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| | | | | <p>“Are they mine?” Corinne’s eyes went wide. “Are you out of your mind?” “You faked a pregnancy. Who knows what else you’re capable of?” Corinne just stood there. “Well?” “Jesus, Adam, look at them.” He said nothing. “Of course they’re yours.” “There are tests, you know. DNA. You can buy them at Walgreens, for crying out loud.”</p> | blame on her as he starts to doubt that the children are not biologically his. |
| | | 3. | 53 - 54 | He knew the truth, didn’t he? Did he really have to wait for her to confirm that she’d faked a pregnancy and a miscarriage? If she hadn’t, he would have heard the denials by now. She was stalling—perhaps to come up with a reasonable rationale or perhaps to give him time to calm down and consider his alternatives. | After knowing that his wife had faked her pregnancy, Adam can no longer trust her as much as he did before. |
| | | 4. | 55 | <p>She stepped close to him. “I can’t tell you what you want to know yet.” He almost punched her. He almost reared back his fist and . . . “What’s your strategy here, Corinne?” “What’s yours?” “Huh?”</p> | Adam and his wife keeps blaming each other when talking about the fake pregnancy. Adam even loses his temper after knowing that his wife does not speak the truth. |

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| | | | | <p>“What’s your worst-case scenario?” she asked. “Think about it. And if it’s true, are you going to leave us?” “Us?” “You know what I mean.” It took a second for him to get the words out. “I can’t live with someone I can’t trust,” he said. She tilted her head. “And you don’t trust me?” He said nothing. “We all have our secrets, don’t we? Even you, Adam.” “I’ve never kept anything like this from you. But clearly, I have my answer.” “No, you don’t.” She moved close to him and looked up into his eyes. “You will soon. I promise.”</p> | |
| | | 5. | 61 | <p>David brought back the wine. Corinne still wasn’t there. David opened the bottle and poured two glasses. Corinne still wasn’t there. At seven fifteen, Adam started to get that sinking feeling in his gut. He texted Corinne. No answer. At seven thirty, Janice came over to him and asked if everything was okay. He assured her that it was, that Corinne</p> | Adam is surprised to read his wife’s text which said that she needs several days to be away from him without any further explanation. |

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| | | | | <p>was probably just caught up in some parent-teacher conference.</p> <p>Adam stared at his phone, willing it to buzz. At 7:45 P.M., it did.</p> <p>It was a text from Corinne: MAYBE WE NEED SOME TIME APART. YOU TAKE CARE OF THE KIDS. DON'T TRY TO CONTACT ME. IT WILL BE OKAY.</p> <p>Then: JUST GIVE ME A FEW DAYS. PLEASE.</p> | |
| | | 6. | 165 | <p>She nodded. "That Sally Perryman woman?"</p> <p>"Mostly, I guess. Corinne and I had grown distant. She feared losing me, feared losing all this. It doesn't matter."</p> <p>"Actually, it might."</p> <p>"How?"</p> <p>"Humor me," Johanna said. "What was going on in your life when she went to that pregnancy-faking website?"</p> | Adam is the one who makes his wife insecure by having an affair with his co-worker. |
| | | 7. | 166 | <p>"The pregnancy startled me, you know? But in a good way. It brought me back. It reminded me of what was important. That's the other irony here. It worked. Corinne was right to do it."</p> | Adam realizes that it is him who makes his wife did the fake pregnancy. |
| Adam | | 1. | 128 | "Let me see if I can help, then. Corinne knew | Tripp Evans accuses Adam's wife |

| CATEGORY | | DATA NO. | PAGE | QUOTATION/DATA | EXPLANATION |
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| | with Tripp Evans | | | that we were looking at her for the theft, and she made it clear that we shouldn't tell you," Tripp said. "You understand just fine." | of stealing the lacrosse's money and hiding it from Adam. |
| | | 2. | 129 | "Come on, Adam. You used to be a prosecutor. I don't think Corinne started out to steal. You know how it is. When you hear about the sweet old lady stealing from the church tithing or, heck, the sports board member embezzling, it isn't like they set out to do it. You come in with the best of intentions, right? But it creeps up on you." "Not Corinne." "Not anybody. That's what we always think. We're always shocked, aren't we?" | Tripp Evans provokes Adam to believe that Adam's wife steals the lacrosse's money. |
| | | 3. | 194 | "Did you steal the money, Bob?" "No. But who'd believe me? And then Tripp confided in me what Corinne was doing—that she was trying to pin the whole thing on me." And then the niggling in Adam's brain stopped. <i>The boys . . .</i> Adam's throat went dry. "Tripp?" | Tripp Evans accuses Adam's wife of stealing the lacrosse's money. |
| | | 4. | 195 - 196 | "Tripp said Corinne was trying to pin it on you?" "Right. He said we needed something, that's all." | Adam realized that it was Tripp Evans who sent the message which said that Adam's wife needed time to be away from him. |

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| | | | | <p>Tripp Evans. Who had five kids. Three boys. Two girls. <i>The kids . . .</i> <i>The boys . . .</i> He thought about that text one more time: MAYBE WE NEED SOME TIME APART. YOU TAKE CARE OF THE KIDS. Corinne never referred to Thomas and Ryan as “the kids.” She always said “the boys.”</p> | |
| | | 5. | 200 | <p>“You got most of it right. I did take the money, but I had every intention of paying it back. I won’t go through the justification again. Corinne found out. I begged her not to say anything, that it would ruin my life. I was trying to buy time. But really, there was no way I could repay that money. Not yet. So yeah, I have a background in bookkeeping. I did it at my dad’s store for years. I started to change the books so the finger pointed more at her. Corinne didn’t know about it, of course. She actually listened to me and kept quiet. She didn’t even tell you, did she?” “No,” Adam said. “She didn’t.”</p> | Tripp Evans admits that it is him who steals the lacrosse’s money instead of Adam’s wife, and it is also him who manipulates the case in order to take the blame on Adam’s wife. |
| | | 6. | 200 | Tripp hadn’t just killed her. He had stolen the diamond studs off her dead body. | Tripp Evans killed Adam’s wife and stole her jewellery. |

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| Employing the Suspense-Based Plot | | | | |
| Mystery | 1. | 21 | Adam chewed on his lower lip. He didn't get it. A stranger comes up to him and tells him that his wife lied to him—elaborately, it seem—about being pregnant. Who was he? Why would he do it? Okay, forget those two questions for now and let's get to the one that matters most: Is it true? | There are two basic problems that needs to be solved by Adam, finding the identity of the stranger and his motive in telling Adam's wife secret and finding the truth about his wife's fake pregnancy as told by the stranger. |
| | 2. | 62 | Adam sent several desperate texts to try to get Corinne to reply. They included: "this isn't the way to handle this," "please call me," "where are you," "how many days," "how can you do this to us"—stuff like that. He tried nice, mean, calm, angry. But there was no reaction. | Adam wonders much about Corinne's recent position since he cannot not access her at all. |
| | 3. | 107 | Why? If she'd been blackmailed, wouldn't she have at least suspected that the stranger would tell Adam? She had also reacted by, what, running away? Did that make sense? She had run so quickly and haphazardly, barely contacting him and the school and, most surprising of all, just leaving the boys in the lurch. That wasn't Corinne. Something else was going on here. | It is strange for Adam to know that Corinne runs away from the case. He believes that there is something beyond his awareness. |

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| Dilemma | 1. | 43 | <p>He knew everything about her. There had been, he thought, no surprises. He even knew her well enough to know that what the stranger had alleged was indeed possible. Yet he hadn't seen this. He hadn't realized that Corinne could read him too, that she had known, despite his best effort to hide it, that something serious had upset him, that it wasn't just a normal thing, that it was something big and maybe life-altering.</p> <p>Corinne stood there and waited for the blow. So he delivered it.</p> <p>"Did you fake your pregnancy?"</p> | <p>Adam finally decides to make Corinne speak after being so confused whether he just forgets her fake pregnancy secret to avoid the clash or takes the consequence.</p> |
| Cliff-hanger | 1. | 52 | <p>She looked up into his eyes. "How did you find out, Adam?"</p> <p>"It doesn't matter."</p> <p>"You have no idea how much it matters," she said in a soft voice. "Who told you to look at the charge on the Visa bill?"</p> <p>"A stranger," he said.</p> <p>She took a step back. "Who?"</p> <p>"I don't know. Some guy. I'd never seen him before. He came up to me at the American Legion and told me what you'd done."</p> <p>She shook her head as though trying to clear it.</p> | <p>The passage concludes chapter 8, leaving the question about the stranger's real identity.</p> |

| CATEGORY | DATA NO. | PAGE | QUOTATION/DATA | EXPLANATION |
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| | | | <p>“I don’t understand. What guy?” “I just told you. A stranger.”</p> | |
| | 2. | 54 | <p><i>“It isn’t what you think, Adam. There’s more to this.”</i> That was what Corinne said, but he couldn’t imagine what. He slipped under the covers and closed his eyes for a moment.</p> | <p>The passage concludes chapter 10, leaving the question about something beyond Adam’s awareness related to Corinne’s fake pregnancy.</p> |
| | 3. | 94 | <p>Pittsburgh. Why on earth would Corinne have gone to Pittsburgh? To his knowledge, she didn’t know anybody there. To his knowledge, she had never been there. He didn’t remember her ever talking about the city or having any friends or relatives who’d moved there. He zoomed in on the orange dot. The address read South Braddock Avenue. He clicked the button for a satellite photo. She’d been in or near a strip mall of some sort. There was a supermarket, a dollar store, a Foot Locker, a GameStop. Maybe she had stopped there to grab something to eat or get supplies or something. Or maybe she was meeting the stranger.</p> | <p>The passage concludes chapter 20, leaving the question about Corinne’s recent position which is hard to find by Adam.</p> |
| | 4. | 113 | <p>“Can you cut the crap and tell me why you’re all so anxious to find my wife?”</p> | <p>The passage concludes chapter 27, adding an unanswered question for</p> |

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| | | | <p>Len looked over at the three monkeys on the couch. Bob's face was set in stone. Cal was busy cleaning his glasses. That left it up to Tripp Evans. Tripp cleared his throat and said, "There seems to be some discrepancies with the lacrosse financials."</p> <p>Boom.</p> <p>Or maybe the opposite of boom. The house grew even quieter. Adam was sure that he could actually hear his own heart beating in his chest. He found the seat behind him and lowered himself onto it.</p> <p>"What are you talking about?"</p> <p>But of course, he already knew, didn't he?</p> <p>Bob now found his voice. "What do you think we're talking about?" he half snapped. "There's money missing from the account."</p> <p>Cal nodded, just to do something.</p> <p>"And you think . . . ?" Adam didn't finish the thought. First off, it was obvious what they thought. Two, it would not do to even voice such a ridiculous accusation.</p> | <p>Adam. Before finding where Corinne is, Adam is surprised at an accusation that Corinne steals the lacrosse's money.</p> |

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| | 5. | 176 | <p>Gabrielle Dunbar stood alone in the clearing. She was staring right at him. He felt the rage build up inside him. He took a step closer, expecting her to run off or say something. She didn't. She just stood there and watched him. "Where's my wife?" he shouted.</p> <p>Gabrielle kept staring.</p> <p>Adam took another step into the clearing. "I said—"</p> <p>Something smacked him so hard in the back of the head that Adam could actually feel his brain jarring loose from its moorings. He dropped to his knees, seeing stars. Working on pure instinct, Adam somehow managed to turn and look up. A baseball bat was coming down on the top of his skull like an axe. He tried to duck or turn away or at least lift a protective arm.</p> <p>But it was much too late.</p> <p>The bat landed with a dull thud, and everything went dark.</p> | <p>The passage concludes chapter 48 in which Adam runs his investigation to find the stranger, yet he is suddenly faint.</p> |

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| Surprised Ending | 1. | 184 | <p>“Adam?” “What?” “We never blackmailed your wife. We never even spoke to her.” Adam didn’t understand. “You blackmailed Suzanne.” “Yes.” “And Heidi.” “Yes. But your case was different.” “Different how?” “We were hired to do it.” For a moment, the pain in his head was gone, pushed out by pure confusion. “Someone hired you to tell me that?” “They hired us to find lies and secrets about your wife and then reveal them.” “Who hired you?” “I don’t know the name of the client,” Chris said, “but we were hired by an investigation firm named CBW.”</p> | Adam is surprised to find out that it is not merely the stranger who threatens his life. The stranger admits that he is hired by another person who wants to threaten Adam’s life. |
| | 2. | 194 | <p>“Did you steal the money, Bob?” “No. But who’d believe me? And then Tripp confided in me what Corinne was doing—that she was trying to pin the whole thing on me.”</p> | Adam is surprised to hear from Bob that Tripp has accused Corinne for stealing the lacrosse’s money. |

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| | | | <p>And then the niggling in Adam's brain stopped. <i>The boys . . .</i> Adam's throat went dry. "Tripp?" "Yeah." "Tripp said Corinne was trying to pin it on you?" "Right. He said we needed something, that's all."</p> | |
| | 3. | 200 | <p>"So I went to Bob and Cal and then, with great pretend regret, Len. I told all of them Corinne had stolen the lacrosse funds. Strangely enough, Bob was the one who didn't really buy it. So I told him that when I confronted Corinne, she said it was him." "And then Bob went to his cousin." "I didn't count on that." "Where is Corinne now?" "You're standing right where I buried her." Just like that.</p> | Adam is surprised to find that Tripp Evans had killed Corinne. |
| | 4. | 202 | <p>"And one more thing," Tripp said. Adam looked up at him. "If you ever go near my family or threaten them," he said, "well, I've already shown you what I will do." "Yes, you have."</p> | Without any anticipation, Adam suddenly shoots Tripp Evans as the revenge for Corinne's death. |

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| | | | And then Adam lifted the gun, aimed it at the center of Tripp’s chest, and squeezed the trigger three times. | |
| Revealing The Critics upon Socio-Political Milieu | | | | |
| Critique on hypocrisy | 1. | 9 | They were in the American Legion Hall in Cedarfield, New Jersey. Cedarfield was a town loaded up with wealthy hedge fund managers and bankers and other financial masters-of-the-universe types.They liked to drink beer in the American Legion Hall because it was comfortable slumming, a way to pretend that they were salt-of-the-earth good ol’ boys, like something in a Dodge Ram commercial, when they were anything but. | The people in Cedarfield love to hang out in American Legion Hall as they want to be socially admitted rather than truly enjoying it. |
| | 2. | 15 | “Look around you, my friend.” Tripp spread his arms. “This town, these schools, these programs, these kids, these families—I sometimes sit back and can’t believe how lucky we all are. We’re living the dream, you know.” | The dream in the context is not about running the live as they want to be in. It is more like an attempt to fit in the society’s steady and arranged standard. |
| | 3. | 51 | “Some women love being pregnant. Not because of the hormonal rush or because they have a baby growing inside of them. Their reasons are much more base. It is the one time in their life they feel special. People hold doors | Corinne knows that faking pregnancy is a sin, but she did that as she was addicted to get people’s attention. |

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| | | | for them. People ask them about their day. They ask them when they're due and how they're feeling. In short, they get attention. It's a little like being famous. Suzanne was nothing special to look at. She didn't strike me as being particularly smart or interesting. Being pregnant made her feel like a celebrity. It was like a drug." | |
| | 4. | 83 | He hit SEND and put the car back into drive. Adam started to wonder, not for the first time, how he ended up spending his life in the town of Cedarfield. It was a simple thought, and yet the obvious implications weighed on him. Had something this important been a conscious choice? He didn't think so. He and Corinne could, he knew, have chosen to live anywhere, but then again, what was wrong with Cedarfield? It was, in many ways, the winner's spoils in the war we call the American dream. | Adam and Corinne think that living in Cedarfield counts as having American Dream. However, they are not as happy as they think. |
| | 5. | 169 | Chris ended up working for one particular site called Fake-A-Pregnancy.com. The company lied, even to itself, pretending that people bought the silicone bellies as "gag" gifts or costume parties or other "novelty funsy" rationales. But they all knew the truth. Someone | Chris criticizes the biased motive from the fake pregnancy website. He thinks that it hurts people more than giving them a gag. |

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| | | | <p>might, in theory, go to a party dressed as someone pregnant. But fake sonograms? Fake pregnancy tests? Who were they fooling? It was wrong.</p> | |
| | 6. | 197 | <p>But Adam could feel his body start to quake from the truth. “We’re living the dream, right? Isn’t that what you always say, Tripp? How lucky we all are, how thankful we should be. You married Becky, your high school sweetheart. You have five wonderful kids. You’d do anything to protect them, wouldn’t you? What would happen to your precious dream if it got out that you’re nothing but a thief?”</p> | <p>Adam criticizes Tripp Evans’ hipocrisy for always making himself a good man with good advices to cover his flaws.</p> |
| Cynicism | 1. | 16 | <p>“It’s perspective, Adam.” Tripp smiled at him. He took off his cap, smoothed down the receding wisps of hair, put it back on his head. “We humans can’t see straight. We are always biased. We always protect our own interests.” “One thing I notice about all those examples . . . ,” Adam said. “What?” “Money.” “It’s the root of all evil, my friend.”</p> | <p>Tripp Evans criticizes the people who are easily driven by money.</p> |

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| | 2. | 32 | The world doesn't give even the slightest damn about us or our petty problems. We never quite get that, do we? Our lives have been shattered—shouldn't the rest of us take notice? But no. To the outside world, Adam looked the same, acted the same, felt the same. We get mad at someone for cutting us off in traffic or for taking too long to order at Starbucks or for not responding exactly as we see fit, and we have no idea that behind their facade, they may be dealing with some industrial-strength shit. Their lives may be in pieces. They may be in the midst of incalculable tragedy and turmoil, and they may be hanging on to their sanity by a thread. But we don't care. We don't see. We just keep pushing. | Adam criticizes the society's ignorance about others. |
| | 3. | 77 | "Doubtful, but maybe," Adam said. "But see, in the United States, the government doesn't decide what makes a man happy. The government doesn't decide that a couple who worked hard and bought their own home and raised their family would now be happier living somewhere else." | Adam criticizes the society who care about the standard of living happily more than the government does. |
| | 4. | 125 | Morgan Stanley. Yeah, when you think of health care for children, the first name that | John Kuntz criticizes human beings which are easily controlled by |

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| | | | comes to your mind is the multinational financial giant Morgan Stanley. But money talks. Money is as money does. | money. |
| | 5. | 161 | That's all. Adam remembered what Tripp Evans had said at the American Legion Hall the night this all started, how he couldn't believe how lucky those of them who lived in towns like this were: <i>"We're living the dream, you know."</i> Tripp was right, of course, but it was interesting how we described our personal paradise as a "dream." Dreams are fragile. Dreams don't last. One day you wake up and poof, the dream is gone. You stir and feel it pull away from you as you helplessly grab at the smoky remnants. But it's useless. The dream dissolves, gone forever. | Adam criticizes the meaning of dream which is actually not as beautiful as it seems. |
| | 6. | 168 | Secrets, Chris believed, were cancers. Secrets festered. Secrets ate away at your innards, leaving behind nothing but a flimsy husk. Chris had seen up close the damage secrets could do. | Chris Taylor sees the negative side of having a secret. Instead of hiding people's flaw, it tends to bring people's life down. |

APPENDIX 2

The Conventions of Point of View in Harlan Coben's Noir Thriller *The Stranger*

| No. | Data | Page | Point of View | | | Explanation |
|-----|---|------|---------------|----------------|---------|---|
| | | | First person | Third person | | |
| | | | | Objec- tive | Limited | |
| 1. | The stranger didn't shatter Adam's world all at once. That was what Adam Price would tell himself later, but that was a lie. Adam somehow knew right away, right from the very first sentence, that the life he had known as a content suburban married father of two was forever gone. | 9 | | | ✓ | The narrator refers the characters with their names: the stranger and Adam Price. In this passage, the point of view is limited into Adam's perspective. It narrates Adam's feeling upon his life which would be ruined after something blowed by the stranger. |
| 2. | For the first time, the man smiled. It was, Adam couldn't help but notice, a kind smile, the smile of a healer, of a man who just wants to do the right thing. | 10 | | | ✓ | Adam observes the stranger. |
| 4. | Adam hadn't cared much where they lived. He didn't care if the house they chose was contemporary or something more classic like this one. He wanted Corinne happy, not so much because he was a great guy but because it didn't matter to him much. | 34 | | | ✓ | Adam thinks about his attempts to make Corinne happy. |
| 5. | Now she only took them off at night and to swim because she worried the chlorine might eat away at the setting. Her other earrings sat untouched in | 36 | | | ✓ | Adam describes what kind of person Corinne is through how she treats the things he gave. |

| No. | Data | Page | Point of View | | | Explanation |
|-----|---|------|---------------|--------------|---------|---|
| | | | First person | Third person | | |
| | | | | Objective | Limited | |
| | <p>that small jewelry box in her closet, as if wearing them in lieu of the diamond studs would be some kind of betrayal. They meant something to her. They meant commitment and love and honor and, really, was that the kind of woman who would fake a pregnancy?</p> <p>Corinne had her eyes on the field. The ball was down at the offensive end, where Thomas played. He could feel her stiffen whenever the ball came anywhere near their son.</p> | | | | | |
| 6. | <p>The stranger sat at a corner table at the Red Lobster in Beachwood, Ohio, just outside of Cleveland.</p> <p>He nursed his Red Lobster “specialty cocktail,” a mango mai tai. His garlic shrimp scampi had started to congeal into something resembling tile caulk. The waiter had tried to take it from him twice, but the stranger had shooed him away. Ingrid sat across the table. She sighed and checked her watch.</p> | 44 | | ✓ | | The event is narrated based only on the stranger’s and Ingrid’s physical actions. |
| 7. | <p>The fourth woman, whose name they knew was Heidi Dann, was the reason they were there. Heidi had ordered the wood-grilled salmon. She was forty-nine, big and bouncy with strawlike hair. She wore a tiger-print top with a somewhat plunging neckline. Heidi had a boisterous yet</p> | 44 | | | ✓ | Heidi’s actions is accessed through the stranger’s sense. |

| No. | Data | Page | Point of View | | | Explanation |
|-----|---|------|---------------|--------------|---------|--|
| | | | First person | Third person | | |
| | | | | Objective | Limited | |
| | melodic laugh. The stranger had been listening to it for the past two hours. | | | | | |
| 8. | Heidi just threw in some twenties. Something about the way she did it—with care and ease— touched him. He guessed that the Danns were okay with money, but who knew in today's world? Heidi and her husband, Marty, had been married twenty years. They had three kids. Their oldest daughter, Kimberly, was a freshman at NYU in Manhattan. | 44 | | | ✓ | The information about Heidi Dann is accessed through the stranger's observation. |

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| | | | First person | Third person | | |
| | | | | Objective | Limited | |
| 9. | <p>“She said that she really lives in Nyack, New York.”</p> <p>That was about thirty minutes from both Bookends and that Starbucks, Adam figured.</p> <p>“She told me a story about having a stillborn. I don’t think it’s true, but it could be. But in many ways, Suzanne’s story is simpler. Some women love being pregnant. Not because of the hormonal rush or because they have a baby growing inside of them. Their reasons are much more base. It is the one time in their life they feel special. People hold doors for them. People ask them about their day. They ask them when they’re due and how they’re feeling. In short, they get attention. It’s a little like being famous. Suzanne was nothing special to look at. She didn’t strike me as being particularly smart or interesting. Being pregnant made her feel like a celebrity. It was like a drug.”</p> | 51 | | | ✓ | Corinne’s confession is seen through Adam’s perspective. |
| 10. | <p>What could he do?</p> <p>Corinne simply shut down. Later, alone in their bedroom, he tried anger, pleading, demanding, threats. He used words of love, ridicule, shame, pride. She wouldn’t respond. It was so frustrating.</p> | 54 | | | ✓ | Adam is worried and devastated about Corinne’s response. |

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| | | | First person | Third person | | |
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| 11. | <p>So what next? Nothing, he supposed. At least, not right this very moment. Go to work. Do your job. Think it through. He was missing something. He knew that. Corinne had as much as admitted that, hadn't she? <i>"It isn't what you think, Adam. There's more to this."</i></p> | 64 | | | ✓ | Adam thinks about his next attempt to find Corinne. |
| 12. | <p>The stranger had given Heidi the link to FindYourSugarBaby.com as well as her daughter's user ID and password. With a heavy heart, Heidi signed in as Kimberly and found out all she needed to confirm that everything the stranger had told her was true.</p> | 67 | | | ✓ | Heidi reacts to the news delivered by the stranger. |
| 13. | <p>Okay, she thought, what do I do about this? Heidi's first decision was almost the simplest: Don't tell Marty. She didn't like to keep secrets from her husband, but then again, she didn't hate it either. It was part of life, wasn't it?</p> | 67 | | | ✓ | Heidi is devastated to think about the news delivered by the stranger. |
| 14. | <p>Right. So what would she do instead? She'd use cash. He checked the ATM withdrawals. The last one she made had been two weeks ago for \$200. Was that enough to run away on? Doubtful. He thought about it.</p> | 71 | | | ✓ | Corinne's habit is narrated through Adam's perspective. |

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| 15. | The stranger hated to do this one. But Michaela Siegel, who was now weaving her way into view, deserved to know the truth before she made a terrible mistake. The stranger thought about Adam Price. He thought about Heidi Dann. They may have been devastated by his visit, but this time, in the case of Michaela Siegel, it would be much, much worse. | 79 | | | ✓ | The stranger thinks about his victims. |
| 16. | But more important, especially now that he thought about it: How did Adam recover so quickly from the devastating news that he had received just minutes earlier at the American Legion bar? Jerry still talked. Bob still smiled. Smiled and smiled. | 96 | | | ✓ | Bob Baime thinks about Adam's problem. |
| 17. | Dan faced the stranger straight-on now. Screw this guy. This was one of the greatest moments—maybe <i>the</i> greatest—of Dan's life and he'd be damned if he'd let some dork get in that way. "Do I know you?" | 117 | | | ✓ | The stranger's attempt to reveal the secret is perceived through Dan's perspective. |
| 18. | Suzanne Hope took another sip. He took one too. The wine tasted like fish ass. "So the guy says that he wants five thousand dollars. He says if I pay it, he'll go away and I'll never see him again, though—and this was really | 106 | | | ✓ | Suzanne Hope's confession in being approached by the stranger is accessed through Adam's perspective. |

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| | odd—he said that I couldn't lie again." "What did he mean?" "That's what he said. He said, here's the deal. You pay me five thousand dollars and stop faking the pregnancy, and I'll go away for good. But if I kept up the deception—that was the word he used, <i>deception</i> —he would tell my husband the truth. He also promised it was a one-time payment." | | | | | |
| 19. | As the stranger entered the garage, he thought, as he did nearly every time he came here, about all the famous companies that purportedly started in just this way. | 138 | | | ✓ | The stranger thinks about his operation. |
| 20. | Next to him was Gabrielle, a single mother of two and the oldest of them by far at forty-four. Two decades ago, she'd started out as a phone-sex operator. The idea was to keep the guy on the line for as long as possible, charging his phone \$3.99 per minute. More recently, in a similar vein, Gabrielle had posed as various hot housewives on a "no strings attached" hookup site. Her job was to coax a new client (read: dupe) into thinking sex was imminent until his free trial was over and he committed to a full-year subscription on his credit card. | 139 | | | ✓ | The narrator delivers the information about the duty of the stranger's partners together with their past experience which are not known by other characters. |

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| | | | First person | Third person | | |
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| 21. | The stranger, whose real name was Chris Taylor, nodded. Chris was the founder of this movement, even if this was Eduardo's garage. Eduardo had been first in with him. The enterprise started as a lark, as an attempt to right wrongs. | 139 | | | ✓ | The narrator reveals the stranger's real identity and his operation. The information is not known yet by other characters. |
| 22. | Chris. It was almost odd to hear someone speak his name. The past few weeks, he'd been anonymous, the stranger, and no one called him by name. Even with Ingrid, the protocol had been clear: No names. Anonymous. There was irony in that, of course. The people he approached had assumed and craved anonymity, not realizing that in truth, it didn't exist for them. For Chris—for the stranger—it did. | 139 | | | ✓ | The stranger is afraid of getting his identity revealed. |
| 23. | Chris had known that what they were doing was dangerous, that they were making enemies, that some would not understand the good and want to retaliate or continue to live in their "secrets" bubble. | 169 | | | ✓ | The stranger feels that his operation is like a boomerang for him. |
| 24. | Tripp shrugged and walked past him. Adam kept the gun on him, trying hard to not even blink. Tripp pierced the dirt with the shovel, scooped up the dirt, tossed it to the side. "Tell me the rest of it," Adam said. | 200 | | ✓ | | The scene is narrated based only on Tripp Evans's and Adam Price physical movements. |

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| | | | First person | Third person | | |
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| | <p>“You know the rest of it, don’t you? After you confronted her about faking the pregnancy, Corinne was furious. She’d had enough. She was going to tell what I’d done. So I told her, okay, fair enough, I’ll come forward. I said, let’s just meet at lunchtime and go over it, so we’re on the same page. She was reluctant, but hey, I can be persuasive.”</p> <p>The shovel dug into the earth again. Then again, “Where did you meet?” Adam asked.</p> | | | | | |
| 25. | <p>“What’s done is done, Adam. It’s détente now. Don’t make something bad even worse.”</p> <p>And then Adam saw one more thing that broke his heart all over again.</p> <p>Her earlobes.</p> <p>Her earlobes . . . they were empty. He flashed back to that Forty-Seventh Street jewelry store, the Chinese restaurant, the waiter delivering them on the plate, the smile on her face, the way Corinne carefully took them off and left them on the night table before going to bed.</p> <p>Tripp hadn’t just killed her. He had stolen the diamond studs off her dead body.</p> <p>“And one more thing,” Tripp said.</p> | 202 | | | ✓ | Adam is shocked to see Corinne’s dead body. |

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| | | | First person | Third person | | |
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| | <p>Adam looked up at him. “If you ever go near my family or threaten them,” he said, “well, I’ve already shown you what I will do.” “Yes, you have.” And then Adam lifted the gun, aimed it at the center of Tripp’s chest, and squeezed the trigger three times.</p> | | | | | |

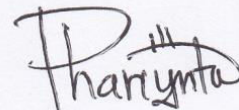
APPENDIX IV
SURAT PERNYATAAN

Yang bertanda tangan di bawah ini:

Nama : Puguh Hariyanto
NIM : 11211141027
Program Studi : Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris
Fakultas : Bahasa dan Seni

menyatakan telah melakukan triangulasi data dalam penelitian yang telah dilakukan oleh mahasiswa bernama Juzi Ammalilia dengan judul “The Conventions of Noir Thriller in Harlan Coben’s *The Stranger*”. Apabila terbukti pernyataan ini tidak benar, hal ini sepenuhnya menjadi tanggung jawab saya.

Yogyakarta, 11 April 2016



Puguh Hariyanto

SURAT PERNYATAAN

Saya yang bertandatangan di bawah ini adalah alumnus Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, Fakultas Bahasa dan Seni, Program Studi Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris:

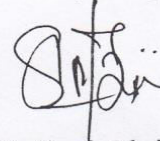
Nama : Sinta Yuliani Alviningrum

NIM : 11211141026

Menyatakan dengan sesungguhnya bahwa saya telah melakukan triangulasi sehubungan dengan analysis data mahasiswa bernama Juzi Ammalilia dalam penelitian berjudul "The Conventions of Noir Thriller in Harlan Coben's *The Stranger*".

Apabila terbukti bahwa pernyataan ini tidak benar, hal ini sepenuhnya menjadi tanggung jawab saya.

Yogyakarta, 11 April 2016



Sinta Yuliani Alviningrum