

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background Of the Study

Social norms are considered as a proper form of discipline in society. Several norms considered inappropriate for some people, for instance; if one villager dies, then the family will provide the guests with some food while the townspeople are breaking the norms, which, as a guest they give a donation to the family. Therefore, the social environment is an important part of people's life. Arifin, Wahab, The & Otman in International Journal of Academic Research in Business & Social Sciences (2018: 931) discuss that the environment plays a crucial role in one's personal growth. An environment can determine one's personality and quality. Therefore, some people assume that if someone is in a good social environment, he will be considered good, otherwise if someone is in a terrible environment, he will be considered bad too. Actually, this assumption is a basic perspective of the community.

Arifin et al. (2018: 931) discuss that human behavior is shaped based on what they observe in the surrounding environment. A social environment can affect the way of thinking of an individual who lives in that social environment. An example is when someone lives in a social environment which is in conflict such as a war, then their way of thinking will differ from people who live in a safe and peaceful social

environment. Someone who lives in a war environment will always feel worried and depressed because everyone who lives in that environment must deal with fear. A social environment becomes a thing that can be built between individuals and individuals, individuals and groups, or groups and groups.

A social environment indirectly can make a regulation to control the activities of every community. These regulations can have different effects on every individual. In a novel, the social environment created by the author has an influence on the character's behavior. The description of the social environment in the novel shows a strict environment to the rules, forcing everyone in the story to obey the rules in the environment, it has a different effect on the personality of each character, for the main character of the restraining rules can be a threat and make an act differently change the social rules in the story in their own way in a hasty manner. Burns and Flam (1987: 389) discuss that most of the activity of human is controlled by the rule and system in society. It is because the rules are formed for humans to exercise their rights without reducing or violating the rights of others. Burns and Nora (2014: 2) discuss that social rule is a real form of the existence of social beings which are manifested in groups which are demonstrated in language, behavior, norm and laws in social institutions in the modern world today, such as families, communities, markets, companies and institution. Every regulation has a universal nature, not limited to one community.

Social rules have an important role in society. Burns and Nora (2014: 3) discuss that social rule can be used as a normative form of communication and social interaction. Here, social rules are one of the government's way to regulate and discuss things that are deemed necessary and unnecessary. Social rule has negative and positive affects, such as the negative impact of social rules is to cause someone overreacts to avoid a regulation that is constrained, while the positive impact of social rule is to order the community and the environment, so it makes government easy to work.

Social environmental issue which forces the character to fight, especially for women's characters, which are very compatible with *The Handmaid's Tale* novel. The researcher chooses *The Handmaid's Tale* novel, this novel which was written by Margaret Atwood as a source of data. VanSpanckeren and Castro (1988: xxxi) discuss that the novel was first published in 1985 and won the Governor General's Award and the first Arthur C. Clarke Award in 1997. The genre of the novel is dystopian or science fiction. In *The Handmaid's Tale* novel, a text containing strict social rules phenomenon for handmaid is found a handmaid must wear their red uniforms, a handmaid is forbidden to study, such as reading a book, magazine and other words.

The novel told about strict social rules for women from Republic of Gilead who became a handmaid because the country uses totalitarianism to control their population. A handmaid just has one function: to breed. Every handmaid must

follow every strict rules in Republic Gilead, while if one hand doesn't follow the rules, she hangs on the wall or sends to colonies where in the place a handmaid will die slowly because in the area was contaminated radiant nuclear.

Every handmaid will live in a commander's home. Every handmaid must be obedient toward the rules in the commander's home and rules of government. One of handmaid is Ofred, it is not her original name because it is forbidden for handmaid to inform their privacy for others. Ofred is different from other handmaid and she looks like obedient toward the rules in her society but she is always committed to deviate secretly to show that as a human being, she has a right and a chance to do that. Ofred doesn't re-deconstruct the rules directly. She was a sly woman to hide her infraction, to fulfill her desire. Ofred just shows the strict social rules in her society one by one.

The issue in *The Handmaid's Tale* novel is suitable with Afghanistan's condition. The issues have a resemblance to the condition of Afghan women where they have to fight for themselves because of social rules which cannot be changed by them. Afghan women do not have the same fair rights such as Ofred's character. They also have special clothes to explain their identity as women. For example, a handmaid must wear a red uniform while Afghan women must wear burqa (clothes that covered all the body), These issues has been analyzed using a sociology of literature by Diana Laurenson and Alan Swingewood.

Laurenson and Swingewood (1972: 13-21) discuss there are three perspectives related to sociology of literature. First, the study is considered that literary work as social documentation which reflects to the conditions when the literary work is created. Second, the study is representing that literary work reflects the author. Third, this study represents history, culture and social conditions. In this study, the writer going to use the first perspective, which focuses in literary work as social documentation which reflects to the conditions when the literary work is created because the story in the novel shows the existence of a strict social regulation towards woman's character named Offred and as a social mirror in Afghanistan social conditions.

In this research, the writer will analyse about the strict society rules that are demolishing by the major character in the novel *The Handmaid's Tale* and how society rules in *The Handmaid's Tale* have a resemblance with Afghanistan's situation. Before the writer writes this research, she gets an inspiration from several studies using a sociology of literature. The first is Ahmad Faqih (2017), a student of the State Islamic University of Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, who conducted *Social Conflict as Portrayed in Khaled Hosseini's Novel The Kite Runner*. The second is Arifuddin (2014), a student of Alauddin State Islamic University of Makassar entitled *An Analysis of Social Conflict in Rick Riordan's Novel "The Red Pyramid"*. The third is Djuwita Lailatul Hikmah (2016), a student of Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University of Malang with his thesis entitled *Social Conflict In Owen*

Matthews' Stalin's Children. The Similarities between those studies and this present study is the source of data. The previous studies and the present study used novel as the major source. The distinctions between those studies and present study are the theory. The strength of this study is about the strict social rules in *The Handmaid's Tale* novel reflecting the social conditions in Afghanistan. This study uses sociology of literature theory by Diana Laurenson and Alan Swingewood because it relates social problems in literary work and this theory has never been used in *The Handmaid's Tale* novel.

1.2 Research Question

1. What are strict social rules breaking in *The Handmaid's Tale* novel?
2. How does *The Handmaid's Tale* reflect the social condition in Afghanistan?

1.3 Research Objectives

This study explores :

1. What *The Handmaid's Tale* novel breaks strict social rules.
2. How *The Handmaid's Tale* reflects the social condition in Afghanistan.

1.4 Scope and Limitation

This research study is focused on analyzing what the strict social rules are breaking in *The Handmaid's Tale* by main characters and how the story is considered as a reflection of social condition in Afghanistan. This research study applies sociology of literature by Diana Laurenson and Alan Swingewood that focuses on

literary work as social documentation and can be a reflection of society at an age. This study is limited to analyze the character's words and the author's narrations, which illustrate the character's experiences.

1.5 Significance of the Study

There are two points in significance of the study: Theoretical and Practical contributions.

1. Theoretically, this research is expected to give contribution to a literary critic, especially in the development of a sociology of literature approach.

2. Practically, this research gives an information for the reader that social rule in the social environment have different effects to distinct people. Sometimes, with many regulations forbidden in one community, it can lead to a rebellion. Therefore, the rules made by human should be good for other human too. This research can be used as a reference for other researchers to analyse other novels using a sociology of literature by Diana Laurenson and Alan Swingewood. This research also can give a variety of knowledge for the other researcher who will analyse literary work using a sociology of literature theory. From the study, the researcher will show what social rules broken in novel *The Handmaid's Tale*, which in the social rule make a lot of prohibition for women, especially handmaids and how the story is considered as reflection of social condition in Afghanistan.

