

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents about five sub-chapters. They are background of the study, statement of research problems, objectives of the study, significances of the study, and scope and limitation of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Novel is one of literary works that has existed since human finds pleasure in language. It is one of the old arts. It currently becomes an interesting book for study either by students or society in general, for example the main star in a movie that becomes the talk of the town and the most favorite one between the other stars, novel is considered to have strong appearance. Novel has its own nature and convention. Therefore, novel has one part of imaginative literary work or fiction, it can be imagined according to the facts and become an interesting book to be read or studied. “Novel is an imaginative literary work whose inner life reveals the introspective life of character” (Wellek and Warren, 1948:23).

In addition, novel is distinctive with the other literary works. Commonly, it presents about the life of various characters and shows some conflicts of the characters through the story. It means that novel has longer words with great amount of details in every page, more detail of storyline, complex and not limited in telling the story. Detail and complex are not created to make the reader of the novel confused, but to show an intended purpose or message which communicated by the novelist or the author within the novel (Peck 1998:103).

Furthermore, it is also believed that novel is one of literary works which has always been one effective way to explore and address social issues. Social issues which happen in society can be a great topic in a novel. Therefore, this way is used by the authors to attract and increase the attention of readers to read the novel. However, if talking about social issues, there are numerous social issues which are used by the author. One of which is alienation.

Alienation is one of the difficult problems in social sciences. It has considerable confusion to be included in sociological or psychological concept. Because of the complexity of concept, alienation lent itself to various definitions. Some say that alienation is losing the control over self. But, some also say that it is loneliness feeling from society. However, Robert deals that alienation refers “both to a personal psychological state and to a type of social relationship (cf. Senekal, 2008:7).” Besides, Feur states that it is used to express “the emotional tone which accompanies any behavior in which the person is compelled to act self destructively (cf. Saleem, 2014: 70)” then distancing the person from social world. Commonly, there are some symptoms of alienation such as bullied or betrayed by someone; a parent’s divorced, feeling different from everyone and the individual cannot get any reward in a group of social life. Indirectly, alienation can cause the space between the individual and the others.

Then, the term alienation becomes one of themes in modern literature. It has been known since the authors of Indo-American-European fiction use it as a theme in the twentieth century. For example, *Portrait as the Artist as a Young Man*’s novel which written by James Joyce in 1916. It tells about Stephen as the

main character who alienated from his religion, family, and culture. Then, the other novel comes from Franz Kafka whose title *The Castle*. It tells about alienation, endless frustration and hopeless pursuit of a goal which happened to the main character (Saleem, 2014: 73).

Beside the novel mentioned above, the researcher finds another novel which contains alienation as the social problem of the main character. The novel titled is *Thirteen Reasons Why*. It was written by Jay Asher. The novel was released on October 18, 2007. The writer has several reasons why this novel is going to be analyzed. It is because *Thirteen Reasons Why* depicts how the alienation happened to the main character. Subsequently the novel also show anger, frustration, and sadness which happened to teen or young-adult. In addition, this novel is successful (Asher, 2007).

The novel *Thirteen Reasons Why* has been an *International bestseller*. Besides, the novel obtained the other excellent awards such as *the New York Times Bestseller*, *Publisher Weekly Bestseller*, *Best Book for Young Adult*, *Association of Bookseller for Children*, *Barnes and Noble (Top 10 Best for Teen)*, *Kirkus Review Editor Choice*, *California Book Award Winner*, *Florida for Teens Award*, *Book Sense Pick*, *Kentucky Bluegrass Award*, *Kansas State Reading Circle*, *Chicago Public Library*. Further, the novel was adapted into a TV series by Brian Yorkey for the original Netflix series.

In addition, there are two reasons why the ideology inside the text can be openly reached by the reader. First, the author of the novel uses everyday

language to convey his message through the narration and the characters' dialogues. Then, Jay Asher is smart to put serious issues in every chapter to make the reader keep turning the pages. Jay Asher is a talented American writer for teen. His debut novel is *Thirteen Reasons Why*. Because of his talent in writing, all of his fourth novel have got winner and translated into over thirty languages (Asher, 2007).

Regarding the novel *Thirteen Reasons Why*, Hannah Backer is the main character in this novel. She is the only child from her parents who move to a small town and open a shop. Early in the school year, Hannah had no friends until she finally met Jessica and Alex. That is where all the things that prompted her to commit suicide began. Hannah explained everything she feels into the cassettes. When Clay received a packet of seven cassettes and a map, Hannah was dead. The cassettes which Clay received, explained about the reason why Hannah committed suicide. Inside the cassettes, there are thirteen reasons for thirteen people. Besides that, there was a rule in the cassettes, that is, everyone whose name is listed, must listen to the cassettes. This cassette was circulated based on the serial number of the mentioned name. Clay was eleventh. When he listened to the tape, there were already ten people who listened first.

Clay felt he had never done anything to hurt Hannah's feelings. Instead he loves Hannah. Clay's life became a mess when he understood and heard that he was one of the thirteen reasons. Each of the names mentioned in the cassettes had a contribution that made Hannah feel alienated and decided to commit suicide.

The writer of this study analyzes *Thirteen Reasons Why* because it depicts alienation as the main issues. This study carries out Melvin Seeman's concept of alienation. Some of scientists explain that alienation is only socio-economic perspective. However, Seeman argues that alienation is also coming from socio-psychological point of view. He though that alienation is also related to the personal psychology state which reflected to a type social relationship. For example, the mindset, the attitude, and the measure to face the problem of life, are some tricks to know that someone alienated or not (Seeman, 1959).

In this novel, there are six senses which were analyzed by the writer based on Melvin Seeman's concept. The first sense is powerlessness. It describes an individual situation in which he has hope or desire but he is unable to attain it. The second sense is meaninglessness which occurs when the individual cannot understand any purpose for his action, as a consequence, the outcome of his actions is unpredictable. The third sense is normlessness. It explains about conflict that makes the individual condition unclear in positioning social norms. The fourth is social isolation which isolation from society when individual does not reverence existing in social norms. The fifth is self-estrangement. It is denoted as the loss of intrinsic meaning or pride in the individual himself (Seeman, 1959). Then, in 1991, Seeman added one sense, namely cultural estrangement in his paper entitled *Alienation and Anomie, in Measure of personality and social psychological attitudes*. Seeman says that Cultural estrangement is "an individual's complete denial of, or sense of distance from, social values prevailing within a society (cf. Blahova, 2016: 37)."

1.2 Statements of Research Problems

Based on the background research above, the writer seeks to address one question of problem, as follows:

How is alienation represented in the novel?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to know how the author develops. There is one primary objective of this study, it is:

To describe the representation of alienation in the novel

1.4 Significances of the Study

The findings should make an important contribution to the field and our understanding about alienation theory. This study provides an exciting opportunity to advance our knowledge in that field. Theoretically, this study is expected to be a reference for further studies which analyze a data especially novel. Therefore, the result of this study is expected will be one of the expansion of the alienation theory. It is expected to enrich this field of studies especially in novel analysis.

While practically, this study can be useful for readers of *Thirteen Reasons Why* Novel. It can be used as a reference.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The focus of this study is the alienation issue which is portrayed in Jay Asher's *Thirteen Reasons Why* novel using the Melvin Seeman's concept. The writer examines how the portrayal of alienation by Hannah Backer in the novel of *Thirteen Reasons Why*. Therefore, the limitation of this study is about the representation of alienation explained in powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, social isolation, self-estrangement, and cultural estrangement in *Thirteen Reasons Why*.