

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the background of the study, the research questions, the objectives of the study, the significance of the study, and scope and limitation of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Along with the development of the modern era, social inequality is increasingly becoming a serious problem that occurs continuously in society. Economic factors are one of the main problems of all social problems faced by anyone. Economic instability creates more complex problems for society, namely social class and class struggle. According to Tyson (2011, p.159), the most powerful people are those who have a lot of materialistic possessions, such as land, where the class system is eventually formed. The ownership of the land gives the whole family the power to control others who have less wealth. The condition affects how people are treated.

The condition reflected in society is that rich people get better facilities and treatment compared to poor people. This happens because of the power of money possessed by the rich. The power and strength rich people possess often lead to behaviors that feel more powerful than others (Tyson, 2011, p.159). Thus, poor people are treated badly because they depend on the rich, who own the means of production, land, or other materials that provide opportunities for people to work. Besides that, some thoughts and actions cause fellow humans not to be treated equally in all aspects of life based on money, not humanity. The issues of social inequality are essential to discuss because it builds a social class and class struggle.

Social class refers to the classification of society based on social status (Ningsih & Prasaja, 2022, p. 146). Social status can be seen from how much economic ownership. The higher the wealth or asset it possesses, the social status in society is seen as high. Whereas, if the ownership of the economy is small then the status viewed by the society is weak and worthless. According to Marx & Engels (1998, p.40), society has two types of social class: the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.

Conversely, Marx & Engels (1998, p.24-48) also briefly explained the middle class and lower middle class. It shows that the types of social classes split into more classes.

Proletariat refers to a group of lower class who have no specific skill, or do not have enough education and they generally work entirely by relying on their labor and depend on the demand for labor (Marx & Engels, 1998, p.41). On the other hand, there is the lower middle class, which is a class that has a slightly higher economy than the lower class, which has little expertise so, this group has a small business that is only enough to fulfill basic human needs. At the same time, the middle class is a class that has a more stable economy, permanent employment, and a more secure life than the lower class. While the bourgeoisie is a group of people who own money, land, means of production, or materials of high value, they can also be called the upper class (Marx & Engels, 1998, p.41).

The bourgeoisie tends to have stronger power to rule in an area because this group has a higher economy (Ningsih & Prasaja, 2022, p. 148). While the bourgeoisie can control the system economy due to their order without caring about the other classes. The economic ownership can mobilize the classes such as middle, lower middle, and lower classes to do the bidding of the upper class. This happens because the classes depend on the bourgeoisie or upper class for their lives. Since the poor rely on the rich for their livelihood, their power frequently leads to problems.

Problems or conflicts that occur between bourgeoisie and proletariat groups of society to compete for economic benefits, political power to control society, and other problems between classes are called class struggles (Fabrianne et al., 2022, p.31). Conflicts between social classes are unavoidable and common. The upper class wants their benefits without caring about the other classes. The above issues, such as the representation of social inequality, arise because of the division of social classes in society based on economic ownership. That ultimately affects the unfair treatment of fellow humans in various aspects of life. Such rich people have more freedom, opportunity, and power to do all activities and get good treatment in all aspects of life. While poor people do not have the same opportunities as the rich to

gain access to education, employment, health, and other welfare. It causes a class struggle for people who do not have the right to equality as human beings to live prosperously. Such as the struggle to access education, struggle for ideology, struggle for economy and struggle from political power by the upper class (Eagleton & Milne, 1996). The issues above are often represented in literary works as a form of reflection on social problems that occur in society.

Literature not only reflects the reality of life, but literature helps to make people aware of social problems about the partiality of certain groups that play an important role in life (Eagleton, 2003, p.48). Literary works not only have the purpose of being a place of entertainment but, behind the stories presented, provide lessons and deep meanings to be used as lessons to deal with difficult situations that may occur (Nasution et al., 2021, p.72). Literature has a direct attachment to the social system that exists in real life, even though literature can provide criticism of social problems Hamdi (2022, p. 210). A novel is one of the types of literary works that can describe the storyline in detail (Siahaan & Satria, 2022, p. 204). Thus, the stories presented in the novel tend to have backgrounds inspired by experiences that have occurred around the social condition. Some novels discuss social issues such as the social class and class struggle. One of the novels that discuss the issues above is a novel entitled *How to Kidnap the Rich* by Rahul Raina (2021).

How to Kidnap the Rich is a debut novel by Rahul Raina, published in 2021. The author was chosen as one of the Crime Writers Association's (CWA) Dagger Award recipients in 2022 (Mitchell, 2022). The novel became the best crime debut novel. The novel was also translated into several languages and received some reviews from famous authors. The novel tells the journey of a man named Ramesh Kumar, born into a low-income family (Raina, 2021). As a child, his daily activities helped his father sell tea drinks. Hence, his father does not allow him to go to school. One day, sister Claire, one of his father's customers, gives Ramesh Kumar a free school scholarship. Sister Claire is an English teacher at the Sacred Heart Convent School. She feels pity for Ramesh, a little boy who cannot attend school but he only helps his father sell chai tea. Sister Claire helps him get his father's permission to go to school. Hence, Ramesh is very motivated to go to school.

During the time, when he wanted to continue his studies in higher education, sister Claire could not give him any scholarships anymore. Therefore, he has to work hard to continue his studies at a university.

Ramesh is a poor boy who has big motivation to study. Even though he frequently receives humiliation from his friends, his father, his teachers, and all the school community because of poverty. Nevertheless, Ramesh Kumar is a genius man. When he grows up, he decides to work as an education consultant. He works undercover to substitute for the children of the rich and take the exams at the top universities. Someday, he does not get any payment for his work. Then, he threatens Rudi's father, one of the rich people. He wants to tell the media the truth that he does not get any payment for his job. He asks for Rudi's father to have another job that would be Rudi's assistant. Rudi's father is forced to accept Ramesh's offer to protect his family's reputation. When Ramesh works as Rudi's assistant, he is treated badly during his work. However, he persists because this job is the only promising job instead of the odd jobs he has done. Ultimately, Ramesh is caught breaking the rules in the prestigious exam. Ramesh is imprisoned for committing the criminal act of being an education consultant. Because, the work refers to Ramesh replacing the children of rich people in the prestigious exam. On the other hand, Ramesh Kumar's wealthy clients who had used his services escaped without punishment.

The theme of the novel explores the serious social inequalities that exist in modern India. The rich people have the freedom to get a good education, a good life, and all facilities. The wealthy parents could plan their children's future by utilizing the power of money, committing fraud, and utilizing power for personal gain. On the other hand, poor people struggle to get an education due to economic constraints. Poor people were humiliated, degraded, and abused as they struggled to achieve their dreams. The lives of the poor and the rich are clearly depicted in this novel. Economic and political power are described as having a strong share to be released from the prevailing punishment. The writer chose this novel to analyze because many issues about social class and class struggle are depicted in the novel. The novel will be analyzed by using Marxist theory to discuss the issues of social class and class struggle.

Marxist theory exists with the purpose to make all people have class equality, have the same position, and reject differences in treatment in life because of social class (Tyson, 2011, p.160). The existence of social class is considered to be a problem for humans. It can create conflicts between rich people and poor people. The class struggle arises because of the injustice some people face in the various forms of behavior or deviant actions experienced by people considered low or working class because of their lack of economic background. Marxist theory exists as a form of resistance to capitalist social conditions where social inequality exists (Akandi & Mila, 2019. P. 66). This study aims to analyze the issue of social class in the novel based on Marx and Engels (1998). In addition, this study also analyzes the issue of class struggle in the novel based on Eagleton and Milne (1996). Marxist theory used to analyze the novel because the theory can be used to identify the social inequality depicted in the novel.

There are some previous studies that applied Marxist theory to analyze the issues of social class, class struggle in literary works. The first previous study is an undergraduate thesis from Urfiani (2015) entitled *The Representation of Class Struggle in John Steinback's The Pearl*, Jember University. The study analyzes class struggle, the causes of class struggle, and the impact of class struggle in the novel using sociology of literature and Marxist Theory by Karl Marx. The second previous study is an undergraduate thesis from Raina (2018) entitled *Balram's Struggle to Reach the Higher Social Status in Aravind Adiga's*, State Islamic University of Sunan Ampel Surabaya. The study analyzes social class, class struggle and impact of class struggle using Marxist Theory. The third previous study is an article from Arifin and Kurnia (2015) entitled *Social Class and Class Struggle in Suzanne Collins's The Hunger Games*. The study analyzes social class and class struggle using Marxist theory. The fourth previous study is an article entitled *Social Class in Victoria Ard's Red Queen* by Ningsih and Prasaja (2022). The study analyzes social class portrayed in the novel using sociological literature. The five previous studies is an article Areqi (2022) entitled *The Upper Class's Violence and Violations in Megha Majumdar's A Burning*. The study analyzes social class, violence, violation and oppression in the novel using Marxist approach.

Many literary studies that analyze literary works based on Marxist theory. Since this topic is obviously seen throughout the story, nevertheless no Marxist theory is used to analyze *How to Kidnap the Rich* by Rahul Raina (2021). Then, the study is necessary to be the first literary study that analyzes the novel based on Marxist theory. Besides, the novel has never been analyzed before. So, it is necessary to do the study in order to produce a new analysis concerning the social class and class struggle portrayed in the novel.

1.2 The Statement of Research Questions

Based on the explanation background of the study above, the following research questions are formulated:

- 1 What social classes are portrayed in the novel *How to Kidnap the Rich* by Rahul Raina?
- 2 How does Ramesh Kumar perform class struggle for better life in the novel *How to Kidnap the Rich* by Rahul Raina?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

Based on the research questions above, the objectives of the study are:

- 1 To describe the portrayal of social class in the novel *How to Kidnap the Rich* by Rahul Raina.
- 2 To find out class struggle performed by Ramesh for better life in the novel *How to Kidnap the Rich* by Rahul Raina.

1.4 The Significance of the Study

This study is expected to contribute theoretical benefit. Theoretically, the study is expected to give a clear elaboration about Marxist theory. The study expected to maintain the existence of Marxist theory for analyzing literature. Besides, this study is expected to give practical benefits. Practically, this study is expected to provide a reference for English study program students who involve Marxism theory for analyzing a novel. This study is expected to be a reflection material for readers regarding the social class and class struggle. It helps readers understand that any unequal behaviors that occur because of wealth that occurs must be stopped in

society. This study explains the important issues that commonly occur in society. This study is also expected to raise readers' awareness of the social situation around the issue of how social inequality affects society's life.

1.5 The Scope and Limitation of the Study

The scope of this study is to analyze issues of social class and class struggle in a novel entitled *How to Kidnap the Rich* by Rahul Raina (2021). The study used Marxist Theory by Karl Marx and Engels (1998) to analyze social class. Then, the study also used Marxist Criticism by Terry Eagleton and Milne (1996) to analyze class struggle experienced by the main character. The limitation of this study is based on the author's narration and characters utterances in the novel. Those represent the biner social class and Ramesh Kumar's struggle as the main character who struggle for education, ideology, economy, and politic as elaborated in the novel.