

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of some details related to the fundamental reasons for the research. It includes the background of the study, problem identification, limitation of the study, statement of the problem, purposes of the study, and the last is the significance of the study

### 1.1 Research Background

Novel is the result of human imagination that is mostly related to the environment where they live. Novel is a written artwork that a part of prose fiction, which means the story, people, or events within the novel is imagery or the result of the author's imagination (Lubart, 2018). However, the fictitious story itself creates to be as familiar as possible to the human environment with the purpose to deliver the right message to the readers. This narrative work uses realism form which becomes the essence of the novel's existence (Golban, 2015). Further, he states that the realistic element concerned with the individual experience and social background and the textual representation of the individual experience and social background with the concern of individual experience and social background which is expressed through the literary characters. For instance, the characters involved in the story will do speak, act, think, have feelings and motives, etc. even though the novel is in form of a fable or it can be a human being with a fantasy life.

Novel reading activity provides advantages to language learning. The essence of reading, fundamentally people do this understanding language ability through text or in a simple word is 'reading' because they have information to gain,

entertainment, increase their knowledge, and self-development which become the goals to achieve through reading activity. In English For Foreign Language (EFL) class novel reading is beneficial. Siaj & Farrah (2019) identified the benefits of the use of novel in the EFL classroom. The students agreed that novels motivate them in learning, improve their cultural knowledge, and enhancing the students' language ability. However, the goals of reading will not be achieved for some reasons such as reading briefly and quickly, however, this action might not become a problem when the readers have a reading purpose to find certain information such as in announcements. Yet, this action might be a problem when the readers are reading literature such as novels. In the situation when the readers do not put attention to the content details, there is a possibility for lack of understanding about the content which resulted in the goals of reading is not achieved. Robertson & Nunn (2015) in their research about reading for EFL learners, lift up the fundamental problem in reading, that is lack of reading culture especially with the foreign language resulted in slow readers for less automaticity. The term automaticity itself refers to the ability to comprehend what they read. Thus, it is important to seek deeper the author's intention and understand the values of the literary work.

In order to go deeper to see what is inside of the literary work itself, two perspectives can be used to study every literature; through intrinsic and extrinsic elements. Intrinsic elements including characters and characterization, plot, setting, point of view, theme, style, and moral value of the story or in other words intrinsic element is what already written in the novel. Meanwhile, the extrinsic element is another way to analyze the novel from outside the work itself like the author's life, the environment, or events that happened at the time. The study about novel analysis

can use one or both elements as the object. While in this research, the focus of analysis is the representation of the real world that expressed by the author from his literary artwork. In order to get a better understanding of the novel, it needs to put suitable theory and the content from the novel that is related.

The two elements intrinsic and extrinsic are the object of analysis that helps in understanding the novel. Besides the perspective of the intrinsic element, it is also vital to understand or to find out from the perspective of the extrinsic element. In a literary artwork, the creators relate their work based on their experience that he/she wants to express their ideas, thoughts, or feeling through this. The previous statement supported by research by Lubart (2018), who said that the creative process in writing involving inspiration, intuition, insight, imagery, imagination, incubation, and improvisation of the author. In simple words, the author tried to relate his literary artwork with the existed universe so that the readers found the relation. From the article by Dubey (2014), literature such as novels, plays, poetries, etc. regarded as the mirror of certain society whether based on the information or the imagination. Further, society is defined as a group of people governed by their values or norms. It is recognized through the patterns of relationships between individuals within the society who share the same culture, beliefs, and values, etc. Dubey (2014) also emphasizes that society is dynamic if seen through its history and this observation can be found in different forms of literature. Moreover, issues such as historical, political and social facts, etc. within the society in a certain period can be identified through literature.

This research will put a deeper analysis of *Crazy Rich Asians* (2013) novel and the author's historical biography, a literary artwork by Kevin Kwan in 2013

which attracts the world's attention and branded as the best-selling novel (Jose, 2018). This novel was successfully sold in the United States of America for 1 million copies. In 2017, the Novel was adapted into a film distributed by Warner Bros and release on August 15, 2018. This novel was reviewed positively by several sources such as The New York Times, The Boston Globe, and The Independent. The characters of the film itself are played by Asian actors and actresses in such Hollywood production and it is regarded as a unique phenomenon. Besides, this novel is regarded as a popular novel due to the affection toward the wrong stereotype of Asians as what Jose (2018) wrote in Hong Kong Tatler. In the film adaptation, most of the actors and actresses were Asian which means they have a chance to prove the 'real Asian' perspective even though there are many critics toward this film that they did not represent all layers of the society. Therefore, many of the research tries to bring the novel or film adaptation of *Crazy Rich Asians* to become the subject of the research such as Rohmawati (2018), Yu (2019), Ifada (2019), Yun (2019), Arsi & Sobur (2019) and Harlie & Widayatmoko (2019). Most of them arise the topic of stereotypes that created within the novel, conflicts, classes, expressions, and identity of the characters in the novel or film adaptation. The research method used is qualitative research due to the result of the research will be explained descriptively with the objective to explain the real world within the novel.

Historical Biography brings an enormous contribution to the process of creating any literary work such as novels. Even though this theory has become the polemic among experts that say this theory has no role in literary criticism due to bringing the biography information of the author into criticism (Olsen, 2010). Through historical biography, the readers will have more comprehension about the

psychology and the creative process of the author. This belongs to the extrinsic approach in literature. The focus is to bring comprehension of literary works by bringing external information rather than put attention and consideration of what is already expressed in the literary work itself. This research will use theory by H.A. Taine (1890) about his three popular words from Taine *race*, *milieu*, and *moment* in supporting to find the reason behind the literary work. Through the theory by H. Taine (1890), this research purposed to find out the *race*, *milieu*, and *moment* of the author Kevin Kwan related to his novel *Crazy Rich Asians* (2013). Although, many of the experts arguing the relation between the artwork and the external factor such as written in Wellek (2016) that the greatest works have nothing to do with historical evidence. However, this research purposed to identify the popular novel *Crazy Rich Asians* (2013) has a strong relation to historical evidence.

In *Crazy Rich Asians* (2013) novel, it shows some distinction between social and culture, especially Asian and Western culture. The interesting thing, Kevin can bring the reality of what Asians think and American people think of each other in a humorous way. Before Rachel Chu went to Singapore to meet Nicholas Young's family who was Singaporean Chinese, she felt burdened when her mother prepared everything for her even for a little thing such as outfit color or presents due to her mother knew something about those people. Her mother was Mainland Chinese while Rachel is ABC (American-Born Chinese), their understanding of the culture also different. Those are pieces of what is inside Kevin Kwan's Novel entitled "*Crazy Rich Asians* (2013)" that related to his life. In simple words, this novel is chosen to be the subject of the research due to the content of the novel and the author's life have a similar background which makes the Historical Biographical

approach applicable in this novel by revealing what is inside the novel and its relation to author's environment. Also, the data are taken from primary and secondary data. The primary data is the novel itself while the secondary data taken from articles, magazines, or documents related to the topic.

## 1.2 Problem Identification

According to the background of the research, literature is closely related to the society in which it is presented in the literature through a fictional form. However, some expert has a different argument as in (Wellek, 2016) that stated bringing literary artwork in criticism argued to be not relevant based on an argument that the great literary artwork has poor historical evidence. However, the novel *Crazy Rich Asians* (2013) has proven its quality as the bestseller novel which is said to represent Singapore, the upper-class family in particular. The idea of this research is to prove that historical biography criticism is relevant to conduct. Besides, analysis using the historical biography approach reveals the extrinsic elements that influenced the author in the process of creation which provides historical evidence. For EFL students, the idea of reading or analyzing novels to improve their language learning is relevant, besides the students can use their critical thinking to discover its relevance to real-world environments which subconsciously gain insights of certain phenomena outside their environment. This is in response to the main problem in reading when students become slow readers due to lack of automaticity and knowledge because of their low exposure to reading activity especially to English as the target language (Robertson & Nunn, 2015). The result of this research purposed to provide an understanding that novels is beneficial to the

teachers or students in that most of the literary work contains historical evidence that can be accessed through understanding by analyzing the extrinsic element.

### **1.3 Limitation of the Study**

The limitation of this research is the Historical Biography of the author *Crazy Rich Asians* (2013) novel compared to the environment in the real-life world. This research focused on the identification of what is inside the novel compared to the author's environment through *race, milieu, and moment* theory by H.A. Taine (1980). Thus, this research brings together the extrinsic element to put in the analysis.

### **1.4 Statement of Problem**

Based on the research background mentioned previously, some problems can be drawn accordingly. Those problems are;

1. How nation represented in the *Crazy Rich Asians* (2013) novel through the characters that reflected the real-world environment?
2. How the environment represented in the *Crazy Rich Asians* (2013) novel that reflected the real-world environment?
3. How the event represented in the *Crazy Rich Asians* (2013) novel that reflected a particular time in the real-world?

### **1.5 Purposes of the study**

According to the statement of the problem mentioned previously, the purposes of this study distributed as follow;

1. To identify the nation in *Crazy Rich Asians* (2013) novel that reflected the real-world environment

2. To identify the environment within *Crazy Rich Asians* (2013) novel that reflected the real-world environment
3. To identify the event within *Crazy Rich Asians* (2013) novel that reflected the particular time in the real-world

## 1.6 Definition of Key Terms

In this part, some key terms are related to give an overview of this research. It distributed as follows.

### 1.6.1 Theoretical

- a. Characterization: How the characters created to become a living individual (Gill, 1995)
- b. Setting: Physical environment within a story (Gioia & Kennedy, 1995)
- c. Historical Biography: A study that relates literary work with the author (Olsen, 2010)

### 1.6.2 Operational

- a. Characterization: This research focuses on to figure out the description of characters within the novel to reveal their social background
- b. Setting: Setting of places, time, and social within the novel and the author's historical biography helps to reveal the explanation about the representation of the author's life experiences
- c. Historical Biography: This research will use historical biography to reveal the representation of the author's life experience in the novel

## 1.7 Significances of the Study

The significance of this study is supposed to provide benefits to the field in which this study belongs. This part of the research is grouped into two; the first is the theoretical significance and the second is practical significance.

### 1.7.1 Theoretical Significance

This study was carried to give a significant contribution to literary work analysis, especially novel analysis that emphasized on the biography of the author.

#### a. Historical Biographical Criticism

Historical Biography criticism is about the role of the author's environment in the process of making literary work. This research is expected to give contribution toward the study of historical biography and enrichment of historical biography criticism in literature due to this criticism is still relevant to conduct. This idea came from the understanding that literary work is the reflection of a particular society. In which, criticism by bringing the author's external factor is important.

#### b. H.A. Taine's (1890) *Race, Milieu, and Moment* Theory

This study is expected to give a contribution to three main motives or factors behind any work of art by Hippolyte Adolph Taine (1890). This concept from Taine is related to support biographical study in understanding the intention of the author from his/her literature work. This research can be empirical enrichment for this theory about the creative process in making literary work. Besides, this theory applied to one of the popular modern novel to see the relevancy of this theory.

c. Novel Studies

Novel studies can be done by looking from the intrinsic and extrinsic elements of the novel just as other researchers had done in the novel study, such as Ifada (2019) who use novel *Crazy Rich Asians* (2013) as the subject of the research, Tussadiah & Saputri (2018) who applied Biographical approach on the novel study using descriptive qualitative method, and many other kinds of research about the novel.

### 1.7.2 Practical Significance

Besides theoretical significance, this study is supposed to provide significance to English teachers, authors, readers, and other researchers.

a. English Teachers

This study can be used by teachers as a reference in teaching literature to students. Especially, when they wanted their students to have a better understanding of the use of the target language and issues related to real-world phenomena portrayed within the novel as historical evidence. Besides, the process of finding the message will allow students to acquire critical thinking. Zahra (2015) from the result of her study, revealed that students believe fiction in the EFL classroom is advantageous to enhance their language skills, personal development and reflection, and cultural understanding and tolerance. Thus, the result of this study purposed to provide an understanding that novel is a fun and meaningful authentic instrument in teaching English as a target language to students.

## b. Fiction Writers

This study can be used to help the creative process in making literary work through the understanding that great ideas can be found in daily life. One of the determinations of a great fictional story is they are mostly shaped based on the reality that happens in a certain society which then mixed with the author's imagination. Details of the environment where few people noticed or the unusual ideas could become a great idea when completed with perfect packaging. This argument supported by Fogle et al. (2006) stated that between literature work and the writer's personal life there is a strong relationship. The previous argument is relevant considering many of the great literary works are based on the real universe. Hence, future readers will have more interest when they found the relation to the real environment.

## c. Students

For the students, this study can be used to remind them as the readers to have more appreciation for literary works such as novels due to its advantages. Deep comprehension of literary work will lead to satisfaction and willingness to keep reading which resulted in many benefits. Artawan, Gede, & Setiawan (2017) in his study states that Biography text brought positive influence on students. Biography is usually written for those who have important achievements. Thus, students are potentially inspired by the experiences of the biography text. Even though the novel *Crazy Rich Asians* (2013) did not implicitly raise a person's biography, there are characters that represented real-world characters. Besides, novel reading has certain effects on the reader's empathy. Bal (2013) stated that fictitious work affects the

reader's empathy compared to non-fictional readers. Empathy leads someone to be more aware of the situation and surroundings. It is the ability to understand the emotion of others. Therefore, by understanding others' feelings, someone can give appropriate responses. Readers will experience the development of their empathy only when the readers are emotionally transported into the story completed with the insights of the real-world environment behind the creative process. Besides, when students have enough exposure to literary work such as novel which using the target language, they will have more potential in increasing their language learning.

d. Other Researcher

For other researchers, this study is supposed to provide them a source in conducting a study in this circle. Besides, the result shown will be able to use as an empirical review and the development of the theory, continuously. Other researchers are able to put this as comparison and reference in making novelty of their research. Kopong (2014) Yuliantari (2015), Dewi (2013), and Tussadiah & Saputri (2018)s are the example of the researchers who have conducted a study about the correlation between the literary work and the author. They proved studies related to biographical analysis still have a place in literary criticism.