CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Literature is defined as one of the manifestations of creative ideas that have distinctive characteristics and are entirely dependent on the author himself (Wellek and Warren, 1997). Literature represents life in a broad measure, a social reality, and the real world is also the object of literary imitation. Literature is an imaginative work of human creation that is aesthetically creative.

In addition, literature also presents a picture of life. Literature is a work that is born from a person's feelings in his social life and then systematically arranged and delivered orally or in writing. Literature is an expression, thoughts, feelings and even events experienced by the creator that are poured in the form of literary works.

Literary works are a means to convey messages about the truth. The messages in literary works are conveyed by the author in a very clear or subtly implied way. Literary works can also be used to describe what the author captures about the life around him. Literary works not only function as a means of entertainment but also contain messages to be conveyed in the form of social values described through the attitudes or behavior of the characters. Forms of literary works include poetry, prose, drama, and other forms of literary works, both those included in old, transitional, and modern literature.

According to Nurgianto (2010), a novel as a work of fiction offers a world, a world that contains an idealized model of life, an imaginative world built through various intrinsic elements such as events, plot, characters (and characterizations), setting, point of view, and others, all of which are of course imaginative.

In principle, literary works are structures. The structure is a systematic arrangement of elements. Between one element and another element shows a reciprocal relationship, mutual determination, mutual influence which together form a unified whole. Literary works are not just a collection or set of things or things that stand alone, but these things are interrelated.

As a work, fiction offers a world. A world that contains an idealized model of life. The imaginative world is built through various intrinsic elements such as setting, characters, events, plot, point of view and others, all of which are of course also imaginative (Nurgiyantoro, 2010).

Among the main genres of literature are poetry, prose, and drama. The prose genre, especially novels, is considered the most dominant in displaying social elements. The reasons that can be stated include novels display the most complete story elements, have the most extensive media, and present the most extensive societal problems. The language of novels tends to be colloquial, the language most commonly used in society. Therefore, it is said that the novel is the most sociological genre, responsive, and very sensitive to sociohistorical fluctuations (Ratna, 2015).

The term novel etymologically comes from the Italian "novella" which means story or tale. People who write novels are called novelists. The content of a novel story is longer, more complex and contains a message that wants to be conveyed to the reader. Usually, the story of a novel begins with the most important event or incident experienced by the characters in the story, which then changes the fate of their lives.

I am very interested in social issues, coincidentally I was reading a novel by John Green entitled *Paper Towns*, then I made this novel and raised this social issue for my research. This research uses the novel *Paper Towns*, which is a novel by John Green and was published on October 16, 2008. *Paper Towns* tells the story of Quentin and Margo. They were born with different backgrounds. Q or Quentin is someone who is very open and never hides anything from his parents. While

Margo is a child who was born to narcissistic parents, making her constantly seek attention and become the most popular girl in school, because of her beauty, intelligence, or mystery.

Based on the two different family backgrounds of the main character, the researcher got the idea to make it a research material because this problem often occurs even in society in Indonesia itself. This novel by John Green is not as popular as his other novels, but the issues and problems that occur in the novel *Paper Towns* are quite important. Many people do not realize that these social issues have a negative impact on society. This novel is indeed a fictional novel, but even so it turns out that the title of this novel was inspired by a true story, this is what distinguishes it from other studies.

According to Wellek and Warren (1995), novels refer more to higher reality and deep psychology. The conflicts experienced by the characters also vary, such as social conflicts. Literary sociology is a study that underlies an understanding of the life contained in a work such as a movie, novel, and others. According to Ratna (2003), the theory of literary sociology that bridges sociological analysis in a literary work or others relies on explaining the social facts of literary works. It is considered a communication system related to extrinsic elements such as social groups, social classes, social certification, social interactions, social realities, social conflicts, and others.

Meanwhile, sociology of literature is also considered as the mother of studies in a research that discusses social life and society. It can be found from a literary work or a literary work that has been modified in the form of a work of art such as a novel. In line with that, the theory used in this research is Emile Durkheim's theory (2014), which contains a problem in literary sociology from the aspect of social reality.

Social reality in sociological studies usually contains a rationale that is able to clarify the reality of social life such as the existence of society, various forms of social groups, and individuals who are joined together in carrying out social

communication and social contact. The behavior of individuals in society is one important aspect as part of social reality, this can be seen from their social interactions with neighbors, siblings, or parents. The process of genius in this social reality can be seen in everyday life starting from eating, drinking, and others as part of individual social reality.

Émile Durkheim was a French sociologist who made significant contributions to the development of theories about society and social behavior. Durkheim distinguished between two forms of social solidarity. Mechanical solidarity applies to traditional societies where common norms and values create cohesion. Organic solidarity, which is more common in modern societies, arises from differences and interdependence among individuals with specialized roles. Durkheim viewed each element of society, including institutions, practices, and structures, as part of a system with specific functions. He believed that these elements contribute to the stability and continuity of society. For example, law, education, and religion serve social functions that help maintain social order

Social reality is a reality that occurs in society related to stability in normal and abnormal patterns of community relations. Social reality in literary sociology is something that is considered real in social life and is the result of social construction, besides that it is also defined as the basic content that can explain the reality in the social life of society or characters who make social contacts and social communication.

Social reality in literary works then becomes important to study and research in order to know and understand the nature of society which is the object of study in social science. Social reality is human life that is formed in a continuous process, namely daily social symptoms or social experiences. In the novel, there are several examples of social realities that occur in the novel and through the process of reading the novel, it is able to open the awareness that there are various social realities experienced by the characters in their lives which are revealed in an interesting way by the author through the setting, events, and lives of the characters.

Social reality is very diverse, one of which is about the issue of teenagers. In this novel, it tells about the problems faced by American teenagers. The social reality faced by teenagers in the United States is very diverse and complex, influenced by cultural, social, technological, and economic factors. Overall, teenagers in America live in a reality full of opportunities but also significant challenges. They grow up in a rapidly changing environment and face pressure to balance social, academic, and personal demands.

Social conditions and society refer to the environment in which people live and interact, shaped by cultural, economic, political, and social factors. These conditions influence individuals' opportunities, behaviors, relationships, and overall quality of life. Social conditions and societal structures are deeply interconnected. Addressing inequalities, fostering inclusivity, and adapting to changing global contexts are critical for building healthier and more equitable societies.

This is a previous research relevant to the topic and object. Previous research will be described which is used as a reference in this research. Therefore, a critical review needs to be conducted in this part by summarizing the previous research. This research entitled "Pengaruh Realitas Sosial Terhadap Kehidupan Pasangan Campuran dalam Novel *L'Histoire de La Femme Cannibale* Karya Maryse Conde" by Rita Nurhasanah. The study is a research aims to show the influence of social reality on the lives of the mixed couples in the novel. To achieve this goal plot analysis, character analysis, setting analysis and point of view analysis. The difference with this research to be carried out is the difference in data and research objects but this research contributes by providing an overview of social reality.

The research entitled is "Ironi dalam Novel *Paper Towns* Karya John Green" by Andre Stifano Jonathan Runtuwarouw. The purpose of this study is to identify, analyze, and classify the types of irony in this novel. Through this research, we can create a society that is realistic in the evolution of our obsessions, assumptions, and thoughts. The results of this study showed that three forms of irony were found in the novel: verbal irony, situational irony, and dramatic irony.

The equation of this research with the research to be done is using the same object, namely the novel *Paper Towns*, but using different methods and theories.

Based on this explanation, this research use theory by Emile Durkheim's theory (2014), which contains a problem in literary sociology from the aspect of social reality. This research is also in line with this understanding by looking at the social reality contained in the novel.

1.2 Research Problem

John Green's novel *Paper Towns* reveals various interesting problems to be analyzed.

1. How does the novel *Paper Towns* reflect the social reality of American teenagers?

2. How does the depicition of cities in the novel *Paper Towns* reflect social conditions and society?

1.3 Research Objectives

Based on the problem formulation, the purpose of this research are as follows.

1. The objective of this research is to identify the ways in which *Paper Towns* potrays the social, psychological, and cultural issues faced by teenagers in American.

2. To analyze how the depicition of cities in *Paper Towns* reflects social conditions and society.

1.4 Research Significance

Based on the research objectives, this research is expected to provide benefits, both theoretically and practically. This research is expected to be an example of literary studies using the comparative method, with the aim of knowing the social reality and deeds in the story of the novel *Paper Towns* by John Green. Thus, this

research will play a role in enriching the development of literature or the appreciation of literature itself.

This research is practically useful to increase knowledge and understanding to be able to distinguish how good and bad characters in life. So that it can sort out which characters can be exemplified and avoided. This research is useful to show that there are social realities in the novel Paper Towns by John Green.

1.5 Definition of the Key Terms

In order to clarify the key terms used in this study, some definitions are put forward:

Social Reality: This refers to the set of shared beliefs, perceptions, and practices that shape how individuals understand and interact with the world around them. Social reality is constructed through social interactions and cultural norms, influencing how people perceive their social environment and their place within it. It encompasses how societal institutions, norms, and values shape individual and collective experiences.

Paper Towns: This is a young adult novel written by John Green. Published in 2008, it follows the story of Quentin "Q" Jacobsen, who is on a quest to find his enigmatic neighbor, Margo Roth Spiegelman, after she disappears. The novel explores themes of identity, perception, and the idea of "paper towns" as metaphors for superficial or illusory aspects of life and relationships. It blends elements of mystery and coming-of-age as Q navigates his feelings and the search for Margo.