CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Literature is seen as a symptom of events written in a specified time period, as well as a recorder of the events of that era (Luxemburg, 1989: 23). One of the things most related to literature is literary works. The key of literature is "language". We can analyze meaning of the some parts of literature by using our understanding with the language.

There are many literary works, including poetry, short stories, novels, prose, and even gurindam. One of the most popular literary works is the novel. Like literary works in general, some characteristics of novels are themes, plot, and background. According to M.H. Abrams, novels are literary works that arise because of the imaginative world, novel stories can live because of the characters and characteristics presented in the novel, and have stories that motivate and understand readers. One of the novels that also has a characteristic storytelling is Margaret Atwood's The Handmaid's Tale. A novel published in 1985 that is set in the United States.Author needs an approach as an tool to analyze a story. One of the approach is semiotic.

Semiotics is a literary approach that studies sign and marker systems. One of Zoest's views is that a sign is something that can be observed. In a further sense, as a theory, semiotics means the systematic study of the

production, interpretation of signs, how signs work, and what benefits they have in human and even social life

Roland Barthes (1915-1980) took De Saussure's model in his research on literary works and cultural phenomena, such as fashion. Literature makes signs not simple to analyze, as they are related to events. Signs in literature are not limited to written texts that are generally passed through literary works. The relationship between literary works, writers, and readers is a sign that has a very deep meaning.

Barthes divides semiotics into three levels, namely denotation, connotation and myth. These three levels have a very important function in analyzing the meaning of a story. In addition, there is one model developed by Roland Barthes, namely the relationship between what is called the system, which is called the treasury of signs, including (words, visuals, images, and objects).

The level called "denotation" is the first level of literal meaning or actual meaning, which is also called linguistic meaning. The reading of denotative meaning uses the heuristic method (considering literary works as a primary system). While the second level of analysis is called "connotation", which is meaning that can use hermeneutic reading (articulation of questions, puzzles, enigmas that finally find answers). And "myth" is directly related to

literary works because it is related to stories in the past and contains social and even religious mandates in it. According to Barthes (2015:151) cultural myths that are played directly by the community are a type of speech. That is why, myths are included in one of the communication systems, which means a message.

The meaning of a sign can be seen from various sides of a story, as well as the storytelling of literary works, and through the interactions that exist in a story. According to Dr. Aart van Zoest (1993:131), social interaction occurs because of stimulation and interpretation in the sign system, in language and non-language. Forms of communication verbally and through body gestures are examples of denotative, connotative, and mythical meanings.

In general, Ferdinand De Saussure, who is a semiological figure, suggested that there are three sign systems, namely signs, signifiers, and signs. In this case, Barthes developed this in literature and put it into symbolic, paradigmatic, and syntagmatic relationships. An example of a "signifier" that we can encounter in our daily lives is the cock crowing before dawn, as a "sign" is that it is almost morning.

Through literary works that present various signifiers and signs, it becomes its own meaning that could have a story in each sign. One literary work, the novel, uses semiotics as the key to a more interesting story. And semiotics is what can build a story. The presentation of semiotics is also present in the novel The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood. Through the signs that are present, it holds a dark history in the past.

The novel, which was first published in 1985, presents several historical facts that can be seen from the signifiers and signs in the novel. There are many reasons why the government system has changed, why there are handmaids as sex servants, and all the rules imposed on society are very strict, these are all signs that are present because there are signifiers or dark history in the past.

Use semiotic analysis and taking Roland Bathes' theory of denotative, connotative and mythical analysis, the researcher found many causes of change as seen from various sides through signs. I found the cause and effect that takes place in the story in The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood.

The researcher found a reflection of the past on the present. Many changes are deliberately made because of personal or group interests. Interests that sacrifice many parties, especially civil society, whose rights and freedoms are not recognized hierarchically. An example that can be seen is

that the presence of the Handmaids greatly changed the culture and conditions of society before the war. Women were highly respected for their freedom, but after that they were confined to all rights and even their voices. This situation is almost the same as the current situation that sacrifices civil society for the sake of interest. People seem to be shackled so that they cannot move and speak out, even though their land is confiscated, the environment, and cultural customs are eliminated due to the massive presence of technology.

Semiotics has been used in many studies, but the discussion of signs, signifiers, and signs is very influential in analyzing a story, including the story in The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood, especially myth analysis. Through the existing signs and signifiers, the researcher will analyze the social and cultural images derived from the circumstances and conflicts in the past, caused by the change of political government, which was the result of World War II, thus sacrificing many people, especially women.

1.2. Statements of Problem

From the background discussion above, the researcher has two problem statements.

1.2.1. How does the author potray the causes of social and cultural change in the novel "The Handmaid's Tale" by Margaret Atwood?

1.2.2. How does the author depict the social and cultural changes through Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis in The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood?

1.3. Scope of Study

Based on the background that has been described above, the researcher wants to discuss more complexly about Roland Barthes' theory of semiotics, with method specifications using the heuristic method by looking for connotations of a sign through language or writing in literary works. If seen further, the analysis of signs is very important, especially in a literary work that almost completely needs interpretation.

1.4. Objectives of the Study

Based on the background and problem formulation above, the researcher would like to describe several objectives of this study, namely:

1.4.1. To analyze the causes of social and cultural changes that presented in the novel "The Handmaid's Tale" by Margaret Atwood

1.4.2. To find out how social and cultural changes in the novel "The Handmaid's Tale" by Margaret Atwood

1.5. Significances of the Research

There are two several significances in this research

1.5.1. Theoretical Significance

The researcher hopes that this research will really add to the reader understanding and increase the use of one of the literary approaches, namely semiotics using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory which the researcher analyzes in the novel "The Handmaid's Tale" by Margaret Atwood.

15.2. Practical Significance

Practically, the researcher hopes that this study can be useful and useful for literary activists, other researchers, readers, and students. To be able to view reality more broadly through literary works. One of the issues raised by the researcher is related to the analysis of signs in various conditions, including social and cultural.

1.6. Review of Related Literature

To support this research, researcher studied several related previous studies.

The first, researcher found a previous study related to the novel "The Handmaid's Tale" by Margaret Atwood, by Uma Aulia Mahsa (2019). English Language Education student of Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta. Her research is entitled "Stuggles For Gender Equality Againts The Fundamentalist Regime in The Handmaid's Tale Novel (1985): A Feminist Perspective" which analyzes gender equality and uses literary criticism, namely a feminist perspective. This study focuses on analyzing the struggle for gender equality, and the researcher brings up the reflection of women's rights along with the violation of women's human rights in the United States in the 1980s. This research has three results, those are; 1). There are six indicators of the stuggle for gender equality, 2). How the issues conveyed by

the author, and 3). The author discusses gender equality in the 1880s in the United States through her experiences.

The second, a research in the form of a thesis written by Aryana Nurul Qarimah (2019) from Postgraduate Program, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Gadjah Mada. The title of her research is "The Hysteria of Subject in The Handmaid's Tale Novel by Margaret Atwood". This research is studied using a psychological approach by raising Slavoj Zizek's concept, namely about subjectivity. Researchers are more directed to a psychological illness, hysteria or subjectivity of a person to accept and reject the mandate that becomes symbolic, such as the main character, Offred, and one of her friends, Moira. Both have different forms of acceptance in accepting life at that time.

This research produces a study of the hysteria of a character in the novel *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood. The character is being subject as a victim of *The Big Other.*

The third research is by Devi Maharani, a student of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education (FKIP), Muhammadiyah University of North Sumatra. Her research is entitled "Semiotic Analysis of Roland Barthes in the Novel Matahari Karya Tere Liye". This research aims to describe Roland Barthes' five semiotic codes, namely hermeneutic, semic, symbolic, proaretic, and gnomic codes presented in the Matahari Novel by Tere Liye. The result

of this research is, researcher found some types of Roland Barthes' Semiotik, there are; 1). Hermeneutic code, 2). Semic code, 3).Symbolic code, 4). Proaretic code, and 5). Gnomic code.

The another research that takes Roland Barthes' semiotic theory is research by Hikma Tansilo (2023), a student. The literary work used as research material is the novel "Dilan: 1990" by Pidi Baiq. This research discusses the icons contained in the novel. The icons include five icons which are image and photo icons, eight indexes which are characters and behaviors, and nine symbols which are human behaviors along with their characteristic indexes. The results of this rearch are that the researcher found icons in the novel *Dilan: 1990*. There are five icons from pictures and photos, eight indexes which represent the attitudes if the main characters, and there are nine symbols which represent human nature and behavior.

1.7. Theoritical Bases

To support this research, researchers use several theories as the foundation of this research, namely:

1.7.1. Roland Barthes' Semiotics

Semiotics is the study of signs, the function of signs, and the production of meaning in these signs. Etymologically, semiotics comes from the Greek: Semeion, which means "sign". Some of the figures who pioneered the science of semiotics are Ferdinand de Saussure, Peirce, and Roland Barthes. Saussure analyzes signs lingually or linguistically, Peirce analyzes using philosophy, and Roland Barthes applies Saussure's analysis model, one of which is about analyzing signs in culture.

Barthes thinks that the semiotic study of text is related to the context behind it. There is meaning present in a sign. Barthes proposed a sign system in connotation. The application of literary analysis is not only at the level of semiosis, but also to connotative social symptoms. Literary works have a second meaning that is hidden through a symptom that exists in a sign (Sutrisno & Hendrar Putranto, 2007: 118).

As Roland Barthes said, if ideology has the power to bring everyone to live in an imaginary and ideal world that makes them trapped in a false reality,

even though the real reality of life does not work that way. That is why Roland Barthes said that connotation is a cultural expression.

As a practical knowledge, semiotics also aims to provide an understanding of the position of signs. Especially in everyday life to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of energy that needs to be spent. According to Dr. Arthur Asa Berger (2000), semiotics is one of the imperialistic sciences, which is why it can be applied to many different fields, including contemporary culture. For this reason, Roland Barthes' semiotics is instrumental in analyzing signs, sign meanings, and sign functions.

1.7.1.2. Denotative

Denotative is very clear to see in literary works because rich literature consists of a collection of language, so this first level of text analysis is very necessary in analyzing the signs and meanings of signs in a literary work. According to Roland Barthes, denotation directly explains the relationship between signifier, signified, and reality, and contains clear, definite meaning. Denotative is also called linguistic analysis, because it only focuses on words, terms, synonyms, and other language signs. The method used is the heuristic method, which interprets language as a primary system.

Denotative expressions contain strong analysis objectively rather than subjectively. Thus, denotative sentences in the scientific, legal and academic

fields can be declared true, because they look at the object that corresponds to the denotative expression. An example of a denotative expression is, stars are present in the middle of the dark expanse of the sky. The word star indicates the explicit fact that stars are indeed present at night, not in bright daylight.

1.7.1.3. Connotative

The connotative is the second level of sign analysis or semiotics. To analyze connotatively, the hermeneutic method is used, which is called the oldest scientific method. In literature, hermeneutic is parallel to interpretation, understanding, verstehen or understanding social phenomena, and retroactive or other names for interpretation based on literary conventions.

Hermeneutics has further analyzed a sign, the analysis has led to puzzles, enigmas, accountability. In analyzing, the researcher or reader has thought about "What for?", "What obstacles arise?", "What is the end and purpose?". For this reason, connotative as the second level of analysis is indispensable in analyzing a sign, especially in literary works.

Connotative expressions specifically ask readers to analyze more deeply the meaning of a sign. One example is the expression black roses have bled. The word black rose can be a metaphor for the meaning of an unga woman who is sad or hurt until she bleeds because of her life problems.

Signs become meaningful when interpreted, black roses will only be words without meaning if they are not interpreted.
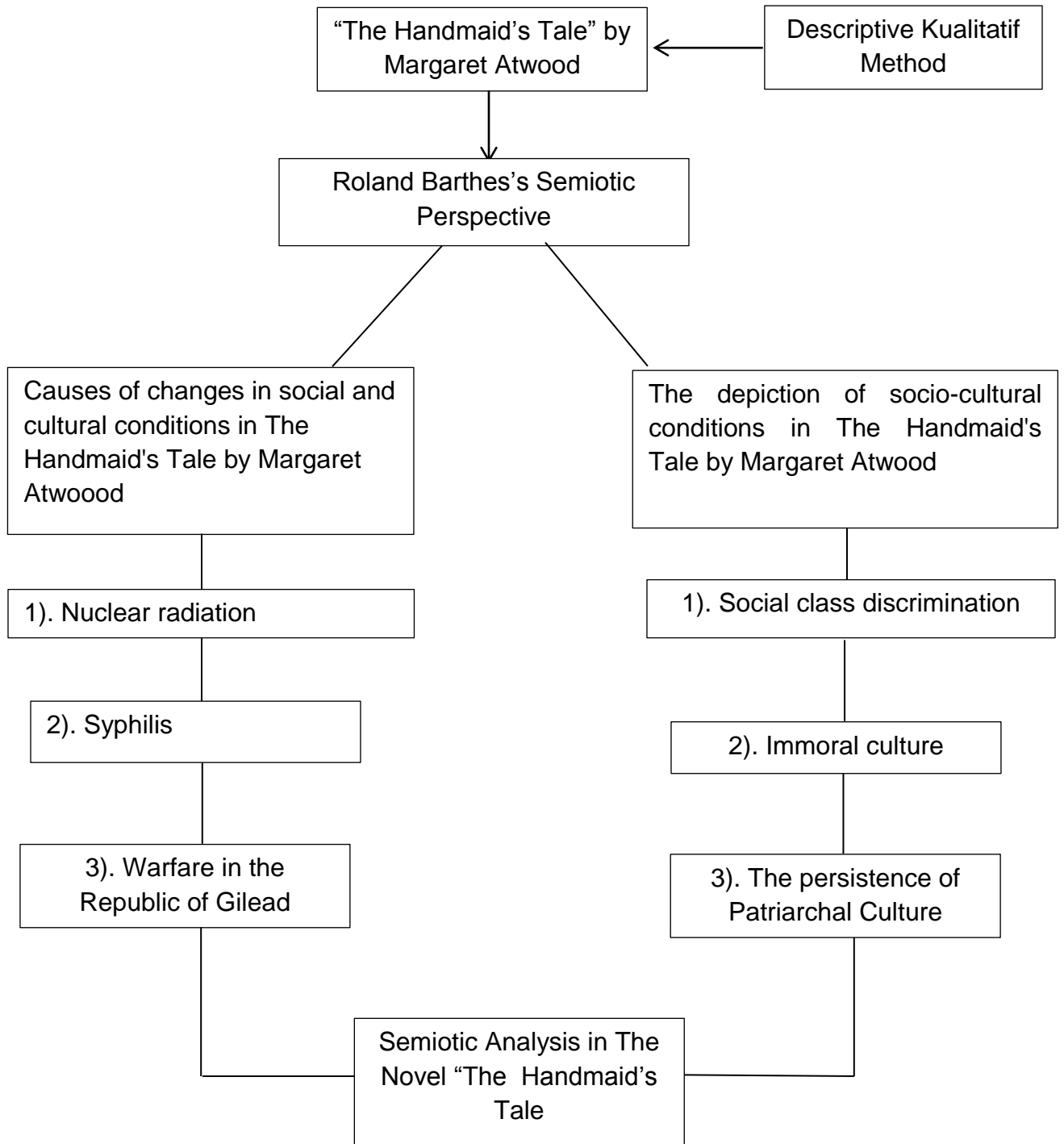
1.7.1.4. Myth

Vredenbreght (1983: 5) said that myth is also holistis. A holistis approach means providing and supporting that looks at whole person. Such as: physical, emotional, social and social and spiritual situations. Myth is the theory used by Roland Barthes and also distinguishes his theory from that of other experts. Myth in his discourse relies on belief and history. This myth system is what Barthes relies on as a second level of analysis derived from the first level of semiotics or denotation and analyzed using hermeneutics. The presence of myths in semiotic studies can be recognized through short expressions full of meaning or what is commonly called the maxim - the expression of a character or aphorism and metonymy.

It can be interpreted that, the relationship between signifier and signified in the second level semiotic system by Roland Barthes is interpreted as a myth. The existence of myths makes readers analyze intensionally or search for meaning, especially social meaning. Etymologically, myth comes from the word Mythology which means a study of myths and what is contained in the myth. The most dominant characteristic of myths is that there is a message to be conveyed either in writing or implied.

Literature plays a role in conveying myths through literary works, either from the author through his work or community stories passed down through oral generations. Myths can be seen in some folktales, for example the story of the formation of Lake Tolire in Ternate City, which tells the story of a kingdom where there is a father and son, but the father has sex with his own daughter. The father and son were then given social sanctions and expelled from the village. before they left the village, there was an earthquake that made water appear and drowned the village. The message of this myth is that father and son are forbidden to build a relationship, let alone have intercourse because of the father's flesh and blood in his son. The message contained in this myth is the benchmark for Barthes in analyzing signs to enter the social order of society using myth analysis.

1.8. Conceptual Scheme

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│  "The Handmaid's Tale"  │ ◄──────  │  Descriptive Kualitatif │
│    by Margaret Atwood   │          │         Method          │
└─────────────────────────┘          └─────────────────────────┘
            │
            ▼
┌─────────────────────────┐
│ Roland Barthes's Semiotic│
│       Perspective        │
└─────────────────────────┘
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Causes of changes in social and cultural conditions in The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwoood	The depiction of socio-cultural conditions in The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood
1). Nuclear radiation	1). Social class discrimination
2). Syphilis	2). Immoral culture
3). Warfare in the Republic of Gilead	3). The persistence of Patriarchal Culture

Semiotic Analysis in The Novel "The Handmaid's Tale

From the formulation of the problem and the theory that has been described above, the researcher makes a conceptual scheme as follows: The depiction of socio-cultural conditions in The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwoood

Through Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis, researcher found two problem of statements. The first one is what causes social and cultural change, the second is how social and cultural depiction are in the novel. There are three causes of of changes in social and cultural conditions in The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwoood. Those are; nuclear radiation, syphilis disease, and warfare in the Republic of Gilead. There are three The depiction of socio-cultural conditions in The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood. Those are social class discrimination, immoral culture, The persistence of Patriarchal Culture

1.9. Method of the Research

The research method is one of the scientific steps used to describe how to collect and analyze data (Sujoko Efferin, Stevanus Haddi Damaji, and Yuliawati Tan (2004: 7). The method used in this research is the qualitative description method, which focuses on analyzing a work. The description analysis method is a measure used to analyze data by describing data without the intention of making universal conclusions (Sugiyono: 2014: 21).

In this study, researcher used a qualitative description method because it was able to help researcher in the process of completing this research. Researcher focus on analyzing signs, signifiers, and signifiers and the influence of the relationship between social conditions on semiotics, through Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis.

1.10. Data Source

Researcher took two types of data, namely;

1.10.1. Primary Data

The researcher chose the novel "The Handmaid's Tale" by Margaret Atwood as the main object of this research.

1.10.2. Secoundary Data

Supporting data taken from this research are taken from several related references, such as theses, articles, and several essays that have different themes but still use the novel "The Handmaid's Tale" by Margaret Atwood as the main object of research.

1.11. Techniques of Collecting Data

The techniques of collecting data in this research are as follows;

1.11.1. Reading Comprehension

The researcher read the novel "The Handmaid's Tale" by Margaret Atwood in order to understand the story, be able to analyze more deeply, and find the main points of the story in the novel "The Handmaid's Tale" by Margaret Atwood.

1.11.2. Library Research

Then this research uses library research to find related data through books and theses.

1.11.3. Internet Browsing

Then, researchers use internet browsing to see previous related research. This technique is very helpful in finding comparisons between this research and previous studies and the originality of a study.

1.11.4. Taking notes

Researchers recorded data and important points related to the novel "The Handmaid's Tale" by Margaret Atwood both from the content of the story in intrinsic and extrinsic elements.

1.12. Techniques of Analyzing Data

This research is divided into four stages of data analysis, namely;

1.12.1. Classification

Researchers classify data collection, and analyze the relationship between previous studies.

1.12.2. Interpretation

In this section, researchers interpret data related to research.

1.12.3. Explanation

After that, the researcher began to explain in detail related to the formulation of the problem through analysis.

1.12.4. Conclusion

The researcher makes a conclusion after going through all the processes of analyzing data and understanding semiotics and its relationship to the social conditions present in the novel "The Handmaid's Tale" by Margaret Atwood.