

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### **A. Background of The Study**

Literature is something that came out from the creativity of a human which is usually presented in the form of written work. Almost all written documents can be called a literary work but there is an exception such as telephone books, magazines, newspapers, and important documents (Mario Klarer, 2013). As already mentioned before someone's creativity can be developed and shape into useful literary works which is part of what's so-called literature.

The literary work itself has a definition that is a product that came from human imagination as a result of the experiences that the author has combined with thoughts, ideas, and feelings as a human being (Nuranisah, 2014). Besides that, according to Rohman (2012), literary works are art in the form of useful and beautiful written expression. As it can be seen from these two definitions, it can be concluded that literary work is something that enables humans to express their creativity in the form of beautiful words in order to be useful in society. Usually, most of the literary work came from the author's reality and their involvement inside of it. Furthermore, the literary work itself is divided into two distinct types which are fictional and non-fiction. Fictional type usually consists of some written works related to imagination or fantasy from its author for example like drama, poetry, or novel. Meanwhile, the non-fiction type came from the reality that happens in the real world in other words a fact which included research papers, biographies, or newspapers.

Among the fictional type of written work, a novel can be said to become one of the most common words to express human creativity. A novel is a type of fictional works which came from the fruit of its author's fantasy containing ideas or thought that may useful for the readers. Apart from its definition which is fictional works, nowadays many authors combine their imagination and real-life events to create novels which not only entertaining but also somewhat educating for example the novel *Schindler's Ark* by Thomas Keneally came from a true story about a German businessman Oskar Schindler and his attempt to save Jewish by employing them in his factory during the event of Holocaust. In the novel *In a Farewell to Arms* by Ernest Hemingway, he explains directly how experience and

fiction can form an unusual relationship. He said that he doesn't know about heroism or history book-stuff but when a person experiences a war the phrases and the newspaper words from the orators don't mean a thing as an expression such as brave, victorious, and gallant become somewhat shameful and nauseous (Hemingway 2004: 143). And so, reading a novel can become a way for a person to aware of the issue in real life.

One of the issues which became somewhat prominent nowadays is prejudice. According to Allports (1955) in his book *The Nature of Prejudice*, prejudice is a feeling of aversive or hostile attitude against a person who doesn't belong to their group because his identity as member of others group and so all of the objectionable qualities which the others group have, its member will also have it. Furthermore, prejudice itself can be happening to anyone not only just because their race or sex but also because of their religion, ethnic or sexual orientation. Based on survey held by Pew Research Center in 2019, it found that 82% of respondents believed that Muslims experienced some discrimination, followed by Blacks (80%), Hispanics (76%), and gays and lesbians (75%) (Pepperdine, 2019). From the result it can be seen that prejudice become something that almost everyone whose belong to minority group experiences.

Prejudice itself came from 3 sources combined which are stereotypes or beliefs, emotion, and predisposition to another group (David G Myers, 2010). First is beliefs or stereotypes in which cannot be separated when prejudice occurs. Usually, prejudice happens when someone begins to have a certain assumption about someone else who belongs to a certain group. This is what it's called stereotyping. It usually follows by the second factor which is emotion. Emotion especially negative emotions such as anger, hatred, or jealousy become the driving force that gives an individual to have a certain feeling to someone. And finally, from that those individuals will begin to have a predisposition about another group action which result in prejudice or worse discrimination. One of the authors who famous for his works in the horror-genre novel, Stephen King trying to add issue about prejudice into his novel which came entitled *Elevation* in which the writer chooses as the object in this study.

Born in Maine in 1947, Stephen King was renowned for his work in horror and fantasy genres such as *IT*, *The Shining*, and *Carrie* in which much of his work has been adapted into movies or TV. King begin his writing when he was still at university and after graduation he trying to work as a teacher but to no avail. His success begins when his first

horror novel *Carrie* became a huge success when it was released in 1973 which allowed him to devote himself as a full-time writer. Many successful novels soon followed such as *The Shining* (1977), *Firestarter* (1980), *Cujo* (1981), and *IT* (1986). Apart from novels, King also writes short stories which have been published in book collections. From his writing, he got many awards in literature such as Brom Stoker Award, World Fantasy Awards, British Fantasy Society Awards, and more recently he received the National Medal of Arts from the U.S. National Endowment for the Arts for his contribution to literature. Apart from his stories, he also often writes a column in newspaper or tweet in Twitter regarding the current issue which often deemed as controversial such as his controversial comments about diversity in Oscars which he said that the award is still “rigged in favor of the white folks” (Alison Flood, 2020). And so, it can be seen that Stephen King is aware of a current issue in society that somewhat influence him in his writing which can be seen in his recent work *Elevation*.

The novel *Elevation* written by Stephen King which released in 2018 tells a moving story about a man who affected by some mysterious illness accidentally brings a small divided town being back together. In the novel the author trying to depict how deep-rooted differences can cause prejudice among people and it also tells how to deal with that issue. More than that the novel depicts how one determined person can change the lives of other people around him without him realizing it.

The author who's famous for his horror or fantasy genre, Stephen King decided to write this relatively different novel comparing to his usual novel because of the condition when the novel was released. At that time the United States is divided into two opposing factions after the presidential election occurred. On one side is the Republican and the other is Democrat in which some of the Republicans especially those who labeled themselves as conservatives still against the idea of same-sex marriage. This caused a rising number of reported cases of prejudice against gay and a lesbian couple. The author is trying to raise this issue in the novel and how to react and act when someone witnessed prejudice happen.

The novel *Elevation* tells a story about a man named Scott Carey a divorce website designer that lived in the small town of Castle Rock that being affected by his strange condition in which he begins to suffer from weight loss every day. Although he gradually loses weight, his physical appearance doesn't change, his appetite is still good, and

surprisingly feels better than he ever was before. More than that when he weights with fully dressed and holding a heavy object, he still weighs the same.

Scott begins to tell his story to his personal friend which also a retired doctor, Bob Ellis. Bob advises Scott to seek professional help but he refuses and decides to live his life until the day he reaches 0 pounds, which he called “Zero Day”, by beginning to fully lived his life like he never before. One of them is to decide to help his new neighbors which are a lesbian couple named Ceidre McComb and Missy Donaldson. Those two start a new business in the town by opening a restaurant named Holy Frijole but things become hard and they face bankruptcy as the summers came to an end. One of the reasons they face bankruptcy is that the locals refuse to eat at their restaurant because of their identity as lesbians. Despite the disagreement from his community and the warning from Deidre McComb herself to stay away, Scott still decides to stand up for them.

Deidre decided to promote her restaurant by signing up for the Thanksgiving Turkey Trot 12k run in which Scott also decided to join. Scott made a wager with Deidre in which if he wins Deidre and Missy should come for dinner in his home so that they can talk things over. When Deidre and Scott almost reach the finish there is an accident that makes Deidre falls but Scott helped her up and makes her finish first. As this act has been released largely in the news the following day, it gives the restaurant the business it needs as the following weeks the restaurant is fully booked, and as the result, the townspeople starting to accept Deidre and Missy despite their previous prejudice to them.

With what happened in the race, Deidre begins to respect Scott and she decided to have dinner at Scott’s. Scott also invited Bob and his wife Myra and decided to tell all of them about his condition. They begin to discuss whether Scott should seek medical air or not but in the end they decided not to do anything as Scott also has started to accept his fate. As Zero Day begin to approach faster, Scott found that his weight loss begin to hinder his daily activities and so he begins to arrange his final plan for his departure. In the last dinner with his friend, Scott asked Deidre to helped him with his final request. When Zero-Day arrives, he requests Deidre to bring him out to his lawn so that she can release him from his wheelchair. As Scott begins to floats away into Space, he lights his SkyLight as a final farewell to his friend on Earth.

The novel *Elevation* receives several positive reviews from its reader. Ron Charles (2018) in his reviews at *The Washington Post* said that King’s new novel is a trick and treat

as it depicts how to overcome prejudice and how to healed resentment in which those two-act come from inside our conscience. More than that he also said this novel is about exemplary behavior which centered on how adults are capable to evolve beyond their narrow-minded beliefs to resolve their differences. Despite being famous for his horror novel, Stephen King decided to write outside his comfort zone to respond to what happens around him.

Meanwhile, Robert Cruz (2018) in his review in *The New York Times* said that this novel seems to provoke the U.S current state of politic which the author delivered it in a weight-less story that also included topic about close-mindedness and prejudice. More than that he also said that the author successfully combines the mundane and fantastical factors inside his novel. He finished his review by saying that there is a sweetness that has been considered as something new in the author's career as a renowned horror writer.

The writer's opinion about this novel is that it depicts a certain social issue which is prejudice in which in our society is sometimes being underestimated as something insignificant. It also tells how to overcome differences and trying to be open-minded in every situation especially when it comes to a sensitive issue such as prejudice. It gives the readers a new perspective of how minorities are being treated in today's society which hopefully will arise awareness among them.

The reason why the writer analyzes this novel because this novel is still can be considered new and so there aren't many researchers yet who use this novel as their research object thus the writer can avoid plagiarism. More than that this novel raises a certain issue which still relevant to today's society which is prejudice and the writer wants to know more detail about how the author portrayed the issue in the novel.

According to some of the reasons from the writer above, the writer decided to analyze prejudice in the novel *Elevation* using Sociological Approach. Therefore, this study is entitled "Prejudice Reflected in Stephen King's *Elevation* (2018) A Sociological Approach".

## **B. Problem Statement**

1. What are the indicators of prejudice in the novel *Elevation*?
2. How is prejudice depicted in the novel *Elevation*?
3. Why did the author address prejudice in the novel *Elevation*?

## **C. Objective of the Study**

The objective of the study is as follows:

1. To identify indicators of prejudice in the literary work.
2. To describe how prejudice being depicted in the literary work.
3. To reveal why Stephen King addressed prejudice in the novel.

## **D. Benefits of the Study**

The result of this research is expected to give some benefits as follows:

### **1. Theoretical Benefit**

The research is expected to present new information and contributed to the literature field. It provides an additional perspective for a different researcher who needs to conduct research especially related to literary studies in the *Elevation* novel.

### **2. Practical Benefit**

The research is expected to increase the knowledge for others students and can be used as a future reference in the literature field from A Sociological Approach.