

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the introduction of the study which consists of seven parts: background of the research, research questions, aims of the research, scope of the research, the significance of the research, the research's clarification of terms, and the organization of the paper.

### 1.1 Background of Research

The early 21<sup>st</sup> century marks a significant progression of human civilization with the development of the globalization of media, technology, and economy which also indicates the shift from modern to a postmodern era. As a consequence of this development, signs of an increasing discontent can be seen in society. Detachment and isolation are examples of how development affects how society works and how human's sociological and psychological state are altered. To make sense of the impact caused by these changes, several scholars have contributed in their respective field of expertise. Among several theories, alienation, as suggested by Forst (2017) to be understood as a form of a dialectical combination of individual and collective autonomy, can be used as one of the relevant theories to make sense of this phenomenon thus making the problem of alienation to be one of the contemporary interests.

The concept of alienation is rooted in Marxism which believed to be formed as a sense of detachment, disempowerment, and estrangement resulted from the capitalization of the economy (Cited in Comninel, 2019). This capitalization of the economy causes several impacts which are experienced by the workers namely: alienation from product, alienation from labor process, alienation from fellow workers, and alienation from self (Heerikhuizen, cited in SocialScienceUvA, 2015).

Furthermore, Seeman (1959) proposes another perspective regarding this issue of alienation and focuses in a socio-psychological sense. He argues that alienation is a

central concept of sociological work and is laden with value and implication which causes an individual to experience detachment from his/her social environment. He mentions five variants in which alienation presents itself namely powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, isolation, and self-estrangement.

The recently developed conception of alienation is proposed by Jaeggi (2014). She argues that alienation could mean ways in which individuals' life may go wrong. For instance, the feeling of apathy and indifference toward life which are bound with alienation threatens to weaken the definition of what good life is in general. This could mean that an alienated person undergoes a detachment from society and even from him/herself so that he/she sees the world with a pessimistic point of view.

As to the theory of alienation proposed by Jaeggi (2014), she believes that alienation is form of a deficient relation. Alienation does not mean an absence of relation, but alienation itself is a relation. Alienation is the contrasting standpoint of relation of appropriation, a relation of both integration and transformation of what is given. She argues that alienation is indicated by three aspects namely the intertwined powerlessness and meaninglessness, constructed as a social heteronomy, and a form of relation of relationlessness.

. Kalekin-Fishman and Langman (2015) reinforce the concept of alienation proposed by Jaeggi (2014). They mention that the theory offers an excellent overview of the concept to protect its importance in contemporary condition. The theory focuses toward a more philosophical, ethical critique and theory of subjectivity rather than the socioeconomics causes without ignoring the indebtedness of the theory to Marx.

Departing from Jaeggi's (2014) perspective of alienation, and concerning the phenomenon of alienation, the novel *How to Stop Time* by Matt Haig (2017) raises similar and relevant issues. The current time setting of the novel is the year 2017. This temporal setting is relevant in representing the current postmodern condition of society. However, the story revolves around the main character named Tom Hazard, and his associates who suffer a condition called *anageria* that allows them to live for hundreds of years, thus, the narration of his experience and the condition of society from hundreds of years ago are also depicted in the novel. The relation and interrelation

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***THE MEN WHO ARE LOST IN TIME: ALIENATION IN MATT HAIG'S HOW TO STOP TIME (2017)***

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among Tom's experiences, characters, and the time itself make Tom Hazard alienated not only from the society where he lives in as a 'normal' human being but also among his associates in the *Albatross Society*. Compared to Marxian alienation which concerns mostly with the socioeconomics condition of an individual as a member of a specific social class (proletariat and bourgeoisie), Jaeggi's (2014) perspective of alienation considered to be a more suitable point of view to see through this novel since it is concentrated around the socio-philosophical side of an individual and his/her individuality.

Numerous alienation studies in the field of literature have been conducted, however, the theory proposed by Jaeggi (2014) mostly used as a complementary for Marx's (1867) and Seeman's (1959) theory. This study, however, employs her theory as the main perspective of alienation to see whether the theory is productive on its own. Besides, *How to Stop Time* is quite a new novel, thus, the writer cannot find any literary research on this novel. However, the issues presented in the novel are deemed to hold great potential for literary research and to understand human nature in general, as well as the unique experience and perspective of quasi-immortal individuals.

## 1.2 Research Questions

In order to keep the research on its track, the writer focuses on answering the following problems.

1. What aspects of alienation are presented in the novel *How to Stop Time*?
2. What do the presented alienations mean?

## 1.3 Research Aims

As this research concludes, the writer aims to unravel the following issues.

1. Identifying the presented aspects of alienation in the novel *How to Stop Time*.
2. Revealing what issues are shown by alienation in the novel *How to Stop Time*.

## 1.4 Scope of Research

This study examines the novel *How to Stop Time* (2017) by Matt Haig. This study focuses on the main character and other characters under the condition of *anageria*,

their interactions, and their view towards their surrounding which the writer thinks as the most representative example on the issue of alienation from Jaeggi's (2014) perspective.

### **1.5 Significance of Research**

This study attempts to show that alienation is a significant issue and still relevant in society nowadays by comparing, contrasting, and elaborating the condition and narration presented in the novel to theories and condition of the contemporary society. This study might also contributes new insights in interpreting and understanding the cases of alienation. The issues presented in the novel deemed to hold great potential for literary research in the attempt to understand human nature in general, as well as understanding the unique experience and perspective of quasi-immortal individuals that adapted in various kinds of social groups from different places and different times.

### **1.6 Clarification of Terms**

To avoid misunderstandings that may occur, the writer thinks it is necessary to explicate several terms that can be found in this research.

#### **1. Anageria**

In the novel, Anageria is the name of a congenital condition that allows someone to live for hundreds of years. The condition makes a person age slower around 1:15 in ratio. It also gives the sufferer a heightened immune system towards many viral and bacterial infections, however, it does not protect the sufferer from malnutrition nor an external direct threat to vital organs such as gunshot or knife stab (Haig, 2017).

#### **2. Albatross (or Alba) and Mayflies**

In the selected novel, people who suffer from *anageria* are called Albatross or alba in short by Hendrich and his society. Mayflies, on the other hand, is a name used by them to call people with a normal span of lifetime which is way shorter compared to the albas.

#### **3. Quasi-immortality**

The prefix quasi- can be understood as having some resemblance, usually by possession of certain attributes, or resembling in some degree (Merriam-Webster online dictionary, 2019). Thus quasi-immortality means a condition which resembles immortality to some degree. This quasi-immortal is the best expression to describe the condition of Tom Hazard and his associate caused by his congenital condition *anageria*.

#### 4. Facticity

In this study, the term facticity refers to the idea proposed by Sartre (2011) which signifies the concrete details contrary to the idea that human freedom exist and is limited. For example, the time, place, and condition of one's birth, one's first language, one's previous choices, as well as one's prospect of the inevitable death.

#### 5. Heteronomy

Heteronomy can be understood as the opposite of autonomy which means the capacity to make an unforced decision. Castoriadis (1986) notes that being autonomous, on a scale of society, are those who are aware that all societies create their own laws, behaviors, and tradition and explicitly self-institute those values. On the other hand, heteronomous society attributes those value toward extra-social authority (The state, ancestors, historical necessity).

### **1.7 Organization of Paper**

This paper is organized into five sections namely: Introduction, Literature Review, Research Methodology, Findings and Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendation.

The first chapter, Introduction, covers the introduction of the study which consists of a background of the research, research questions, aims of the research, scope of the research, the significance of the research, the research's clarification of terms, and the organization of the paper.

The second chapter covers the literature reviews which are relevant to the study conducted by the writer. The chapter consists of the issue of postmodernism, existentialism, loneliness, and freedom which are brought to the surface as the issues

shown by alienation. Lastly, the theoretical foundation of alienation, its corresponding issues, and previous alienation studies in literary works are presented as the complement of the introduction to the study.

The third chapter covers the methodology of the research. The chapter consists of the explanation of the research design, the data source, the process of data collection, and a brief explanation of how the data is analyzed.

The fourth chapter covers the findings and the discussion of the study. The chapter consists of the findings of the current research which are obtained through textual analysis which based on the questions of the research, the theory of alienation proposed by Jaeggi (2014), and further elaborated in the discussion section.

The fifth chapter covers the conclusion and the suggestion of the study. The chapter consists of the conclusion and recommendation of the whole study which is drawn from the previous sections. The conclusion sums the whole research while the recommendation can be used as a reference for further research.