

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

Defining war has become the first philosophical obstacle, and to avoid epistemological or linguistic vagueness the definition offered by Moseley is that 'war is a state of organized open-ended collective conflict' (2002). War always has consequences, as there as good affects, there are also terrible impact for the victim of war. War has devastating impact, and its aftermath can be immensely difficult. One of the biggest problems of war is refugees and displacement.

The literature of war has existed since the first literary texts were written. The existence of war as theme in literature has been acknowledged since the three earliest cultures: the Greeks, the Romans, and the Hebrews. The ancient Sumerian epic *Gilgamesh* also includes a legendary battle against an enemy force that must be defeated. However, every action has consequences, and the consequence of war is not small and affects various things. The consequences of war in literature often portrayed as theme that describe the struggle of people after the war ends. Literature that explores the war aftermath topic often delves into themes around psychological and social impacts on individuals and society. One of some notable works of literature that focus on the aftermath of war is "The Kite Runner" by Khaled

Hosseini. Written in 2003, the novel captures the personal and societal impact of war and the long lasting scars of conflict. The literature of war aftermath shows how individuals and societies struggle to heal after the violence and trauma of conflict. In this research, the novel by Alex Irvine *Transformers: Exiles* explores the theme of refugees and displacement, which leads to alienation of the characters involved in the civil war and their idealization of utopia.

The definition of refugee stated in an article written by William Thomas Worster entitled “The Evolving Definition of the Refugee in Contemporary International Law”, that what categorize someone or some people as refugees are: 1) the person has already been considered as refugee under prior treaty arrangement or, 2) the person is outside the country of his or her nationality (or having a nationality) and is unable or unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country due to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion. However, war could be the one reason of refugee to flee their home or nation to seek asylum. According to the 1951 United Nations (UN) Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, people who flee conditions of general violence, such as civil war or international war and the breakdown of political regimes, in addition to those escaped direct government persecution are considered to be refugees. Refugees are usually thought of as victims of political violence. People in these contexts face difficult choices: stay and risk harm, or flee to safety, leaving behind one’s property,

homeland, and friends and family. Refugees are rarely live in peace, ironically, in the place they supposed to find asylum. The promise land the refugee wants to find to return to is a place they hope they can find peace where all of their problem can be solve. The place they are looking for also known as utopia.

The word *Utopia* was first coined by Sir Thomas More to describe and ideal, imaginary world in his work if fiction (16th Century Dreams: Thomas More). The term Utopia derives from the Greek word *ou-topos* which has the meaning “nowhere,” but also the opposite of the similar sounding Greek words *eu-topos* meaning “a good place”. Sir Thomas More satirically combined both words in order to capture ambiguity of the Commonwealth of the Utopia, the good place that is no place. In his literary work, More did not mention that Utopia is achieved through war. In fact, the relationship between utopia and war is often very complex. War can lead both to utopian and dystopian outcome. War also leads to alienation of survivors who flee to seek for protection to other places.

Alienation and the feeling of not belong are always becomes one of the main problem of refugees. Alienation as a term was etymologically originated from a Latin noun *alienation* which is derived from a Latin verb *alienaire* meaning to *take away, remove, or cause a separation to occur* (Sarfaz, 1997). This problem also mentioned in the novel. There are so many reasons of why refugee are alienated in the place they seek help. Some of those reasons are: differences and prejudice. Differences are an old issue of human conflict in history of humanity. Whether it is difference in gender,

race, religion, etc. prejudice is usually comes from the host country. Yusuf Nural also argues in his thesis, that there is an empirical studies show that there is a growing anti-refugee sentiment and attitude among people from host country. They believe that the refugee disturb the peace, and are involved in crime, violence, theft, smuggling, and prostitution. It is basically the feeling of mistrust of the new coming people. In literary works, war and its aftermath is often brings up as a setting or the plot of a fantasy novel. The war has inspired many authors to write about it. Literature of war has been written since the beginning of days, and it has remained relevant and significant until today. From *Beowulf* to Shakespeare, the manifestation of the war in literature had still used and modernized from time to time.

One of the media that tells stories which bring up war and battle in modern day is *Transformers* franchise, an American company Hasbro, which had been created so many novels, comic books, animated series, and movies based on the franchise. Transformers begin as a long-running franchise consisting of dozens of toy lines. Transformers is a story of an eons-old fight between two groups of a race of sentient Transforming Mecha, ordinarily called the Autobots as the protagonist of the story and Decepticons as the antagonist. The initial toy line sold in America came approximately when Hasbro imported a few dissimilar Japanese Toy lines, essentially Takara's toy establishment of 1974 to 1984. Hasbro is the one who possesses the right for the conveyance of items that related to Transformers around the world but in Japan. Takara Tomy owns it in Japan.

Published in 2011, *Transformers: Exiles* by Alex Irvine, an American fantasy and science-fiction author, is one of many war literatures that provoke readers understanding about war and its consequences. It is a sequel of *Transformers: Exodus* written by the same author. It exists in the Transformers Aligned Continuity. All of the characters presented in the novel are fictional characters created by the *Transformers* franchise. Having the word 'exile' in the title indicates a connection with war, politics and the impact of the war to people who involved in it. The *Transformers: Exiles* by Alex Irvine is a third-person point-of-view novel, which telling the story of the aftermath of civil war that happens previously in the first series of the trilogy. It portrayed what happen after the civil war and the consequences of the act to both parties, the Autobots and Decepticons.

Transformers is also known as 'robot in disguise' is a species of sentient, living robotic beings originating from machine world called *Cybertron*. The main character of *Transformers: Exiles* novel is Optimus Prime, a leader of a resistance group called the Autobots. They are fighting the Decepticons lead by a tyrant named Megatron. In the first novel, the Autobots are in constant civil war with the Decepticons in defending each other ideologies. In the novel *Transformers: Exiles*, Alex Irvine directly tells the reader the aftermath of the civil war between Autobots and Decepticons. The novel mostly tells the reader about the Autobots seeking refuge in the nearest planet they could find. As their origin planet, *Cybertron*, has destroyed and made the Autobots as refugees who need a new place to stay and recover. They

travel through space on board their spaceship, the Ark, and find a planet inhabited by Velocitrons. Optimus lead the Autobots to space exploration in the hope of finding the All Spark to restore their home, planet Cybertron.

In this research, the writer seek to analyze the consequences of war aftermath: refugee, displacement, and utopia in *Transformers: Exiles* by Alex Irvine. This research is to analyze how refugee, displacement and utopia are created as the result of civil war. This research tries to represent how refugee is facing difficulties in their new place. The place which is very different compare to their home. Although people of the asylum is hospitable there are also some people that sees them as outsider and do not belong in their place. Additionally, the writer argues that the refugee is also had a picture of their ideal place they would like to call a home. The place they tried to restore, their own definition of utopia. So, the title of this research is “Refugee, Displacement, and Utopia as Seen in *Transformers: Exiles* by Alex Irvine”.

1.2 Identification of the Problem

This research analyzed the impact of aftermath which causing refugee and displacement in *Transformers: Exiles* and how the novel describe utopia from the eye of the refugee. The work specifically portrays the challenge that the Autobots had to face after the war aftermath and how they struggle as refugees in the new place. The novel also show their philosophy of utopia they want to realize keep them strong in battle. The writer finds the novel intriguing because of the topic of war aftermath it

brought. War could bring suffering even after it finished, leaving war victims fighting for their life and surviving in the new place. Those people are categorized as refugees, and because of they live in the new place they face alienation. This topic is important to discuss as it mirrors real human life problem of real life conflict. War is not a fiction as well as its aftermath. The novel, although it is fictional, is the representation of real life issue in narrative. Everything the characters of the novel face during their struggle as refugee is also similar to what real refugees has to face, such as alienation and a hope in finding a better home. As a result of this research, the writer will find the representation of refugee, displacement and utopia as result of war aftermath in the novel *Transformers: Exiles*.

1.3 Review of Related Literature

To support the research, the writer read several related studies that explain the same topic or issue which is displacement of the refugee and utopia in the eye of the refugee and has the same theory philosophical approach. The purpose is to get deeper understanding in order can explain the issue.

First, a study by Mutia (2021) from Andalas University entitled *Civil War and Ideology Conflict as Seen in Alex Irvine's Transformers: Exodus*. In this thesis, she discusses the representation of civil war and ideology conflict in *Transformers: Exodus* by Alex Irvine. She found that ideology conflict contributes toward a civil war that happens in the novel. She also pointed out the moral messages that can be

obtained from it. All of the characters of the novel come from Transformers franchise. In this study, the writer finds a similar discussion about the characters of the novel as it is comes from the same author and part of a trilogy. The novel *Transformers: Exiles* is the sequel of *Transformers: Exodus*. Although the study has differences for the objects, but the theme is still the same about war. From this study, the writer had better knowledge about war: how it begun and its aftermath.

Second, an article entitled “The Aftermath of Civil War” by Siyan Chen, Norman V. Loazya and Marta Reynal-Querol (2006), they claim that the study is focused on those experiences where the end of conflict marks the beginning of relatively lasting peace. The authors evaluate the aftermath of war by basic indicators on social areas. The authors argues that war has devastating consequences for a country, including death, displacement of people, and destruction of public infrastructure as well as physical and social capital. The paper compares the post- and pre- war situations and then examines their dynamic trends during the post-conflict period. This article provide a thorough explanation of civil war which taken from war histories of human. The writer found this article helpful to understand how war aftermath affects humanity physically and socially and more information about war aftermath in general.

Third, a paper titled “The Issue of ‘Trust’ or ‘Mistrust’ in Research with Refugees: Choices, Caveats and Considerations for researchers” by Tricia Hynes. The study investigates the experience of asylum seekers in the UK dispersal process. The

study examines the refugees experience in its entirety, focusing on pre and post arrival in the UK. The author investigates the history of mistrust and relationships of mistrust prior to arriving in the UK by examining the experiences of refugees from Myanmar in refugee camps and urban centers in Southeast Asia. The paper provides a lot about refugee and their challenge in the process of seeking asylum. Unfortunately, this paper only focuses on one phenomenon of refugee displacement, but it supported by many appropriate data.

Fourth, writer also found in an international journal of Refugee Survey Quarterly, an article that analyze utopia and refugee entitled “Utopia and reality: Regional Cooperation in Latin America to Enhance the Protection of Refugees” by Fabiano L. Menezes. In this journal article, Menezes argues that utopian element is going to be enhanced rather than reality element for Latin America Refugee. The utopian element in this matter is used as advertisement for the refugee to move from the state to avoid accumulation. This article brings interesting perspective of utopian element used as advertisement, but it lack of detailed information on the topic utopia.

Another study that also discuss about utopia is a book entitled “Utopia and Education: Studies in Philosophy, theory of Education, and Pedagogy of Asylum” written by Rafat Wtodarzyk. This book outlined the topics of utopia in its relation to educational theory and practice. Philosophical perspective is mainly used in analyzing the definition of utopia. In this book, the author also mentioned some philosophers who define what is utopia which enrich writer’s point of view on the topic utopia.

The first name the author mentioned in his book is Thomas More, who was an English lawyer, judge, philosopher, author, statesman, and noted renaissance humanist. His most famous work is *Utopia*. Based on Thomas More's work, Wtodarzyk argues that, utopia owe its name from a remote island of an unknown location. It was inhabitant by a society spread across fifty-four cities and their subordinate rural districts, organized and functioning in ways that were distinctly different from the European standards of the renaissance, and much worse in comparison. When coining its name, More combined Greek word, which suggests that the Author meant it ironically as a 'non-place', or rather a 'non-existent place'. However, the text itself leaves another interpretative clue related to the use of the term eutopia in relation to the island, which can be read as a 'good place'. My conclusion is that the author analyze utopia from psychological perspective, which makes it contain a complete information regarding utopia on every aspect. Overall this book is very excellent in analyzing utopia in philosophical way.

The last review is an article written by Idean Salehyan and Kristian Skrede Gledistch entitled "Refugee and the spread of civil war". This article thoroughly examine about refugee displacement and reasons that cause it. There are many reasons that cause refugee flow mentioned in the article. Civil war becomes the most investigated reason of people movement seeking for refuge. This article focused on analyzing the role of refugee flows in the international spread of civil war. The authors analyze it through a statistical analysis of refugees from neighboring

countries and civil war onset during the period 1951-2001. The analysis finds that countries that experience an influx of refugees from neighboring states are significantly more likely to experience civil wars themselves. However, the authors believe that a better understanding of the circumstances under which refugees can increase the risk of conflict also can help one create better policies for managing the relevant security concern. This article takes some examples of civil war causing the flow of refugee and clearly describes in detail how civil war cause displacement of the refugee and spread it out. But there is always solution on that matter. This research provides detailed information about civil war and refugees and help the writer to understand the issue in deeper overview. To sum up, all of the information written by the researchers above will help the writer to do her research.

1.4 Research Question

In order to focus on the analysis, writer will pose some questions to guide writer in doing the research. To limit the scope, two research questions were formulated, they are:

1. How does war aftermath affect displacement of refugees as seen in *Transformers: Exiles* by Alex Irvine?
2. What is utopia in the eye of refugee of war aftermath as seen in *Transformers: Exiles* by Alex Irvine?

1.5 Scope of the Research

This research explores the representation of refugee, displacement, and utopia found in Alex Irvine's *Transformers: Exiles*. Therefore, the writer limited this study to two discussions. Firstly, the writer analyze how does war aftermath affect refugees and displacement as seen in *Transformers: Exiles* by Alex Irvine. I would like to examine how the phenomenon of war aftermath affect the characters as refugee including their feeling of not belong and different from a place where they seek help. Secondly, the writer will analyze what is utopia in the eye of refugees in the novel *Transformers: Exiles* by Alex Irvine.

1.6 Objective of the Research

This research is aimed to examine how civil war and its aftermath affect refugees and displacement as represented in the novel *Transformers: Exiles* by Alex Irvine. The writer wants to discover how does war aftermath affects displacement of refugees. It includes how the war aftermath causes the exiles of refugees from their homeland and their relation with the people from the place they seek asylum. The writer also wants to examine the idealization of utopia in the eye of refugees.

In this study, the writer has objective to show how the impact of war do not stop as soon as the war ends. It has so many negative impacts on society. One of those problems is the refugees who are fleeing from their home in order to survive. With

their peace disrupted, they have no place to go back and have to survive by the help of others.

