

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### UNIVERSITAS ANDALAS

#### 1.1. Background of the Research

François Fénelon, a seventeenth-century French Roman Catholic priest and archbishop, once said: "All wars are civil wars because all men are brothers..." (Cohen 148)—that is, whatever the reason is, war is a conflict between humans against others humans, the same sentient beings that bleed the same fluid, breathe the same air, and live in the same planet. Yet ending other human beings' lives is among the direct consequences of the war. In a way, any war is essentially a war against the universal brotherhood of humanity. Despite that, we frequently learn about the horror of the war on many media. War stories can be easily found by watching videos on the internet or television, or by reading books that describe the experience of living in a war zone. The stories may focus on the members of the military group involved in the war, or from the perspective of civilians who get to witness their homes get torn by the war. Moreover, there are many books that describe wars, including both fiction and non-fiction books. In the literary world, many authors created fictional accounts about the war and turn a tragic tale into a compelling story worth reading.

Among the representations of war in literary works are the ones inspired by civil wars. Michael Shaara's *The Killers Angels* (1975) is a fictional account of the life

of Union and Confederate troops leading up to the Battle of Gettysburg during the American Civil War. Some other instances of literature describing civil war include Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* that takes place during the Spanish Civil War, and Margaret Mitchell's *Gone With the Wind* (1936) that takes place during and after the American Civil War. Both novels portray the lives of civilians and soldiers of the respective eras. These instances suggest that literary works are often inspired by what happened in the real world.

The representations of the real world in literary works are not just limited to specific times or events such as the ones in civil war stories, but also the form of ideas such as ideology. The existence of ideology in literature, I suppose, is rather implicit rather than explicit. When someone may easily realize that a book takes place during the civil war based on the author's descriptions, it may take a close analysis to find the possible representation of ideology. For example, George Orwell depicts a society runs by an authoritarian ideology in his 1949 novel, *1984*. Meanwhile, Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) describes gender oppression against women which is imposed by an extremely religious ideology. In addition, discrimination against muggleborns—wizards who are born from non-magical parents—as seen in J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter Series* may be perceived as a representation of racist ideology. These examples further imply the relation between literature and the real world.

Literature itself is often regarded as a reflection of reality, in which fictitious storylines and characters show resemblance to what happens in real life. While the

characters in literary works do not necessarily have to be human, they often exhibit real-life human traits and behaviors. Literature also frequently serves as an allegory to actual live events, and in many cases, provides social commentary on real-life issues. As Hudson (1913) explained, literature records what people have seen in real life, their opinions, and their feelings towards certain aspects of their lives. In other words, literature can be seen as a language-based medium to express life (11).

Literary works come from many forms, including novels. Indeed, as fictional works, the events and stories depicted in the novel are likely to be slightly different or significantly different from real life. However, as noted by Colin McGinn (2007), fiction is written in ways that appear to be realistic and understandable for the readers (3). Thus, much of the fictional novels that we consume may contain real-world issues.

Civil war and ideology are among real-world issues Alexander “Alex” C. Irvine explores in his 2010 novel *Transformers: Exodus*. The novel, written in collaboration with American company Hasbro, narrates the history of the civil war in Cybertron, a fictitious planet where the story has taken place. The novel details how the ideological conflict between two groups, The Autobots and The Decepticons, has precipitated a civil war that transformed the previously civilized planet into a warzone. In the aftermath of the conflict, members of the involved parties have to leave Cybertron as the planet has been destroyed.

As described by *Transformers Wiki*, transformers itself is a franchise that began in 1984 and continues to this day. While there are many versions of Transformers, they all work with the same premise, in which the characters are robot-like aliens from a

planet called Cybertron and can transform their bodies into vehicles, aircraft, among other things. Hasbro is the one who owns the rights for the distribution of Transformers-related products around the world except in Japan, where Japanese company Takara Tomy owns it. Together these two companies produced a toy line based on the Transformers characters. Besides toys, several novels, animated series, movies, and games also have been created based on the franchise.

Among the novelizations of Transformers is *Transformers: Exodus*. This novel is a part of what the Transformers fans defined as Transformers Aligned Continuity. It means that the characters and the backstories are parts of a shared universe. Therefore, *Transformers: Exodus* shares some elements that also exist in other media concerning Transformers. However, as pointed out in a 2019 article by *BW Media Spotlight*, not all of the installments are truly aligned.

*Transformers: Exodus* presents an exciting narrative of sentient beings who suffered from the impact of civil war and ideology conflict. The two main characters in the book, Orion Pax and Megatronus, are two close friends who bond over their dissatisfaction with the Cybertronian caste system, a hierarchical concept that has restricted the people of Cybertron for so long. Thus, both are determined to change the status quo. However, due to differences in philosophies, the two characters end up being on the opposite sides of the war, with Orion Pax, now known as Optimus Prime, leading the Autobots army, while Megatronus, now known as Megatron, leading the Decepticons army.

In this research, I seek to analyze the representation of civil war and ideology conflict in *Transformers: Exodus*. This research analyses how two ideologies are born from the same societal issue: social hierarchy, how they are incompatible, and how these incompatibilities fueled civil war. It also examines the political reasoning behind the conflict to inspect the possible indication of self-interests. Additionally, I argue that the philosophical conflict in this novel leaves valuable moral messages for the readers. Thus, I title this research "Civil War and Ideology Conflicts as Seen in Alex Irvine's *Transformers: Exodus*."

## 1.2. Identification of the Problems

This research analyzes the roles of ideology toward civil war in *Transformer: Exodus* and how the novel contains moral lessons about the consequences of philosophical conflict. There are three reasons why I chose this topic. First, I am interested in how the novel presents two contrasting ideologies and how they appear to be incompatible. Second, I want to examine the role of ideological conflict toward civil war portrayed in the novel, including the political reasoning behind the conflict. Third, I want to show how the novel emphasizes the consequences of ideology-related conflicts and contains valuable messages. Significantly, it will shed some light on how important it is to accept differences and resolve conflicts peacefully instead of prolonging the animosity.

## 1.3. Review of Related Literature

In conducting this research, I consulted some related literature. The literature review consists of theses, journals, and articles related to the research. To the best of my knowledge, there is yet a study that analyses *Transformers: Exodus*. Therefore, the literature that I used is related to the topic or using similar theories with my research.

About the war, a Ph.D. dissertation titled *Literary Representations Of Civil Wars: A Comparative Study Of Novels Dealing With The Spanish Civil War And The Yugoslav Conflict* by Tiana Vekić draws comparisons between several novels that explore the Spanish Civil War and Yugoslav Conflict. The dissertation, published in 2016, finds that the novels showcase the effects of civil war on people who live through it. This dissertation provides a thorough examination of civil war representation in literary works, employing close analyses on the narrative strategies found in the novels in question. I found this dissertation helpful to understand how wars are represented in literature and give me more information about war literature in general.

Regarding civil war representations in particular, Anjar Dwi Astuti from Mulawarman University, in her 2017 article *Portrayal Of Nigerian After Civil War In Chinua Achebe's Civil Peace (1971)* uses new historical and postcolonial criticism to show how the novel portrays the lives of Nigerian people after the civil war. The research, published in *CaLLs (Journal of Culture, Arts, Literature and Linguistics)* finds that the novel is heavily influenced by the time of civil war. This article includes some helpful information on the historical background of both the war and the Nigerian

history and the writer himself as part of the analysis to support her claim that the author's experience influences the short story he created. However, the article seems to contain fewer references to the novel itself. This research implies that the writing of the novel leaves a message that civil war effects will live on even after the event itself is already over, which is something I also like to explore in my research.

Ilhamdi Alfiz Sofian from Andalas University also analyses how an author's experience influences his attitudes towards war and society in his 2019 bachelor thesis, *"There Is No Good War": The Firebombing Of Dresden And Kurt Vonnegut's View Towards World War II In Slaughterhouse-five*. Sofian uses M. A. Abrams's expressive theory and Guerin's historical-biographical approach to analyze how the author uses his book to convey his personal views on war. The research asserts that the author intended to use the novel to show that war is meaningless. Sofian provides detailed analysis backed up by references from literature covering Vonnegut's personal life to support his arguments. Coming to my research, I also notice that Irvine's portrayal of the civil war shows how pointless the fight is. Thus, Sofian's study gives me more insights into how an author conveys this message in his story.

In 2020, Fredrik Svensson's doctoral thesis, *Ideology and Symbolism in Cormac McCarthy's Novels* discusses ideology in novels. The findings suggest that each novel embodies McCarthy's various thoughts typically concerning humans and the environment, implying that the diverse symbolism in the novels allows for open interpretation of his ideologies. In this study, the researcher manages to present a comprehensive analysis by reviewing a variety of different works and critics of

McCarthy. This research contributes to increasing my knowledge of how ideologies are presented in literary works.

Fajrul Falah in his 2020 conference article *Hegemony and Ideology in Novel Bidadari Bermata Bening* by Habiburrahman el Shirazy (*Gramsci Hegemony Study*) used the descriptive-analytic method to observe hegemony and ideology found in an Indonesian novel with said title. This research finds the religion of Islam as the dominant ideology. The analysis presents an easy-to-understand analysis to point out how ideology affects the behaviors of the characters. Unfortunately, there are some confusing sentences in this article and the rather simple delivery makes the research lacks some depth. Despite that, this research gives me more knowledge of how ideology emerged and how it has a massive impact on people's lives even without them being aware of it. It also gives me some information on hegemony and ideology are intertwined, which I will also inquire about as part of my theoretical framework.

Gisa Vadhika Sacawisastra, in his 2016 article *Ideology in Pramoedya Ananta Toer's Footsteps* employs the concept of ideological features by Terry Eagleton to study the ideology found in said novel. This study, published in *Passage*, finds five ideological features the dominant class in the novel has utilized to impose two ideologies—capitalism, and feudalism—to preserve their power: legitimation, rationalization, action-oriented, universalization, and naturalization. This article is able to systematically explain how ideologies are used as a tool to legitimate the values and ideas of dominant groups. What I found rather confusing is the fact that the researcher defined Eagleton's theory as Marxian without elaborating the reasons why he



categorized it as such and stated that the work will be analyzed by using Marxist theory (Sacawisastra 46). However, Marxism is never even explicitly mentioned for the rest of the article. Nevertheless, this research provides me with some information on how ideological strategies promoting particular ideologies are found in a novel and gives me an example of how to investigate the representation of ideology in a novel using Eagleton's theory of ideological features, which is something that will also explore in my research.

In 2018 an article published in *Vivid: Journal of Languages and Literature* titled *Cultural Hegemony in J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter Series*, Shalih Dzakiyyah Farda uses Antonio Gramsci's hegemony theory to observe how the ruling class in the novel uses ideology to maintain their position. Farda's article concludes that the ruling group has manipulated subordinate groups using ideology resembling what happens in real-life society. The researcher is able to explain how an ideology is used to legitimate the interests of the dominant group. However, the article could have elaborate more on the parts that supposedly show the reflection of real-life society to support this conclusion, since I notice the discussion mainly covers the novel. Nevertheless, Farda gives an exciting and helpful explanation of how characters exercise and perceive ideology in literature. Her article also provides me with some insights into how to apply Gramsci's hegemony theory in analyzing novels, which I also used in my research.

Regarding ideology conflict, Ana Wiyasa Nugrahawati explores this topic in the 2014 publication article of her master thesis titled *Representation Of Ideological*

*Conflict In The J. R. R. Tolkien's Trilogy The Lord Of The Rings Novel (1937 – 1949)*

using several contexts oriented approaches, namely sociological literary criticism, ideology, and conflict. Nugrahawati points out that ideological conflict in the novels seems to derive from the differences in views, noting that government domination often contributed to such a dispute. The strength of this research is it explains why ideological preferences play significant roles in a conflict. Unfortunately, this research contains some confusing sentences. The introduction consists of related studies while the literary review itself seems to contain the theories, which is rather confusing and raises a question of such arrangements is a mistake on the researcher's part. However, this research helps expand my knowledge of the war of ideology and supports my observation that differences in opinion are a significant cause of ideology conflict, which I will further explore in this research.

As my research also concerns moral messages, I also consult Dwita Laksmi Rachmawati et al's 2019 article titled *The Moral Philosophical Analysis as Reflected on Dan Brown's Inferno*, which employs Husserl's intentionality theory combined with the philosophy of mind theory to observes *Inferno* by Dan Brown from a moral perspective. Published in *Exposure Journal*, this research concludes that the novel contains a message that says people may have a different opinion regarding right or wrong, and it is okay to not agree with someone. The researcher is able to make simple explanations that make her argument can easily be understood. However, it appears that the researcher does not make a clear distinction between literature review and

theoretical framework. Nevertheless, I found this research helpful in showing me how the moral-philosophical approach is used in analyzing a novel.

Based on all the literature above, the topics discussed are varied but somehow related to my research. I noticed that there is yet research that focuses on the representation of both civil war and ideology conflict in a novel. The novel that I am using has not yet been studied in the academic field either. Thus, I assume that the research I am working on is original. Furthermore, I want to analyze my research objective, *Transformers: Exodus*, to analyze the relationship between civil war and ideology and how the novel shows the consequences of such conflict.

#### 1.4. Research Questions

There are several issues regarding civil war and ideology conflict in *Transformers: Exodus*. After reading and comprehending the book, I formulated the following questions:

1. How does ideological conflict contribute towards civil war as seen in the novel?
2. How does conflict of philosophies impact the narrative, and what lessons can the readers learn from it?

#### 1.5. Scope of the Research

This research explores issues related to civil war and ideology found in *Transformers: Exodus*. Thus, I will focus on some parts representing civil war and

ideological conflict as seen in the novel. First, I will analyze how two factions with two different ideologies emerged as a response to injustice and how conflicts between them become a catalyst of civil war. Second, I will analyze the impacts of ideological conflict on society in the novel and the important messages from the story. Significantly, this research will shed some light on the consequences of ideological conflict and its valuable moral lessons.

Literary research differs from other research because it analyses literary works based on the researcher's interpretation. One of the prominent literary analysis features that distinguished them from other studies is literary works as the primary data. In this case, I decided to use Alex Irvine's *Transformers: Exodus* as my preliminary data.

### **1.6. Objectives of The Study**

This research's general objective is to examine civil war and ideology conflict as represented in the novel. The study will pay attention to how the same desire for equality creates two conflicting ideologies. It also concerns how the ideological conflict led to the emergence of civil war that impacted society in the novel. Meanwhile, this study's specific objective is to show how civil war should not happen in any form since it is easy to see how differences in opinion divide people from the same nation or even lower levels such as families and social groups. Thus, I aim to explain how dangerous it is to hold extreme views towards something while unable to take critics and engage in healthy conversations with those with different views.