

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Literary works are considered important because, in novels, poetry, and drama appear what is best from thought and said (Kasih, 2020). *The Martian* is a popular novel by Andy Weir written in 2011. The novel's story is about an astronaut named Mark Watney and his team sent to the planet Mars by NASA to observe the land on the planet. When they arrive and begin their study, unpredicted sandstorms strike them and damage their supplies. The mission is forced to cancel, and the crew flies back to planet Earth. The crew leaves behind Mark Watney because they think he is already dead and cannot survive in the conditions on Mars. But somehow, Mark Watney survives the sandstorm and is still alive. He realizes that the rest of the crew has left him, and he begins to find a way to survive with limited numbers of food supply and water. This novel written by a real scientist finally gained popularity as it was adapted into film.

Andy Weir began writing the book back in 2009. Weir studied astronomy, orbital mechanics, and the history of manned spaceflight so that the book would be as realistic as possible and based on the existing technology. Later, he decided to put the book on his website in serial format which was one chapter at the time for free, but as requested by the fans, he made an Amazon Kindle version that was available to buy for 99 cents. The Kindle edition topped Amazon's list for best-selling science-fiction titles and sold 35,000 copies in only just 3 months. In January 2013, *The Martian* sensation took the attention of Podium Publishing for the audiobook

version and Weir sold the print rights to Crown for over 100,000 USD. This novel has been translated into over 45 languages and have won some major awards including Hugo Awards, John W. Campbell Awards for Best New Writer. This novel was also adapted into film. In March 2013, Twentieth Century Fox hired screenwriter Drew Goddard and director Ridley Scott to adapt and direct the film. The film was starred by Matt Damon and was released on October 2, 2015. This film became the 8th highest grossing film of the year that received approximately 630 million USD worldwide.

The success of *The Martian* novel followed by the movie makes it one of the most popular topics at the time considering the history from the adaptation of the novel. It can be concluded that this novel is a popular novel. This is reasonable when this novel can be investigated more in the perspective of popular literature (Kasih, 2018; Fithratullah, 2020). This kind of literature is derived from what it calls popular culture. Popular culture is a mass culture. Historically, popular culture emerged as a response to the development in the modern era (Storey, 2015). The popular kind of literature is also seen in *The Martian* fiction. It applies the use of science in developing the story, so this novel can be stated as science fiction. Science fiction is usually known as the mixture of real technology which exists in real life with fictional technology that does not exist in real life. The setting that happens in science fiction mostly takes place in space, a different world, unknown planet, spacecraft, or when the Earth is likely dying.

Science fiction characteristics that are recognized in *The Martian* are part of discussion in genre fiction. Cawelti (2014) stated that genre fiction can be analyzed

by formulaic analysis focusing on convention and invention. Literary formula is a narrative written in a structure or dramatic conventions employed in a great number of individual works. Cawelti stated that there are two core aspects of formulaic structures, essential standardization and primary relation to the needs of escape and relaxation or which is famous by the name of escapism (Cawelti, 2001). The first aspect is standardization. It refers to the similar understanding between writers and audiences. It is an important way in attracting the interest of the audiences that standardization reflects the sense of the story in the novel. This way is for increasing the audience's understanding and enjoying the details of a literary work. The work may give enjoyment for the reader. It brings about tracing historical trends or relating literary production (Cawelti, 2001). The second aspect is the needs of escape and relaxation. Escape or escapism is about the aesthetic taste in literary works such as pleasure and enjoyment. A successful formulaic work needs to be unique despite sharing the same patterns with the rest of the literary works in the era and this can be reached when the addition of pleasure or escapism in the conventional structure or standardization can excite the readers, this can also result in a mimetic literature.

The study of science fiction genre in *The Martian* will be applied in this thesis paper as this novel delineates science and technology which are partially true and fictitious. The story is set in the future and in a different world like Mars, the accuracy of Mars' situation combined with future technology such as crew's basecamp represent the genre of the book. The use of science and technology makes this novel interesting and popular for the reader. This reason makes it possible for the writer to analyze this novel. The writer then decides to analyze the science

fiction genre in *The Martian* novel as this novel applies science such as new discoveries, human element, and how scientific developments works for the future in solving the problem. Further deeper analysis is applied for applying formulaic analysis by Cawelti's theories to find out the characteristics of the science fiction genre in the novel.

1.2 Research Question

Based on the background, the writer formulates the research question of the problem is:

1. What is the structure or the convention of the science fiction genre in *The Martian* novel? How is it delineated in *The Martian* novel?
2. What is the invention of the science fiction genre in *The Martian* novel?

1.3 Research Objective

The research objectives of this study are:

1. To explain the structure or the convention of science fiction genre in *The Martian*
2. To find out the invention of the science fiction genre in *The Martian*.

1.4 Use of Study

This research will be beneficial for both future research and society. The use of this study is divided into two, as follows below:

1.4.1 Practical Use

This research enlightens the public about genre fiction and the information in this research can be used for future research. The author studied the accuracy of science and technology in the novel including convention of science fiction and humanism in the novel.

1.4.2 Theoretical Use

The theory used in this study can be used by future researchers to arrange deeper studies related to popular culture especially in the science fiction genre. This research can also be used by future researchers who want to conduct the same research background.

1.5 Scope of the Study

This research will focus on analyzing the genre of science-fiction in *The Martian* novel. The study will apply popular literature theories, genre fiction theories and science fiction theories. This study will apply the theory from Ken Gelder in investigating popular literature, genre fiction and science fiction. The study will also apply Cawelti's theory of formula to find out convention and invention in science fiction.

