

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains the phenomenon and background of the research, which reveals the reasons for the researcher's choice of topic. After the background of the research, the identification of problems related to Juvenile Delinquency is found. After identification, the limitation section will outline the limitations of the research. After that, the formulation of the problem is presented, followed by an explanation of the significance of the research that summarizes its benefits. Finally, to help students understand this research better, some key terms are included at the end of the chapter.

1.1. Background of the Research

Literature is a form of artistic expression that uses language as a medium to convey human ideas, feelings, and experiences. This is in line with the opinion of Wellek & Warren (1949) that literature is a reflection of human life that describes feelings, thoughts, and views on life, which can be understood based on the personal judgment of each individual. In this case, this human life is often reflected in literary works. Through literary works, readers can find a depiction from the author about the reality of life by using themes that are relevant to society. To understand how literature truly reflects society, we need to look at the form of the literary work. By analyzing the content, themes, and how the author depicts life, we can see how literature reflects social conditions in a society.

One form of literary work that often depicts people's lives is the novel. According to Gill (1995), a novel is a long fictional story that depicts the

experiences of characters and various events in their lives. Although fictional, the stories and characters in novels often reflect social reality, including values, conflicts, and dynamics of society. Eagleton (2005) states that fiction can be a more effective way to depict reality than simply conveying facts directly, because real stories are sometimes too messy with irrelevant or confusing details. Novels allow authors to create their own world, where readers can understand characters and events through the author's perspective. Thus, novels are not only a means of entertainment, but also a mirror that shows the conditions of human life in society.

One of the novels that whose story reflects the phenomena that occur in society is "Falling into Place" by Amy Zhang. This novel was Amy Zhang's debut as a talented young writer and published by HarperCollins. Initially, this story originated from two short stories which she then developed into a full novel. Zhang wrote her first draft during National Novel Writing Month in November and managed to finish it in less than a year. The "Falling into Place" novel tells the story of Liz Emerson, a teenager who struggles with feelings of emptiness, until she finally decides to crash her own car in an attempt to commit suicide. This novel describes how social pressure, feelings of loneliness, and lack of emotional support can affect a person's decisions. In addition, this novel also explores the theme of Juvenile Delinquency which reflects the reality of teenage life in modern society. "Falling into Place" is one of the literary works that reflects the harsh reality of teenage life and the impact of the social pressures they face. Through this novel, Zhang succeeds in presenting a story that not only touches the hearts of readers, but

also provides a deeper understanding of the social factors that contribute to Juvenile Delinquency.

Amy Zhang is a young author who is starting to be known in the literary world, especially in the teenager genre. She was born in China and moved to the United States when she was a child. Zhang grew up in Wisconsin, where she developed her interest in writing. After completing her high school education, she continued her studies at Hamilton College and graduated in 2018. Despite her busy studies, she continued to pursue her writing career and managed to publish her first novel before graduating. Zhang's debut novel, "Falling into Place", was published by HarperCollins in September 2014. The idea for the novel originally came from her school assignment in English. After the success of her first novel, Zhang continued her writing career by releasing "This Is Where the World Ends" and her latest work, "The Cartographers". She is currently under contract to write her next novels and continues to develop her career as a writer. She now lives in Brooklyn, New York, where she is active in the literary community and continues to produce new works that her readers are looking forward to. With her distinctive writing style and themes that are relevant to teenagers, Amy Zhang has become one of the most popular young writers in the modern literary world.

Through this novel, readers can see how social or environmental factors influence an individual's decisions and emotions. This shows that novels can be a reflection of social phenomena experienced by many people in real life. Therefore, in the world of literature, there is an approach used to study the relationship between literary works and social reality, namely the sociology of literature. According to

Laurenson & Swingewood (1972), sociology studies how humans live together in society, how society is formed, operates, and continues to survive over time. In this theory it is also mentioned that one of the principles that explains literature is a form of reflection of society is called social documents. Through stories and characters in literature, we can see a real picture of the dynamics of society and help us understand the conditions and behavior of humans at a certain time and place.

As an approach that studies the phenomena in society, the problem of Juvenile Delinquency is one of the phenomena that can be studied using a Sociological Approach. According to Siegel & Welsh (2009), Juvenile Delinquency refers to unlawful behavior committed by children or adolescents who are still under the legal age limit. By studying the form of status offense and social factors, this approach is suitable for analyzing the social aspects in it. The form of status offense consists of smoking and drinking, disobeying parents, skipping school and disobeying teachers, having bad companions, running away, participating in sex or immoral conduct, violating curfew, and using profanity. For social factors, these include the influence of family, school environment, and also peer relationship factors can play a role in shaping delinquent behavior.

One of the phenomena of Juvenile Delinquency occurred in December 2024 in South Jakarta, a 14-year-old boy, identified as MAS, killed his father and grandmother (Guardiola, 2024). In addition, he also stabbed his mother which resulted in her being serious condition. It is stated that the attack on the father, mother, and grandmother shows an extreme level of violence, where the child has committed a crime. According to Murrel & Lester (1981), homicide is stated that

the act is included in the criminal act. MAS, who is still under 18 years of age, will be placed in a special detention center for children in accordance with the Child Protection Act in Indonesia. He faces several serious charges, including murder, serious abuse resulting in death, and domestic violence. Because his actions involved serious violence, MAS is categorized as a violent juvenile offender, which a term for juveniles who are proven to have committed violent acts such as homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, and kidnapping (Siegel & Welsh, 2009).

With all forms of Juvenile Delinquency that occur, there are various impacts that can be experienced by the adolescents. The next phenomenon can be seen in a study conducted in Nigeria in 2024. It was found that Juvenile Delinquency behavior has a strong relationship with mental health (Ola-Williams et al., 2024). A total of 250 high school students aged between 13 and 18 years, it was shown that higher levels of Juvenile Delinquency were associated with worse mental health outcomes among the students sampled. In the study, it was found that adolescents involved in delinquency tend to experience higher levels of stress, anxiety, and depression. In addition, it was also explained that children who often commit offense, such as vandalism, theft, drug abuse, and violent acts, are more susceptible to mental disorders that interfere with their daily lives. Moreover, bad experiences such as arrest or punishment can worsen their mental condition. Thus, this emphasizes the importance of psychological support and counseling for adolescents caught in risky behavior to help them break out of this negative cycle.

The next phenomenon is related to the influence of identity crisis on adolescents. Identity crisis is a time when adolescents feel confused about who they

really are and what they want to achieve in life. If they do not get good guidance, this confusion can lead them to do negative things, such as brawling, using drugs, or even committing violence. Adolescents who feel unaccepted or lonely often look for their identity in the wrong places. One example is the case of Solomon Henderson in the United States which occurred in early 2025 (Patton, 2025). He was a teenager who shot his own friend and then committed suicide. From the records found, he felt self-loathing and did not know the direction of his life. In addition, he was also influenced by online communities that support violence. This shows that the case proves how dangerous an identity crisis is in adolescents if not handled seriously.

In addition to the phenomena above, literary works that adapt the social conditions are found in novels. Novels are a form of reflection of social phenomena that occur in the real world. One of the novels that contains the phenomenon of Juvenile Delinquency is "Falling into Place" by Amy Zhang. The author includes various acts regarding Juvenile Delinquency in the novel starting from criminal acts that are considered serious offenses which are also mentioned in the phenomenon above, also including acts of offense that are considered minor. One form of minor offense found in the "Falling into Place" novel. In the story, Liz committed an act that is considered Juvenile Delinquency. She took a bottle of liquor from her mother's cabinet without permission. When she returned to her room, she immediately drank it quickly in a few gulps. Liz's action is considered a status offense. This is behavior that is considered illegal if done by a minor, but is not considered criminal if done by an adult (Siegel & Welsh, 2009). One form of status

offense that Liz committed was drinking alcohol underage. With the existence of such offense behavior, of course this has factors that cause adolescents to carry out various forms of status offense.

In the story also shows one of the factors why the characters in the novel carry out delinquent behavior. Liz wants to make sure whether her mother's love is really there for her and whether her mother really cares. She tries to call her mother, but her mother's response is cold and shows that Liz is not her top priority. When her mother finally answers, her voice sounds rushed and busy. In this context, it can be seen that Liz's relationship with her mother is not harmonious which can have a negative impact on the child's development. Children in this situation really need help, but find it difficult to express it. On the other hand, the mother is too busy with her work so that she is not fully present emotionally. If this pattern of interaction continues, the child can feel neglected and lack guidance from the family. Based on the theory of Siegel & Welsh (2009), this reflects social factors related to Juvenile Delinquency, especially in the family aspect where disruptions in family interactions can increase a child's risk of experiencing Juvenile Delinquency. The family is the main influence in shaping children's behavior. If the parenting pattern is inadequate, such as being too disciplined without affection or not being involved in the child's life, then the child's emotional and social development can be disrupted.

In addition to this research that analyzes forms of status offense and social factors of Juvenile Delinquency, there are also other researches that discuss similar topics. For example, a research conducted by Rachayu & Aprilia (2015) which uses

the novel *The Casual Vacancy* as a data source. This research focuses on the influence of psychological aspects of adolescents through Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory (id, ego, and superego) to understand Juvenile Delinquency behavior in the novel. In this research, the method used is descriptive qualitative by identifying forms of Juvenile Delinquency based on Fagan's theory (2006), such as smoking and drug abuse. The results of the research show that Juvenile Delinquency in the novel is mostly influenced by the ego, which makes them tend to follow momentary impulses without considering the long-term impacts. On the other hand, the current research focuses more on the forms of status offense and social factors that influence Juvenile Delinquency in Amy Zhang's novel "Falling into Place", using the theory of Siegel & Welsh (2009). The main difference between previous research and current research lies in the analytical approach. The previous research looked at Juvenile Delinquency from a psychological aspect, while this research examines the Juvenile Delinquency from a sociological aspect on adolescent deviant behavior.

The next research is obtained from Afriyah (2017). This research was conducted on the novel *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger, which analyzes the motives behind the Juvenile Delinquency committed by the main character, Holden Caulfield. This research uses a descriptive-qualitative method to reveal five motives that drive Holden to commit Juvenile Delinquency, namely physiological needs, the need for security, the need for belonging and love, the need for appreciation, and the need for self-actualization. For the result, from the five motives, the need for belonging and love is the strongest factor that triggers

Holden's deviant behavior. In addition, this research also explores aspects of adolescent education that can be learned from the novel, such as the importance of the role of parents in understanding how adolescents think and guiding them in dealing with problems. The introduction of values, norms, laws, and religion is referred to as an important element in helping adolescents understand their position in society. Although both analyze the novel, the main difference between current research and the previous research lies in the approach used, namely the previous one focuses more on psychological motives, while this one uses a Sociological Approach in analyzing Juvenile Delinquency.

In this research, the reason the researcher chose “Falling into Place” novel by Amy Zhang to be analyzed is because this novel depicts various forms of Juvenile Delinquency, especially status offenses committed by characters. This novel is interesting to study because it shows how social factors play a role in shaping adolescent deviant behavior. This research is analyzed using the theory of status offense and social factors from Siegel & Welsh (2009) to examine the topic of Juvenile Delinquency in Sociological Approach. In this way, this research is different from previous research above that focused more on psychological motives or psychoanalytic aspects of adolescents, because this research tries to reveal how social interactions can trigger Juvenile Delinquency. Therefore, the researcher is interested in raising this topic and giving the title of the research as: "**Juvenile Delinquency in “Falling into Place” Novel by Amy Zhang: Sociological Approach.**"

1.2. Identification of the Problem

Based on the background of the research above, several problems related to social issues found by researcher can be seen as follows:

1. The criminal act as a form of Juvenile Delinquency committed by minors in the "Falling into Place" novel by Amy Zhang
2. The psychological impact of Juvenile Delinquency in the "Falling into Place" novel by Amy Zhang
3. The influence of identity crisis on Juvenile Delinquency in the "Falling into Place" novel by Amy Zhang
4. The forms of status offense in Juvenile Delinquency in the "Falling into Place" novel by Amy Zhang
5. The social factors of Juvenile Delinquency in the "Falling into Place" novel by Amy Zhang

1.3. Limitation of the Problem

Based on the identification of problems that have been found, then researcher limited the existing problems to the following:

1. The forms of status offense in Juvenile Delinquency in the "Falling into Place" novel by Amy Zhang
2. The social factors of Juvenile Delinquency in the "Falling into Place" novel by Amy Zhang

1.4. Formulation of the Problem

Based on the limitations of the problems mentioned above, the formulation of the problems to be discussed in this research as follows:

1. What are the forms of status offense in Juvenile Delinquency in the "Falling into Place" novel by Amy Zhang?
2. What are the social factors of Juvenile Delinquency in the "Falling into Place" novel by Amy Zhang?

1.5. Objective of the Research

After formulating the problem, in conducting the analysis, below are the objectives of the research:

1. To find out the forms of status offense in Juvenile Delinquency in the "Falling into Place" novel by Amy Zhang
2. To discover the social factors of Juvenile Delinquency in the "Falling into Place" novel by Amy Zhang

1.6. Significance of the Research

There are two things that become the significance of the research, namely theoretical significance and practical significance. Below is the significance of the research of this research:

1. Theoretical Significance

Theoretically, this research can be the basis for further analysis, especially in the research of Juvenile Delinquency, especially in identifying forms of status offense and social factors that cause Juvenile Delinquency. The results of this

research are expected to be a reference for further researchers who want to study the social aspects that influence adolescent behavior, including how social and environmental factors contribute to the emergence of deviant behavior in adolescents.

2. Practical Significance

Practically, the findings in this research are expected to increase public understanding of the types of Juvenile Delinquency, especially forms of status offense, namely adolescents who commit violations of the law that are only considered illegal if committed by minors. In addition, this research also aims to provide insight into the social or environmental factors that contribute to Juvenile Delinquency, such as family, school, and relation with peer. By understanding these factors, the public is expected to be more concerned and can take preventive measures to reduce the risk of Juvenile Delinquency. In addition, this research can also be a reference for authorities, such as schools and social institutions, in designing more effective strategies in dealing with and preventing Juvenile Delinquency.

1.7. Definition of Key Terms

Sociological Approach : Sociology is the objective scientific study of society, including social structures and processes. This approach seeks answers about how societies are formed, function, and persist. Sociology studies phenomena that occur in life, where each event originates from previous

events in society and the focus is on social interactions and their effects on human behavior. In literary research, the Sociological Approach sees literary works as social products that reflect culture, ideas, and emotions that are influenced by the lives of society.

Sociology of Literature : A study that views literary works and sociology as having the same goal, namely understanding human life in society, including how they interact, form groups, and adapt to the social environment through written stories or narratives.

Juvenile Delinquency : The involvement of a minor in illegal or unlawful behavior. Adolescents who are categorized as juvenile delinquents are still within the age limit set by law, so the law treats them differently than adults. These actions can range from minor offenses, such as skipping school or breaking curfew, to more serious acts such as theft or violence.

Status Offense : A legal term used to describe an offense committed by a minor because of their age. This means that the act is considered illegal simply

because the perpetrator is a minor, but if committed by an adult, it would not be considered a crime.