

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the research by providing a comprehensive background of the study, identifying the research problem, outlining the research purposes, explaining the significance of the study, and defining key terms relevant to the analysis.

1.1 Background of Study

Humans are inherently social creatures that rely on interaction and communication to form relationships, build communities, and survive emotionally and physically. As Aristotle famously stated, “man is by nature a social animal”, highlighting the essential role of social connectedness in human life. From early development, individuals are shaped by the presence and influence of others, learning social cues, language, empathy, and cooperation (Tomasello, 2014). In this way, individuals constantly navigate the intricate ways of social dynamics, emotional exchange, and relationships. While these interactions often foster trust and mutual understanding, others may exploit them. Instead of building healthy relationships with individuals, some develop relationships that control, dominate, and only take advantage of others. This kind of situation can also be referred to as manipulation.

Manipulation is a darker facet of human interaction that involves the deceptive influence of a person’s beliefs, desires, and emotions to serve the manipulator’s personal gain (Goodin, 1980). Their actions are driven by a relentless pursuit of self-interest, often at the expense of the well-being and autonomy of those around them (Potter, 2006). Ultimately, manipulation not only undermines personal agency but also distorts relationships and ethical boundaries, highlighting its profound psychological and social consequences.

At the core of manipulative behaviour, lies a lack of empathy and moral conscience. This is demonstrated by the way manipulators operate, as they prey on the vulnerabilities, insecurities, and emotions of others, using persuasion, coercion,

and deception to gain control. To win their victims' trust, manipulators often develop an image that plays on the victim's needs and weaknesses. The manipulator starts by presenting a picture of compassion, empathy, and attentiveness, which makes them appear trustworthy and safe. By reflecting the victim's values, interests, and emotional needs, they can help the victim feel seen and understood in a way that is special to them. In this way, manipulators foster dependency by positioning themselves as a source of support and guidance. However, over time, the manipulator can subtly influence the victim's ideas, decisions, and perceptions, as this meticulously crafted facade frequently makes the victim feel compelled to return the favour (Maulidia, 2021).

The psychological mechanisms behind manipulation, particularly how manipulators construct false identities and exploit others, align closely with Jung's archetypes, particularly the persona and shadow. The persona and shadow represent two contrasting yet interconnected aspects of the human psyche. The persona refers to the outward mask or social identity that an individual presents to the world, which is shaped by societal expectations, norms, and roles, serving as a tool to navigate social interactions. The persona allows individuals to adapt to their environment and maintain harmony in relationships by conforming to accepted behaviours. However, Jung warns that over-identification with the persona, treating it as the entirety of one's self, can lead to a loss of authenticity and alienation from deeper aspects of the psyche (Jung, 1980).

In contrast, the shadow embodies the repressed, hidden, or unconscious aspects of the self, often including traits, desires, and emotions deemed undesirable or incompatible with societal norms. The shadow is not inherently negative; it contains both destructive impulses and creative potential. Jung describes the shadow as the "dark side" of the psyche because it often reflects qualities an individual disowns or denies. Jung argues that the failure to confront and integrate the shadow can result in destructive behaviours (Jung, 1980). The shadow can also lead to externalized behaviours, such as manipulation or deceit, as individuals struggle to balance societal expectations with their hidden nature.

Manipulative tendencies may arise from an individual's attempt to manage their shadow by controlling others, thereby avoiding confrontation with their own shortcomings or flaws (Jung, 1980). This behaviour reflects the inner struggle to cope and harmonize conflicting aspects of the self, which can manifest in the external manipulation of others. By utilizing the personas, manipulators can hide their darker motives and gain the trust of their victims as they are more likely to be seen as decent people, which obscures their true selves. Meanwhile, the shadow characteristics may drive the interactions and tactics of manipulators, even though they stay hidden under their meticulously constructed facade.

Manipulative behaviour, as understood through Jung's persona and shadow archetypes, finds unsettling expression in various life contexts. In fact, many crimes are directly involved with manipulation, one of them being child grooming. Child grooming is defined as a person's attempt to establish rapport, trust, and emotional connection with minors to manipulate, exploit, and abuse them (Dilla & Ufran, 2022). Usually, both physical and psychological manipulation are used in the process. First, the child and the perpetrators build a relationship based on affection and trust. Then, the perpetrator gradually violates boundaries over time, turning the trust into an excuse for having a physical relationship or engaging in intercourse (Gill & Harrison, 2015).

Moreover, research found that 30-45% of child sexual abusers employ sexual abuse strategies, suggesting that sexual abuse is frequently conducted through grooming activities beforehand to prime the child for a sexual relationship of some kind (Oltman & Surface, 2021). Child grooming can occur in various settings and times where children are accessible, making it difficult to pinpoint specific circumstances. Common environments include schools, sports teams, religious institutions, and online platforms, as these settings provide groomers with opportunities to establish trust and familiarity with their victims (Whittle et al., 2013). Groomers in such settings often adopt the persona of a trusted educator, mentor, or leader, projecting reliability and care, while their shadow drives covert and harmful actions aimed at exploiting vulnerable children. The

contrast between these psychological elements not only enables the manipulation but also reveals the profound dangers of unexamined psychological dualities when placed in positions of trust.

The act of child grooming is often depicted in literary works through their manipulative characters, for example, in Kate Elizabeth Russell's novel *My Dark Vanessa*. *My Dark Vanessa* tells the story of Vanessa Wye, a young woman grappling with the aftermath of an abusive relationship she had as a teenager with her teacher, Jacob Strane. The novel shifts between her teenage years in the early 2000s and her adult life in 2017. At 15, Vanessa, a lonely boarding school student, became involved with Strane, who is 42 years old. Strane manipulated her carefully, beginning with praise and private conversations about literature and escalating to inappropriate physical contact. In 2017, 32-year-old Vanessa was struggling with depression. When the #MeToo movement gained momentum, Vanessa was confronted with the allegations of sexual misconduct against Strane from other students. As a result, she is forced to confront the truth about her past and grapple with her identity as a victim. Despite feeling that their relationship was consensual and romantic, Vanessa became increasingly confused and disturbed by the realization that she was being manipulated and abused.

In this study, the novel *My Dark Vanessa* is chosen as the research object for several reasons. The novel revolves around the predatory relationship between a student, Vanessa, and her much older teacher, Strane. Strane's manipulation is a major issue in the story, making the novel a rich source for analyzing manipulative behaviour. Strane is portrayed not only as a predator but also as someone who uses sophisticated ways to manipulate Vanessa's perceptions and emotions. This highlights the potential of analyzing a character like Jacob Strane in *My Dark Vanessa*, where his manipulative behaviour exemplifies how the persona and shadow are used.

The analysis of how Strane uses his tactics to manipulate others can be explored through the concept of persona. Meanwhile, Strane's motivations for manipulating his victim can be revealed through the concept of the shadow.

Additionally, the theory of manipulation by George K. Simon (2010) and the theory of child grooming by Georgia Winters and Elizabeth Jeclic (2016) are used in this study to assist the analysis. In this way, Jung's theory, with the assistance of Simon's theory and Winters and Jeclic's theory, can provide a comprehensive lens for dissecting both the manipulative tactics and the underlying motivations, giving this study a solid foundation for analyzing the manipulative behaviour of character Jacob Strane.

Furthermore, the topic of manipulative behaviour depicted in literary work is chosen because manipulation in literature can be a powerful tool to deepen narratives, develop characters, and explore complex themes. Manipulation can be used as an intrinsic aspect of storytelling that can operate at the surface level, between characters (Yassine, 2023). This manipulation focuses on characters emotionally, psychologically, or socially influencing each other. The surface level of manipulation in a story is often apparent to readers, who can observe the manipulative tactics as part of the storytelling. However, these techniques contribute to the immersive experience by making the story compelling and layered.

Moreover, analyses of manipulative behaviour and the persona and shadow of fictional characters in literary works have been conducted by some scholars. One of the previous studies is *The Innocent Killer: Ethan's Manipulation in A. J. Finn's The Woman in The Window* by Maulidia (2021). This thesis explored the manipulative behaviour of Ethan Russell in A.J. Finn's novel *The Woman in the Window*, focusing on how he employs his persona and shadow archetypes to deceive his victim, Anna Fox. The analysis identifies several distinct ways Ethan manipulates Anna. First, he adopts several personas. He constructs an elaborate artificial scenario in which he presents himself as other people, furthering Anna's trust and sympathy and manipulating Anna's perception of events. These calculated personas allow Ethan to obscure his true intentions and keep Anna unaware of his deceptive tactics. The study also uncovers several motivations behind Ethan's manipulative behaviour that drive him to maintain proximity and control over Anna, and his need to protect himself from being implicated in a murder. The findings

reveal how Ethan's mastery of persona manipulation, combined with his shadow aspects, makes his actions particularly dangerous. Ultimately, the thesis demonstrates the efficacy of Jung's archetypal framework in analyzing Ethan's complex personality reflected through his manipulative strategies and the reasons behind them.

Another study is entitled *Trudy's Persona and Shadow Portrayed in Keri Beevis's Novel The Summer House* by Salam (2024). This research examined the representation of Trudy Palmer's persona and shadow in *The Summer House*, focusing on her dual nature as an antagonist character. Using Jung's archetypal theory of persona and shadow, alongside the Dark Triad framework, comprising Machiavellianism, Narcissism, and Psychopathy, the study sought to uncover the complexities of Trudy's good and bad sides. The findings revealed Trudy's persona and shadow as dual and contrasting elements of her personality. The first category revealed Trudy's persona and shadow in several forms. These personas represent the facade she projects to manipulate and interact with others. In contrast, her shadow traits highlight the darker, hidden aspects of her character. The second category explained the processes and motivations behind the manifestation of Trudy's persona and shadow. Her personas are driven by specific intentions, such as manipulation or self-preservation. Similarly, her shadow traits are tied to underlying psychological and situational factors that influence her actions. By integrating Jung's archetypal theory with the Dark Triad framework, the research offers a nuanced understanding of Trudy's character, emphasizing how her contrasting traits shape her role as an antagonist in *The Summer House* novel.

Another study is entitled *Manipulative Behaviour of Michael Whittaker Character in Joy Fielding's Novel See Jane Run* by Pangestika (2024). This research focuses on the manipulative behaviour of Michael Whittaker, the antagonist in Joy Fielding's novel *See Jane Run*. The study explores how Michael's character is constructed in the novel and examines the various types of manipulative behaviours he employs. The study used George K. Simon's theory of manipulation to understand Michael's manipulative tactics to maintain control and achieve his

hidden agendas. This study identified eleven categories of manipulative behaviour categories of manipulative concepts. Out of the eleven categories of concepts examined, it was discovered that the male protagonist's motivation to carry out manipulative acts was to hide his crimes. This study emphasizes the value of examining manipulative characters in literature because it can illustrate how manipulative individuals carry out their manipulative behaviours.

This study drew on previous research that utilized Jung's archetypal theory, particularly the concepts of persona and shadow, to explore manipulative characters in literary works. Although aligned with the previous studies, this research distinguished itself by examining a different literary work as its primary object of analysis, namely the novel *My Dark Vanessa* by Kate Elizabeth Russell. There have been several studies so far that have used *My Dark Vanessa* for their research material. They primarily focus on the victim's experiences, including examining the trauma of a woman due to an age difference relationship (Adisasono, 2024), the cause, forms, and psychological effects of the sexual abuse (Pradini et al., 2024; Anisa & Marsih, 2024; Putri, 2023; Furada, 2021), Vanessa's obsession as the main character (Maria Godensia, 2023), the woman's struggle reflected in the novel (Chintya, 2023), Strane's stage of grooming and the factors contributing to Vanessa's abuse (Hartati et al., 2022), the manipulation tactics used and their impact on the victim (Paramitha, 2021), and only one focuses on the perpetrator, examining Strane's psychopathic personality disorder (Ariyanti, 2021). However, most of these studies center on Vanessa's victimization rather than a deep psychological dissection of Strane as a manipulator. This research filled that gap by shifting the focus to the perpetrator, particularly analyzing the manipulative behaviour of the character Jacob Strane through his persona and shadow.

Through exploring Strane's persona and shadow reflected in his manipulative behaviour, this study offers a new perspective on the psychological mechanisms behind his manipulation in *My Dark Vanessa* and provides a more nuanced understanding of his character beyond his actions alone. Through this comprehensive approach, the study not only builds on existing research into

Jungian archetypes but also expands the understanding of manipulative characters in literature by applying these theories to a specific dynamic, namely, in a child grooming case.

1.2 Statement of Problem

Based on the previous explanation, it may be concluded that this research is a continuation of previous studies on the persona and shadow archetypes depicted in literary works. The novelty aspect of this research is the use of a different work, namely *My Dark Vanessa* by Kate Elizabeth Russell, as the research object in depicting the manipulative behaviour of Jacob Strane character. Problems related to the character's manipulative behaviour are analyzed through his persona and shadow. From this problem, the research questions are:

1. How does Jacob Strane employ his persona to manipulate others in Kate Elizabeth Russell's *My Dark Vanessa*?
2. How does Jacob Strane's shadow drive his manipulative behaviour in Kate Elizabeth Russell's *My Dark Vanessa*?

1.3 Research Purposes

Based on the formulation of the research question above, the purposes of this research are:

1. To analyze how Jacob Strane employs his persona to manipulate others in the novel *My Dark Vanessa*
2. To analyze how Jacob Strane's shadow drives his manipulative behaviour in the novel *My Dark Vanessa*

1.4 Research Significance

This research aims to provide readers with a better understanding of the varied range of characters seen in literary works, particularly novels. Novels usually offer deeper insights into their characters' distinct personalities. This research is also expected to enhance literary research by delving into the complex

characterization in novels. In theory, this research will enrich interdisciplinary discourse, bridging literary studies with psychology. The anticipated outcome of this research is to offer readers insights into the psychological perspective of an individual's behaviour within a character-driven narrative. The range of information around this issue can help common people comprehend the meaning of literary works. Moreover, this study may serve as a further resource for the analysis of characters in psychological themes, specifically regarding manipulation, in literary works in future studies.

This study will not only hold significant value for literary discourse, but also for psychological and social discourse. This study will provide insights into the psychological mechanisms behind manipulation and enhance understanding of how abusers manipulate and control their victims, particularly in vulnerable age groups such as adolescents. The study of the character Strane will also have practical significance in raising awareness of critical issues such as manipulative or predatory tendencies, particularly in educational settings. It can encourage more informed discussions about the blurred lines of victimization in unequal power dynamics. Eventually, the research will underscore the importance of recognizing grooming and other forms of psychological abuse that may not always be visible but have profound impacts on the victims' identities and life trajectories.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

a. Archetype

The archetype is an inherited mode of functioning that shapes humans' thoughts, behaviours, dreams, visions, or emotions. It affects how people perceive the world and interact with one another, which can be manifested in human culture, art, religion, and symbolic experiences (Jung, 1978).

b. Persona

The persona is an artificial identity that covers an individual's true nature while simultaneously making a positive impression on others. It is one of the archetypes that are displayed in certain conditions and societies

that are influenced by social conventions, culture, and community circumstances (Campbell, 1976; Jung, 1972).

c. Shadow

The shadow archetype encompasses a part of one's repressed and unrecognized personality that stands for all of a person's actions that the individual wishes others were unaware of. It contains a variety of morally ambiguous traits, often projected onto others (Feist & Feist, 2006; Jung, 1959).

d. Manipulation

Manipulation is the use of deceitful, unfair, or cunning tactics to control or exploit others for personal gain. It is a psychological outcome carried out covertly that often involves psychological tactics that distort perception (Braiker, 2004).

e. Child Grooming

Child grooming is defined as a person's attempt to establish rapport, trust, and emotional connection with minors to manipulate, exploit, and abuse them (Dilla & Ufran, 2022)

