

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Research

Literature is the most historic branch of human culture, preceding all others. Literature is used to express and communicate messages as well as human emotions. A literary work is a reflection of people's lives, a visual representation of them. Through literary works, the author attempts to express the ups and downs of the people's lives and its surroundings. Literary works in its development are divided into several types, such as Poetry, drama/plays, essays, short stories, and novels.

A novel is a piece of fiction in which a story is told in narrative form. According to Kenney through (Yuliani et al., 2013), a novel is a thought of as containing about 45.000 words or more. Longer than short stories, novels are works of prose that develop themes, settings, and characters. In every novel, there are "actors," also known as "figures," who play important roles in the development of a story idea. Each of these characters has a distinct personality based on the events depicted.

Novels typically have a more complex plot than other literary works and are published in a form of book. There are numerous ideas that can be developed into a theme in a novel. The novel's typical themes are very diverse. Themes that are frequently raised include love, betrayal, good and evil, death, redemption, courage, revenge, violence, traumatic experience, and many more. Each of the well-known

theme examples above illuminates the human condition and provides readers with ideas to pause and reflect after the story is over.

A number of modern theories can be used to analyze the novel as one of literary works. A novel with a violent and traumatic theme would be appropriate for psychoanalysis theory. It is because psychoanalysis places a lot of emphasis on the idea that people's behavior is influenced by the recurring events they have previously stored in their minds. Further, the primary objective of psychoanalytic theory is to find out a literary work's hidden meaning. According to what Rokhmansyah wrote, through (Nurdayana & Saraswati, 2020). Essentially, what becomes the object of literary psychology is the human aspect that exists in a fictional character contained within a literary work that is created. In that case, psychoanalysis can use the narration in the novel to determine the cause of the trauma.

One of the psychoanalytic theories that can be applied is the theory by Sigmund Freud. Sigmund Freud himself assumed at the start of his career that a history of sexual seduction in childhood was to held responsible for the neurotic symptoms he observed in his patients. Freud only then began to investigate the conscious-unconscious problem.

Freud classified human minds as conscious, subconscious, and unconscious. The conscious mind is made up of the events, memories, fantasies, feelings, and emotions that the human is aware of at the time. The sub-conscious or pre-conscious mind is made up of psychic experiences and desires from the past. Those painful experiences and emotions are stored in the unconscious mind: fears, wounds, guilt,

and unresolved conflict. The subconscious is the most important aspect to consider. Trauma, fear, guilt, desire, and unresolved issues that manifest as a defense mechanism are investigated here.

Trauma is a state of mind or behavior that is no longer normal as a result of pressure or influence from past events that left a deep impression on a person. Trauma can happen to anyone, whether they are adults or children. Freud had already in his earlier period started the search for the traumas in childhood which lead to hysteria or obsessional neurosis.

Freud stated that the neurotic had suffered a trauma or shock, which had not been properly dealt with (Fine, 2014). This trauma can directly affect someone when they are involved in the traumatic event or even indirectly when they only witnessing it. Back in the 1960s, trauma theory arose as a result of several social concerns: recognition of the prevalence of violence against women and children (rape, battering, incest); identification of the phenomenon of post-traumatic stress disorder in war veterans; and recognition of the psychic scars left by torture and genocide, particularly the Holocaust. This statement was also in accordance with Caruth (1996), In her book, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* stated that in traumatic neurosis, Freud encounters the strange and perplexing experience of survival rather than a reaction to any horrible event.

According to Fine (2014), Freud also stated that when an individual encounters something that is considered disturbing, he will release his emotions from time to time and eventually forget it. Neurotic, is vice versa. It will continue to remember the traumatic experience and create a pathological reaction. In other

words, trauma can be a personal response to something too upsetting and overwhelming for the human mind to process, something that eventually seeps into the soul and prompts certain responses in the person.

Trauma can be found in realist literature, which focuses on triggering experiences like domestic violence or violence perpetrated by those close to them. It can be found in one of Colleen Hoover's novel, *It starts With Us. It Starts With Us* is a sequel to *It Ends With Us* written by Colleen Hoover in October 2022.

This book tells the story of Atlas Corrigan and Lily Bloom's romance, each of whom suffers from trauma. It reveals that Atlas's childhood trauma was caused by his own mother, who was willing to abandon him in order to choose her own partner. Meanwhile, Lily experienced this trauma as a child, when she frequently witnessed her father's acts of domestic violence. Growing up, Lily witnessed violence in a relationship perpetrated by her own partner, Ryle Kincaid. Both of the characters tried to prevent abusive behavior happening to them and to not happen on the next generation.

The choice of this literary work for this research is based on the fact that both characters experienced trauma as children, but they have different ways of defense mechanism, makes their experiences looks similar and interesting to discuss. When Freud's concept of personality is associated with the trauma experienced by Atlas Corrigan and Lily Bloom, which had an impact on their "life", it demonstrates neurosis, a type of disorder characterized by conflict, anxiety reactions, partial damage to personality, and sometimes phobias.

The researcher reads several studies related to the discussion of trauma and defense mechanisms. The first research to read entitled *“The Impacts of Charlie’s Childhood Trauma Towards His Personality In Stephen Chbosky’s The Perks of Being Wallflower”* written by Aditya Widayani (2015). This study discovered that Charlie, the main character, was traumatized by Aunt Helen's death and sexual abuse, which resulted in his psychological disorder. The character's behavior in the present is influenced by the trauma of sexual abuse. Charlie uses six defense mechanisms to deal with his problems.

The second research entitled *“The Personality Structure And Defense Mechanism Of The Main Character In The House At The End Of The Street Film”* written by Eris Widya Astuti (2018). This study discovered that the main character, Ryan, has a trauma caused by the childhood abused when he was 7. Ryan’s id dominates his ego to release from pain and he does anything to please the id. The ego ignores the superego to stop the anger and killing his parents.

The third research is entitled *“The Impacts of Psychological Childhood Trauma on the Main Character, Libby Day, in Gillian Flynn’s Dark Places,”* written by Sandy Rodan (2018). This study discovered that the problem that she faced as a child had an impact on her personality, making her difficult to deal with emotions. For Libby, the complex childhood trauma is a painful memory of her family, causing her to be depressed for about twenty-four years. It makes her feel guilty and shows a lack of self-awareness.

The three studies mentioned above are distinct but related. It is about describing the main character’s trauma using Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis

theory. This research differs from previous research, as it can be seen in the main problems and the subject of the studies. Furthermore, in the first study, although it also focuses on defense mechanisms, the trauma was focused only in childhood trauma, whereas in this study, the trauma is focused on highlighting the anxiety and the trauma that the main characters experienced. The difference between the second research is on that research is to analyze the unpleasant feeling and trauma in the movie. The researcher were also found that none of the studies choose *It Starts With Us* as the oboect of research.

1.2 Statement of Problems

According to the research background described above, the researcher concludes that the primary focus of this study will be:

1. What type of psychological trauma experienced by the main characters?
2. How do the main characters build the defense mechanism as an impact of their trauma?

1.3 Research Purposes

According to the problem of the study above, the purpose of this study is:

1. To understand the psychological trauma experienced by the main characters, Atlas Corrigan and Lily Bloom.
2. To find out how the trauma had an impact towards their personality.

1.4 Research Significance

The research surely has significance, as for the significance of this research, consist of:

1. Researcher hope that this study can be beneficial for the readers especially those who is interested in psychoanalysis.
2. Researcher hope that the findings of this study will be useful and beneficial and be a new contribution to the study of literature.
3. It is also expected to be used as a future references to the next research to analyze using Sigmund Freud Psychoanalysis theory, especially thus who is interesting in studying defense mechanism.

