

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Research

Shakespeare is a playwright who has created many masterpieces; each of his works has very complex puzzles wherein we can explore all human emotions. No wonder so many critics try to analyze many things from the play because of its complexity and rich of human's psychological problems. Additionally, Shakespeare is one person who created the English language; even quotes from Shakespeare's plays are used in everyday English language. According to Forrester (1995), Shakespeare has contributed a lot of words to the English dictionary and are still being used today (17).

In addition to learning English, Shakespeare also taught us the history of English culture from 400 years ago. The world in Shakespeare's works explains well the cultures that occurred in England at that time. Even though the works were written 400 years ago, they could present all human feelings and problems that readers are interested in learning. Each character in his works has a nuanced inner life, and they have psychological problems that still relate to today.

*Hamlet* is known as the longest Shakespeare's play with many complex puzzle in it. Gearhart (2007) points out that murder, revenge, adultery, and suicide are listed in the story, and these are hard subjects that cannot be discussed with elementary students (44). Children who are interested in literature will probably seek Shakespeare's play and come to *Hamlet*, but the question is, is it okay for children to read it? As Gearhart mentions, the psychological problem in *Hamlet* cannot be discussed with

elementary students, and one of those psychological problems is madness. In the play, many abnormal events question Hamlet's sanity, concluding that Hamlet is mad. According to Felman (1975) in his journal article, "madness is a phenomenon of thought, thought which claims to denounce, in other thoughts, other thoughts: which thought is not" (206). The conflict of thought in the play *Hamlet* is dense, and by reading *Hamlet*, we might consider how Hamlet is trying to denounce other's thoughts. The madness of Hamlet is supported by Davis (1921), who states that Hamlet becomes peevish because of the sorrow for his father's death, and his psychosis naturally develops under the influence of his mother's second marriage (629). Those are one of the reasons why Hamlet is categorized as mad. In his essay, T.S Elliot (1922) also states that Prince Hamlet is dominated by emotions that cannot be expressed because it exceeds the visible facts (4). Even so, T.S. Elliot criticizes *Hamlet* for the instability of Hamlet's character, and it could become a hint to know about Hamlet's madness.

Considering Shakespeare's work for young readers, the young readers here means children aged 6-14 years old, wherein a child is in the way of their development of identity (Eccles 1). That is a sensitive age for children to accept or emulate everything they read. Eccles (1999) in his journal article, states that children aged 6-14 years old are driven by the psychological need to achieve competence, autonomy, and relation. Children tend to seek opportunities to demonstrate and master a new skill to make independent decisions and control everything on their own behavior (2). Therefore, analyzing Hamlet's madness is necessary to make sure the madness will not affect young readers negatively. However, in 1897 Edith Nesbit published *The Children's Shakespeare* which adapted Shakespeare's plays into short stories and made

them child-friendly. Edith Nesbit retells *Hamlet* more simply, focusing on the plot rather than psychological issues and language. The complexity of *Hamlet* has been adapted into a child-friendly story by Nesbit to make children enjoy Hamlet; however, Hamlet's madness still needs to be discussed because this topic is a very tough issue for children.

### 1.2 Identification of Problem

Shakespeare's play *Hamlet* has a very complicated plot, yet Shakespeare's fame made several adaptations of his works emerge. One of the adaptations is the book by Edith Nesbit entitled *The Children's Shakespeare*. She adapted the longest Shakespeare's play — to be shorter and simpler. In *Hamlet*, madness is the most prominent and interesting psychological issue, and we need to know how Nesbit presents Hamlet's madness in her adaptation, it is as complicated as the original version or not, considering her version is written for young readers.

### 1.3. Review of Related Studies

*Hamlet* is written by Shakespeare. It is a tragedy about the Prince of Denmark named Hamlet, who avenges his father's mysterious death and falls into madness. This madness arises a question: is it okay for children to read it? This study does not use all dialogue in both books but only the dialog related to Hamlet's madness. Many scholars already do Shakespeare's Hamlet as an object of research. Therefore the writer will provide several research related to Hamlet's madness to help his research.

First, Teney L. Davis (1921) has already done similar research in his journal

article "The Sanity of Hamlet." Davis questions the sanity of Hamlet's character. Davis states that questioning Hamlet's sanity is difficult because many scholars, on the one hand, believe Hamlet is insane, and on the other hand, Hamlet is sane. Davis also gives other scholars' thoughts in his article. This article provides a logical explanation and compares traits between Hamlet and other characters from other literary works. In the end, the writer concludes Hamlet is sane because, in the play, Hamlet thinks logically too often, which means he is sane enough to think logically. This is a very interesting idea to understand Hamlet's sanity, but this article only examines Hamlet's character with a philosophical approach that weakens the writer's opinion. Reviewing it with a psychological approach is more credible because Hamlet in this play is undoubtedly being attacked psychologically by his uncle unconsciously.

R.W. Hamilton (1991), in his journal's article "The Instability of Hamlet," compares Hamlet and King Lear. Hamilton begins by explaining how King Lear reacts after seeing Cordelia's dead body, which at that time, Shakespeare used textual ambiguity for arbitrary realization, and then Hamilton compares it with Hamlet. In Hamlet, there is not much textual ambiguity in it, but there are a lot of crucial interpretations instead. This is the key to ascertaining Hamlet's instability. Hamilton also indicates how Gertrude cannot see the King's ghost while Hamlet can. Hamilton states that nothing in the text can answer this question, and there will be only interpretation. Next, Hamilton explains one by one the instability of Hamlet's characters and explains to his readers who is right and who is wrong. From reading his article, we will know he acknowledges Hamlet's madness positively and says that Hamlet's madness is a good thing because, in the end, Hamlet is dying for people.



Jacquelynne S. Eccles (1999), in her journal article "the Development of Children Ages 6 to 14" examines children's developmental stages around age 6 – 14. Eccles explains that children ages 6 to 14 are in middle childhood and early adolescence, where many events will occur in their life, and this event will influence their way of thinking or their identity. The interesting part of his article is that Eccles explains the stage of development according to Erik Erikson and gives a diagram of how a conflict is resolved.

Mariana Lessa de Oliveira (2018) also used Hamlet as her main object of research and Hamlet's character as her research topic. The title of her article is "' Was Hamlet really mad?' The function of Shakespeare's Hamlet in Brian Friel's *Volunteers*." Instead focus on the madness of Hamlet itself, she focuses on the adaptation of Hamlet, especially on Friel's adaptation. She compares Hamlet's madness in Friel's Adaptation and the original Hamlet. However, she still explains the madness of Hamlet clearly in each act from the original. In her opinion, the Friel adaptation repairs the plot hole in the original version.

Guido Paduano (2018), in his journal article "Is Hamlet's Madness True or Faked?" mainly discussed about Hamlet's artificial madness by examining Hamlet's declaration of intent, his relation to Ophelia, his intellectual construction, and his witticisms. Most of his article retells the story related to Hamlet's faked madness. Paduano states another scholar's opinion that Hamlet's artificial madness slowly becomes his true self, but he is not sure about it. In conclusion, he gives his own argument about Hamlet's madness with several classic examples of Shakespeare's criticism holding the idealizing view. Unfortunately, his article seems out of point

because he does not have any findings, just retelling the story and giving his opinion about Hamlet's madness.

Vrinda Sawhney and Anshu Teoria (2021), in their journal article "The Dynamic Impact of Madness in Literature (From Shakespearean to Modern Era)" analyze madness in literary works from the Shakespearean to modern era. They started their opinion by explaining how the authors in the Shakespearean to modern era still use madness as their topic. This study explores meaning-making for people with mental disorders because of their environment and culture. These authors believe that people who have psychological trauma will regain a way of order by imposing a narrative structure on these disturbing experiences. They explain the meaning of madness through Shakespeare and other literary works and conclude that those authors write "madness in literature" because they have experienced and seen it in their environment. After that, these authors decide that madness is defined differently in every period because of their environment and culture. This research becomes an important point to support my research about the meaning of madness to learn/understand Hamlet's madness, which can change over time.

#### **1.4 Research Question**

This research will discuss about Hamlet's madness both in the play and in the short story by Nesbit, these questions below will be answered:

1.4.1 How is madness presented in Shakespeare's Hamlet?

1.4.2 How does Nesbit adapt madness in her version of prince Hamlet? And how Nesbit version could be presentable for young readers?

### 1.5 Scope of the research

The first aim of this research is to explain the psychological issue in *Hamlet*. The discussion involves the explanation of how Shakespeare presents madness in Hamlet. Next, it will be compared to the adaptation of *Hamlet* by Nesbit, which later can answer how Nesbit presents Hamlet's madness in her adaptation and how it becomes presentable for young readers.

### 1.5.Objective of the Research

Based on the research questions above, the objective of the research is to analyze Hamlet's psychological issue—Hamlet's madness in both Shakespeare's Hamlet and Nesbit's Hamlet. We also aim to examine how Nesbit presents the issue of madness for young readers.

