

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Literary work is the imaginative result of the author in producing a work. However, characters in a literary work can be depictions of humans in reality. Through the characters, the author displays psychological aspects that often occur in the real life. As living creature, human being may have experienced traumatic events that could affect their lives. Events or experiences that are scary and horrific over time will traumatize a person. Tyson (2006) state if a person experiences the trauma of sudden death, being separated from a loved one, losing a sibling or family, and so on he or she will be overwhelmed by all the guilt, denial, and conflict that the person has repressed with the event. Based on the definition of trauma put forward by Tyson, it can be understood that trauma can break someone's happy life. What is worse it can break someone's safety feeling.

Furthermore, Harvey (2002) explains the definition of trauma in his book as a specific term referring to extreme psychological and psychological reactions to major losses, such as the death of closer one. The consequences when a person faces a traumatic event can be shock, anxiety and denial. Trauma is a disability that is familiar in society, not only by adults, but also by children. Someone who has had a traumatic experience is usually difficult to forget the incident and it affects his or her life in the future. All important experiences since childhood are stored in memory and affect their behavior and thoughts when they are adults so that they can unconsciously cause PTSD symptoms.

A traumatic event that can effect someone's life is a topic of the novel *Girl Against the Universe*. Paula Stokes as one of successful writer, she has published several historical, young adult and action/adventure novels. Stokes was born and grew up in Ireland, she also graduated from the National Collage of Art and Design in Ireland with Bachelor's Degree in Glass Design. In addition being a writer, Stokes also a crisis emergency responder and mental health counselor. *Girl Against the Universe* is one of young adult novel by Paula Stokes. This novel tells about the main character named Maguire. She experiences a lot of things in her adolescent life that have caused her to feel that she is bad luck and disaster for people around her and she does a lot of 'rituals' to help herself cope with this feeling. It starts when she was in a car crash with her father, brother and uncle and all of them died and she was the only one who survived. Because of her PTSD, Maguire shows difficulties in interacting because she always looks down on herself and always blames herself for all the bad things that happen to people around her. Maguire's mother decided to send her to a therapist because she kept blaming herself for all that happened. The therapist, Dr. Leed gave her challenges to make her out of the fear she had been trough, and Maguire do the challenges to get her goal to go to Ireland where there is going to be a memorial service posted by her grandmother for her father, brother and uncle, while doing challenges from her therapist she faced some difficulties, she also met Jordy in waiting room area in the hospital, unexpectedly he is an important person in carrying out changes and achieving her goal. The whole story revolves around the post-traumatic therapy process experienced by Maguire and the life of adolescent puberty. In adolescent or teenagers phase they begin to adapt the changes and start to search their self identity.

These changes makes them vulnerable to mental health issues. Sometimes, it makes them emotional and result in sadness, fear and anxiety. Especially, from a traumatic event in their life that makes them emotionally disturbed or distressed. A child or adolescent who has been exposed to a series of trauma may become overwhelm by the event and more convinced that the world are the safe place, they may also show symptoms such as loss of interest in daily activities, excessive worry and sleeping problem. These symptoms can indicate if someone experiencing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

According to Smith and Segel (2008), Post Traumatic Stress Disorder is a disorder that can develop following a trauma event that threatens your safety or makes you feel helpless. The traumatic events that can lead to PTSD, include: war, natural disaster, car or plane crashes, terrorist attacks, sudden death of a loved one, rape, kidnapping assault, sexual or physical abuse and childhood neglect. People who suffered from PTSD have intense thought and felling about their traumatic experienced and also effect their behavior. This aspect has a correlation with the psychoanalytical approach by Sigmund Freud. Based on the explanation above, this research focuses on how the traumatic event effect the main characters personality and the struggle that she faced while doing therapy session to overcome her trauma. Particularly this research try to analyzes the kinds of defense mechanism that she use to overcome her trauma.

1.2 Identification of Problem

Girl Against the Universe evidently shows that a traumatic event can last very long in the victims unconscious mind. Maguire grows up with her mind believing that she has caused a lot of troubles and misfortune.

However her mother can convince her to go to a therapy. The therapy itself does not seem like an easy process. During the therapy Maguire faces a lot difficulties. At the same times, the struggle can brings her to a new stage of life. This research focuses on Maguire struggle to overcome the trauma and what she becomes in the end of the therapy.

1.3 Review of Related Literature

As the author is going to analyse the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder as seen in the novel *Girl Against the Universe* by Paula Stokes, it is important for the author to collect and study literature that relate to the topic and the work themselves. PTSD is the phenomenon that exists in this decade. The previous study will help writer to give more information about PTSD and self defense mechanism. The author find some previous study that discussed Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

The first study, in relation to the theory that will be applied on this researcher, there are psychological theory by Freud, Rizka Merdifa (2018) in her journal entitled "The Main Character's Loss, Emptiness and Object of Desire in Markus Zusak's *The Book Thief*". The writer find the main discussion of this research is the personality of the main character who is consider of experiencing trauma and anxiety after losing the loved ones. This study uses Lacan's psychoanalytic theory of real, symbolic and imaginary human beings; and also Freud's theory of anxiety. In this study the writer concludes that the main character has anxiety and trauma disorders, this is shown by several symptoms found in him. This trauma and anxiety disorder is caused by losing her parents which is the most important people in his live and brother at a very

young age. From this study the writer can see how losing someone can make people trauma and have anxiety, the uses of psychological approach Lacan and anxiety theory by Freud can complete this research.

Secondly, Muhammad Maulana (2021) in his thesis titled “ An Analysis of Hannah Baker’s Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in Jay Asher’s Novel *Thirteen Reasons Why* “ also uses psychological theory to analyze the mental disorders experienced by the main character in the novel *Thirteen Reasons Why*. Researchers found four symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder described in the novel. The second thing that the writer conveys is what factors are related to this mental illness. This study aims to help the writer to understand more about Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder experienced by the main character. The writer gets some information about Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder symptoms because the writer also researches Post- Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Thirdly, a thesis by Ridha Wahyuni Taher (2021) entitled “ Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Defense Mechanism in Laurie Halse Anderson’s *Speak* ” discuss issues of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and defense mechanism. The issues analysis using psychoanalysis theory by Sigmund Freud. In this study shows several symptoms of PTSD, the writer also found several efforts by the main character to protect themselves from the trauma they experienced. Based on the defense mechanism proposed by Sigmund Freud, the effort is identified as a type of defense mechanism. The conclusion of this study is the change in the personality and behavior of the main character. Unlucky, the defense mechanism she used to help her overcome the problem so that her living

conditions became better. This thesis also explain some kind odd defense mechanism by Freud.

On the other hand, article is written by Marcy Viboch (2005) entitled “Childhood Loss and Behavioral Problems: Loosening the Links”. The author of this article explains that an experience of traumatic youth moment can effect a great damage to children especially the behavior and the personality. Especially something cause by death. Loss is common among children with poor conduct, because it can affect their personality, especially their behaviour. The victims easily become angry over something unimportant, fighting, irritability, and poor concentration, and all natural psychological responses to childhood grief and so on. The article concludes all the attention of related authorities with children development to the importance of decisions that consider children as a human being that is capable in contributing significantly towards a sustainable society and environment. This article helps the writer to understand deeply about all psychological responses to childhood grief. The tragedy of losing someone can heavily damage the mental state of a child. The effect of losing someone can cause several problems to related child, which is concludes in this article.

Furthermore, the thesis by Yanady Ayubrata (2016) entitled, “ Revealing Charlie’s Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Through His Behaviors in Stephen Chbosky’s *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*”. In this thesis the author focuses to find out the characteristics of the main character and his destructive behavior which then expose the main character to post-traumatic stress disorder. In analyzing the symptoms of PTSD disorder, the researcher first analyzed the traumatic event that had been experienced by the main character that led to post-

traumatic stress disorder. Then, the writer applies the eight symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder in the main character's behavior to reveal the disorder he has. The theories used to analyze this problem are character and characteristic theory, psychoanalytic theory and post-traumatic stress disorder theory. The writer finds the result of this study is traumatic experiences, pain, loss and emotional distress by the main character play an important role in the mental disorders experienced by the main character. All bad emotions are stored in her unconscious because she doesn't want to remember them again through destructive behavior.

These studies are helpful in conducting the research the the author want to conduct since she is going to analyse the traumatic event effect the main character as found in the novel *Girl Against the Universe* written by Paula Stokes. Among the literature reviews above, the author decides to study the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) using psychological theory and defense mechanism by Sigmund Freud.

1.4 Research Questions

This research is conducted to answer the questions below:

- 1) What is the traumatic event that happened in the main character's life?
- 2) How does the prolonged trauma influence the main character's personality?
- 3) What are the types of defense mechanism that Maguire uses to overcome her trauma?

1.5 Scope of Research

This research focuses on the main character, Maguire who had a traumatic event in the past where she lost her family. Paula Stokes provides some issues in *Girl Against the Universe* such as bullying, love and relationship between daughter and mother. Obviously this issues are interesting to be discussed. However, the writer limits the discussion on how traumatic event can last long in someone's unconscious mind and that can effect the person's personality. Furthermore, the researcher will also examine the types of defense mechanism Maguire uses to overcome her trauma so that she can become a new person. This research is intrinsic research, because it examines mental disorder suffers by the main character.

1.6 Objectives of the Research

Related to the problems that the writer has mentioned before, this study is aimed at exposing the types of defense mechanism uses by the man character. Additionally, it will also include the discussion of how the traumatic event can last long in victims unconscious mind and how the therapy effect the personality.