

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

In the social environment, the term youth is a stage that may be a bit complicated to qualify for, because basically teenagers are too mature to be qualified as children and too young to be considered adults. Adolescence is also a stage that cannot be avoided by humans in the stage of life. According to Macket, teenagers or Young Adults in the age range between 18 and 22 are positioned between the stages of children and adults (4). Teenagers also get more attention in social categories and even literary works. Young Adult is a genre that involves teenagers as readers and writers. This genre is also considered a marginal genre and can be equated with popular literary works which are considered to have high aesthetic value.

The perspective of adolescence on a work of young adult literature directly affects how a teenager forms a perspective of self-perceptions and self-concepts, because basically the cases raised in young adult literature are related to character formation of adolescence and the events which they faced also the character they develop which will influence their behavior and identities (Janet Alsup 205). The storyline that really reflects the problems of life among teenagers is one of the reasons why this Young Adult novel is in great demand. Apart from having an interesting plot, Young Adult novels also present very realistic characterization and relate to various teenage characters.

The Perks of Being a Wallflower by Stephen Chbosky which was first published in 1999 by Pocket Books, tells the story of an introverted and awkward teenager named Charlie. Although described as a loner, Charlie is a person who likes to observe things around him. The word 'Wallflower' in the title of this novel is a reflection of the image of a teenager who is unpopular and finds it difficult to socialize with the surrounding environment. The word comes from a situation where usually a introvert person prefers to be alone and standing close to the wall in every party or crowd (Chbosky 28). The word 'Wallflower' is also suitable to describe the characteristics of a Charlie in the novel *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*.

The whole story revolves around the search for Charlie's identity with various childhood traumas, stories of the past of a large family, and the life of teenage puberty. Charlie's trauma is the main cause of character and personality being formed. The traumatic experience which happened in his life started with the death of his aunt and best friend. It was told that his best friend died by suicide, while Aunt Helen (Charlie's aunt) died in an accident that occurred while on the way to buy a birthday present for Charlie. In addition to these events, another dark side began to be revealed. It turned out that Aunt Helen, whom he considered to be his own mother, had abused him sexually and he did not realize until he was an adult. From there, Charlie's anxiety grew, which affected his personality and the way he saw his environment. The traumatic experience directly affects the way Charlie socializes with his surroundings.

Identity has a strong relationship as an individual's psychological characteristics. Identity is a term often used to describe the roles, goals, value, and

beliefs about someone's perspective of world which people adopt in order to give their lives a sense of direction and purpose. Erikson (1968) also explained that human identity makes individuals able to accept themselves. Identity also makes a person have an orientation and purpose in life in the form of internal beliefs to consider several things in his life. In general, identity is the continuity of the individual with the past which they experience and the basis for a meaning personal and social, which concerns their future. Meanwhile, identity is first combined in late adolescence, as initial identity. According to Kroger (2000) the development of identity undergoes successive transformations in at least with every stage of the life cycle. An identity (in the psychoanalytic concept of ego) develops during adolescence and is influenced by self-exploration and the environment. Traumatic events have an important role in shaping a person's identity. Traumatic events can change the course of identity development and undermine the existing of identity commitments. Trauma can also affect the authority a person has over how the formation of his identity works. It makes sense that frightening or traumatic experiences and identity development are connected and influence one another (Berman 3). It also has a correlation with the psychoanalytic approach by Sigmund Freud.

Psychoanalytic approach proposed by Sigmund Freud, explained that someone will protect themselves from anxiety by using a defense mechanism in order to deal with their trauma. In this novel, it is indicated that Charlie as main character uses a self-defense mechanism in the form of repression.

In addition, the way Charlie adapts to his environment is also a form of repression. Therefore, the defense mechanism in the form of repression will be the main focus in how shaping identity leads to Charlie's adolescence.

1.2 Identification of the Problem

Charlie is a 16 year old teenager who has the characteristics of being an observer in his social environment. He is associated as a 'Wallflower' which refers to a quiet person who prefers to lean against a wall rather than interact with crowds. In this study, there is an indication which a correlation between how Charlie tries to blend in with his environment and how traumatic events in his past had a major influence on his present identity. In addition, Charlie is described as having difficulty trying to remember events from the past that he has faced. I also assume that Charlie as an observer in his environment is the result of how his past trauma affects the development of his identity towards adolescence. I try to prove that the past traumatic events greatly impact on the shaping of Charlie's identity

1.3 Review of Related Literature

The Perks of a Being Wallflower by Stephen Chbosky is a novel that represents a situation where past trauma can affect one's growth and development and shaping one's identity. In writing this research, I need several reviews from related studies conducted by other researchers to obtain wider views to enrich the analysis conducted by me as the writer in this study.

The first thesis provided by Rinda Sinta Dewi entitled “*Introvertness In The Perks of Being a Wallflower* Novel by Stephen Chbosky” (2019) ,This thesis discusses the same novel that I will analyze in this thesis, namely *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*. In this thesis, the writerr also uses the Psychoanalytic Approach theory in researching Charlie's personality. There are three objectives in this research. First, the writer analyzes Charlie's habits and personality in his environment, the second writer analyzes Charlie's introverted personality and also looks at whether this introverted personality has a significant impact on Charlie's habits. The conclusion obtained is that Charlie has 4 habits, namely as an introvert, social introvert, thinking introvert, anxious introvert, and retained introvert. In addition, the four personalities affect Charlie's habits, namely the effects of psychology and social communication. This thesis helps me as the writer, because it uses the same theory, namely the dynamics of the personality structure proposed by Sigmund Freud.

The second is a thesis written by Uswatul fitri entitled “The Struggle of The Main Character The Struggle of The Main Character with Personality Disorder as Seen in *Gone Girl* by Gillian Fynn” (2020) which focuses on the personality problem of the main female character in the novel that, Amy Elliott Dunne, who was assumed to have a disorder from the start personality. This thesis using the psychoanalytic theory discovered by Sigmund Freud about the three zones of the human psyche (id, ego, superego), characteristics psychopathy by Martin Kantor and ego defense mechanisms by Anna Freud. I conclude that the diary written by Amy is used for trapping her husband is part of the ego defense mechanism that is projection, where the diary contains what is actually felt by Amy herself but she

distorted the facts from what was real occur. This thesis is helpful for me because it is inform about the struggle of the main characters with the personality disorder and this thesis also use psychological approach by Sigmund Freud.

The third thesis provided by Pakerti Nur utami, entitled “Personality Disorder Of Charlie Kelmeckis In *The Perks Of Being A Wallflower*” (2019) . The theory used by the writer is psychoanalysis popularized by Sigmund Freud. Unlike the previous paper, this paper focuses more on the analysis of the id, ego, and superego in Charlie's character. The conclusion of this study is Charlie Kelmeckis experienced anxiety which is the effect of trauma and unpleasant childhood experiences, sexual harassment he got from Aunt Helen (One of the main characters in this film) As a result, her superego has a strong influence on overcoming bad memories. In psychoanalytic theory, he uses the defense of rationalization the mechanism by which the id pushes into socially acceptable ways. This thesis has the same focus as the thesis that I will analyze, namely in the form of an analysis of the self-defense mechanisms that exist in the main character. The difference is the result of this study, I found that the main character uses a self-defense mechanism in the form of rationalization.

Fourth thesis provided Khendy entitled “Defense Mechanism System of the Main Character in the Whispering Skull Novel: Psychological Approach” (2020). This research focuses on several types of self-defense systems using a psychological approach in Jonathan Stroud's novel *The Whispering Skull*. In addition, the writer also examines the patterns of human reactions on websites that are unexpected and tend to be unpleasant. The theory used in this research is Sigmund's theory, namely self-defense mechanism Self-defense system is also

explained as a person's way of defending and protecting oneself when faced with an unpleasant condition. Based on the results the analysis, the writer concludes that; there are five types of systems self-defense in the novel, namely sublimation, repression, denial, displacement, and projection. This thesis is very helpful, because it contains a detailed explanation of the self defense mechanism which is the theory used in this thesis.

The next article written by Dwi Didik Santoso entitled “Kecemasan Dan Mekanisme Pertahanan Ego Tokoh Utama Dalam Kumpulan Cerpen Lǚ Xùn Xiǎoshuō Quánjí 鲁迅小说全集 Karya Lu Xun” (Paramasastra, Vol. 4, No. 2, pp.294-304). This study focuses on the psychoanalytic analysis of the main character in Lu Xun's collection of short stories entitled Lǚ Xùn Xiǎoshuō Quánjí 鲁迅小说全集 by Lu Xun Yang. In this article, the discussion includes the anxiety experienced by the main character in the form of realistic, neurotic, and moral anxiety, the causes of anxiety, the main character's ego defense mechanisms. The data obtained in the analysis of this article in the form of neurotic anxiety dominates and the ego defense in the form of repression also dominates. Overall, the data in this article helps me the writer in analyzing this thesis, because they have the same study focus in the form of an analysis of self-defense mechanisms in the form of repression to the main character of a story.

Last thesis written by Alyssa Ibrati entitled “Peer And Adolescence Stage Development In John’s Green Looking For Alaska” (2018). In this thesis, the writer emphasizes the analysis of the adolescence stage of the main character in Looking for Alaska by John Green and how the relationship of the main character

with his friendship environment influences his adolescent identity. In this thesis, Erik Erikson's theory is used, namely the Psychosocial Development stage. The results of the analysis found that the main character named Miles Halter managed to get a virtue of fidelity or the ability to adapt in a community where an individual can contribute and has the ability to accept the imperfections that exist in that individual. This thesis helps in examining the results of the shaping of identity of the character Charlie in *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* which also uses the theory of Psychosocial Development by Erik Erikson.

All studies were conducted by me the writer to explore the analysis of psychoanalytic theory in the form of identity development and how self defense mechanisms can influence personality formation. Therefore, I will conduct research on how the effect on past traumatic event in the shaping of identity in *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* using psychoanalytic theory by Sigmund Freud.

1.4 Research Questions

Based on the phenomenon that has been explained about the development of personality towards adolescence faced by Charlie in the novel *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, I decided to formulate two questions to be answered in the results and classified research chapters. as follows:

1. What traumatic events happened to Charlie in *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*?
2. How do the traumatic events impact his identity and how does Charlie cope with them?

3. How is the process of shaping Charlie's identity which influenced by the traumatic events that occurred in his life?

1.5 Scope of the Research

This research focuses on the main character in *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* named Charlie Kelmeckis. It is told that Charlie, who is a 16-year-old teenager, is facing a search for identity. But on the other hand, he is also faced with past trauma which affects the identity that will be shaped within Charlie. Therefore, to analyze this thesis, the theory will be used that discusses the personality structure described by Sigmund Freud which affects the development of Charlie's characteristics that make him an observer in his social life. In addition, I will also examine how a self-defense mechanism can affect on how Charlie deals with his past trauma. The results of the analysis will ultimately relate to how the identity is shaped.

1.6 Objective of the Study

This research aims to explain indications of self-defense mechanisms in Stephen Chobsky's novel *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* which are carried out by Charlie as the main character to overcome his past trauma, which forms Charlie's identity. Apart from that, this thesis will also explain the impact of trauma on the shaping of Charlie's identity.