

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the research

There is a lot of violence experienced by children today, some of the violent acts experienced by children include physical, sexual, emotional abuse, mental abuse, abusive parenthood or child neglect. The Centres for Disease Control and Prevention define child abuse as any act or omission by a parent, guardian, or other caregiver that harms or threatens a child. The four main types of violence against children are neglect, emotional/psychological abuse, sexual and physical abuse. Whatever form of violence a child experiences, it can have serious and lifelong consequences. Abuse can lead to physical trauma, sexually transmitted infections, depression, unplanned pregnancies, suicidal thoughts, anxiety, and even death. This definition of violence, which excludes behaviours such as accidents and self-defence, aligns with that of Krug et al. (2002). It is important to note that this definition excludes any subjective evaluations. As explained by Hamby (2017), violence includes intentional acts of physical force or power, whether threatened or real, against oneself, others, or a group or society, which cause injuries, deaths, psychological harms, damages, or deprivations. Hamby and Krug et al. have emphasized the importance of violence as a prevalent issue in contemporary society. The impact of violence can have a profound effect on individuals, potentially hindering their ability to achieve their life goals.

Violence can have a significant impact on your psychological health. It is widely recognised that post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) can develop after

experiencing or witnessing a traumatic event. According to Davidson et al. (2000), PTSD is a disorder that can develop in individuals who have experienced a shocking, scary, or dangerous event, as classified in abnormal psychology. It is important to note that PTSD is a treatable condition and seeking professional help can make a significant difference in recovery. These traumatic events are often life-threatening, like war, natural catastrophes, car crashes or sexual violence. But some events are not necessarily dangerous. It is not surprising that the impact of violence continues to increase in various ways, including its detrimental effect on mental health. Traumatic events expose people to fears and dangers that can temporarily or permanently alter their coping abilities, perceptions of biological threat, and self-concept, including family and social abuse, rape and assault, natural disasters, war, accidents, and predatory attacks. Traumatized individuals often experience post-traumatic stress disorder, in which memories of the traumatic event dominate the victim's consciousness and rob them of meaning and pleasure in life. Child maltreatment takes many forms. It can be sexual, physical or emotional. It happens in all countries and all places - in children's homes, communities, schools and cyberspace. For many girls and boys, it happens at the hands of people they trust - their own parents or caregivers, teachers, friends and neighbors. Whatever form of violence a child experiences, it can have serious consequences and lifelong effects. Most people recover naturally from this condition over time. However, individuals with PTSD do not experience relief. Long after the traumatic event has ended, they continue to feel stressed and frightened. Research also shows that the toxic stress associated with childhood exposure to violence can disrupt brain growth and damage other parts of the

nervous system. This highlights Bradley's attempt to address the issue of parental violence against children, mental health disorders, and responses to trauma in *The War That Saved My Life*. Researchers investigate this topic for several reasons. Firstly, the novel provides readers with information that violence can be a vicious circle, known as 'violence breeds violence'. It is important to note that subjective evaluations have been excluded, and clear, objective language has been used throughout. This means that individuals who have experienced violence may become violent themselves. Secondly, the novel highlights the impact of violence on mental health, which is a prevalent issue in today's society. The topic of mental health is of great interest due to the high incidence of trauma, anxiety disorders, and personality disorders in modern times. Trauma can be caused by various factors, such as experiencing violence, sexual assault, bullying, or psychological abuse. This novel highlights that trauma can affect not only teenagers but also children as young as under 15. It is important to note that trauma can also result from parental violence. The writer believe this novel is an inspiring read, because Kimberly Brubaker Bradley herself wanted to convey courage, Kimberly wants readers to understand how complex the response to trauma can be. Regarding the theme, there are two things; First is the idea that people should not feel ashamed of the things they cannot control, and the second is that what limits us in one way does not have to limit us in all ways. (That would be “my feet are still far from my brain.)

1.2. Identification of the Problem

There are at least three issues in the portrayal of violence against children and post-traumatic stress disorder that researchers can identify from reading this

novel. The first is the impact of the violence that Ada describes while staying with Susan; the way in which she manages the fear of memories of her mother's abuse; the way in which the mother perpetrates violence against Ada; the type of violence perpetrated by the mother; and the way in which she defends herself. Its effects may be both physical and emotional. Violence that affects a person psychologically turns victims of violence into perpetrators of violence against others. This is sure to have a bad effect. This situation is consistent with what Kimberly Brubaker Bradley is trying to express in her novel, which is the effect that violence can have on her mental health. Post-traumatic stress disorder is the mental health that Kimberly is trying to expose. Throughout their lives, people with PTSD have experienced deep trauma and stress.

The second issue is Kimberly's explanation of violence that will have an impact on the child's physical and mental health. Violence is discussed endlessly. Kimberly has revealed that there are two types of violence - physical violence and psychological violence. Readers should know that violence, both physical and psychological, has a huge impact on a person's life.

A final topic to be discussed is the relationship between violence and post-traumatic stress disorder. In today's society, the issue of violence and post-traumatic stress disorder is quite well known. In order to explain violence and PTSD, this novel is an appropriate medium. It turns out that there is a relationship between the violence and the PTSD that is portrayed in this novel. This relationship is an indication of the effect that violence has on our psyche.

The focus of this research is on the violence or mental abuse perpetrated by Ada's mother and the daily life of Ada as she deals with the trauma of being separated from her mother.

1.3. Review of Previous Study

To support the study, the author conducted a literature research to find out about other researchers' views on the same problem about PTSD and defence mechanisms in literature. Other articles that might be helpful to the author in this study.

First, an article titled "Forms of violence against children and their impact" was written by Aghnis Fauziah, S. Psi, Psychologist (2021). Fauziah found that, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), violence against children refers to mistreatment or abuse of children in various forms such as physical harm, emotional harm, sexual harm, neglect of parental or caregiver responsibilities and exploitation for financial gain. This can lead to unintentional or intentional harm to the child's health. The author clarifies that violence against children, also known as Child Abuse, is any kind of violence committed by individuals who are responsible for or have authority over the child, such as parents, close relatives and teachers. This article presents a similar topic to that of the author, focusing on the protection and well-being of children in terms of their survival, dignity and development. The article's strength lies in Aghnis' clear explanation of the various forms of violence against children, and their associated effects. This will enhance my research and provide me with a unique perspective on the main character in *The War That Saved My Life*, ultimately aiding my understanding of Ada Smith's PTSD experience.

The second article is a journal publication authored by Essalih Bougherara and Nor El Houda Bellakhdar (2018) from Mohamed Boudiaf University titled "Defense Mechanisms and Tragic Fall in John Green's *The Fault in Our Stars*". It examines the challenges faced by Hazel, the protagonist, in trying to overcome her anxiety. Hazel's anxiety arises due to her stage four cancer, and her fear that her parents will be profoundly affected if she happens to die. Hazel feels threatened in the presence of her friends because they exhibit differential behaviour towards her, leading to irritation. This investigation characterises Hazel as employing self-defence mechanisms to enhance her quality of life. Prior to deploying such mechanisms, Hazel had an obsessive preoccupation with death due to thyroid cancer. The writer portrays Hazel opting to read books in her room rather than socialising with others due to perceiving it as a threat to her life, which is the prime defence mechanism Hazel utilises. Moreover, the author portrays Hazel utilizing additional defence mechanisms. Eventually, Hazel decides to connect with others, inspire and motivate them on social media, and attend cancer support groups. In this article, the author applies Aristotle's tragic hero theory to introduce August as another key character. August is portrayed as a tragic hero who makes sacrifices for his loved ones without any regrets. One of the strengths of this study is the precise analysis of Hazel's defence mechanisms, which help her overcome psychological issues. The author's perspective is that the explanation of the main character's defence mechanism in this story is intriguing. The author elucidates how the main character's despair transforms into positivity through the adoption of various defense mechanisms.

Third is Roudya Farha Perennia's thesis (2022) entitled *Childhood Trauma and its Influence on the Character of Charlie, Min in the Novel The Perks of Being A Wallflower*. Based on the research, Charlie has experienced every symptom of PTSD. Charlie's childhood trauma has affected his life. Not only does it affect his personal life, but it also affects his social life. It can be concluded that childhood trauma is very damaging to a child's life. Apart from the fact that it affects the child's life when he is a child. It also affects the child's life when he or she is an adult. Charlie is one of the evidences that his childhood trauma affects his life as a teenager as shown by the symptoms of PTSD. Some of the results of his research found that there were two causes of childhood trauma in Charlie, namely Traumatic Grief, Sexual Abuse, This research also found the effects of childhood trauma. The symptoms of PTSD found by this study clarify the effects caused after experiencing trauma. There are three symptoms of PTSD shown by Charlie, namely: Intrusive Symptoms, Avoidance Symptoms, and Awakening Symptoms. This research emphasises on character psychology in literary works. For future research, researchers can also analyse psychology in literary works from the aspect of author or reader psychology, and provide different analyses.

Forthcoming in 2019, M-Fauzan's dissertation will be on "Self-defence mechanisms in the protagonist of Emma Donoghue's novel, *Room*". Fauzan's research indicates that the protagonist, Ma, suffers from depression due to various causal factors and symptoms. The thesis explains in detail how Ma's past experience of being kidnapped and imprisoned in a room for many years ultimately caused her depression. Ma was unable to fully enjoy her life as she did prior to escaping from the room, causing upheaval in her life. Fauzan explained

that Ma utilized self-defense mechanisms to cope with the resulting psychological problems. Ma was unable to fully enjoy her life as she did prior to escaping from the room, causing upheaval in her life. Due to her inability to return to her usual routine, Ma opted to start anew by inhabiting a different flat and choosing a different room, distinct from the one where she was previously confined. This strategy provided relief to Ma, who was uncomfortable with the outside world. Rather than forcing herself to conform to societal norms, she chose to confine herself to her apartment. Such self-isolation is a coping mechanism that brings her comfort. Fauzan's thesis is powerful in his detailed analysis of Ma's psychological struggles, particularly his comprehensive descriptions of her depressive symptoms. Fauzan explains that Ma was affected by a horrific experience, causing her to lose all interest, suffer from insomnia, and experience suicidal ideation. Ma experiences continued struggle with depression symptoms, unable to return to her previous lifestyle due to its perseverance. Fauzan suggests that while Ma cannot eliminate her depression through defence mechanisms, it is possible to conquer it. The author highlights a weakness of this article, namely that Fauzan inadequately examines the defence mechanisms employed by Ma.

Wa Ode Nia Fadillah analyses the journey of Clifford, the protagonist, as he strives to evolve as a character in her 2018 thesis entitled 'Characters' Self-Defence Mechanisms in Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover*'. Fadillah explores how Clifford's unstable condition, aggravated by the war, affects his physical and emotional state. The frustration of the previously attractive Clifford with his deteriorated condition is a central theme in the novel. The frustration of the previously attractive Clifford with his deteriorated condition is a central theme in

the novel. Consequently, Wa Ode discovered that Clifford employed defensive measures to improve his life. Clifford secludes himself due to his aversion to appearing inadequate and feeble to others, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. She divulged that Clifford eventually embraced constructive pursuits. He resolved to pursue writing, penned books about individuals in his social circles and achieved renown as an esteemed author. This thesis presents a thorough exposition of Clifford's self-defence mechanisms, depicting how the main character grapples with his life and the consequent impact of these mechanisms on his problem-solving skills. The reader is aided by lucid narration throughout the work. Additionally, this study draws on Freud's self-defence mechanism theory, as did the author's research. One limitation of the study is the absence of a comprehensive explanation of Clifford's psychological issues. In contrast, the author's research delves into the diverse facets of the main character's psychological problems and outlines strategies to effectively manage them. The author draws on insights from five prior studies to gain a deeper understanding of the research subject. These studies not only address *The War that Saved My Life* but also explore psychological issues and methods of self-defence. Certain studies aided the author's comprehension of how trauma is depicted in various forms, while others provided insight into applying self-defence techniques to psychological challenges.

The Last In her article *Psychodynamic Approaches to Violence* (2018), Jessica Yakeley explains the evolution of violence and how psychodynamic theory talks about violence. This article has value in reviewing some key psychodynamic principles and concepts relevant to understanding violence. These

keys will be useful to scholars in expanding their knowledge of violence and psychodynamic theories. In contrast to Jessica Yakaley's discussion of psychodynamic theory, in their article *Violence and Communication* (2014), Novak-Marcincin and others mention the increasing diversity of types of violence, education levels, age groups perpetrating aggression, and who perpetrates aggression. Not only that, but this article also explains and discusses violence in detail, including causes of violence, psychological explanations of violence, classifying violence, and the triangle of violence. This is useful because it allows researchers to learn about how violence is understood. Judging from all of the above research, the researcher believes that the research discusses violence and post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as well as the way in which novel writers express their characters. The researcher then carried out further research from the previous research after reviewing these different studies. There has been research into violence, post-traumatic stress disorder and the way novelists portray their characters. However, in this research, the researchers will combine the researchers' research in a single study. The researchers will look at the ways in which writers can portray violence and post-traumatic stress disorder in their novels. The researcher's view is that this is something new as a researcher.

1.4. Research Questions

In this study the author try to identified the cause of childhood experienced by Ada Smith, the symptoms and self defenses does Ada Smith use to overcome her PTSD.

Question to be investigated are:

1. What kind of symptoms Ada felt after being a victim of violence from her own mother?
2. What impact will Ada experience from the violence committed by her mother?
3. What type of defense mechanisms that Ada Smith uses to overcome her trauma?

1.5. Scope of the research

The focus of this research is on the violence or mental abuse perpetrated by Ada's mother and the daily life of Ada as she deals with the trauma after being separated from her mother. The researcher focused on how physical violence and mental abuse perpetrated by parents can greatly affect the state of their children both physically and mentally, so that in the future they will experience post-traumatic disorders. By analyzing Ada Smith and her mother, researchers can reveal the forms of violence committed by her mother that will affect Ada Smith's mental and physical health in the future by looking at her actions and reactions to certain situations. And want to know what self-defense features Ada Smith does if she remembers the bad incident.

1.6. Objectives of the Research

In general, the aim of this study is to improve the analysis of the main character, Ada Smith, in the novel *The War that Saved My Life* (2015) by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley. This study aims to reveal the types of violence perpetrated by Ada mother and the types of defense mechanism used by Ada to overcome the fear of traumatic memories from her mother which have not been specifically analysed in previous studies.