

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

Insecurity, anxiety, and other mental health issues have become a common topic nowadays. So many people are insecure about their looks, skills, or any other aspects. This phenomenon is often seen on social media and in daily life. People who are in their mid-twenties and struggling with insecurities will start to wonder about their self-worth and their ability to achieve their goals. In fact, insecurity can impact many aspects of person's life, including self-esteem and competence in achieving goals. This whole phenomenon reflects the struggles that individuals face in dealing with their psychological dynamics.

Matt Haig's novel, *The Midnight Library* appears as a literary work that deeply explores the various psychological aspects. Through the story of the main character Nora Seed's emotional journey, Haig invites readers to explore the various elements of dissatisfaction and insecurity that are often determining factors in forming an individual's self-esteem. In each page of the story, Haig carefully examines how Nora's insecurities and worries about her life choices create deeper questions about her identity and purpose in life.

Furthermore, this novel is not only a reflection of the reality of mental life, but also provides deep insight into literature as an object of human understanding. By exploring the psychological aspects of his main character, Haig portrayed complex feelings, giving readers the opportunity to reflect on the human

experience more deeply. In other words, *The Midnight Library* is not just about a book, but also a realizing journey in terms of the fragility, strength, and complexity of human mental health.

In this novel, Matt Haig explores the dimensions of self-esteem from Nora Seed journey, the main character of the novel. Nora is a woman who is trapped in a feeling of failure and regret about her life. She feels dissatisfied with the path she has taken in life and always wonders what would happen if she has made a different choice. One day, Nora accidentally found a mystical library, which became a gateway to the many alternative life that Nora could have lived. In the library, every book represents an alternative life, and Nora is given the opportunity to explore and experience each life. Along this confusing and interesting journey, Nora thoughtfully examines her self-esteem. While exploring various alternative lives, Nora experiences different challenges and opportunities. Through these experiences, she learned the importance of accepting failure and regret as an inherent part of human life. Nora realizes that self-esteem does not only in achievements, but is closely related to what she thinks is important in her life and what truly makes her happy. By breaking the limits of reality, *The Midnight Library* brings reader to a deep reflection on the meaning of life and the importance of self-esteem. Through the character of Nora Seed, Matt Haig teaches us the importance of maintaining a healthy self-esteem and an authentic identity. The novel inspires readers to reflect on their own life choices, and inspires us to understand that every life has unique value and meaning.

This research will focus on analyzing the portrayal of self-esteem in the novel *The Midnight Library* using Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory. The writer

chose this topic to explore how the author portrays psychological aspects in narrative form. Then, the novel was chosen because its theme is very relevant to the psychological aspects portrayed through the main character's journey.

1.2 Identification of the Problem

This research attempts to explore and analyze the self-esteem found in the character of Nora Seed in the novel *The Midnight Library* by Matt Haig. This research will focus deeply on understanding how Nora Seed's self-esteem is developed throughout the storyline. This research will explore the changes and journey of Nora Seed's self-esteem in the novel. In her situations of failure, regret, and dissatisfaction in life, the research will explore how her self-esteem is influenced and developed. By analyzing interactions with other characters, internal conflicts, and Nora's thoughts and feelings, this research attempts to provide insights about self-esteem's role in influencing a character's perceptions and behaviors.

By exploring self-esteem in the context of Nora Seed's character, this research hopes to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the character's psychological and emotional complexity. The result of this research are expected to provide new perspectives on self-esteem in literature, as well to contribute to our understanding of how these factors influence the personal development and transformation of characters in novel narrations.

1.3 Review of Related Literature

To support this research, the writer needs several related studies that discuss the same research object with different topics or different objects but have

similar topics, the purpose is to compare the topics that the writer takes to get a deeper understanding;

The first previous study was conducted by Indah Sari Lubis, entitled "Self-esteem Development of The Main Character in *Andy Noya Kisah Hidupku*." This study discusses how a person's life journey and struggle, especially the main character Andy Noya, can be reflected through the lens of personality and self-confidence. Understanding a person's character in a literary work, in this case Andy Noya's biography entitled *Andy Noya Kisah Hidupku*, is considered to influence his future career development. This study purposes to explain how the development of Andy Noya's self-esteem, which is reflected in his biography, can affect his future career. In this study, Coopersmith's humanistic psychology theory is used, and this study is conducted with a literary psychology approach using a descriptive qualitative research method using library research.

The second previous study was conducted by Fibry Halla Fanani entitled "The Influence of Self-esteem to Sexual Behavior of Christian Grey and Anastasia Steele in E.L. James *Fifty Shades of Grey*". This study explains the influence of self-esteem on sexual behavior in the novel "Fifty Shades of Grey" by E.L. James. Self-esteem is defined as an individual's valuation of self-worth and dignity which includes attitudes towards self. This study examined the socio-psychological dimensions of self-esteem and its impact on the sexual dynamics portrayed in the novel. The focus of this study is on the main characters, Christian Grey and Anastasia Steele, who engage in a submissive-dominant sexual relationship. Using a socio-psychological approach, the analysis identified different levels of self-esteem between the two characters, with Christian Grey

being characterized as the dominant character and having higher self-esteem, while Anastasia Steele, in a submissive character and having lower self-esteem. This study contributes to the understanding of how self-esteem differences appear in the dynamics of sexual behavior.

The third previous study that was conducted by Rozadi, F. entitled "The Impact of Post-Trauma in The Personality Development in Matt Haig's *The Midnight Library*: A Psychoanalytical Study of Character." This study discusses how *The Midnight Library* illustrates that childhood trauma is an experience that happens to a child without realizing it. This study indicates that trauma experienced by a child in the past can affect their character development as an adult. In exploring the novel *The Midnight Library* by Matt Haig, this study uses the close reading method. Psychoanalysis is the main research approach in this study, which purposes to see how trauma affects the main character in a novel.

The fourth previous study was conducted by Salsabilla entitled "The Main Character's Anxiety and Defense Mechanism in Matt Haig's *The Midnight Library*." This study analyzes the anxiety experienced by the main character, Nora Seed, in the novel *The Midnight Library* by Matt Haig. Nora Seed faces anxiety problems in her life, and this study purposes to describe the forms of anxiety that occur, their causes, and the types of defense mechanisms used by Nora Seed. Using Sigmund Freud's and Anna Freud's psychoanalytic theories, this research successfully identified three types of anxiety experienced by Nora Seed, which are realistic anxiety, moral anxiety, and neurotic anxiety. The causes of these anxieties involve conflict, frustration, and the surrounding environment. In addition, Nora Seed uses various defense mechanisms such as repression, reaction

formation, projection, regression, rationalization, displacement, and sublimation to cope with her anxiety. The results of this study provide deep insight into the psychological complexity of the main character in facing and overcoming anxiety problems in the context of the story *The Midnight Library*.

The last previous study was conducted by Amy Mastura Madjid, entitled “Earned Secure Attachment of Avoidant Personality Disorder Client in Matt Haig's *The Midnight Library*.” This study investigates the attachment Nora Seed acquired from her avoidant personality disorder in Matt Haig's *The Midnight Library*. Applying Millon's AvPD concept, Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, Erikson's stages of psychosocial development, and Pearson's attachment theory, this study used a descriptive-analytical method to analyze the causes and symptoms of Nora's AvPD, Nora's contestation of thoughts, Nora's psychosocial development, and Nora's development of secure attachments. The results of this study indicate that during Nora's psychosocial development from childhood to adolescence, the absence of her parents as role models influenced Nora to develop an unhealthy personality.

These previous studies can be a useful reference in forming a theoretical framework and improving the understanding of self-esteem and its relationship with Nora Seed's character development with the storyline in the novel *The Midnight Library*.

1.4 Research Questions

In this research, the writer focuses on various aspects related to the self-esteem of Nora Seed's character in *The Midnight Library*. The two aspects that are the main focus include:

1. How was Nora Seed's self-esteem represented in the novel *The Midnight Library*?
2. What is the influence of social interaction on Nora Seed's self-esteem development?

1.5 Scope of the Research

The main focus of this research is on the analysis of the self-esteem that Nora, the main character experiences in the novel *The Midnight Library* by Matt Haig. This research explores the factors that influence Nora Seed's self-esteem, such as life experiences, social interactions, choices that she makes, and the part of her society in influencing her self-perception. The scope of this research also includes observations on how self-esteem in the character of Nora Seed changes during the story. This research the writer uses Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory to strengthen the analysis related to self-esteem.

1.6 Objectives of the Study

The objective of this research is to analyze how self-esteem is reflected in Nora Seed's character during her journey in the novel *The Midnight Library* unfolds and develops during the story. Moreover, this research attempts to connect self-esteem with relevant psychological and literary theories. The writer

will also analyze how Nora Seed's self-esteem changes affect the storyline in *The Midnight Library*. Overall, the objective of this research is to provide deeper literary insights into character development and how psychological aspects such as self-esteem can contribute to literary work.

