

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains about the background of this research, the research question, reason why this research was conducted, objective of this study, scope and limitation, and significant of this study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Conflict is an essential element that helps humans grow, both in their thinking and actions. Conflict can occur when a person experiences differences of opinion or disagreement between one person and another or differences of opinion between someone's mind and heart. "Conflict is an important aspect of story structure, as it drives narrative tension and character development." (Wellek, R. & Warren, A 1948). This sentence means that conflict can occur when there are two equally strong points of view and there is a difference of opinion between the two, where there are statements of agreement and disagreement on an action. In novel usually conflict aims to make a character experience get a significant development, such as in novel *All the Bright Places*, where the characters in the novel experience significant development when they are facing conflicts that they are experiencing, both their conflicts with people around them and with themselves or commonly referred to as internal conflicts.

Internal conflict refers to a struggle that takes place inside a person's mind such as when a person disagrees with what is in his mind, "Internal conflict is a psychological struggle within a character, which frequently involves moral quandaries or emotional pain and produces narrative intensity" (Kenney, 1966). In internal conflict there is a problem where a person or character is in conflict with himself, which can cause a person to experience mental health problems such as depressive disorder because the person cannot solve the problem between the conflict between himself and his mind. Which is depressive disorder is a mental health disorder that has a very bad impact on a person, where the impact of depressive disorders can cause a person to change their daily life both in thinking and doing something. "Depression as internalized anger resulting from a loss" (Freud, S, 1917). That sentence means that depressive disorders can occur when a

person experiences a loss that makes them feel internalized emotions towards themselves, in other words, self-blame. This causes a person to act in ways that are strongly related to the defense mechanisms that occur when a person is under a lot of psychological stress.

Depressive disorder are associated with internal conflicts that emerge when individuals encounter loss, internalize the lost object, and subsequently redirect anger and hostility towards themselves, this can affect the actions taken by a person when they are experiencing a depressive disorder. “The ego can self-destruct when it turns outward-directed hostility inward by seeing itself as an object.” (Freud, S, 1917). In other words, the ego can self-destruct by internalizing external violence, perceiving itself as an object, which may result in self-destructive conduct stemming from unresolved internal conflict. Which the ego can trigger changes in action taking by a person when he is depressed by using defense mechanism, because his ego cannot fulfill his desires or cannot solve a problem experienced by a person, for example When a person experiences loss, what he does is self-blame, so in the end he takes other actions when he cannot solve the problem.

The novel *All the Bright Places* by Jennifer Niven is tells about Two characters named Theodore Finch and Violet Marker. The problems of the two characters between Theodore Finch and Violet Marker in novel *All the Bright Places*, are not far from internal problems where the conflicts faced by both of them are conflicts about their mental health, where mental health conditions usually occur when a person experiences deep sadness, looming childhood trauma, excessive anxiety or anything else that can change a person's behavior. “Mental illness to mean that their brain is damaged or that there is something wrong with their mind and that they will never be able to think clearly” (Andreasen, 1974). In other words mental health disorders can occur because someone cannot think rationally due to the problems they are facing, or other things that can make a person feel depressed so that their brain cannot function normally.

The character of Theodore Finch in the novel *All the Bright Places* is one of the characters who experiences mental illness in the form of depressive disorder which is caused by the trauma he experienced in the past, his unfavorable

environment and also unsupportive family factors, where the character Theodore Finch also experiences deep sadness caused by the loss of his closest person which makes him experience severe mental health disorders. “The term depression is often used to designate a complex pattern of deviations in feelings, cognition, and behavior that is not represented as a discrete psychiatric disorder” (Beck & Alford, 2014). The signs of depressive disorder are shown by the character Theodore Finch when he experiences a problem with his family and relationship problems either with his school friends or with the character Violet Marker, where the signs of depressive disorder experienced by Finch include significant mood changes, feelings of hopelessness, avoiding social interactions, feelings of wanting to end his life, and so on.

The character Theodore Finch is not the only one who struggles with a mental health condition, but Violet Marker also experiences the same thing as Finch where she experiences symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder after she loses her sister in an accident, which deeply affects her emotions and how she connects with others. “Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), the central symptoms concern intrusions about, and avoidance of, memories associated with the traumatic event itself” (Abbas & Mahin, 2013). In other words, post-traumatic stress can arise when someone remembers traumatic or sad things in the past, so that the person avoids these memories by doing something else. This can be seen from the character Violet Marker character in the novel *All the Bright Places* tries to forget her past trauma where she lost her sister by occupying herself with activities such as driving a car or with school activities to avoid feelings of anxiety and sadness that haunt her all the time.

From the two characters between Theodore Finch and Violet Marker, the writer focuses on the character Theodore Finch, who demonstrates or reveals his mental health issue to everyone around him. Which, based on the behavior of the character Theodore Finch, leads to him being shunned by many of his friends, who believe he is insane. The character Theodore Finch also exhibits some deviant behaviors such as being desperate to climb onto the roof of the school just to relax his minds, talking about something terrible, and so on. “Deviant behavior is a

violation of the social rules of accepted behavior” (Roberson & Garrido, 2015). It means that deviant behavior is a behavior that contradicts to the social norms around us. The deviant behavior shown by the character of Theodore Finch is an interesting thing to research, which is a mental health disorder that occurs when a person experiences damage to their mindset, which can be caused by past trauma, depression, or other things that can cause this to happen.

This study is using the defense mechanism theory as proposed by Sigmund Freud and Anna Freud, which defensive mechanism is used by a person’s mind to overcome trauma or distress caused by that person, such as involving other people or fleeing away from situations that cause worry or other difficulties. “Defense mechanisms may help us maintain our mental health by protecting us from feelings or realities that cause anxiety or distress” (S. Freud, 1920). Based on Sigmund Freud’s opinion, it is can be conclude that the defense mechanism is an indirect defense employed by a person to escape problems that the individual does not want to face, in other words, running away from things that cause anxiety or depression. Defense mechanisms are unconscious ideas that cause a person to make a decision or take an action that relieves their discomfort by doing something else.

There are some previous studies that related with this research, one of them is “Loss and Depression in Jennifer Niven’s *All The Bright*” by Rosa Maria Simamora, Riandi Hasibuan from Universitas Katolik Santo Thomas (2023), which is discusses how the novel depicts loss and sadness. Using mimetic theory, Violet battles with guilt following her sister's death, but Finch suffers from significant depression caused by family neglect and bullying, eventually leading to his suicide. And then “Inner Conflict of the Main Characters in the Novel ‘All the Bright Places’: A Study of Literature Psychology” by Valentcya Trifena Mahdani from Bosowa University (2023). Which is talking about the inner conflicts of Theodore Finch. From all of the previous studies with this study is using same source of data which is novel entitled *All the Bright Places* by Jenniver Niven, but the difference between this research and the previous research is that the previous research focused on depressive disorders while this research focuses on the actions taken by Theodore Finch.

1.2 Research Question

1. What are the cause of depressive disorder experienced by Theodore Finch represented in novel *All the Bright Places*?
2. How does Theodore Finch perform his defense mechanism in nove *All the Bright Places*?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1. To identify what causes the depressive disorder in the character Theodore Finch.
2. To describe how the character Theodore Finch deals with his depressive disorder and what action or decision taken by Theodore Finch.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The writer hope that this study can help everyone who wants to analyze the mental health disorders of the characters in a novel using the theory of depressive disorder. However, the writer also hopes that if the next writer wants to take the same data source, it would be better if the next writer uses a different theory, because there are many theories that can be used to analyze this novel, such as the theory of Marksism, new criticism, feminism and the others. Which is Marksism theory can also be used to analyze this novel such as analyzing the social issues that occur in the novel, or any other theory that can be used to analyze this novel.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study uses a novel entitled *All the Bright Places* by Jennifer Niven (2015) as a source of research data, and this study is focuses on the character of Theodore Finch where the data will be taken from the habits shown by character Theodore Finch, and the dialogue from Theodore Finch's conversations with people who are around him also the conversation between Finch and himself that shows his depression. The data also taken from other characters point of views or perspective on Finch's mental disorders such as Violet Marker. This study also focuses on using Sigmund Freud's and Anna Freud's theory of defense mechanisms as the main theory and also theory of depressive disorder by Sigmund Freud's as the sub theory.