

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides background information and reasons for conducting the research, explaining why the issue was chosen. The aims and focus of the study also provide constraints on how the study should be conducted. This is discussed in more detail in the research scope sub-chapter. In addition, the significance of the study contributes to both research on theoretical and practical elements. This research also provides scope and limitations.

1.1 Background of the Study

According to Wallek and Warren (1948, p.10), literature is a field that encompasses various aspects, including aesthetic beauty, intellectualism, and tradition, all of which play an important role in understanding a literary work as a whole. Literature is a creative medium that expresses human emotion, thought, and imagination through language and writing style, offering beauty, moral values, education, and entertainment. It captures the complexities of life by portraying characters and conflicts that reflect real human experiences, including inner conflict. As emotional beings, humans are inherently connected to internal struggles, which literature effectively illustrates. According to Sutiasih and Ngestirosa (2024), inner conflict arises from tension between desires, values, or identities, shaped by psychological and environmental factors. This conflict deepens character development and drives the plot, making stories more engaging and relatable. One literary work that explores this theme in depth is *Desert Flower* by Waris Dirie and Cathleen Miller. According to Ouno (2021), *Desert Flower*, an autobiographical novel written by Waris Dirie and Cathleen Miller, is a true story based on Waris's own life experiences. M.H. Abrams (1999) defines autobiography as a biography written by the subject about themselves, containing of significant life events. In recent years, the distinction between autobiography and fiction has become increasingly blurred. Many writers insert themselves directly into fictional

works, while autobiographies are often structured using narrative techniques typically found in fiction.

The novel *Desert Flower* chronicles Waris Dirie's traumatic experiences with female genital mutilation (FGM), sexual abuse, cultural displacement, and identity struggles. Born in Somalia, Waris faced traditional practices that endangered her well-being, particularly FGM, which severely impacted her physical and psychological health, leaving deep wounds and undermining her self-esteem. This trauma becomes the central psychological conflict she endures throughout her life. The novel also illustrates how Waris overcame her trauma and became an activist for women's rights. FGM, a cultural ritual marking the transition to womanhood, is deeply rooted in some African societies, including Somalia (Susanti, 2022). Though intended to preserve purity, FGM often results in serious physical trauma and health complications, even death. In *Desert Flower*, Waris recounts her struggle to escape the cultural norms that accepted this harmful practice.

The displacement of Waris from Somalia to Western countries was also a big challenge for her. She experienced a cultural clash when she fled to England. She was faced with a very contrary freedom with life in Somalia. This cultural displacement creates an identity crisis because it must adjust to different norms, besides that she is also haunted by the traumatic shadow of her childhood. This process illustrates how cultural transfer can create inner conflict in Waris herself.

The search for Waris's identity was more complicated when she began to build a career in the modeling world. Her success in the world of modeling gave her the opportunity to interact with western society and learn new values about freedom and rights of women. However, she is still faced with moral tension between respecting her original culture, namely Somalia and opposing destructive practices such as FGM. In this *Desert Flower* novel, Waris revealed the inner conflict that she went through to find her identity amid the clash of different cultural values.

The theory of id, ego, superego is used to find out the cause of inner conflict, explain the origin of the inner conflict, and how individuals try to overcome it.

According to Freud (1923, p.22-23), inner conflict occurs because of the clash between desires (id), norms or morals (superego), and the reality of life (ego). According to Freud (1923, pp.150-151), explains that when the id and superego are too contradictory, the ego has difficulty balancing the two. If the ego chooses to suppress the urges of the id, unresolved inner conflict can develop into neurosis, where the individual experiences anxiety or other emotional disturbances. However, if the ego is no longer able to cope with the pressure of the superego, the individual can experience psychosis, where he completely detaches himself from the real world and creates his own reality as a form of escape from intolerable reality.

From the description above, it can be concluded that the inner conflict experienced by Waris Dirie in *Desert Flower* novel can be analyzed using Freud's psychoanalytic theory, especially the conflict between the id, ego, and superego. The id in her contains the urge to be free, survive, and fight against the practice that has caused her physical and psychological suffering. However, the superego, which is formed from the norms and values of Somali society, instills in her that FGM is part of a woman's honor, creating guilt and moral pressure when she begins to oppose the practice. The ego acts as a balancer, trying to navigate between her past trauma, the traditional values that have been ingrained in her, and the freedom she finds in the Western world.

In Freud's theory, when someone faces an inner conflict between the id, ego, and superego, defense mechanisms often emerge as a way for the ego to protect itself from anxiety or psychological tension. According to Freud (1923, p.150), when the id produces an urge that is socially or morally unacceptable, the ego can prevent the urge from reaching consciousness. This process is called repression, which is pushing instinctual urges into the unconscious so that they are not recognized by the individual. This concept was further developed by Anna Freud, who identified various forms of ego defense mechanisms that individuals use to deal with inner conflict. These mechanisms work unconsciously to prevent inner conflict from developing into excessive anxiety. Thus, Anna Freud's ego defense

mechanism theory not only explains how individuals overcome the inner conflict of the main character, Waris Dirie in the novel *Desert Flower*, but also becomes a useful tool in analyzing how literary characters respond to trauma and emotional stress in their stories.

The writer found previous study that examines the novel *Desert Flower* by Waris Dirie, but there are differences in the topics and theories discussed. An article by Susi Susanti (2022), entitled “The Author's Worldview in Waris Dirie's *Desert Flower* Novel”. Explores the author's worldview seen in the novel *Desert Flower* by Waris Dirie using a sociological approach and genetic structuralism theory. The writer also found previous research on inner conflict, but different data sources. The first previous research is an article by Samuel Jacob Abednego Palungan (2023), entitled “Inner Conflict of The Character in *Nine Perfect Strangers* by Liane Moriarty”. The second previous research is an article from Rafi Ferdiansyah and Sufi Ikrima Sa’adah (2022), entitled “Main Character’s Inner Conflict in Brian Khrisna’s *Kudasai: Freudian Psychoanalysis* ”. The third previous study is an article by Yessi Oktaviani and Muhammad Iqbal Ramdhani (2021), entitled “Inner Conflict of Suleyman In Movie *Ayla, The Daughter of War*”. The writer also found previous research on defense mechanism, but different data sources. The first previous research is an article by Tery Angela Monica, Jepri, dan Ulum Jannah (2020), entitle “Self Defense Mechanism as an Overcoming Tool of Anxiety in the Novel *Me Before You* by Jojo Moyes”. The second previous study is an article by Shesi Meilan E. Doe, Rusni Podungge, and Novi Rusnarty Usu (2023), entitled “Defense Mechanism Of The Main Character In Khaled Hosseini’s Novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns*”.

Based on the explanation above, previous studies have analyzed the novel *Desert Flower*, but they focused on different aspects, such as the author’s worldview or sociological issues. Other studies explored inner conflict or defense mechanisms in different literary works, but not in *Desert Flower*. Additionally, no existing research has combined the analysis of inner conflict and defense mechanisms in *Desert Flower* using Sigmund Freud's theory of id, ego, and

superego along with Anna Freud's theory of defense mechanisms. Therefore, this study fills the gap by examining both the causes of Waris Dirie's inner conflict and the psychological strategies she uses to cope, through a psychoanalytic lens.

1.2 Research Question

In this study, the writer investigates the inner conflict and defense mechanism in the novel *Desert Flower* by Waris Dirie. The researcher formulated two research questions as follows:

1. What are the inner conflicts experienced by the main character in the novel Waris Dirie's *Desert Flower*?
2. How does the main character overcome to the inner conflicts that she has experienced?

1.3 Objective of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to explore the inner conflicts and defense mechanisms used by the main character to protect herself. Specifically, the objectives of this chapter are:

1. To identify the inner conflicts experienced by the main character in the novel Waris Dirie's *Desert Flower*.
2. To find out types of defense mechanisms are carried out by the main character to protect herself.

1.4 Significances of the Study

This psychoanalytic study of Waris Dirie in *Desert Flower* by Waris Dirie and Cathleen Miller is important because it can provide theoretical and practical contributions to literary analysis. Theoretically, this study aims to improve the understanding of psychoanalytic literary criticism by providing a detailed analysis of the inner conflict and defense mechanisms experienced by Waris Dirie. By

applying psychoanalytic theory to the main character, this study aims to build on existing knowledge about how psychoanalysis can be used to analyze literature.

Practically, this study provides a deeper understanding of Waris Dirie's inner conflict and defense mechanism in the novel *Desert Flower*. This study helps readers understand the psychological challenges faced by the main character. Through this analysis, readers can become more aware of the inner conflict she experiences, as well as the ways she protects herself using psychological defense mechanisms.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study is based on the psychoanalytic analysis of the main character, Waris Dirie, in the novel *Desert Flower* by Waris Dirie and Cathleen Miller. The focus of the analysis is to identify the inner conflict of the main character and analyze how the defense mechanism carried out by the main character as a response to the inner conflict to protect herself. Based on psychoanalytic literary criticism, this study aims to provide a deeper understanding of the psychological aspects that analyze Waris Dirie's inner conflict and defense mechanism.

However, the study was limited to analyzing the novel *Desert Flower* and did not include interpretations outside the novel, focusing specifically on the utterances and the writer's narration related to the topic. This research focused only on Waris Dirie and not on all characters.