

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains a description of the basis and direction of the study conducted. It explains the background of the study, research questions, objectives of the study, significance of the study, and scope and limitation of the study. All sections in this chapter aim to provide an overview of the focus, rationale, and direction of the study conducted by the writer.

Background of the Study

Literary studies are closely connected to psychology because both try to understand human life and emotions. Psychology explains people's behavior, thoughts, and feelings in a scientific way, while literature shows them through stories, imagination, and symbols. A story can reflect real human experiences, including emotions and inner struggles. As Schwerin et al. (2025) explain, when people read a story, they don't just follow the plot but also enter the world of the characters. Readers often feel what the characters feel, as if they are living inside the story, and this helps them understand emotions on a deeper level. In this way, studying literature through a psychological lens not only helps us understand the story but also helps us learn more about ourselves as human beings.

In literary works, characters are more than names or descriptions, they feel real because they have emotions, goals, and actions that make the story meaningful. Readers can understand who the characters are by looking at what they say, think, and do, and how others in the story react to them. According to van Krieken et al. (2017), characters act as a bridge between readers and the story, creating a sense of closeness or identification. This connection depends on how the writer expresses the characters' thoughts and feelings (Huang et al., 2024). Reader engagement can appear through different aspects like emotional or moral understanding often triggered by the language used in the story. Piper (2024) also notes that fiction tends to show a character's presence through physical actions, like walking, smiling, or touching, rather than only through inner thoughts. Therefore, understanding a character means paying attention to their actions, words, emotions, and goals,

because all of these make them come alive and help readers connect with the story in a more emotional way. Through this deep connection between readers and characters, literature becomes more than just a story, it turns into a reflection of the human mind. This is where psychoanalytic theory plays an important role, as it helps uncover the hidden thoughts, desires, and conflicts that shape a character's behavior and emotional journey within the narrative.

One of the most influential psychological approaches in literary studies is psychoanalytic theory. This approach draws on Freud's concept of the id, ego, and superego, along with the unconscious forces that shape human behavior and emotion. Within literary studies, this perspective helps readers understand characters, conflicts, and narrative symbols as expressions of deeper psychological tensions. As noted by Jamal and JaF (2023), literary elements often reflect inner struggles and moral dilemmas experienced by the characters. In line with this, Sanbæk (2022) stated that the relationship between psychoanalysis and literature is mutual, which is psychoanalysis provides tools for understanding literary texts, while literary works provide a space for understanding psychoanalytic analysis in a cultural and symbolic context. Through this lens, psychoanalytic analysis not only reveals the hidden layers of a story but also shows how authors convey human inner experiences through language and narrative structure.

Theoretically, Sigmund Freud's classical concepts of the id, ego, and superego form the main foundation of psychoanalytic interpretation. Freud (1923) assumed that the id represents instinctual drives, the ego is responsible for adjusting individuals to reality, while superego represents internalized moral values and norms. Freud (1923) explains that psychological conflict appears when the id, ego, and superego pull a person in different directions, creating an internal pressure that affects their emotions and decisions. This kind of inner struggle helps explain the roots of Takako's emotional crisis throughout the novel. According to recent psychoanalytic scholarship, these Freudian structures remain relevant as analytical tools in exploring human behavior and emotional conflict in literature (Cieri & Esposito, 2019). Contemporary researchers emphasize that psychoanalysis continues to evolve. It is serving not only as a psychological framework but also

as a means to interpret character's consciousness and personality in narratives. Based on this theoretical foundation, this study uses Freud's psychoanalytic concepts to explore psychological struggles and personality development of its main character in *Days at the Morisaki Bookshop* as the focus object of this study. Although Freud's ideas help explain Takako's psychological conflicts, this study also incorporates Elisabeth Kübler-Ross and David Kessler's theory of grief as a supporting framework to better understand the stages of emotional response Takako experiences throughout the story.

While Freud's psychoanalytic theory helps explain the psychological conflicts experienced by Takako, this study also uses Elisabeth Kübler-Ross and David Kessler's theory of the stages of grief as a supporting framework to understand the stage of grief she experienced. Kübler-Ross and David Kessler's theory is relevant because it provides a clear picture of how a person responds to loss in stages through five emotional stages, namely denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. In Takako's case, her breakup not only triggered inner conflict but also brought about a sense of loss that affected how she viewed herself and her life. Through these stages, Takako slowly faced her emotional reality, starting with denial of the situation, an outburst of negative emotions, and deep sadness. As the story progresses, she begins to accept the loss and rebuild her life in a calmer and more reflective manner. Although Kübler-Ross's theory was originally developed in the context of death, but it has been expanded by Kübler-Ross and Kessler that can be applied to someone who has experienced the loss of a partner and the emotions that influence it. By combining Freud's theory in explaining Takako's psychological conflict and Kübler-Ross and Kessler's theory in understanding her stage of grief, this study is expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of Takako's inner journey, both in terms of the causes of her emotional breakdown and the emotional process she experiences throughout the novel *Days at the Morisaki Bookshop*.

Satoshi Yagisawa's *Days at the Morisaki Bookshop* is a contemporary novel that explores loss and emotional healing, which makes it suitable for a psychoanalytic reading. The story is not only about life in a small secondhand

bookstore in Tokyo, but also about the inner struggles of its characters as they try to understand themselves. This psychological depth fits well with Freud's theory, which highlights how human behavior is shaped by unconscious mental processes. The main character, Takako, experiences a painful emotional breakdown after being betrayed by her boyfriend. Because she was quiet and didn't have many friends at work, she relied heavily on him, and the breakup leaves her feeling loss and grief. Her decision to leave her job and isolate herself reflects the Id's impulse to escape emotional pain. As the story continues, Takako moves in with her uncle and slowly begins to rebuild her life, showing the Ego's role in helping her face reality and adjust to her new situation. Over time, the Superego becomes visible as she learns to forgive, restores her sense of self-worth, and regains her moral direction. Her journey from heartbreak to acceptance illustrates how the Id, Ego, and Superego interact in shaping her personality. This clear alignment between the novel's themes and Freud's psychoanalytic concepts is what makes the story a meaningful object for this study

Another reason for choosing this novel is its strong position as a best seller for several months and its recognition in contemporary Japanese literature. Since its publication, *Days at the Morisaki Bookshop* has won the Chiyoda Literature Prize in 2010, showing its literary quality. Its success also led to an English translation by Eric Ozawa in 2023, which helped the novel reach readers outside Japan. The book has become quite popular, especially among readers who enjoy stories about books, and its simple language makes it accessible for those still learning English. According to The Japan Times (2013), Satoshi Yagisawa is known for combining a straightforward writing style with touching emotional depth, which supports the relevance of this study using a psychoanalytic perspective. According to Alkhodairy (2024), the psychoanalytic approach helps readers understand trauma and loss as inner conflicts connected to human personality. Therefore, analyzing Takako's psychology through the Id, Ego, and Superego not only deepens the understanding of her character but also shows how popular literature can reflect complex emotional experiences. Based on this, it is important to review previous studies that also used psychoanalysis to examine

literary characters, so we can identify where this research stands among existing works.

Several previous studies that relate to this study discuss *Days at the Morisaki Bookshop* as well as the application of psychoanalytic theory in literary analysis. The first article, “Quiet Transformations: Place, Identity, and Gentle Healing in ‘*My Name is Cinnamon*’ and ‘*Days at the Morisaki Bookshop*’” by Chauhan and Sharma (2025), explores how identity and healing are shaped through space and human connection by using postcolonial and spatial theories. Another study, “The Interplay of Emotional Healing and Interpersonal Relationships in *Days at the Morisaki Bookshop*: A Synthesis with Fritz Heider’s Psychological Theories” by Nuzrath and Ishwaryia (2025) focuses on Takako’s emotional transformation, showing how she grows from heartbreak and depression into self-acceptance through relationships and reflection.

Furthermore, several studies also support the application of psychoanalytic theory in literature. For example, “Analysis of Sigmund Freud’s Psychoanalysis Theory: Id, Ego, Superego on Personal Character in the Novel *The Tragedy Paper*” by Mutyarani, Amareta, and Hardiyanti (2022), which explains how the three elements of personality influence the character’s decisions and behavior. Likewise, “A Psychoanalytic Analysis of the Character of Theo Faber in Alex Michaelides’ *The Silent Patient*” by Shoukat, Arshad, and Azam (2021) portrays the inner conflict between instinct, morality, and guilt within the main character. Lastly, “An Analysis of Salieri in *Amadeus* from Freudian Personality Theory: Id, Ego, Superego” by Juan Wang (2020) examines how Salieri’s id drives him to reject God and destroy Mozart, while his superego makes him admire Mozart’s music as a divine expression, reflecting the tension between desire, faith, and conscience.

In addition to previous studies discussing Freud’s psychoanalysis, there are previous studies analyzing Kübler-Ross theory of grief as a supporting theory and focus in this study. Teh, Ng, Lim, Chong, and Yen (2023), in their study titled “Business Closure and Kübler-Ross’ Five Stages of Grief: A Conceptual Framework,” found that Kübler-Ross’s five-stage model of grief -Ross model of the five stages of grief (denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance) is not

only relevant to loss due to death but can also be applied to non-death-related losses such as business failure. The findings indicate that business owners experience these five stages of grief when their business closes, with the acceptance stage being reached once they are able to view the failure as a valuable learning experience. Second study by Winardi and Subianto (2023) analyzed the grieving process of the main character in the novel *How to Make Friends with the Dark* using Kübler-Ross's stages of grief theory and David Kessler's sixth stage. The results of the study show that the main character experiences various stages of emotion after losing a loved one, namely denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance, and finally finding meaning in the loss. This study also confirms that the grieving process does not always occur sequentially and that each individual has a different way of dealing with loss, so that literary works can be an effective medium for describing a person's psychological process in dealing with sadness and self-acceptance.

Although several previous studies have examined *Days at the Morisaki Bookshop*, none of them specifically analyze the main character using Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory and Kübler-Ross and David Kessler's theory. Previous studies such as Mutyarani et al. (2022), Wang (2020), and Shoukat et al. (2021), applied Freud's concepts to different literary works and genres. Meanwhile, previous studies from Teh et al. (2023) and Winardi et al. (2023) applied Kübler-Ross theory of grief in different data. However, study focusing on Takako's psychological condition through the perspective of the Id, Ego, and Superego and stage of grief is still very limited, so the writer found an opportunity to analyze it through the theory and characters of this novel. Therefore, the focus of this study is to analyze the psychological conflict experienced by Takako in Satoshi Yagisawa's *Days at the Morisaki Bookshop* using Freud's psychoanalytic framework, particularly the personality structure of the id, ego, and superego, as well as Kübler-Ross and Kessler's theory of the stages of grief to examine the emotional processes she undergoes in relation to her psychological conflict. By integrating these two theoretical perspectives, this study seeks to provide a more comprehensive understanding of Takako's inner struggles, both in terms of the underlying causes

of her psychological conflict and the progression of her emotional experiences throughout the narrative.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the background, several questions were posed material for analysis in this study, as follows:

1. What psychological conflicts does Takako experience in *Days at the Morisaki Bookshop*?
2. How do the stages of grief Takako reflect her psychological conflicts in the story?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1. To identify Takako's psychological conflicts through the novel.
2. To analyze how the stages of grief Takako reflect her psychological in the story.

1.4 Significances of the Study

This study is expected to provide meaningful contributions both theoretically and practically. From a theoretic perspective, this study enriches the discussion of literary studies by applying Freud's psychoanalysis theory with the structure of the Id, Ego, and Superego to a modern Japanese novel. Since psychoanalytic is often applied to Western literature, therefore bringing it into the analysis of *Days at the Morisaki Bookshop* offers a different perspective that broadens the scope of literary criticism. In addition to Freud's framework, this study also introduces Kübler-Ross and David Kessler's theory of grief as a supporting perspective that offering a deeper understanding of how characters heal emotionally. This study may also serve as a useful reference for future students or researchers who are interested in combining psychology and literature, particularly those who want to analyze inner conflicts and psychological of character.

In addition to its academic value, this research also has practical significance. For readers and literary enthusiasts, the findings can provide a deeper understanding of Takako's struggles as she deals with emotional pain and gradually recovers. Her journey is not only a fictional portrayal, but it also mirrors the real

experiences of many individuals who go through crisis, and emotional struggle. Takako's story seen through the lens of psychoanalysis helps readers understand that literature is not just a fictional story, but also a mirror of the psychological realities experienced by humans in everyday life. Lastly, for the writer herself, this study functions as a process of intellectual growth. It allows the researcher to practice applying a theoretical framework in analyzing literature, to strengthen critical thinking skills, and to gain a more structured approach in writing academic work. By conducting this study, the researcher also hopes to contribute, even in a small way, to the broader conversation about the relationship between literature and psychology.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study focuses on the psychological aspects of the main character, Takako, in *Days at the Morisaki Bookshop* by Satoshi Yagisawa. The scope of this study is limited to examining her psychological conflict as reflected in the narrative. The analysis is conducted using Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, particularly the structure of the Id, Ego, and Superego. This study does not aim to analyze all the characters in the novel or apply other theoretical perspectives such as feminism, Marxism, or sociological approaches. The main concern is to highlight Takako's psychological journey as an individual character. In relation to the second research question, this study also uses Kübler-Ross theory of grief only as a supporting framework to examine how the stages of grief Takako goes through are connected to and shaped by her psychological conflicts. The theory is not applied in a clinical sense but is adapted conceptually, focusing only on the character's psychological journey within the narrative.

The limitations of this study lie in its focus and method. The interpretation depends entirely on Freud's concepts, which means that using different psychological frameworks might lead to different interpretations of the same narrative. Another limitation is that the study relies solely on author narration and textual analysis without the support of empirical data such as interviews or psychological case studies. Therefore, the findings should be understood as literary

interpretations, not clinical psychological diagnoses. Despite these limitations, narrowing the focus to Takako's character allows the analysis to be more in-depth, structured, and consistent with the study objectives.