

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of background of the study, research questions, objectives of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation. The background of the study discusses about the topic and general description of this thesis. The research questions state the problems to be accomplished. The significance of the study presents the purposes and the benefits of writing this thesis. Lastly, the scope and limitation explains about what aspects that being explored in this thesis.

1. 1 Background

Literature share the same aspects with life, it has a strong relationship with character. According to Bennett and Royle (2004), a character in a book is simply a copy of such a person (p. 62). A character either in literature or real world has behaviour, experience, relationship status, and psychological state. Even in a literature which based on imagination of an author, it is possible to find several or many things which can be associated with real world. Meanwhile in real world, some copied things from literature also can be found because readers can consider them as inspiration and ideas.

Dealing with character, psychological aspect is really important because it gives a lot of contribution to literary works. Psychology itself can be defined as the scientific study of mind (mental processes) and behaviour (Stangor, 2011:5). A lot of scholars had created and developed the connection of literary works with psychological approach using the term of

psychoanalytic criticism, such as Sigmund Freud, Alfred Adler, Erik Erikson, Carl Rogers and more. As Tyson (2006) mentions, psychoanalysis is able to help people understand literary works, which are about human behaviour (p. 11). A character's psychological state is really matter because it is considered as the basis of the character's mindset and behaviour. For example, a loner character will avoid a crowded place because he/she hates it, then the following happenings are the butterfly effects of it. It shows that the character's psychological state is able to influence the character's thoughts, words, actions, and reactions, then those will absolutely affect the plot, conflicts, other characters, and more.

Regarding to character's psychological state in literature, psychoanalytic criticism is the best theory to use in discovering and describing it. Sigmund Freud developed psychoanalytic perspective which explain about unconscious processes where many impulses of human behaviour is resulted from innate instinct. They may manifest themselves as emotional problems and symptoms of mental illness (Nolen-Hoeksema, Fredrickson, Loftus, & Wagenaar 2009:14). For example, a child whose parents prohibited him/her to have a friend will grow unconsciously as an individual and solitaire person.

Psychological disorder is also one of interesting discussions in psychoanalytic criticism. According to WHO, psychological disorder is "a clinically recognizable set of symptoms or behaviours associated in most cases with distress and with interference with personal functions" (WHO, 2011). When a character in literary work has psychological disorder, his/her

condition may create actions and give reactions, then it will lure the plot and build the story in some ways.

One of psychological disorders is post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) which is also the main issue in *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine*. Schiraldi (2009) defined post traumatic stress disorder as results from exposure to an overwhelmingly stressful event or series of events, such as war, rape, or abuse (p. 3). Stangor (2011) also explained that trauma occurs when the individual develops a strong association between the situational factors that surrounded the traumatic event (p.11). For example, a drowned survivor in a ship accident may unconsciously experience fear and anxiety toward sea or places with huge amount of water.

A number of writers have analysed the issue of trauma in some literary works. All of the previous studies have psychological literary works, to be specific, some novels, as the source of data. The writers make the correlation between literature and psychology, explain the theory of trauma, then mention the research questions and the objectives of the thesis. Those writings use the theory of trauma by Schiraldi, Calhoun, Shakespeare-Finch, and other scholars. All previous studies used descriptive qualitative research method.

First is Artriani (2010), she discussed about Gayle's causes of trauma and ways to cope with it in *Mummy's Witness* by Gayle Sanders. Sulaeman (2014) also discussed about trauma experienced by Elsa and Marin in *Scared to Death* by Wendi Coursi Staub. The analysis includes their traumatic

experience and their healing process. Ayubrata (2016) made a writing about Charlie's characteristics and trauma behaviours in *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky. Yasin (2016) had also analysed about trauma suffered by Katie in *Safe Heaven* by Nicholas Sparks. The discussion talks about the causes, the symptoms, and the impacts of trauma. Febriani (2018) had discussed about Megan's trauma in *The Girl on The Train* by Paula Hawkins. The thesis explains the effects of her trauma and how she deal with it. Lastly, Tiansyah et. al (2021) published a journal entitled *The Impact of Psychological Trauma on the Life of the Main Character in the Novel Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine* by Gail Honeyman. The journal analysed the factors and the impacts of Eleanor's trauma in her life.

This novel entitled *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine* was written by Gail Honeyman in 2017 as her debut novel. It was first published by Harper Collins Publishers and has subsequently sold to almost thirty territories worldwide, has been receiving a lot of positive responses from readers and experts. Gail who lives in Glasgow was awarded the Scottish Book Trust's Next Chapter Award in 2014, and has been longlisted for BBC Radio 4's Opening Lines and shortlisted for the Bridport Prize (Milburn, 2018).

Eleanor Oliphant, the main character, faced the issue of trauma and its consequences in almost of her lifetime. She lived her own world and barely interacted with other people, unless for something necessary. When she tried to interact with people, she tended to say exactly her thought and made the conversation went awkward. However, she always think that she was

completely fine because she had been living that way for more than ten years. She had a mindset that being solitaire is an independent and courageous act, because she need not to rely on other people.

After years since her childhood, Eleanor faced her first slump because of her unrequited love. She fell in love to a musician who did not recognize her. However, she ended up disappointed because he did not meet her expectation. Her dark pasts, traumas, delusion of her mummy, and loneliness piled up and manifested her slump which was triggered by her disappointment. Raymond was the one who found and took care of her, also convinced her to go to a doctor. Slowly, she regained her life motivation after revealing her sequence of dark stories.

Based on the story above, the writer found the novel has a strong theme of trauma. It really portrays the issue of trauma from the sufferer's point of view, start from the past traumas until the ways to cope with it. It shows a lot of points where trauma really affects someone's personal and social life. Therefore, the writer chose to analyse the main protagonist of this novel using the theory of trauma as part of psychological literature.

1. 2 Research Questions

In accordance with the background, this study attempts to answer these research questions:

1. What are Eleanor's causes and symptoms of trauma?
2. How does Eleanor overcome her post traumatic stress disorder?

1. 3 Objectives of the Study

Related to the research questions, this study has two objectives:

1. To analyse Eleanor's causes and symptoms of trauma in the novel.
2. To elaborate Eleanor's ways to overcome her post traumatic stress disorder.

1. 4 Significance of the Study

The writer analyses the post traumatic stress disorder in this novel in order to meet some advantages. First, the writer expects this research is able to give knowledge and awareness to one of psychological issues, that is PTSD. PTSD as a real life issue which depicted in *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine* has more complex factors and effects than what people think. Second, the writer hopes this research is able to help English Study Program students to understand about psychological aspect of a character in literature. This research can be used as a source, comparison, and evaluation for analysing the phenomenon of post traumatic stress disorder in literary works.

1. 5 Scope and Limitation

This research aims for the best result of trauma explanation through Eleanor Oliphant's experiences in *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine*. The novel mainly tells about Eleanor's life, her loneliness, her trauma, and her personality development. This study concentrates on describing the PTSD factors throughout the story. The writer focused on the causes, the symptoms, and the ways of coping with trauma.