

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Undoubtedly, every human being ever experiences a situation where they start questioning about self-identity, the reasons of their existences or perhaps the purpose of their lives. There are also many cases where people started questioning their life's choices, whether they belong to the right—and perhaps good—path or the opposite path. These problems appeared after one experienced being a complete unity, separate from others or more specifically the loved ones for the first time.

The distressing event that is being experienced by the subject has great effect on the subject's behaviors, personality as well as self-development. Some people may feel that they are worthless or unimportant which later convey that they do not deserve to be loved or happy. The physical disappearance of others also resulting in the lack of being and emptiness within himself and more importantly the feeling of exclusion. Nevertheless, the subject has to accept the reality that he already lost the immediacy of the loved ones and must look for substitute of the lack of being. This consequently marks the appearance of desire for the experience of the completed self in which the subject had experienced before the separation. Desire aspires to redress the lack and hence the subject tried to attach himself to something to fill the hollow (Fink 2015, 65).

For Lacan, desire can be explained as the reminder of excessive satisfaction of mother's attention the child was once submerged in Symbolic order (Lacan 1958). Desire is related to the subject's loss of being and illustrated his longing for possessing and enjoying primordial object of satisfaction (Azari 2008, 10). Desire always reproduces itself in different forms and it remains unnamable. Once it is temporarily fulfilled, it immediately slides onto another desire and creates a never-ending cycle (12).

In the midst of the process of recapturing the most important experience and the feeling of completeness that disappeared, the subject has to approach to every small thing that substitutes the missing part of himself. As Tyson argues, the subject will most likely spend his time pursuing what he desires in the Symbolic Order (Tyson 2015, 27). Desire encourage the subject to be better, stronger, and have the urge to live his life to the fullest, yet since he is unable to figure out what exactly kind of fulfillment he seeks, the subject will never achieve what he refers as self-completion. Therefore, as previously mentioned, desire will remain unsatisfied. In addition, Lacan explains that it is human nature that whenever we accomplish certain goals there is always something more we desire (Lacan 1958, 87).

In relation to the lack and desire, Lacan introduces the term "*objet petit a*" which also called as object cause of desire. The *objet petit a* is not an actual object, but fantasies attached to objects, people, or events which are related to the subject's desires and only belong to himself (Kirshner 2005, 88). *Objet petit a* foremost role is to bridge the gap between the subject and the lost object (89). As it represents an

imaginary link between individual and a specific memory of the missing part of himself, the object cause of desire provides motivation and vitality for the subject.

In addition, Lacan during his tenth seminar on anxiety discussed about how desire's intentionality is not fixed on the object cause of desire, or that is to say the *objet petit a* only works behind the scenes which is to fill the gap in the symbolic reality (Lacan 2014, 101). Simply, *objet petit a* is not what the subject desire but rather the object that causes him to desire the thing he actually desires. *Objet petit a* functions as a lure for the subject to achieve the goals of his life.

The development in science, technology and knowledge had affected people or more specifically literary critics to be more critical in analyzing literary works. Numerous theories have been applied in many types of literature in attempt to get deep understanding and/or answer several problems that arise in these works. One type of literature that probably most popular among literary critics is fiction. As a broad category that includes numerous made-up stories of any length, fiction offers many kinds of work in written form such as novel and short stories. Novel, a longer version of fiction divided into many types or genres, and one of the most famous types is coming-of-age novel.

Emphasizing its story on a journey of the characters—especially protagonist—from youth to adulthood, coming-of-age novels has succeeded to attract readers of all ages. Relatable stories that often show how growing up is not easy as there will usually be pain and suffering along the way attract readers to read them as sometimes the stories reflected of what they felt in the real life. As for

literary critics, the background, settings, and plots of the story increase their curiosity to analyze and find out the motives of the author in creating and writing such stories. This based on the fact that literary work can be the reflection of the author himself.

The work of Hermann Hesse entitled *Demian* which explores an individual's search of whole being is considered as the most appealing in early 1900s as it had made a great impact on the consciousness of the country. The story revolves around a 10-year-old boy named Emil Sinclair who undergo various stages during his childhood that led him to a profound change in his behavior and worldview. Sinclair who was portrayed as innocent child that belong to the realm of light falls into the dark world and suffers much of the anguish of life once he experienced being all alone in a strange situation without the guidance of his family.

In the complete loss of hope and the absence of something important in his life, Sinclair is captivated by the sight of Max Demian, an older boy he met in his school, Beatrice, a young girl that inspires his artistic creativity, and Frau Eva, Max Demian's mother. Throughout Max Demian, Beatrice, and Frau Eva, Sinclair begins to become involved in living and thinking about the world in which he lives in. In this case, taking Lacanian theory at face value, these figures are simultaneously taking the role of Sinclair's *objet petit a*. These three figures have specific qualities or traces that help Sinclair recapturing the security and warmth of his home and all goals for which he is striving. Furthermore, with the help of these figures Sinclair manages to achieve his self-realization.

The term self-realization can be used to describe two conditions: the expansion of consciousness and the growth in awareness (Assagioli 2011). However, the most frequently meaning given to the self-realization is psychological growth and maturation of the awakening and manifestation of latent potentialities of the human being (9). Human beings experienced self-realization through their daily activities and/or especially through religious experiences. In addition, Assagioli also claimed that self-realization is not merely the reflection of the spiritual self or the personal conscious of self. Self-realization is kind of projection related to the personality (Assagioli 2011 , 10).

Sets on the early 1900s, the novel portrays how religion has strong influence on society's way of thinking and takes control over what society's view as righteous and sinful. Apparently, this point still valid and relatable until today—though it is not as strong as in the earlier days—as many people still experience the influence of religion in their lives. Children who are raised in strict religious family, for example, are expected to avoid anything that could distract them from piety to the point they are prohibited to do everything they love. As the consequence, they are forced to hold back who they truly are out of the fear of the said religion's rejection.

Throughout the novel, Hesse wants to point out that one needs to understand himself in order to achieve the true self. Growing up is hard, there will usually be a struggle both internally and externally, but growing up out of the society's views and judgement can be even harder. It is by breaking through their fears, thinking outside of the box and overcoming these obstacles that people will able to cope with devastating experiences and find who they truly are. The aforementioned issue

about growing up and finding ourselves are worth to be discussed and analyzed because it is still relatable and reflecting what people experience and feel in daily life. By analyzing the certain issue we can reflect on how important is to follow a deep feeling in our heart and desire in order to continue living our lives despite all of difficulties.

Many writings and discussions have been conducted concerning Hermann Hesse's novel *Demian*. Winda Pradnya Paramita in 2008 with her thesis entitled *The Significance of Dreams in Revealing Emil Sinclair Individuation as Seen in Hermann Hesse's Demian* discusses the important role of dream and archetypes in developing Sinclair's individuation. Johanna Neuer in her article entitled *Jungian Archetypes in Hermann Hesse's Demian* explores Jung's influence in Hesse's novel and how every character in the novel shares the quality of Sinclair's archetypes with a guiding function which can help him get the way out of difficulties. Another study by Donald F. Nelson in his article entitled *Hermann Hesse's Demian and the Resolution of the Mother-Complex (2010)* shows Sinclair's psychosexual "mother-image" development through the novel.

For the study purpose, the writer also included some qualified secondary sources which are obtained from articles and dissertation which have similar issues in order to support the arguments on the analysis. Some of the discussions are: *Approaching the Ideal Self through Love: Lacan's objet petit a and Representations of Love in The Color Purple, Poor Things, and The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao (2018)* by Lukas Konstantin Krupka that emphasizes how romantic attractions are used by the characters in those three novels as ways of self-expression. The

second study is done by Martin Schulter with his article entitled *A Literary Study of Desires, Fantasies, and Identifications in a Corporate Law Firm: Kermit Roosevelt's In the Shadow of the Law* (2007). The article discusses about the stereotype portrayal of law that is believed providing possibility to someone to unleash the desire.

The writer is deeply interested in analyzing the issues about how the figures in the novel associates with Sinclair's lost object and how it helps him approaching his self-realization. In addition, the writer chose this literary work because it portrays very interesting issue that not only relatable and reflect to our daily life, but also reveals a contrasting view how desire twist and turn into a tool for individual to achieve his goals. The feature that distinguishes this study with the previous studies can be seen in the selected issues which are going to be analyzed and most importantly the use of Lacan's Psychoanalysis. While previous studies focusing on the archetypes and significance dreams of Emil Sinclair in revealing his personality, on the other hand this study focuses on Sinclair's development through the story—upon experiencing unexpected and painful separation with his family, how he manages to reaccumulate the feeling of enjoyment through the *objet petit a*.

With all that being said, the *objet petit a* is like something that keep Sinclair striving for better things and something that keep him continue living his life despite all difficulties. This is the missing part of him that he sacrificed all of his time unconsciously searching for in order to fulfill his desire, or it should be said he must find this 'thing' in order to be whole again. By applying Lacan's theory of *objet*

petit a, the study attempts to explore why Sinclair feels more attracted to certain person who coincidentally related to his lack and not to other person. The study also elaborates how the determinate content of *objet petit a* comes to cause specific desire or in this case Sinclair's desire to change his life and find his ideal self.

1.2 Statement of the Problems

The problems of the study formulated by the writer are:

1. How does Sinclair's traumatic experience influence his personality and the development of subjectivity?
2. How can the other characters' specific features, traits, and qualities be associated with Sinclair's *objet petit a* and later reveal his self-realization?

1.3 Objective of the Study

In relation to the statement of the problems above, the study is conducted in order to answer the questions that have been formulated by the writer. The study decides to answer question beyond:

1. To elaborate how Sinclair's traumatic experience influences his behavior, personality and development of subjectivity
2. To elaborate how supporting characters in the novel namely Demian, Beatrice, and Frau Eva associate with Sinclair's *objet petit a* and their involvement in helping Sinclair achieves his dreams and reveals his self-realization

1.4 Significance of the Study

All human being ever experiences a series of events whereby they attempt to learn and define who they truly are. During the process of finding the sense of true self—the authentic or real sense of self (Winnicott 1965, 12), everyone struggles and has to face oppositions which sometimes unbearable to handle. No one finds it easy to break free of habits and contemporary society's view. However, the only way to cope with anything around and obtain the true self is by breaking through fears, thinking outside of the box and overcoming these obstacles. With the knowing that we are doing the right thing, we should follow a deep feeling in our heart and our desire. The importance of this study is to explore how desire occupies important role in people's development, influences them to behave in particular manner and keep striving to live an ideal life. Through the result of this study, the writer also wishes to present a sample to help the readers to have deep understanding about the powerful and important lessons about growing up and finding who they truly are. In addition, this study is expected to be the reference for the students especially for those who have interest in studying psychoanalytic theories.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

Desire : hoping, craving or longing for something; a strong feeling of wanting to have something (Evans 2006, 37).

Lack : The absence of something important or desirable (Evans 2006, 98)

Objet petit a : The French term of “object small o”; a fantasy that functions as the cause of desire (Kirshner 2005).

Self-realization : Psychological growth and maturation, of the awakening and manifestation of latent potentialities of the human being (Assagioli 2011 , 9)

Subjectivity : The condition of our being that enables us to recognize ourselves as a subject or person ; reflects to the social process that constitutes us as a subject (Sheikh 2017, 2)