

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Childhood is the time when children build a lot of memories for the future. It is a moment when kids have all the time in the world to enjoy and learn new things. Childhood is also crucial time in shaping people's personality. Therefore, experiences that happen during childhood will influence their personality and behaviour. Childhood period has to be a period of delight and happiness for children. Unfortunately, it does not happen to all children in the world. Many children encounter some unpleasant experiences, such as traumatic experiences.

In the developing process of thinking, children tend to have different perspectives than adults. Children who have painful experience during their childhood usually suffer a trauma. According to Blum, "The classical definition of trauma is that the ego has been overwhelmed and flooded by stimuli in a dangerous situation emanating from within or without—i.e., an internal or external danger (Blum 146)." Here, a traumatic condition results from an unpleasant event which surely causes disturbance during the mental development because any painful memory resulted from repressed emotional shock will produce a lasting harmful effect.

In addition, a person, including a child who has a traumatic experience usually has a problem with communication to other people. The person will become an introvert person because he or she always remembers about the

trauma. The person also has experienced a pressure in his or she life because the person has fear and anxiety to start a relation with other people (Tower 371).

One of the forms of child trauma is child abuse. Child abuse, also known as child maltreatment, refers to violence that a child or an adolescent experiences at the hand of people caring for him or her, such as the parents. Inappropriate perception toward children is the main cause of children to experience physical abuse, neglect, psychic abuse and sexual abuse. Hughes states that some factors identified in abusive parents include: low self-esteem, low intelligence, hostility, isolation, depression, immaturity, dependency, drug or alcohol, lack of parenting skills, inappropriate attitudes, physical illness, marital conflicts, financial stress, and so on (503). These factors may lead to behavior on the part of the parent that causes child abuse or neglect to appear. According to the data of *Komisi Nasional Perlindungan Anak* (National Commission for Children Protection), 1032 cases of child abuse have been reported in 2013. The child physical abuse are 294 cases or 28 percent, the child psychic abuse are 203 cases or 20 percent and the child sexual abuse are 535 cases or 52 percent (Komnaspaspa Online). The writer thinks that there are many phenomena of child abuse in our society especially in Indonesia, for example, the phenomenon of child sexual abuse in Jakarta International School and the case of Angeline, a young girl who suffered child abuse done by her step-mother. These two cases can motivate readers to pay more attention to children and their life.

The case of child abuse is found not only in reality, but also in literary works. Child abuse is also well represented in a novel entitled *Street Kid* which later will

be explored in this study. Judy Westwater is the author of the Sunday Times bestselling *Street Kid*. Judy Westwater wrote *Street Kid* in 1994. She was born in Timperley, Manchester, in 1945. After a tormented childhood, much of which she lived as a feral child, Judy Westwater was determined to make her life meaningful. Over the past ten years, she has set up seven day centres for children in the violent townships of South Africa and lectured to many thousand peoples across the UK to raise funds for her work. In 2004, Judy Westwater was awarded a prestigious Unsung Heroes Award for her tireless efforts to improve the lives of street children through her charity The Pegasus Children's Trust (Weswater 301).

Street Kid itself tells about Judith Richardson, a two years old child who is snatched from her mother and sisters by her psychotic father, a spiritualist preacher. He keeps her in his backyard and lets her die of starvation. During living with her father (Jack) and her stepmother (Freda), everyday Judith gets physical abuse from them. At four years old, Judith tries to ran away from physical abuse done by Freda. Then, she is sent to an inhumanely strict catholic orphanage, before being put back in her father's cruel care. For the next three years, she is sent back to her father. She feel frightened to meet Jack and Freda because they remind her of the traumatic and threatening incidents that she experienced in the past. At seven years old, she begins a new life with Freda and Jack as a slave again. At eight years old, she experiences the child sexual abuse by a stranger. This accident leaves a big hole of trauma toward her life.

At the moment, Judith is taken by Jack and Freda to South Africa. While in Africa, she studies in Barnato Park Girl's School. Everyday she is exposed with

the rigid disapproval of the whole miserable, a lot of students and teachers in the school. Someday, she meets a group of circus and she joins the circus where she finds her first taste of family, freedom and friendship, before her father tracks her down again.

Few weeks later, Judith is alone again and lives on the street, she feels terrified to turn to her circus friends. For nine months, at twelve years old, Judith makes her home in a shed behind a bottle store before collapsing in a shop doorway from near-starvation. Finally, at seventeen years old, Judith manages to pay her way back to Manchester to find her mother and sisters. Then, Judith succeeds to return to Manchester to meet her mother but her mother rejects her. It makes Judith get a depression. At the moment, Judith starts to look for a job to cover her anxiety and trauma. She becomes one of the Australian Air Aces Circus members, a trapeze artist. The condition and society in the circus make Judith become strong woman. Finally, Judith get what she wants. She already feels free from her fear and trauma of childhood life. It is determined that her childhood experiences should in some way give meaning to her life.

From the explanation above, people may have a strong connection with their past and reach an extreme condition. Some people will find difficulties in the past experience which they can not forget, if they do not want to admit his or her own past wisely. The writer argues that there are various reason why people refuse to look back at their old memories from the past. A trauma mostly makes people feel hurt about their memories in the past.

A trauma in childhood becomes a factor why people suffer from anxiety. According to Thurschwell, “Trauma is an event in a person that is intense and unable to be assimilated, it creates a psychic upheaval and long lasting effects (30).” Therefore, people usually try to find a way to avoid it and make a protection from the pain of trauma. The meaning of protection is defense mechanism. People use the protection when they cannot handle the problem in their mind. The psychological problems, such as child abuse, traumatic experiences, and anxiety are common problems suffered by people particularly in the modern era. This anxiety later leads them to develop a certain defense mechanism like repression, displacement, sublimation, projection, and denial to keep the anxiety unconscious.

This study will mainly focus on analyzing Judith’s anxiety of the traumatic experiences and defenses behaviour as the long term impact of child abuse that she experiences during her childhood. The writer also attempts to discover child abuse event and its influence toward the life of the main character by exploring how she experience the abuse treatment and how she deals with traumatic events that lead to her anxiety. The writer of this study believes that the theory of psychoanalysis by Sigmund Freud is the best theory to be approach because it gives emphasis on the importance of childhood period in determining individual’s emotional being and personality in the adulthood (Ferrera 80). The writer is interested in choosing this novel because there are several messages delivered, such as the ways to overcome anxiety of the traumatic experience. Furthermore,

the events of child abuse trigger to the existence of anxiety by the main character in the novel.

1.2 Statement of the Problems

Based on the background of the study which is stated previously, the writer has proposed two questions that are going to be elaborated within his analysis :

1. How does the process of Judith's traumatic experiences lead to her anxiety ?
2. How does Judith deal with her anxiety?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This study aims at reaching several objectives which are expected to meet. The following objectives will be intended to answer every question proposed in the statement of problems above. Regarding the statement of the problems, the objectives of this study are:

1. To find out how the process of Judith's traumatic experiences leads to her anxiety.
2. To find out how Judith deals with her anxiety.

1.4 Scope and Limitation

The study focuses on the main character, namely Judith Richardson and what she has experienced in her life about her personality development after getting abused in her past experience. The other characters in the novel also

support the main character to reveal the personality of Judith. The writer analyzes how anxiety of traumatic experience in the past can influence her personality and the concept of defense mechanism as the manner to overcome Judith's anxiety of traumatic experiences.

1.5 Significance of the Study

By doing the study, the writer expects to be able to give positive contribution toward the writer itself, society and academic field as well. For the writer itself, he tries to get deeper understanding about psychoanalysis. For the society, this study is expected to make the readers gain more knowledge about the anxiety based on the traumatic experience and the defense mechanism. The study also attempts to give contribution to the study of literature, particularly in English Department of The Faculty of Humanities of Airlangga University in dealing with the case of anxiety based on a traumatic experience and defense mechanism of a main character in a novel.

This study concerns the issue of the influence of childhood experience in children suffering from abuse in the family toward their adulthood. Moreover, the writer also wants the readers to understand a character which has been influenced by a psychological problem. Furthermore, it is expected that the readers would enrich their knowledge about psychoanalysis theory and the defense mechanism.

1.6 Theoretical Background

Some theories are needed to support the analysis of this study. Psychoanalysis theory belongs to psychological approaches to analyze the behaviour of childhood and adulthood. The goal of psychoanalysis is to help

society resolve psychological problems. The writer uses the psychoanalysis theory to analyze the novel. Pamela Thurschwell in *Sigmund Freud* suggests that psychoanalysis is a new ways of understanding among other things, namely love, hate, childhood, family relation, religion, sexuality, fantasy and the conflicting emotions that make up our daily lives. One critical goal of psychoanalysis is toward searching behind and below the surface content of the language of our everyday life (3).

This study focuses on the things that cause a trauma for Judith and kinds of defense mechanism she did to deal with her anxieties resulted from her trauma. Trauma is resulted from the anxiety that is created through the conflict of id, ego, and super ego. Moreover, by the presence of the anxiety, the defense mechanism appears to help the traumatized person overcome it. In analyzing those issues the writer will use Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, especially about defense mechanism.

Defense mechanism determines the way someone deals with he or she own anxiety or bad experience. Freud argues that defense mechanism helps shield the ego from the conflict created by the id, superego and reality. The mechanism of defense is also described as a freudian term referring to an unconscious avoidance of something which produces anxiety. There are several ways of defense mechanisms such as repression, displacement, sublimation, projection and denial.

Repression is the most basic type in defense mechanism. Repression occurs when the ego is threatened by undesirable id impulses, and then the ego protects itself by repressing id impulses and forces threatening feelings into the

unconscious (Feist 35). Judith also has several ways in order to deal with her anxiety, namely sublimation. According to Mischel, sublimation is an ego defense that is particularly significant in development of culture, for example, masturbation becomes too threatening to a young child. He or she may sublimate or transform these impulses into a socially acceptable form, such as horseback riding and other athletics (48). Sublimation is probably the most useful and constructive way of defense mechanism as it takes the energy of something that is potentially harmful and turns it into doing something good and useful.

1.7 Method of the Study

In this study, the writer applies a qualitative research method using close reading. Creswell states that the qualitative method has several characteristic such as, natural setting, research as the key instrument, multiple sources of data, inductive data analysis, participants meaning, emergent design, theoretical lens, interpretive, and holistic account (202).

In data collection, the writer defines the primary source and secondary sources. The primary source is taken from *Street Kid* novel itself. In addition, the writer collects data from the novel, internet, journal, book as the secondary sources which have a closer interpretation and is related to the problem that appears in the novel. Then, collecting the data is also required to make the proportion of the data based on the criteria which contains the identification of the existence of the character itself.

In beginning the analysis, the writer will search for some parts of the story related to the issue of child abuse by reading the book, taking notes, and

highlighting the parts. After identifying the part as appropriate, the writer will relate the findings with the theory, in this case, the psychoanalysis theory. The writer also finds some thesis in English Department that discuss psychoanalysis.

In analyzing the reasons behind the emergence of defense mechanism for the main character, the writer uses the theory of psychoanalysis. The writer also is going to search any kind of reason that causes the traumatic experiences of the main character in the study. The process of data analysis in this study is by observing the main character, Judith, who is trapped in a traumatic condition in the novel. Then, the writer explores the process of psychological development. By doing these steps, the writer is able to reveal how a traumatic event influences her personality in this novel.

1.8 Definition of Key Terms

- Child abuse : All forms of physical and emotional ill treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in an actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development in the context of relationship of responsibility, trust or power.
- Trauma : A painful experience that causes someone to have a mental problem usually for a long time.
- Anxiety : An uncomfortable feeling of nervousness or worry about something that is happening or might happen in the future

Defense Mechanism : A process that protects an individual against anxiety and awareness of internal or external dangers.

Sublimation : A state to express strong emotions or the use of energy by doing an activity, especially an activity that is considered socially acceptable.

Repression : An effort of the ego to keep the contents of the id permanently unconscious