

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Children need a family structure to develop their character in order to become productive adults in the future. However, there are many debates as to what equals a complete family. Some define a complete family consists of a father, mother and children living in a state of greater geographical, economic and social independence from other relatives and associations (Ferry 12). Traditional family in the American culture usually consists of father and mother. Under this definition, any family without a mother or a father would not be categorized as a family (15). Therefore, the idea of the traditional family has been radically changed since divorce has been one of the causes of children's mental breakdown.

Divorce has a huge influence towards children's personality. They are likely to be aggressive and get in trouble with school authorities or the police. These children are more likely to have low self-esteem and feel depressed (Ferry 27). A parental divorce shows higher levels of depression and anxiety for children. Moreover, the depression and the anxiety are big factors for children's mental breakdown (Robert 33). Child abuse is usually caused by parental divorce, and based on a research, 20% to 25% of children whose parents got divorced would have mental problems (Robert 34). However, it is believed that there were greater number of cases

that went unreported as approximately 75% of a total child cases go unreported (Robert 35).

In the year of 2000, Justice Statistics reported that each year, over 1 million American children suffer from the divorce of their parents. Moreover, half of the children that were born this year have chance to see their parents' divorce before they turn 18. They exhibit more health problems, behavioral and emotional problems. They also get involved more frequently in crime and drug abuse, and have higher rates of committing suicide. Children are increasingly suffering from mental ill health, a new report has found, with family breakdown as the major cause (Ferry 39).

Jodi Picoult, a New York Times bestselling author fiction, brings up the issue of domestic and child abuse in one of her novels. Picoult was born in Nesconset, New York In 1966, and she studied creative writing with Marry Morris at Princeton University. She had to share stories published in seventeen magazines, while she was still a student. Her husband is Tim Van Leer, whom she met at Princeton. When Picoult was pregnant of her first child, she wrote her first novel entitled *Songs of the Humpback Whale*. Jodi Picoult is a bestselling author of the following novels: *Songs of the Humpback Whale* (1992), *Harvesting the Heart* (1994), *Picture Perfects* (1995), *Mercy* (1996), *The Pact* (1998), *Keeping Faith* (1999), *Plain Truth* (2000), *Saleem Falls* (2001), *Perfect Match* (2002), *Second Glance* (2003), *My Sister's Keeper* (2004), *Vanishing Acts* (2005), *The Tenth Circle* (2006), *Nineteen Minutes* (2007). In 2003, she was given an award for the New England Book Seller Award for

Fiction. She also got some awards because of her fantastic talent, such as: The Richard and Judy best read of the year best novel nominee (2005), and Sains Burry's popular fiction award best novel nominee (2006): *My Sister's Keeper*. One of her bestselling novel as a children literature is reflected in her work, *Keeping Faith's* (Picoult 1999).

Keeping Faith falls into a category of fiction novel, as there is no reality-based data included in the novel, thus Faith White is only a fictional figure. However, in a book called *Psikoanalisis dan Sastra* (2003) there is a piece of writing regarding the application of psychoanalysis theory that states that analysis in the character(s) in a novel is very popular as the characters are seen as human beings. In this case, the object of the analysis is seen as manifested "texts" to find hidden text beneath its conscious drives (Moesono 112). Therefore, even though the story of the character Faith White is not a true story, it is reasonable to perceive her as if she is a real life character and to observe and analyze her mental breakdown as the main object of the study.

Keeping Faith is a story about a girl named Faith White, who has grown up in the middle of family conflict. She lives in New Canaan with her parents, Mariah and Collin White. Faith is a seven years old girl, and she has a great talent. Faith learns and lives the world by her family structure. Faith's activities are going to school and having a ballet course. However, she decides to stop doing her activities since her

parents' marriage get into a serious conflict. Mariah and Collin often fight each other and Faith is always there to witness of her parents' unstable relationship.

There are many times when Faith is forced to look at what happened between her parents. Faith becomes frustrated because she finds her parents are always fighting. Faith feels that her parents do not recognize her presence. When her father comes home, Faith tries to behave normally like a girl who knows nothing about her parents' conflict. Faith pretends to herself that she is well. Faith jumps to his father and she says that she misses him very much. However, Faith knows that her father looks very different after he goes out from the house. Faith finds that her father comes with another woman because she sees the woman who only wraps her body with a towel, after taking a shower in her father's bathroom. Mariah stands in the corner of Collin's door, cannot say anything and her tears are falling down from her eyes.

From her parents' conflict, Faith is deeply upset to know that this matter becomes the reason why her parents must be separated. Divorce has become an alternative for Collin and Mariah as the ground of their marriage does not work. However, Faith is upset and she feels that her life is totally changed. Faith often feels fears, and difficulty in sleeping after her parents' divorce. She always reminds herself that she is the victim of domestic abuse; in this case her parents' divorce.

Faith confuses and she does not know how to arrange herself in order to get a stable side between her parents. Faith wants them together, but she knows that she

cannot have them back again. She is desperate for and regrets everything that happen to her family. Faith is only by herself during the post divorce. In the middle of her parents' crowd situation, Faith is out of control. She learns that her parents do not mention her presence as a daughter, their only child who needs much attention and affection. She is depressed and tries to commit a suicide by cutting her hand with a knife.

Long after her parents' divorce, Faith's behavior are likely to be aggressive and get in trouble at school. After cutting her hand, Faith does not want to go school and avoids people around her. Faith prefers to stay home, plays with her dolls only. Faith lives her life by reminding herself that she is the victim of divorced parents. Her parents' divorce always reminds her that being a child of divorce means that she loses all the affections and loves from the parents.

The culmination happens when Faith tells her mother that she has an imaginary friend, she calls her as 'guard'. Nevertheless, Mariah considers what her daughter say is only a hallucination. According to Faith, her 'guard' is a nice friend with whom she can share and play with. Whenever she wants anything, her 'guard' will always be there. Her 'guard' is the substitute for the unfulfilled attention from her parents, especially her mother.

The writer of the study chooses this novel to be analyzed for some reasons. Firstly, this novel contains the issue of child abuse caused by parents' divorce. Some couples choose divorce for the sake of kindness but they forget that there are many

children who lose their rights and they have to face the reality without any support from their parents. Many children become so frustrated and they fall down in depression and anxiety. And last, this novel teaches the readers moral values especially for all parents in the world. They have to be aware of their children's need. In this novel, the writer tries to analyze "Faith White's Mental Breakdown in Jodi Picoult's *Keeping Faith*."

Therefore, this study will focus on analyzing Faith White's mental breakdown as long-term impacts of her behaviors during her childhood life. The writer of this study considers that the theory of Psychoanalysis by Sigmund Freud is best to be applied to analyze the case of Faith White considering with her parents' divorce. Freud also gives emphasis on the importance of childhood period in determining individual's emotional beings and personality in the adulthood (Ferrara 80).

1.2 Statement of the Problems

After reading the novel, there are two questions used as the basis in doing the analysis. The questions are as the following:

1. What are the causes of Faith White's mental breakdown?
2. How does Faith White's mental breakdown affect her behavior?

1.5 Objectives of the Study

In organizing the study, there are several objectives that are desired by the writer to be achieved. The objectives of the study will be intended to answer every question, as it has been mentioned in the statement of the problems. By using the chosen theory as a tool of analysis, this study tries:

1. To identify what the causes of Faith's mental breakdown during her childhood.
2. To identify how Faith's mental breakdown affects her behavior.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study will mainly focus on the main character's way of dealing with Faith White's mental breakdown experience of being the victim of parents' divorce with the use of psychoanalysis theory of dream displacement.

The study is also done to give contribution to the study of literature in English Department of Airlangga University, as up until this study is being written, there has not been any study done concerning the issue of children's mental breakdown using *Keeping Faith* novel. Accordingly, this study is expected not only to enrich the way of applying psychoanalysis theory by employing more than just written text as the basis of analysis but also the writer hopes that the readers are more concerned about the issues which are implied in the novel.

1.7 Scope and Limitation

In order to analyze Faith White's mental breakdown more thoroughly, the writer decides to limit the discussion only in causing Faith's mental breakdown and profoundly identifies how Faith's mental breakdown affects her behavior.

To keep the study in the expected field, the writer limits the analysis only on the novel's text and the character of Faith white in the novel. Therefore, all other aspects outside the research object are not considered as subject of discussion in this study.

1.8 Theoretical Background

To answer the problems and to provide the explanations regarding Faith White's mental breakdown, the writer of the study applies four parts of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis theory. The theories are anxiety, depression, defense mechanism, and dream displacement.

. According to Freud, Anxiety is evoked by objects and situations such as open spaces, closed spaces, and others, to an extent which is out of all proportion to their actual danger (Hall 46). In dealing with the case of Faith White, there are many events in the novel that show Faith is experiencing anxiety especially neurotic anxiety.

In Faith White's case, the parents' divorce resulted in negative short and long-term emotional effects. Also, Faith White's case is one of the children who is

drown in emotional abuse. Thus, depression also comes in, causing her to experience a mental breakdown. When someone loses the love and any chance to resolve the conflicts, a person doubly and become obsessed with the intensively mixed feelings (Heller 72).

Further on, Freud believes each person has his own way to deal with experience in life, including a way to deal with traumatic or painful experience. Freud believes that there are kinds of ways people use to deal with trauma, which he calls as Defense Mechanism. By definition, defense mechanisms are the behavioral “strategies” or responses made to alleviate or reduce anxiety (Boeree 195). In the case of Faith White’s, her childhood behavior represents the defense mechanism called a denial.

To fulfill wishes, Freud placed great importance on the function on dreams, calling them “the royal road to unconscious”. A dream is a mental experience that occurs during sleep, consisting of a series of vivid, usually visual and often hallucinatory images. Through sleep, the unconscious is free to express itself, and it does so in someone’s dream. Dreams, like symptoms, are disguises and partial wish fulfillment. In the case of Faith White’s, the writer will use the term of dream displacement.

1.9 Method of the Study

The method of the study is library research, while the primary source used is *Keeping Faith* novel itself. The writer collects data from the novel, Internet and books which have a closer interpretation and related to the problems that appear in the novel, which are associated with this subject. Then, collecting the data is also required to make the proportion of the data based on the criteria which contain the identification of the existence of the character's personality.

After collecting the data, the writer of the study will arrange it in order to get whole to study it. Therefore, understanding the novel and the topic are important to deepen and sharpen the analysis. Afterward, it will be easier to begin the analysis by using provided sources based on the theory. In analyzing the data, the writer uses descriptive methods of analysis. This method is considered suitable to be applied in the analysis because it supports properly the description of the topic that is going to be analyzed. Finally, the next step after making the analysis is drawing the conclusion, so that the study is complete based on the research requirements.

1.8 Definition of Key Terms

1. Mental Breakdown : Mental illness that influences people's personality and it is used to describe a sudden, acute attack such as anxiety and depression.

2. Depression : Involves loss of a love object, painful rejection and sadness, loss of interest in the world, low energy, and inability to love.
3. Anxiety : Fears which are evoked by objects and situations such as open spaces, closed spaces, and others, to an extent which is out of all proportion to their actual danger. The focus of anticipated danger may be internal or external.
4. Defense Mechanism : The behavioral “strategies” or responses made to alleviate or reduce anxiety
5. Dream : Mental experience that occurs during sleep, consisting of a series of vivid, usually visual and often hallucinatory images
6. Substitution : Substitution is an act of diversion or compromition where the satisfaction reached by the individual has almost the same taste with the original desired satisfaction. This is one of the terms in defense mechanism which is used to replace the unfulfilled desired satisfaction of an object with another object with the same proportion with the desired satisfaction.