CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Human life which is developing in many aspects becomes an interesting topic be reflected in literary works. Psychological experiences in human life and the aspects are the important things in creating literary work, including the author's life. How the condition of the authors when they write down the story also can influence how they create the character. In fiction, some authors create fiction characters with compiling the condition as human life in a real life and the form of imagination in his/her imaginary place. Because having experiences in a real life and using them as the obvious examples, the authors will give description how to create the characters in a new world with some problems which are not far and relate to human life.

The condition of human life does not always go smoothly. Sometimes, they are happy with everything that can fulfill their pleasure. But, on the contrary, they find some obstacles in their lives and keep struggling to continue their lives. Those conditions are known in psychological field. The phenomenon of psychological field also can be found in the literary works. This phenomenon in literary works is not too far from the portrayal of human life. But it cannot be denied that the literary works are also influenced by the authors' imagination. So, for knowing how the psychological aspects influence the literary works, the writer

will use one of the philosophy fields, psychoanalysis. This theory was introduced by one of the philosophers, Sigmund Freud (1856-1939).

According to Patricia M. Wallace (1997), Freud was a philosopher who is well known with his theory of personality, including psychoanalysis. He emphasizes on unconscious processes in personality development, especially unconscious memories of childhood events (22). Basically, psychoanalysis emphasized the drives of the id is regulated by forces from the ego (reality) and superego (moral standards). It studies about the efforts of the person to satisfy the drivers of the id with the demands of the superego and ego or reality. It is usually caused by conflicts between the wish to express the drives and the fears of harm from within or from external factors (Pervin 96). This fear is a reflection of the cause of memories in childhood which influence the present life (Pervin 5). This harm feeling or injury may result the anxiety that represents a signal of child experiences in which drives was built by punishment and pain. People think that if they do this, they will be hurt (Pervin 97).

The concept of Freud's drive theory about daily personality problems also can be found in fiction. Some authors create fiction story with compiling the condition as human life in a real life and the imagination of their mind. Experiences in the real life are as the obvious example that will give the author descriptions how to create the character in a new world with some problems which are not far from human life. One of the authors who often clusters the theories of science and fiction in some his works is Daniel Keyes. He writes a number of fiction novels with psychology as the theme and some of his works

become phenomenon because the uniqueness that he makes in every single story. He uses the problems of human life to make his works alive. His stories seem like based on true stories of his patient. He combines these aspects of fiction with science or it is known as science fiction. One of his great works that will be analyzed in this thesis is *Flowers for Algernon* (2007).

Flowers for Algernon is one of the phenomenal works that was adapted by many countries either in plays, movies, or still in novel within many versions. The story also received one of science fiction's highest honors, the Hugo Award in category of the best story of the year in 1959. In 1961, it was adapted as a successful television film, *The Two Worlds of Charlie Gordon,* starred Cliff Robertson as Charlie. Then Keyes also set out to enlarge *Flowers for Algernon* into a full-length novel. For the result, he published the novel in 1966 and won the Nebula Award as the best novel of the year and expanded dramatically on the popularity of the short story. In 1968, the novel version was adapted again for a feature film called *Charly.* Cliff Robertson still took his role as Charlie Gordon and won an Academy Award for his performance (Keyes).

This story is very phenomenal just because Keyes make the story be alive and he can use psychological elements that support the plot itself. It cannot be denied that this novel is influenced by the background of Keyes, who was born in Brooklyn, New York. He took Psychology as his major at Brooklyn College where he received his B.A. Degree in psychology. He also was employed as an associate fiction editor and teacher in the New York City schools. While teaching, at night Keyes returned to Brooklyn College to continue his post-graduate with

major in English and American literature. This is clear that psychology more influences his literary works, including *Flowers for Algernon* (Willey).

In briefly, this novel tells about three main characters, considering "I", Charlie and Algernon. Actually, "I" and Charlie are representation of two world of Charlie Gordon. Charlie is representation of old Charlie in mentally-retarded condition. And "I" is representation of new Charlie when the experiment walks in progress. Both of them are different characters just in narrator's mind. The narrator is as the first character because this novel uses first person for viewpoint. "I" as the narrator has big influence in the plot itself. "I" tells the two world of Charlie Gordon. If the readers do not read deeply, they will confuse to differ between "I" and Charlie. Basically, "I", Charlie and Algernon have the similar fate becoming the experiment of the psychological laboratory.

This novel has a complex and phenomenon story because it uses psychological aspects as a part of science compelling with what the author's imaginations are (fiction). Combination of both is known as scientific fiction. The other aspect of this novel which can attract the reader is the way of Daniel Keyes used for telling the whole of story. He uses concept of someone's diary in writing this novel by combining forward and flash back for the plot. So, it seems more like a true story because he also addes the experiences of him in healing his patients.

The phenomenon of psychological aspects in the novel of *Flowers for Algernon* will be a focus in this research. By using psychoanalysis, this research analyze the main character of this novel, Charlie Gordon, including his

characterization. Then this analysis will help to find the questions of the writer about the problems at the present and future of Charlie that are caused by his traumatic past events and the impacts or fears of them in his anxiety. It also tries to find the ways of Charlie used to defense his fears. So, It will clear away the problems of main character by using Psychoanalysis theory, particularly about anxiety and defense mechanism.

1.2   Statement of the Problems

Based on the background study above, the writer focuses in analyzing the problems as follows:

1. What are the traumatic past events of Charlie Gordon and their influence to his anxiety?

2. What kinds of defense mechanism are Charlie Gordon has to face his condition?

1.3   Objective of the Study

Regarding the statement of the problems, the aims of the thesis analysis will:

1. Describe the traumatic past events of Charlie Gordon and their influence to the anxiety of Charlie Gordon.

2. Find kinds of defense mechanism of Charlie Gordon that he has to face his condition as the ways how he continues his life.

1.4   Significance of the Study

The significance of this study on Daniel Keyes' novel entitled *Flowers for Algernon* specifically is to give the valuable insight in understanding the anxiety of the main character in the novel that are influenced by his traumatic past events of the childhood and how he defends the anxiety to continue his life. The anxiety appears with the appearance of problems. By understanding the problems of the main character with psychoanalysis theory particularly personality development and defense mechanisms, this study will give more knowledge about psychological aspects that occurs in a literary work and open the people's view toward this area wider than before.

Generally, this study is written in order to present the function of intrinsic elements, such as character, in analysing the literary works as the field of student in English Department. It also gives the example a kind of fiction , especially scientific fiction. It is a kind of fiction but it uses science elements to make this story more alive. Although it is just a fiction of literary works, however it may describe and reveal some important things in real life.

1.5   Scope and Limitation

For keeping this study still in its track, the writer will give scope and limitation of the analysis by focusing the analysis in the main character, Charlie Gordon, in novel entitled *Flowers for Algernon* by Daniel Keyes. This study will reveal one by one the past experiences of Charlie Gordon that make the appearance of his anxiety and some actions that he does as the results of anxiety

including the appearance of imagination character. The other aspects of this novel are possible to be examined as long as connecting with the topic that will be discussed and explained further in analysis.

1.6 Theoretical Background

The analysis of this study will use the theory of Psychoanalytic Criticism especially Freudian Psychoanalysis, anxiety, defense mechanisms. They will be used to analyze the anxiety and defense mechanism of the main character, Charlie Gordon. The writer wants to analyze anxiety that caused by the two different conditions. This condition is also supported by the shadow of past events in childhood experiences that were opposed by his family. So, the anxiety appears when Charlie's personality is unready accepting the two different conditions between in mentally-retarded and genius condition.

According to Walter (1993) in Freudian theory, when the ego cannot deal with the commands of people desires, the constraints of reality and our own moral standards will occur. Anxiety acts as a signal to the ego that things are not going right. There are three kinds of anxiety; realistic anxiety, neurotic anxiety, and moral anxiety. But in this study the author will discuss about realistic and neurotic anxiety. Realistic anxiety appears because he is afraid with the development of his emotional in making relationship that is also influenced by past experiences. Then the neurotic anxiety appears because of the traumatic past events of his childhood that appears when his mind is able to remember about his childhood, especially about his mother.

Not only the anxiety will discuss in this study, but the author also wants to discuss about the defense mechanism of Charlie Gordon. From about fifteen kinds of defense of mechanism, Keyes uses some kinds of them to complete his story. They are one kind of Denial mentioned as repression, displacement, regression, fantasy and alienation. Those defense mechanisms happen in Charlie to continue his life.

The other aspects of this novel are possible to be examined as long as connecting with the topic that will be discussed and explained further in analysis.

1.7   Method of the Study

The main source of the analysis is the novel "Flowers for Algernon" by Daniel Keyes. The procedures of the study are by making data collections from the novel; starting by close reading, classifying the data, and determining the data based on the criteria on what the writer want to analyze.

In terms of the method in conducting the analysis, the author uses qualitative method in research. The descriptive analysis will be applied to find out the answers of the problem statements. The analysis will be divided into two steps. First, the writer will discuss about the main character of Charlie Gordon. Then, by using Psychoanalysis of the main character and his actions, this qualitative research expects to inform about Charlie's anxiety and his defense mechanisms will be described clearly.

1.8   Definition of Key Term

Anxiety: distress or uneasiness of mind caused by fear of danger or misfortune.

Defense Mechanism: the ways of attempting to cope with the drives without injury or pain.

Neurotic Anxiety: emotional condition in which there is fear and uncertainty about the future.

Psychoanalysis: a method of treating somebody's mental problems or disorders by making them aware of experiences in their early life and tracing the connection between these and their present behavior or feelings.

Realistic anxiety: fear of real-world events. The cause of this anxiety is usually easily identified. For example, a person might fear receiving a dog bite when they are near a menacing dog. The most common way of reducing this anxiety is to avoid the threatening object.

Traumatic past events: the events that cause a painful experience that sears someone psychologically.