

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Avoidant Personality Disorder (AvPD) is a type of disorder where a person feels great inferiority which possesses him with a tendency to hide from the outside world for it is too intimidating. Eugene Bleuler, in his work *Dementia praecox: Or the group of schizophrenias* (1911), defines AvPD as a disorder that makes someone persistently hiding from reality because he finds that it is too powerful to his emotional state. AvPD is also known as Anxious Personality Disorder. This naming refers to the main issue which strikes its sufferers, which is anxiety. Someone who suffers from AvPD tends to have a serious problem with his anxiety to the point that he even prevents himself from being attached to other people to spare himself from unwanted rejection.

AvPD is influenced by social, genetic, and psychological factors. These factors are not specifically fixed, but mainly the emerging factor which causes AvPD to arise are unpleasant childhood experiences such as emotional neglect, peer group rejection, and it can be an inherited temperament from parents (Eggum et al., 2009). These three factors mostly happen in childhood. For instance, emotional neglect refers to parents' ignorance of their child's feelings, while peer group rejection refers to all kinds of rejection from any peer group that is experienced by someone from his early childhood throughout his life. If

someone experiences one of these factors, there is a high possibility of him suffering from Avoidant Personality Disorder.

Millon (1991) characterizes seven signs of AvPD as following: "(1) persistent and pervasive feelings of tension and apprehension, (2) habitual self-consciousness and feelings of insecurity and inferiority, (3) continuous yearning to be liked and accepted, (4) hypersensitivity to rejection and criticism, (5) refusal to enter into relationships unless receiving strong guarantees of uncritical acceptance; very restricted personal attachments, (6) habitual proneness to exaggerate the potential dangers or risk in everyday phobic avoidance, and (7) restricted lifestyle because of need to have certainty and security". These signs significantly portray AvPD with a tendency of social discomfort and hypersensitivity to negative evaluation.

AvPD can be reduced by several methods such as "social skills training, psychotherapy, cognitive therapy, exposure treatment to increase social contacts gradually, group therapy for practicing social skills, and sometimes drug therapy" (Ronald, 2014). One of the well-known methods of AvPD treatment is developing a client's earned secure attachment. Attachment theory was invented firstly by Bowlby's (1907-1990). It discusses how a child is always looking for any figure to rely on physically and emotionally, and once he is separated from this figure, he will experience despair and depression. Attachments are classified into children attachment and adult attachment. In children attachment, there are three patterns of attachment: secure attachment and insecure avoidant attachment, and insecure ambivalent attachment (Ainsworth and Bell, 1970). Meanwhile, in adult

attachment, there are four styles of attachment: secure attachment, anxious-preoccupied attachment, dismissive-avoidant attachment, and fearful-avoidant attachment (Barholomew and Horowitz, 1991). Earned secure attachment is part of secure attachment. This kind of attachment is usually experienced by an individual who failed his early childhood attachment and developed a new pattern of attachment as the alternation of the failed early childhood attachment.

Earned secure attachment was firstly discussed by Pearson et al. in their study "Earned- and Continuous-Security in Adult Attachment: Relation to depressive Symptomatology and Parenting Style" (1994). This attachment style is given to adults who had a difficult early relationship with their parents and was developing new secure models as the indication of a high coherency and is associated with depression-related distress in adulthood. (Pearson et al., 1994). The new secure models which are developed in earned secure attachment are based on two values: the assumption that the attachment figure will respond to requests for support and protection and the judgment that the attached person will be responded in a supportive way by anyone, particularly by the attachment figure (Roisman et al., 2002). These two values correspond with the characteristic of AvPD in which the client is always struggling with the tendency to avoid any rejection while keeping himself distant from other people.

Structures of the human mind are divided into three parts according to their function: id, ego, and superego. The id is located at an unconscious level and has the function of seeking pleasure. It contains human's drives which are classified into two categories: life instinct or Eros and death instinct of Thanatos (Freud,

1923). For the ego, it is part of the id, which is located in between the conscious and unconscious and is influenced by the reality. It has the function to connect the id with the reality principle, which is gotten from the interaction with the external world. This part also holds the control of defense mechanisms which will be activated once anxiety arises as to the result of an unfulfilled drive. Meanwhile, the superego is a projection of the ego, which represents its ideal. The origin of the superego is highly influenced by totemism (Freud, 1923). Therefore, the superego always demands the most ideal in life.

Further, Freud (1923) states that anxiety is a negative result of unsatisfied libido. Anxiety can be realized in physiological as in *coitus interruptus* or unsatisfactory sexual practices resulting in "actual neuroses" or "anxiety neuroses", and from repression as a symptom of the continued pressure of unacceptable desires which led to the "psychoneuroses" (Freud, 1923). Anxiety is divided into three types: (1) *reality anxiety*, which is originated from the real threat in the physical world to one's well, (2) *neurotic anxiety*, which comes from the overwhelmed ego due to the id that threatens to express its irrationality in thought and behavior, and (3) *moral anxiety*, which comes from a feeling that one's internalized values are about to compromise (Freud in Hall, 1954). Basically, the arousal of anxiety is caused by the conflict between the id, ego, and superego while responding to any trigger from the outside world. It can be in the forms of threat, oppression, or frustration, which stimulates an individual's feelings, attitude, emotions, or behavior (Hilgard et al., 1983). If the triggers continue to attack the individual, which then forms a repetitive pattern of anxiety,

it will result in a fixation on the individual's character. For example, if an individual continues to receive threats from others that cause trauma for him, he will likely develop a denial as a shield to protect himself from this trauma. This is called a defense mechanism. It is a mechanism used by the ego to protect the individual from anxiety. Freud (2003) classifies defense mechanisms into repression, reaction formation, projection, regression, sublimation, denial, and rationalization. Each of these mechanisms will appear depending on the situation that is experienced by the individual.

Erikson (1950), in his theoretical framework of psychosocial development, states that a human's personality development is influenced by the extent of social surroundings which interact with individuals throughout his life. Erikson believes that these interactions influence the fixating process of someone's traits. The psychosocial development happens in eight stages: (1) trust vs. mistrust, (2) autonomy vs. shame or doubt, (3) initiative vs. guilt, (4) industry vs. inferiority, (5) identity vs. role confusion, (6) intimacy vs. isolation, (7) generativity vs. stagnation, and (8) integrity vs. despair. All of these stages are important to be experienced successfully by the individual in order to overcome a perfect self-development of a child to adult in a well-adjusted personality.

Avoidant Personality Disorder had been depicted in Matt Haig's *The Midnight Library*, published in 2020 by Canongate Books Ltd. *The Midnight Library* told about the struggle of Nora, a woman in her 30s. She was trying to survive her life alone with all miserable past events haunt her. In her childhood, she had no close friends and was also neglected by her parents who like to

criticise and blame her. Her father died before she was able to make up their relationship she broke, and it was followed by the death of her mother. Unfortunately, her relationship with her brother was also worsened because of her problem with her psychological state. All of these events burdened Nora to think that she was the one who caused all the miserable events. These also caused Nora to develop an avoidant personality disorder, which made her like to hide from the world.

Referring to community reviews in Goodreads, Matt Haig's *The Midnight Library* presents a relatable story for readers. The struggles experienced by Nora were realistic enough that the reader might also experience the same or similar one in his real life. Therefore, the researcher found that this novel would be a sufficient source of healing for the reader who might have the same struggles with Nora. In a more serious way, if the reader happens to suffer from AvPD too, the researcher found that this novel would help to remit the reader's AvPD as AvPD is still rarely discussed in literature. The researcher also finds that the novel is unique because it is such an irony that the main character who experienced mental illness was told as a philosophy student who was actually really understanding about the philosophy of life (Haig, 2020). The main character often quoted philosophical statements from experts such as David Hume to make statements about her feelings or opinions. Nevertheless, this novel still uses a casual narration style, so the readers will not be burdened as if they were reading a philosophy textbook.

Matt Haig is well known as a novelist who often brought psychological issues in his work, especially from the sight of a person with family conflict. Aside from *The Midnight Library* (2020), he had written several novels with psychological issues, such as *Dead Fathers Club* (2006), which is about an 11-years-old kid who must deal with his father's ghost, *The Possession of Mr. Cave* (2008) which is about an obsessive father who is hardly keeping his daughter safe, and *Shadow Forest* (2007) which is a story that begins with the horrible death of the protagonist's parents. All of these novels were accepted well by the readers. For *The Midnight Library* itself, it won Goodreads Choice Awards for Best Fiction 2020 and had been shortlisted for the British Book Awards Fiction Book of the Year 2021 and Audie Award for Fiction 2021.

There are several previous related studies of this research. The first one is a study conducted by Midhun P. Jose entitled "The Contribution of Freud's Theories to the Literary Analysis of Two Victorian Novels: *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre*" (2020). This study used Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis to figure out that two characters of *Wuthering Heights*, Catherine, and Heathcliff, lived in dissatisfaction. Catherine behaved hysterically because the repressed expression originated from the demands of society, while Heathcliff was mad because of his unfulfilled wishes of life. This study also found that the character in *Jane Eyre*, Jane, were living a similar way with the ones in *Wuthering Heights*. She was constantly discontent and restless in her attempts to fulfill her dreams to be a respectable and wealthy woman. This study will contribute as the example of the

application of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis to reveal the characters' struggle in life in order to fulfill their drives.

The second previous study is conducted by Asma Kashif Shahzad, Farwa Muneer, and Muhammad Imran Saeed, entitled "Evaluating the Construction of Child Abuse in Morrison's Home" (2020). This study analyzed the main character, Cee, who was abused and abandoned in her own home after the death of her biological parents. Using Cee's story as a model, this study found that homeless children are vulnerable to distress and misery. Home, in this case, not only refers to its denotative meaning as a building with walls and roof used as a shelter but also refers to its symbolic meaning as a place where someone is loved and surrounded. It is likely for homeless children to get tortured and abused, which causes them to have serious problems with trauma. This study revealed that the presence of biological parents or caring caregivers is very important for homeless children who always get rejected and abandoned. This finding will be used as a reference to analyze the role of the family in the development of children's emotional states in this research.

The last previous study was conducted by Shubh M. Singh and Subho Chakrabarti entitled "A Study in Dualism: The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" (2008). This study found that the two identities of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde manifest Freud's theory of mind. The researchers revealed that Mr. Hyde was recognizable as the id, which has aggressive instincts without moral or social mores that need to be followed. Meanwhile, Dr. Jekyll is the ego which was conscious, rational, and dominated with social principles, in this case, Victorian

society's principle, which also represented the superego. This study revealed that between Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, both were two equipotent, coexistent, and externally opposed components that make up a normal individual. In this research, the findings in this study will be used as a reference of the application of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis in analyzing the state of mind of people with a personality disorder.

From the previous studies above, the researcher found that the three research discussed Freudian psychoanalysis to reveal children's abuse, adults' unfulfilled desire, and personality development. However, this study is conducted to apply Freudian psychoanalysis with the help of Erikson's psychosocial development and Pearson's attachment theory to reveal the earned secure attachment of avoidant personality disorder case in Matt Haig's *The Midnight Library*. The researcher found that this study is important to be conducted because in discussing avoidant personality disorder cases, a thorough investigation of the internal conflict which happens in the individual's state of mind is needed. Thus, Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis will be used in this scope. In addition, it is also important to investigate the social surroundings of the AvPD client because the risk factors of AvPD lies in this state. Thus, Erikson's theory of the eight stages of psychosocial development will be used. At last, this research combines these theories with Pearson's theory of attachment to analyze the appearance of earned secure attachment in AvPD clients, which has the function of the cure for avoidant personality disorder cases.

1.2 Research Question

How is Earned Secure Attachment of Avoidant Personality Disorder Client depicted in Matt Haig's *The Midnight Library* novel?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to reveal how Earned Secure Attachment of an Avoidant Personality Disorder client is depicted in Matt Haig's *The Midnight Library* novel by analyzing the words, phrases, clauses, and sentences which are quoted from the novel script using Millon's concept of Avoidant Personality Disorder, Erikson's theory of 8 personality stages of development, Freud's psychoanalysis, and Pearson's theory of earned secure attachment.

1.4 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on analyzing the depiction of earned secure attachment of avoidant personality disorder client in Matt Haig's *The Midnight Library* through the words, phrases, clauses, and sentences which are quoted from the novel script. Millon's concept of Avoidant Personality Disorder and Erikson's theory of 8 personality stages of development are used to uncover the causes and symptoms of AvPD, Freud's psychoanalysis theory and Pearson's earned secure attachment theory are used to investigate how Nora Seed's earned secure attachment is revealed.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to contribute knowledge in psychological criticism study. The researcher also hopes that this study can make the reader aware of Avoidant Personality Disorder in both fiction and real life. At last, the writer hopes that this study can help the reader to gain a deeper understanding of Freud's psychoanalytical criticism, Erikson's theory of 8 personality stages of development, and Pearson's earned secure attachment theory.

