CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background of the Study

Anxiety is humans' natural reaction when they perceive danger or threat. Corey (2013) defines *anxiety* as a condition that motivates someone to do something; the function is to warn about something dangerous, as a signal for the ego that would increase continuously if someone does not take the suitable action for reducing the anxiety (p. 66). According to the World Health Organization (WHO), anxiety is the most common mental disorder worldwide, with 1 in 13 globally suffers from anxiety. In the U.S alone, there are 40 million adults aged 18 and older and approximately 4.4 million adolescents aged 3-17 that suffer from anxiety (ADAA, 2021; CDC, 2021). Anxiety is caused by many situations. However, if the feeling of anxiety is caused by social encounters or interactions, it is known as social anxiety.

Social Anxiety Disorder (SAD), also called Social Phobia, is a marked fear or anxiety about one or more social situations in which the individual is exposed to possible scrutiny by others and negative evaluation (APA, 2013). Typical social situations are those that involve interaction, observation, and performance such as meeting people or strangers, talking in meetings or groups, starting conversations, doing something while being observed by other people, and public performance like speaking. Even though the anxious feeling which involves these social

situations is common, people with social anxiety disorder can worry excessively about them and may do so for weeks before anticipated social situations occur (APA, 2013). The fear itself is usually caused by fear about doing or saying something that they think will be humiliating or embarrassing, making a bad impression, or being judged critically by others (Antony & Swinson, 2008, p. 15).

Many studies have found that social anxiety is a common mental health problem. For instance, based on diagnostic interview data from the National Comorbidity Survey Replication (NCS-R), as many as 12.1% of the general U.S. population suffer from social anxiety disorder at some point in their lives (Kessler et al., 2005, p. 595). It makes social anxiety disorder the second most common anxiety disorders, affecting more than 35 million people in the U. S. only. The number is high enough to make it the fourth only to major depression, alcohol dependence, and specific phobias as the most prevalent psychiatric condition (Kessler et al., 2005, p. 595).

Individuals experiencing social anxiety appear to struggle with social situations. When interacting with unfamiliar people, they might or might not seem troubled or show evidence of discomfort. However, they invariably experience intense physical or emotional symptoms like blushing, sweating, trembling, heart racing, difficulty speaking or concentrating (Stein & Stein, 2008, p. 1115). Social anxious people fear being seen as stupid, boring, or unlikable. Accordingly, they avoid making eye contact, speaking in public, expressing opinions, or even socializing with peers. Hence, people with social anxiety disorder are often highly

self-critical, experience decreased self-esteem, and have depressive symptoms (Stein & Stein, 2008, p.1115).

While it does not have one specific cause, there are a number of risk factors that can increase a person's likelihood of developing social anxiety disorder. People who have experienced trauma after experiencing panic in one social situation have the potential to develop social anxiety disorder (Kashdan & Herbert, 2001, p. 41). Moreover, a study conducted by McCabe et al. (2003) noted that 92% of adults with social anxiety disorder result from severe teasing and bullying in childhood (p. 7). The family environment that is rejecting, emotionally distant, overprotective and possessive, and modeling negative and overvalued importance of others' opinion also hypothesized to affect the potential of social anxiety disorder in children or adolescents (Kashdan & Herbert, 2001, p. 41). Too much pressure and expectation from parents toward individuals to gain high achievement also have some mental impact if done without providing emotional support, which would lead to high anxiety and self-isolation (Moneva & Moncada, 2020, p. 271).

Social anxiety disorder has a very early onset, which often begins in childhood or early adolescence. Adolescence is the period that witnesses the sense of identity. It is the time when a person begins to build his/her personal identity, and relationship with peer groups becomes increasingly important. Identities are the traits and characteristics, social relations, and roles that define who one is (Oyserman et al., 2012, p. 2). Identity is really important since it can influence what people are motivated to do, how they think, and make sense of themselves

and others, the actions they take, their feelings, and their ability to control or regulate themselves (Oyserman et al., 2012, p. 3). The National Comorbidity Survey Replication Adolescent Supplement (NCS-A) noted that an estimated 9.1% of adolescents had social anxiety disorder, with 10.1% of them were adolescents aged 17-18 years old. In addition, between males and females, the risk is higher for females than for males (Merikangas et al., 2010, p. 980). In fact, Schneier and Goldmark (2015) stated in their study that the prevalence of social anxiety disorder is indeed most significant among young adults (p. 50).

The impact of social anxiety is widespread, affecting functioning in various parts of life, lowering mood and general wellbeing. For adolescents, academic achievement is hard to attain, with individuals at risk of dropping out of school early and gaining lower qualifications (Leigh & Clark, 2018, p. 389). Social anxiety in adolescents is also associated with a considerable impairment that persists through adulthood, such as increasing the risk of unemployment and work absence (Schneier & Goldmark, 2015, p. 50). Additionally, social anxiety disorder is often followed by comorbid disorders like depression which can raise the risk of attempted suicide (Baldwin & Buis in Bandelow & Stein, 2004, p. 62). However, although social anxiety disorder affects people early in life, it has been shown that patients with uncomplicated social phobia rarely seek help in the healthcare system (Hidalgo et al., 2001, p. 282).

Research has found that high anxiety in adolescents exhibits more troublesome identity construction than their low anxiety peers. It happens because as the anxious adolescents get older, they become less certain about their

commitments, thus indicating their great difficulty in making relevant identity choices (Crocetti et al., 2009, p. 848). Identity construction is the development of a separate personality at a particular stage of life; in which individual characteristics are possessed person by person or a person is known to others (Upreti, 2017, p. 54). Therefore, to better examine the process of identity construction in adolescents, Marcia (1966) expanded Erikson's eight stages of life into four possibilities: identity achievement, identity diffusion, identity moratorium, and identity foreclosure, which based on two key categories: exploration (crisis) and commitment (p. 1). Exploration refers to times during adolescence when the individual seems to be actively involved in choosing among alternative occupations and beliefs. Meanwhile, commitment refers to the degree of personal investment the individual expresses in an occupation or belief (Marcia, 1966, p. 1).

These identity statuses are the four modes in dealing with the identity issue which characterizes late adolescence. Identity achievement is when individuals have resolved an identity crisis by making commitments to beliefs, goals, and values after exploring different areas. Identity Moratorium refers to individuals currently exploring identity alternatives but still have not committed to a certain identity. Identity Foreclosure is when individuals have not explored alternative identities but have committed to an identity based on values that the person receives from their family or society without their own exploration. Finally, Identity Diffusion is when individuals have not yet examined alternative identities and have not committed to a certain identity (Marcia, 1980, p. 162).

It is important to know the symptoms of social anxiety disorder and treat them as early as possible, for example, by using psychoanalysis techniques, such as free association and cognitive-behavioral therapy. Sigmund Freud, a father of psychoanalysis, began his career in medical science in Vienna, Austria. In 1896, he presented the psychoanalysis theory for the first time. Freud (1920) argues that psychoanalysis is a method of treating nervous patients medically (p. 8). In general, it can be said that psychoanalysis is a new perspective about human beings, in which unconsciousness takes a central role, and that it can be used to treat many conditions, including anxiety (Bertens, 2016, p. 3). Psychoanalysis seeks to investigate psychological problems by searching the human mind, where free association is a central technique of this therapy.

Freud (2003) stated that an individual's mental life is divided into two parts of consciousness (p.143). The human consciousness consists of the various forms of thoughts and feelings that we are aware of in one particular moment. Meanwhile, the level below consciousness is known as unconsciousness, which is then divided into preconscious and unconscious proper (Freud in Feist & Feist, 2009, pp. 29–30). Following this, free association is one of the primary tools used to identify the repressed material that is locked in the unconscious (Corey, 2013, p. 79). Moreover, cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) also found to be the most useful treatment for social anxiety disorder. It teaches the patients different ways of thinking, behaving, and reacting to situations that help them feel less anxious and fearful (Corey, 2013, p. 306).

In addition, Freud (1989) distinguishes three psychological structures of the human mind that cooperate to make a balanced personality: the id, the ego, and the superego (p. 22). The id is the source of all our aggressions and desires. It is the wholly unconscious part of the mind and the basic instinctual drives which motivate the person to seek pleasure through Eros, or the drives toward life, and Thanatos, the death drives. Meanwhile, the superego works to prevent the drives of the id, to shove back the impulsive actions to the unconscious that society deems as unacceptable (Freud in Feist & Feist, 2009, p. 34-36). In addition, the ego is a part of the human consciousness. The ego is the decision-making component of personality. In the ego, various techniques can be used to control the id. When the id endangers the ego and creates anxiety, the ego uses defense mechanisms in order to neutralize the id. Defense mechanism is various techniques that the ego employs to control our negative emotions and anxieties (Freud in Berger, 2004, p. 89). In some cases, adolescents with social anxiety disorder tend to isolate themselves to avoid anxious feelings, one of which is using social media.

In social media, internet users may create their own online personas. The anonymity of the internet makes it an attractive venue for people with social anxiety disorder (Prizant-Passal et al., 2016, p. 227). It is because the internet provides a safe place where socially anxious individuals can avoid face-to-face interactions and allow them to present themselves as they wished. Moreover, Lailiyah (2015) argues that social media is a means of constructing an identity for its users. Through social media, people will find it easy to create the identity that

they expect (p. 26). However, Hughes (2017) argues that social media or the internet might also contribute to problematic use and exacerbates the avoidance of offline communications (p. 7).

Francesca Zappia is the award-winning young adult fiction author of the novel *Made You Up* (2015) and *Eliza and Her Monsters* (2017). She is currently living in Indianapolis and is considered the next John Green. Both of her works take up mental illness as its subject. In her interview with *IndyStar* (2015), she mentioned that she wants to change the stereotypes of people with mental illness as dangerous people. Specifically, *Eliza and Her Monsters,* published in 2017, is one of many novels that represent social anxiety disorder in a adolescent.

Set in a small-town Indiana, *Eliza and Her Monsters* is narrated by Eliza Mirk, an 18 years old high school senior who does her best to remain invisible. She is quiet, socially awkward, and uncomfortable around people. However, in the online world, Eliza Mirk is LadyConstellation, the creator of the popular web-comic, *Monstrous Sea,* but nobody knows the truth behind this identity. Eliza keeps to herself: her friends exist in the Monstrous Sea forums, and she rarely leaves the comfort of her own room. Eliza loves drawings. For her, drawing is a way to express her emotion and also run from reality. However, her parents do not seem to value her talent and have no understanding of her online life, from friendship to the scope of the world she created. Her parents always expect her to be the sociable one, the girl who enjoys any activities outside of her room. This condition makes her even more shut down from the real world until she meets the new student named Wallace, the *Monstrous Sea*'s biggest fan fiction writer.

There are many studies that focus on identity issues. Through several different approaches, identity can be seen in many dimensions. First of all, there are three previous related studies that discussing similar issue on identity construction in the novel. The first study is an article journal written by Abed and Janoory (2018), entitled *Approaching Hysteria and Abjection through Freudian Reading of Toni Morrison's Paradise*. This study aims to reveal the reasons for the female characters' hysterical symptoms and how it influences their behavior, and the strategies to get rid of these hysterical behaviors and regain their identity through Abjection to construct their subjectivity. It is found that talking therapy as one of the steps of Abjection can help the main female character regain their identity to construct their subjectivity.

Next is *Psychoanalytic Reading of D.H. Lawrence's Sons and Lovers and Lady Chatterley's Lover*, an article journal conducted by Nisha Kumari (2016). This study examines how Freud's theory of personality could be used to interpret literary text and understand the main characters' psychological development. It is found that Paul's sexual desire for her mother, which results from the domineering power of the love of his mother, affects Paul's personality in the *Sons and Lovers* novel. Moreover, in the *Lady Chatterley's*, the conflict between Connie's id, ego, and superego is due to social class and society.

The last study was conducted by Abdullah (2017), entitled *Healing Trauma and Reasserting Identity through Remembrance in Joanne Fedler's The Dreamcloth*. This study analyses the role of memory with trauma, and the importance of exploring history, as well as sharing and talking about traumatic

events in the process of healing. It is found that Mia, the protagonist of the novel, suffers from trauma, namely the transgenerational trauma of her grandmother. Hence, Mia recovers from her trauma by exploring her history and sharing her past traumatic memories.

The other two studies were conducted by analyzing films. Perveen & Anwar (2020) conducted a study entitled *Moratorium or Achievement: Identity Statuses in Mohsin Hamid's The Reluctant Fundamentalist* using Marcia's four identity statuses theory to analyze the main characters process of identity construction. The other study is *Identity Construction of Skeeter in the Movie The Help* by Dwirasanti (2011). However, unlike Perveen & Anwar, Dwirasanty analyzes the main female character identity construction using Erik Erikson's theory of identity development.

The last related study is a research entitled *Swedish 18-Years-Olds' Identity Formation: Associations with Feelings about Appearance and Internalization of Body Ideals* by Wangqvist & Frisen (2013). This study analyzes 714 Swedish adolescents aged 18' identity formation in relation to body-esteem and body ideal internalization based one the presence of ideological commitments and explorations.

The previous related studies discuss identity construction from different corpus and approaches. Departing from these researches, this study will use psychoanalysis by Sigmund Freud and James Marcia's identity statuses theory, Gillian Butler's Social Anxiety concept, and Antony & Swinson's CBT concept to

examine the identity construction of a Social Anxiety Disorder sufferer in a novel. Therefore, as there have not been any studies that discussed social anxiety disorder in *Eliza and Her Monsters*, this study is conducted to reveal how social anxiety disorder affects the construction of one's identity in *Eliza and Her Monsters.*

1.2   Research Question

How is the construction of Eliza Mirk's identity as a Social Anxiety Disorder sufferer reflected in Francesca Zappia's *Eliza and Her Monsters*?

1.3   Purpose of the Study

To analyze the construction of Eliza Mirk's identity as a Social Anxiety Disorder sufferer in Francesca Zappia's *Eliza and Her Monsters*, from Butler's concept of Social Anxiety Disorder, Freud's Psychoanalysis theory, Antony & Swinson's CBT concept, and Marcia's identity statuses theory.

1.4   Scope of the Study

The study focuses on analyzing the identity constructions of a Social Anxiety Disorder sufferer in *Eliza and Her Monsters* by Francesca Zappia through the plot and point-of-view of Eliza Mirk, as the main character. This study employs Butler's Social Anxiety Disorder concept to reveals the causes and symptoms of Eliza's social anxiety disorder; Freud's Psychoanalysis theory to reveals Eliza's inner conflict and personality; Marcia's identity statuses theory and Antony & Swinson's CBT concept to reveals the process of Eliza's identity construction.

1.5   Significance of the Study

The results of this study are expected to provide contributions and information to the broader community, particularly regarding the identity construction of social anxiety disorder sufferer in a novel by combining Butler's Social Anxiety Disorder concept, Freud's Psychoanalysis, Marcia's identity statuses theory, and Antony & Swinson's Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy concept. This study also will broaden the reader's understanding of Social Anxiety Disorder and the application of psychoanalysis in any literary works.