

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of Study

Literature is the way of humans expressing their emotions through the written text. Many aspects in real life like social life, romance, drama, and friendship can be expressed through the fictional world which is through the literary works. It is no wonder that humans use literature as a media to deliver their thinking through literary works. Literary works have many forms like novels, poetry, short stories, plays, and folktale. Novel is one of the literary works. The novel is a fair length piece of prose fiction (Wolfreys, 2004). Another definition of a novel is a work of fiction that includes features such as story, topic, character, place, and point of view (Nurgiyantoro, 2012). As a result, there are several parts inside the novel. Some authors or novelists have developed their own methods for improving their literary work. The term "book" is currently given to a wide range of texts that have just one thing in common: they are long works of prose fiction (Sardjono, 1992). While the novel is used in a range of writing in general, including works of fiction, the kind narrative in the novel may be diverse, with different topics presented to read and enjoy. Many topics can be explored from literary works like novels, especially a topic that involves humans' life, such as their relationships, their characteristics, their ideologies, their daily life, and so on. Any topics have to be interesting enough so that the readers will be drawn to the writer's work.

The literary works can also be linked to psychology if the author of a literary works is effective in incorporating psychological elements into the plot. In the

viewpoint of the readers, the inclusion of psychological themes elevates the work's creative worth. The study of a character's personality can be the focus of the use of psychology in writing, particularly in the novel. The study of the character's personality became a subject of psychological research due to the intriguing characteristics of the character's self. His or her traits in the novel are dynamic, comparable to human features, which are also the focus of psychological research. As a result, studying the character's personality from a psychological standpoint is appropriate for the subject.

Trauma is one of psychological features in humans that is an example of the literature on psychology. Trauma is part of anxiety. According to Ruzek (2009), defines trauma as a specialized phrase relating to intense psychological and psychological responses to catastrophic losses, such as the death of a close relative and also trauma is a type of anxiety disorder that is triggered by a traumatic event and is characterized by intrusive thoughts, intense physiological reactivity, and avoidance of the trauma-related stimulation. On the other hand, trauma as an aspect of anxiety, which is psychological shock, has a long-term impact on mental health (Miller, 2007). Feeling caused by a traumatic incident might result in an excessive reaction in both one's physical and psychological. It signifies that trauma is an occurrence that might occur as a result of losing something, such as the death of a family member, a spouse, or individuals with whom you have a strong relationship. Although psychological activity can cause trauma, the consequence is more apparent in someone's psychology. Psychological trauma, on the other hand, exists. This is the true consequence that someone who has been through a terrible

encounter will face. As a result, people who witness a traumatic event experience anxiety.

One of the interesting topics out there that can be analyzed is the defense mechanism that is usually experienced by the adolescent in the story as a result of childhood trauma, just like how Arvin Russel experiences in the novel of *The Devil All the Time*, with the approach of psychology viewpoint. Some people use self-defense mechanisms to lessen emotions of despair, worry, tension, or conflict in order to face a conscious or unconscious threat. According to Sigmund Freud, such defensive mechanisms are activated if anxiety signals a risk that unacceptable initial impulses would resurface (Berteens, 1986). Conflict is one of the causes of a defensive mechanism, and it is an important aspect of the novel, and the basic component is the plot or the storyline of the story.

The novel's incident or struggle might serve as a lesson to people about life and living. The defensive mechanism idea was pioneered by Sigmund Freud, but it was completed by Anna Freud or his daughter. Anna Freud's study on defensive mechanisms is a direct descendent of Sigmund Freud's classic work understanding the origins and function of the ego. Defense mechanisms, according to Anna Freud (1948), are "unconscious resources utilized by the ego" to reduce internal stress. Patients frequently develop these unconscious methods to reduce internal conflict, notably between the superego and id. Anna Freud stated, as her father had argued, that defensive mechanisms evolve alongside personality structures (the id, ego, and superego). She categorizes the defensive mechanism into 10 categories: Repression,

denial, displacement, projection, fantasy, reaction formation, regression, sublimation, intellectualization, and rationalization.

In short, reading literature can provide readers with a depiction of human life. Even if the author is unaware of the psychological implications of his or her work, a work of literature can reveal profound psychological truths like what this novel, *The Devil All the Time*, offers. This novel is considered as a psychological novel as it is fascinating to watch Arvin grow as a person as he deals with his traumas.

The Devil All The Time is a novel (2011) written by Donald Ray Pollock in 2011. It tells the narrative of Arvin Eugene Russell, a little kid who is traumatized by his mother Charlotte's death and the impact it has on his father, Willard, who is a retired soldier from war and turns to God for solutions who appears frantic in his attempts to communicate with God, and also is prone to spontaneous acts of violence, terrifies his son, Arvin, by forcing him to pray at the altar with him, and even sacrifices his son's dog and an innocent person to try to see if their lives could be swapped in exchange for healing his wife's illness. When that doesn't work, he raises the bar and commits suicide on the altar.

Arvin witnessed his father violently beating up a man as a child. As he grows older, he becomes obsessed with what he "needs to do," which frequently ends violently. Arvin's acts show one of the novel's key themes: violence is continuous, often unavoidable, and may be carried down like a family tradition. It's evident that the residual trauma he endured as a child, as well as his father's lesson that violence isn't always the answer—especially since Arvin discovers God isn't the answer—to

his issues took their toll on Arvin who also acts violently as a defense mechanism to survive in life.

In this study, the writer uses the same topic which talks about defense mechanisms issue in the other works as the previous studies because the corpus is limited and not discussed enough, it is difficult to discover research that discusses it. Anshori (2011) conducts a similar study on the same topic, which is defense mechanism. He tries to talk about the personality and defense mechanism of Henry Fleming, a fictional character from the novel *The Red Badge of Courage*. The novel depicts Henry's maturation as a soldier through changes in his personality and behavior. Henry's emotions shift dramatically during this transition, from glory to fear to depression to anger to exhilaration to courage to honor. Several examples from the novel highlight the changes that occur in Henry's character and his relationship to his defense mechanism.

Besides that, Gogdak (2015) did the research too with the same topic. He did research that was conducted to reveal the university students' defense mechanisms in overcoming stress. The data is taken from a total of 587 students who participated in the study. The results show the difference between female and male participants' defense mechanisms that are frequently used. Rohaeni, et al. (2019) also did a similar issue where they analyze how anxiety and defense mechanisms are described in Hawkins' *The Girl on the Train* and to explain how anxiety and defense mechanisms construct psychological thrillers as represented in Hawkins' *The Girl on the Train*. This study is descriptive qualitative study by applying Freudian psychoanalytic theory and is analyzed based on Freudian

psychoanalytic theory by describing anxiety and defense mechanisms described in the novel and it is also analyzed by explaining how anxiety and defense mechanisms construct psychological thriller. The results show there are three kinds of anxiety and six kinds of defense mechanisms. In addition, Pangestu and Sunardi (2016) also did a study which aims at identifying Hazel Grace Lancaster's self defense mechanisms and core issues as well as their potential causes in the novel of John Green's *The Fault in Our Stars*. This paper employs psychoanalysis theory by Sigmund Freud as its analytical tool. As a literary research, it uses a descriptive qualitative method. The results show that Hazel employs several self-defense mechanisms to defend herself in the face of threats and also finds Hazel's core issues.

Moreover, the writer also uses the similar theory, which is Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis as the previous study that will be used in this research. Hossasin (2017), particularly, did research on a similar issue that talks about Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis. This study aims to explore where psychoanalysis has been used by the author's in his/her literary works in English literature. The method used in this study is interpretative analysis. This article also discusses the different psychoanalytic theory which was born out of the self-analysis undertaken by Sigmund Freud in 1897.

Based on the elaboration above, the writer wishes to conduct research on the psychological aspects of Arvin Russel's personality. The writer is interested in analyzing Arvin Russel's character who has issues of acting violently as a defense mechanism to survive in life because of his past traumas and also the way of how

his self-justice takes control of every problem he faces in his surroundings. Furthermore, the researcher discovers the same issue in some related research in various works, but the researcher has not discovered any study on this topic in the novel *The Devil All the Time*, implying that the research on this topic and the corpus is limited. The analysis will be centered on Arvin's personality and it will be descriptive-analytical research. To support the analysis, the writer should examine the theory of psychoanalysis of personality structure by Sigmund Freud and Anna Freud's defense mechanisms to analyze the main character's personality.

1.2 Research Question

How does the development of Arvin's character from the plot and characterization reflect his defense mechanism in the novel?

1.3 Purpose of The Study

This study aims to analyze:

To explain how the development of Arvin's characteristics reflect his defense mechanism in the novel.

1.4 Scope of The Study

This study focuses on analyzing Arvin Russel's defense mechanisms from the novel of *The Devil All the Time* (2011) which is written by Donald Ray Pollock. This study investigates the development of his characterization to reveal his defense mechanism using psychoanalysis theory of personality structure by Sigmund Freud and Anna Freud's defense mechanisms.

1.5 Significances of The Study

The writer hopes this study will be useful for readers to get a better understanding about the defense mechanism of a character and to understand more literary works from the psychological view. Also, the writer wishes that this study will be helpful as a reference in psychoanalytic literary criticism for the English literature students in the future.

