## CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Anxiety is a normal human response to perceived danger or threat. Corey (2013) describes anxiety as a situation that encourages someone to act; its purpose is to serve as a warning about something harmful, as a signal for the Ego that will continue to grow if the individual does not take appropriate action to alleviate the worry (p. 66). According to the World Health Organization (WHO), anxiety is the most prevalent mental condition worldwide, affecting one in every thirteen people. Roughly 40 million individuals aged 18 and older and around 4.4 million adolescents aged 3-17 suffer from anxiety in the United States alone (ADAA, 2021; CDC, 2021). Anxiety may be triggered in a variety of scenarios. However, if social encounters or interactions trigger the anxiety, the condition is referred to as social anxiety.

Social Anxiety Disorder (SAD), sometimes referred to as Social Phobia, is a persistent dread or anxiety about one or more social settings in which the person may face scrutiny and unfavorable judgment from others (APA, 2013). Typical social situations involve interaction, observation, and performance, such as meeting new people or strangers, conversing in meetings or groups, initiating conversations, performing an activity while being observed by others, and public performance such as speaking. While the nervous sensation associated with these social circumstances is natural for some individuals, others who suffer from social anxiety disorder might obsess about them and may do so for weeks before expected social

interactions occur (APA, 2013). The fear is often triggered by a dread of doing or doing something they believe would be humiliating or embarrassing, creating a negative impression, or being assessed negatively by others (Antony & Swinson, 2008, p. 15).

Numerous researches have shown that social anxiety is a prevalent mental health issue. For example, according to diagnostic interview data from the National Comorbidity Survey Replication (NCS-R), up to 12.1% of the general population in the United States suffers from a social anxiety disorder at some time in their life (Kessler et al., 2005, p. 595). Social anxiety disorder is the second most prevalent anxiety condition, impacting about 35 million individuals in the United States alone. Indeed, the prevalence is significant enough to rank it fourth among mental disorders after severe depression, alcoholism, and particular phobias (Kessler et al., 2005, p. 595).

Individuals who suffer from social anxiety tend to have difficulty in social settings. When they meet with strange individuals, they may or may not seem distressed or in discomfort, but they usually exhibit significant physical or emotional symptoms such as flushing, sweating, shaking, racing heart, and difficulty speaking or focusing (Stein & Stein, 2008, p. 1115). Social nervous individuals dread being seen as unintelligent, uninteresting, or unlikable. As a result, they avoid eye contact, public speaking, expressing their thoughts, and even mingling with colleagues. As a result, individuals with social anxiety disorder are often self-critical, have low self-esteem, and exhibit depressed symptoms (Stein & Stein, 2008, p.1115).

While social anxiety disorder does not have a single cause, various risk factors might raise a person's probability of getting it. Individuals who have suffered trauma after an episode of panic in a social context are at risk of developing social anxiety disorder (Kashdan & Herbert, 2001, p. 41). Additionally, McCabe et al. (2003) reported that 92 percent of individuals with social anxiety disorder developed the disease due to severe taunting and bullying throughout childhood (p. 7). A family setting that is rejecting, emotionally distant, overprotective, possessive, and models a negative and exaggerated value placed on others' opinions is also predicted to influence the likelihood of a child or teenager developing social anxiety disorder (Kashdan & Herbert, 2001, p. 41). Not to mention, excessive pressure from parents or friends to attain high success or to become someone they are not might have inevitable mental consequences if not met with emotional support, one of which is increased anxiety and self-isolation (Moneva & Moncada, 2020, p. 271).

Social anxiety is also associated with various typical personality characteristics and styles, including shyness and introversion (Antony & Swinson, 2008, p. 9). Shy individuals often feel uneasy when confronted with a social scenario, mainly when they must engage with people or strangers. Meanwhile, introverted individuals are more cautious and reserved in new social circumstances and prefer to be alone than extroverted individuals.

Social anxiety disorder often starts in youth or early adolescence. Adolescence is the stage during which a person develops a sense of self. This is the stage at which an individual begins to develop his or her identity, and relationships with peer groups become more crucial. Identities are the features and traits, social

relationships, and roles that determine who we are (Oyserman et al., 2012, p. 2). Identity is important because it may affect how individuals behave, think, and make meaning of themselves and others, their activities, their emotions, and their capacity to govern or regulate themselves (Oyserman et al., 2012, p. 3). According to the National Comorbidity Survey Replication Adolescent Supplement (NCS-A), an estimated 9.1% of adolescents had a social anxiety disorder, with 10.1 percent being teenagers aged 17-18. Additionally, ladies have a greater risk than men (Merikangas et al., 2010, p. 980). Indeed, Schneier and Goldmark (2015) found that the incidence of social anxiety disorder is highest among young people in their sample (p. 50).

Social anxiety has a widespread impact, affecting performance in different areas of life and reducing mood and overall well-being. Academic attainment is difficult for teenagers, with some in danger of leaving early and obtaining less-than-satisfactory credentials (Leigh & Clark, 2018, p. 389). Social anxiety is also related to significant damage in adolescents that remains into adulthood, such as an increased likelihood of unemployment and job absenteeism (Schneier & Goldmark, 2015, p. 50). Additionally, social anxiety disorder often co-occurs with other diseases such as depression, increasing the likelihood of attempted suicide (Baldwin & Buis in Bandelow & Stein, 2004, p. 62). Even though social anxiety disorder affects individuals early in life, it has been shown that patients with simple social phobia seldom seek medical assistance (Hidalgo et al., 2001, p. 282).

Additionally, research indicates that teenagers with high anxiety have more difficulty constructing their identities than those with low anxiety. This occurs because worried teenagers grow less clear about their commitments as they mature,

revealing their significant difficulties in making meaningful identity choices (Crocetti et al., 2009, p. 848). Identity creation is the process by which a distinct personality develops at a certain period of life, in which individuals hold unique qualities or a person is known to others (Upreti, 2017, p. 54).

Thus, Marcia (1966) enlarged Erikson's eight stages of life into four possibilities: identity achievement, identity diffusion, identity moratorium, and identity foreclosure, based on two key categories: exploration (crisis) and commitment (p. 1). Exploration is a term that refers to periods throughout adolescence when a person seems to be actively engaged in deciding between different jobs and beliefs. Meanwhile, commitment refers to an individual's level of personal involvement in a profession or idea (Marcia, 1966, p. 1). These four identity statuses represent the four strategies for resolving the identity crisis that characterizes late adolescence. After investigating several areas, individuals attain identity accomplishment when they overcome an identity crisis by committing to particular views, ambitions, and values. The term "Identity Moratorium" refers to persons researching various identities but have not yet committed to one. Identity Foreclosure occurs when people have not investigated different identities but have committed to one based on their family or cultural values. Finally, Identity Diffusion occurs when people have not yet considered alternate identities and have also not committed to a particular identity (Marcia, 1980, p. 162).

It is essential to know the symptoms of social anxiety disorder and treat them as early as possible, for example, by using psychoanalysis and cognitive-behavioral therapy. Sigmund Freud, a psychoanalysis father, began his medical science career

in Vienna, Austria. In 1896, he presented the psychoanalysis theory for the first time. Freud (1920) argues that psychoanalysis is a medical method of treating nervous patients (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.

Additionally, Freud (2003) argued that a person's mental existence is separated into two distinct areas of consciousness (p.143). The human consciousness comprises all the ideas and emotions we are aware of at any time. Meanwhile, unconsciousness is the level below consciousness, subdivided into preconscious and unconscious proper (Freud in Feist & Feist, 2009, pp. 29–30). Following this, free association is a fundamental technique for locating repressed data trapped in the unconscious (Corey, 2013, p. 79). It teaches patients new ways of thinking, acting, and responding to circumstances, reducing their anxiety and terror (Corey, 2013, p. 306).

Furthermore, Freud (1989) defines three psychological structures in the human mind that work together to create a healthy personality: the id, the Ego, and the superego (p. 22). All of our aggressions and wants to originate in the id. The completely unconscious component of the mind and the most fundamental innate urges leads a person to seek pleasure through Eros, life drives, Thanatos, or death drives. Meanwhile, the superego strives to subdue the desires, d's relegating to the unconscious the impulsive behaviors that society considers inappropriate (Freud in

Feist & Feist, 2009, p. 34-36). Additionally, the Ego is a component of human awareness. The Ego is the component of personality that makes decisions. Numerous tactics may be utilized in the Ego to exert control over the id. When the id puts the Ego in danger and induces anxiety, the Ego employs defensive mechanisms to negate the id. The defense mechanism is a collection of tactics the Ego uses to control our unpleasant emotions and concerns (Freud in Berger, 2004, p. 89).

Rainbow Rowell, 24, is the Omaha World Herald's youngest and first female columnist. From 1995 through 2012, she worked as a columnist and ad copywriter at the World-Herald. While she was still employed as an advertising copywriter, she started writing her first book, *Attachments* (2011), just to test if she could. *Attachments* is a 2011 modern adult romance comedy film. In 2011, Rowell participated in National Book Writing Month, writing the first draft of her YA novel *Fangirl* (2013) during the month-long literary event. Fangirl was eventually published in 2013 as Rowell's third book after the enormously successful YA novel *Eleanor & Park* (2012).

Rainbow Rowell's Fangirl is a coming-of-age novel that delves into fandom and social anxiety topics via the heroine Cather Avery. Cath is a huge admirer of the Simon Snow series, a fanfiction figure set in a magical realm similar to Harry Potter. She is an active member of the fandom, writing fan fiction about Simon and his archenemy Baz. The novel is written in the third person yet follows Cather's thoughts. Apart from the narrative as told by Cather, each chapter includes snippets from Simon Snow's stories. The book's central theme is the fictional characters'

participation in Cath's life. Even though she has Simon Snow souvenirs and merchandise, she often thinks of them as actual people. She is considerably more at ease writing about Simon and Baz than she is with typical freshman stuff. Cath suffers from severe social anxiety, which causes her to go weeks without eating in college. She avoids society and prefers to spend her free time reading or writing. She is the opposite of her sister, an extrovert who enjoys socializing. Her social anxiety comes from her mother's departure and her father's bipolar behavior disorders. She fears suffering a mental breakdown like her father because she believes she is too similar.

Numerous research has been conducted on concerns of identity. Identity may be seen in a variety of ways. Three earlier studies discuss a similar topic of unique identity construction. The first research is an academic journal article titled Approaching Hysteria and Abjection Through a Freudian Reading of Toni Morrison's Paradise by Abed and Janoory (2018). This research aims to elucidate the causes of the female characters' hysterical symptoms, their impact on their conduct, and the tactics used to overcome these hysterical behaviors and reclaim their identity via Abjection. It has been discovered that talking therapy, as one of the processes of Abjection, might assist the protagonist in reclaiming their identity and constructing their subjectivity.

After that comes Nisha Kumari's Psychoanalytic Reading of D.H. Lawrence's Sons and Lovers and Lady Chatterley's Lover (2016). This research aims to demonstrate how Freud's personality theory may be utilized to evaluate literary texts and comprehend the psychological development of notable characters. Paul's

sexual yearning for her mother, which stems from his mother's controlling love, affects Paul's personality in the book Sons and Lovers. Furthermore, in Lady Chatterley's work, the fight between Connie's id, ego, and superego results from social status and society.

The last one is from Abdullah (2017), who published research titled Healing Trauma and Reestablishing Identity via Remembrance in Joanne Fedler's The Dreamcloth. This research examines the relationship between memory and trauma and the necessity of investigating history, sharing, and discussing painful experiences throughout the healing process. Mia, the novel's heroine, is discovered to be traumatized, namely by her grandmother's transgenerational trauma. As a result, Mia heals from her trauma by delving into her past and revealing her horrific recollections.

The other two studies used film analysis. Perveen & Anwar's (2020) research, Moratorium or Achievement: Identity Statuses in Mohsin Hamid's The Reluctant Fundamentalist, analyses the main character's process of identity construction using Marcia's four identity statuses theory. The second research is Dwirasanti's Identity Construction of Skeeter in the Film The Help (2011). In contrast to the previous research, this one examines the primary female character's identity creation through the lens of Erik Erikson's identity development theory.

Previous studies in this field have discussed identity construction using a variety of corpuses and methodologies. Using psychoanalysis by Sigmund Freud and Marcia's identity statuses theory, this study will investigate the identity

construction of a Social Anxiety Disorder sufferer in a novel. As there has been no research on social anxiety disorder in Fangirl, this study will examine how social anxiety disorder influences how one constructs one's identity in the novel.

## 1.2 Research Question

How is the construction of Cather Avery's identity as a Social Anxiety Disorder sufferer reflected in Rainbow Rowell's Fangirl?

## 1.3 Purpose of the Study

To examine the construction of Cather Avery's identity as a Social Anxiety Disorder sufferer in Rainbow Rowell's Fangirl, from Butler's concept of Social Anxiety Disorder, Freud's Psychoanalysis theory, and Marcia's identity statuses theory.

## 1.4 Scope of the Study

The study examines the identity constructions of a Social Anxiety Disorder sufferer in Rainbow Rowell's Fangirl via the storyline and point of view of Cather Avery, the novel's protagonist. Butler's Social Anxiety Disorder concept is used to derive the causes and symptoms of Cather's social anxiety disorder; Freud's Psychoanalysis theory is used to deduce Cather's inner conflict and personality; Marcia's identity statuses theory is used to derive the process of Cather's identity construction.

## 1.5 Significance of the Study

The results of this study are expected to contribute to and inform the broader community, particularly about the identity construction of social anxiety disorder

sufferers 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. Additionally, this study will help the reader better understand Social Anxiety Disorder and the use of psychoanalysis in literary works.