CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background of the study

Young adult literature is literature wherein the protagonist is either a teenager or one who approaches problems from a teenage perspective (Carlsen, 1980 in VanderStaay, 1992). According to Carlsen, young adult literature typically describe initiation into the adult world, or the surmounting of a contemporary problem forced upon the protagonist(s) by the adult world. Though generally written for a teenage reader, such novels address the entire spectrum of life. According to Reid (1999) in Pramesti (2015), young adult is a "books that adolescents would probably like and be able to relate to".

Adolescence is a transitional stage of physical and psychological development that generally occurs during the period from puberty to adulthood. It can also be seen as a time of self-discovery. WHO (World Health Organization) describes that adolescence is the stage of human growth between childhood and adulthood, which occurs from the ages of ten to nineteen. This period is a unique stage of human development and a crucial time to develop the foundations for a healthy body and mind (World, 2019).

As mentioned in previous passage, the psychological development play a role in adolescent's life. The psychological development includes the development of cognitive, emotional, intellectual and social capabilities and functioning. Adolescence is a time of rapid emotional and intellectual growth. Emotional intelligence (EI) plays a key role in the adjustments of adolescents during this

transitional life period (Tejada-Gallardo et al, 2020). In the course of adolescence, many developmental changes occur along with demanding life adjustments, especially in the school and family environments (Cejudo et al, 2018 in Tejada-Gallardo, 2020). According to Tejada-Gallardo (2020), there are two main points that showed emotional mechanisms are connected to future expectancies in adolescence. First, emotional attention and emotional regulation play an important role in the process of future envisioning in adolescence. Being able to generally reason about emotions and regulate one's own and other's emotional states (emotional regulation) contributed to optimism, while overly dwelling on emotions (emotional attention) contributed to pessimism (Tejada-Gallardo, 2020). Emotional regulation is a situation where people know how to feel and regulate their emotions, while, emotional attention is when someone how people do not understand or do not feel their emotion. Second, optimism and pessimism can be understood as two separated dimensions in adolescence. Both dimensions can affect adolescent's view about life choices and future envisioning. According to Seligman (2006), the optimists tend to believe defeat or unfortunate event is just a temporary setback. They believe defeat is not their fault. They perceive it as a challenge and try harder. On the other side, the pessimists tend to believe bad events will last long, undermine everything they do, and they believe it is their own fault. Chang (2002) states that optimism and pessimism influence how people cope with stressful events and can thus account for indicators of individual differences.

Both optimism and pessimism have been portrayed in several young adult literature. According to Nilsen and Donelson (2001), successful young adult novels address emotions that are relevant to young adults. Nilsen and Donelson (2001)

argue that the characteristic of young adult literature is that young adult books are written through the eyes of adolescents. There are numerous well-known young adult novels in several genres that successfully address emotions that are relevant to young adults. The website *Goodreads* (goodreads.com) published an article that discovered the all-time favourite young adult literature based on readers interest. The list is formed starting from book titles that are often put on member readers' shelves and have a four-star-average rating. These books also already have film adaptations, namely, *Harry Potter and The Sorcerer's Stone* by J.K. Rowling, *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins, *The Fault In Our Stars* by John Green, *Divergent* by Veronica Roth, *City of Bones* by Cassandra Clare, *The Maze Runner* by James Dashner, *Five Feet Apart* by Rachael Lippincott with Mikki Daughtry and Tobias Iaconis, and many more.

There are numerous previous studies with the same corpus. The study entitled *Five Feet Apart as a Young Adult Literature* by Noviani (2022) aims to describe the characteristics of the young adult literature genre found in the novel. The findings are the characteristics of young adult literature in the novel *Five Feet Apart*. Then there is a study conducted by Mogea (2022) discussing conflict in novels. Then, a study about the protagonist's motivation from *Five Feet Apart*. The research aims to reveal the protagonist's motivation. There are also several studies that cover optimism and pessimism in literature. The study about *Optimism and Pessimism of Hazel Grace in John Green's Novel The Fault in Our Stars* done by Artha (2019). This study aims to reveal the optimism and pessimism in Hazel Grace, the main character of *The Fault in Our Stars*. Then there is also a study of character optimism in the novel *Orang-Orang Biasa* by Andrea Hirata conducted

by Petrus (2021). This study aims to describe the aspects and functions of character optimism in the novel *Orang-Orang Biasa*. There is also a study of pessimism conducted by Hafid (2019) in the novel *La Chute* by Albert. There are also several studies that apply Todorov's narrative analysis. There is the study conducted by Jeceline (2021) that discussed the story line about 'coming out' in LGBT-themed films Jeceline (2021) according to Todorov's narrative analysis. Kristianto (2022) also conducted a study on the film *Story of Dinda,* an Indonesian feature film. Kristianto (2022) used Todorov's narrative analysis theory to reveal the storyline of the toxic relationship story in the film *Story of Dinda.*

This study will take the *Five Feet Apart* novel as the corpus. Although there have been many studies that use this novel as the corpus, in this novel there are still new things that can be highlighted and analyzed, which is defensive pessimism. The defensive pessimism has never been analyzed in this novel. Furthermore, to analyze the defensive pessimism, this study will highlight the pessimistic traits found in the main characters. The analysis of the novel *Five Feet Apart* will be pursued with Todorov's narrative analysis to see the development of each character. Todorov's narrative theory analyzes the narrative pattern as a way to understand the underlying meaning behind a story. This theory focuses on the narrative which involves the narrative forms of representation (language, symbolism, or event in the story). Thus, this study chose Todorov narrative structure theory. The reason for choosing defensive pessimism as the topic in this study is to add new insight in psychoanalysis of young adult literature which discuss optimism and pessimism. Pessimism has generally had negative press (Thornton, 2019). While optimism is often predicted as the key to success in life. Hence, the novelty of this study is the

analysis of defensive pessimism in the novel *Five Feet Apart*. This study is expected to add new insights, especially in understanding defensive pessimism.

1.2   Research Question

1. How does the *Five Feet Apart* novel represent a pessimistic trait through the main characters?
2. How defensive pessimism is portrayed through the main characters?

1.3   Purpose of the study

According to the research questions stated above, the purpose of this study wants to implement the following statements:

1. Analyses how the *Five Feet Apart* novel represents a pessimistic trait through the main character.
2. Analyses how defensive pessimism is portrayed through the main characters.

1.4   Scope of the study

The scope of the study is the main characters Will Newman and Stella Grant from *Five Feet Apart* novel. This study will analyse Will Newman's and Stella Grant's interaction from their dialogues and sentences that narrates the story from the novel to see the character development and determine the pessimistic traits and defensive pessimism strategy.

1.5   Significance of the study

The result of this study are expected to be beneficial in several aspects, namely:

1. To provide knowledge in analysing this topic applying Todorov's narrative structure in *Five Feet Apart* novel.

2. To provide knowledge in analysing pessimistic traits and the strategy to deal with pessimism, specifically defensive pessimism portrayed in the novel.