

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Humans were created to interact with each other because humans are social creatures. Social beings mean that humans cannot live alone to adapt. Ivey and Hurst state that interaction is the learning process of each person to adapt through communication action and feedback mechanisms. Besides, since childhood, the presence of individuals from society needed to stimulate the growth process. This means that interactions are essential for the development of human life. Yet, some people are uncomfortable interacting with others that they would feel anxious, even diving into light conversations. Hence, it impacts on relationship restrictions which are unconsciously constructed by people's traumas, desires, and needs. Especially, if the restrictions become exaggerated, it can influence them to have difficult life, significantly in conducting daily conversations which are needed by people to support their social life. Thus, this problem is called social anxiety. Nowadays, anxiety disorders have become a hot issue among people in society lately.

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, (2013) Fifth Edition (DSM- 5) stated:

“Anxiety disorders include disorders that share features of excessive fear and anxiety and related to behavioral disturbances. Symptoms include feelings of nervousness, panic and fear as well as sweating and a rapid heartbeat. Severe anxiety disorders can lead the person to alter someone's lifestyle to accommodate the anxiety. They can keep someone from carrying on with his or her life normally.”

In this case, Social Anxiety is the condition of excessive fear of social. The fear of being watched, rejected, and judged by others persistently. Besides, people with

social anxiety have a desire to be accompanied, but they are afraid of being known to be boring, ignorant, or disliked (Stein, 2008). By this means, it is possible that the opponent speakers tend to hardly recognize someone with this disorder, moreover, they may think or blame themselves if that someone with social anxiety does not want to talk with them which may lead to misunderstanding between them. It is, indeed, the reason why someone with social anxiety cannot live their life properly.

Therefore, it is safe to say that anxiety disorders are serious matters. People who have anxiety tend to miss out on opportunities to enjoy themselves or to act in their own best interest. We live in the society that requires us to interact and communicate with one and another, however, people with anxiety disorders cannot quite perform a proper social interaction which could bring them to a failure in delivering their ideas, thoughts, and opinions, or worse, as mentioned before, getting themselves misunderstood by people. Surely, they would need certain ways to deliver their thoughts in order to avoid such problems.

This situation prevents individuals from having a normal life because society certainly is something that cannot be avoided. For example, most people have occasionally felt shy or insecure, but it does not disrupt their everyday activities. Those who are suffering from social anxiety disorder, on the other hand, experience severe emotional, physical and behavioral symptoms. A person with social anxiety disorder feels symptoms of anxiety or fear in certain or all social situations. Doing everyday things in front of people also causes anxiety or fear. It is more than just shyness. Social Anxiety can be experienced by anyone, regardless of their age. This

could mean that a child is possible to show some indications of social anxiety at his or her early age. It does not rule out the possibility that a child may develop more severe indications of social anxiety if the parents are not aware of and act towards the disorder. Children who are rejected, neglected, and interacted negatively are reported to social anxiety because children need social acceptance (Ginsburg, La Greca, Silverman; 1998). This means that children are fragile Peer relationship plays an important role to support their development of emotional/social functions during childhood. Emotional abuse doesn't look like physical abuse, but it can have just as severe consequences, such as cause nervous, breakdown and the effects of it can be painful and destructive, both in the short and long-term. Suffers are often plagued by low self-esteem, anxiety, depression and feelings helplessness. And can even affect social relationships (Yulianti & Setiawan, 2022). Therefore, a horrible relationship can influence children to have bad perceptions about social that makes them reluctant to get along.

Social and psychological problems can be seen through literature because it is known as social reflection. Albrecht (1954) states that the meaning of reflection in literature is applied in almost all social and cultural aspects. In other words, many cases of social and psychological problem possessed or experienced by people are represented literature such in the form of poems, novels, short stories, biographies, and so on. It means that through literature, people, specifically researchers, can dig deep into the issue presented in it. As it is considered as an expression of society, the content of literary work acts as a recorder tool of human lives. Furthermore, the main aim of literary works is to entertain and educate the readers, in other words the readers learn something from the fiction works (Efrilia & Setiawan, 2020). Therefore, there are

many kinds of literary works that are suited based on the experience of authors, poets, or writers. Kardiansyah (2016) states the structure created in the story is representing the author's world view. Literary works created from the author's imagination are the reality of human life and the author's expression in conveying his ideas and thoughts (Lina and Setiawan, 2017). The writers apply the worldview concept as the main theory of current research. Hence, literature approaches were constructed as well according to its issues and forms of literary works. However, social and psychological problems are mostly presented in novels. Among several types of literature that portray the real issues, novel is seen as the suitable types of literature to portray the real issues and events. It is because novels play a role as the prose narrative book length that represents characters and actions with some degree of realism (Nassoba & Samanik, 2022).

One of literary works that talks about a psychological problem is the novel entitled *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine* by Gail Honeyman. It is reflected because it has cases about mental problem in adolescents. Especially social anxiety disorder. It is very helpful in understanding more about social anxiety disorder. Knowing that there is a lack of knowledge of people in society about anxiety disorders, the writer believes it is important to raise awareness about it. Significantly when it comes to understanding the symptoms of a person with social anxiety, so that people can set their strategies while communicating with one of them. It is not quite easy to set conversational strategies since communication often happens naturally without one preparing what to say. Not to mention it is a serious matter with so many disadvantages. In fact, for some people, knowing everyone's capability in conducting a conversation while having such problems can also be challenging.

With all these challenges, one can improve their skill of communication. This does not mean everyone should utilize someone's mental condition for their own sake. This is more to mean having the awareness towards the disorder. In addition, through a literary work, in this case novel, people can learn about this issue in a more fun way. Nowadays, people not only consider novels as a media for entertainment only. They see it from a different perspective as it is now discussing more serious topics, psychology is one of them. Both novels and psychology use human as their object of study. Through a novel, the reader can learn and understand the case of psychology in the easiest and most fun way.

Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine is a young adult novel which was first published in 2017. *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine* by Gail Honeyman is one of the novels which specifically portrays how social anxiety disorder appears in someone's life. It is reflected in the main character of the story. It tells a story about the main character named Eleanor Oliphant who is 29 years old, single, and highly intelligent. In the story, she is described for having no friends. Eleanor did not like to put herself in any kind of social interactions, she was trying with all of her strength to avoid a single conversation with a person. She doesn't have the courage to go out for whatever the reason, even if she is invited or asked by any people. She avoids having any contact because she has anxiety and panic attacks when it comes to interacting with people. She experienced an excessive anxiety whenever the thought of having to interact with people came out. The anxiety always came out of the blue with no apparent reasons.

When Eleanor is absent from work, and, in fact, planning her suicide, someone is sent to investigate, and he helps her to get better by encouraging her to see a doctor and a counsellor, and giving her a cat to look after. She begins to heal, and we learn that the weekly conversations with her overbearing, manipulative mother were actually all imaginaries. When Eleanor was 10, her mother burned the house down, killing herself and Eleanor's sister – and the fallout from this is the source of her scars, much of her trauma. She suppresses memory and numbs her pain by performing defense mechanisms. She also could not deal with the new situation as well. She spent her days mostly in her room which was her comfort zone that she did not want to leave. She also found it very hard to open up to new people. Overall, the novel tells the kind of struggle of how she dealt with her social anxiety disorder. Hence, based on the summary of the novel above, the writer intends to analyze more about the social anxiety disorder experienced by the main character. The story specified in social anxiety disorder is very complex, and exceptionally represents a real picture of someone who has this disorder. There are two important variables that influence one's perception of others, namely the 'bias' of perception, or the type of judgment that people often make, and stereotypes, or people's tendency to categorize others based on the groups from which other people are originated (Setri & Setiawan, 2020). This writer believes this novel is suitable and very helpful in understanding more about social anxiety.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the background of the study, the writer formulates the research question: How is Eleanor's Social Anxiety disorder revealed in the *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine* by Gail Honeyman?

1.3 Research Objective

The objective of this research is to answer the formulated research question, in which it focuses on the main character in the novel. The objective is to understand the Social Anxiety of Eleanor and to reveal the Social Anxiety disorder suffered by Eleanor Oliphant.

1.4 Uses of the Study

Every researcher must contribute to the academic world, and it shall be useful for society as well. The main purpose of this research is to give knowledge and more information that can be implemented by society. Therefore, this research is expected to be able to give understanding for the reader, both theoretically and practically.

1.4.1 Theoretical Use

Theoretically, this research is expected to develop the relation between the study of literature and psychology. It is also expected to give an understanding that anxiety disorder is a scientific study. This research can be one of references that can be used by other researchers who are interested in this discussion and want to apply similar theory. Therefore, the writer hopes that this research can give significant improvement of knowledge to the society about the topic that being discussed in this research.

1.4.2 Practical Use

Practically, the reader is expected to understand the difference between the study of literature and psychology. This research is expected to provide a deeper understanding of psychological approaches in literary works, especially on *Eleanor*

Oliphant is Completely Fine novel and to be another reference for other researchers who carry out psychological studies on aspects of anxiety, especially social anxiety disorder. This study aims to contribute to the method of developing literature studies on matters relating to psychological understanding of problems, specifically regarding social anxiety that can actually be seen from many perspectives.

1.5 Scope of the Study

In order to avoid overlapping explanations, making a scope is important in analyzing this study. The restriction of this analysis goes to the main character of the novel, the writer has only focused on the psychological analysis of the research problem based on the content of the novel, which is social anxiety disorder. The writer will analyze the symptoms of social anxiety that can be found in the main character as portrayed in the novel.