

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

Anxiety is something that is commonly found in everyday life and can be experienced by everyone. Anxiety is a normal reaction when someone feels threatened or facing a problem or situation that causes worry and fear. Someone usually experiences anxiety as a reaction to a very stressful situation because that anxiety lasts only briefly (Ramaiah, 2003). Even so, anxiety is one crucial aspect of personality development. Freud saw anxiety as an important part of the personality system, a foundation and center of the development of neurotic behavior and psychosis (Andri & Dewi, 2017). Anxiety can occur due to certain factors, such as negative experiences or conflicts that cause stress or psychological trauma. Someone who shares certain events or experiences that are traumatic tends to experience anxiety. Anxiety often develops over a long period and largely depends on one's entire life experience (Ramaiah, 2003)

Normally anxiety has a significant influence on forming one's personality, such as people who feel anxious when attacked by illness. He will take preventive measures always to maintain his health. Someone who experiences anxiety disorders, at some level, will show physiological symptoms such as changes in behavioral symptoms, palpitations, insomnia, etc. Anxiety disorders, in some cases, can even disrupt his social life. Most people who live with anxiety disorders live with fear and worry about most life aspects (Ramaiah, 2003). Anxiety can be experienced by everyone and can happen to someone at any time in a particular event or experiencing specific conflicts.

There are several ways to describe or reflect on how anxieties can be experienced by someone, one of them through literary works. Han Kang reflected on the experience of anxiety through the characters in her novel. Through her novel *Human Acts*, Han Kang tries to tell the events and conflicts experienced by the characters in it to experience or even live in anxiety. Han Kang is a novelist from South Korea. She won the Man Booker international prize for fiction in 2016, and many of his works have been translated into various languages, including *Human Acts*, *Vegetarian*, *White books*, and others.

In her novel entitled *Human Acts* Han Kang tries to tell how the characters in his novel experience or live in anxiety and how the characters deal with it. With different settings, *Human Acts* illustrates how a traumatic experience can change an individual's life, and personality, anxiety disorders and depression experienced by a character continues to develop even years after the event occurred.

Human Acts is a novel that tells the story of victims in a demonstration movement in Gwangju, South Korea, in 1980. *Human Acts* has seven chapters, and each chapter is told from a different perspective.

Dong-ho is a third-grade student in junior high school who is looking for the body of his friend Jeong-dae who was with him when the chaos in the demonstration occurred. Jeong-dae had a gunshot wound to his waist and he fell. People ran because of panic and gunfire going on continuously from all directions. Jeong-dae, who at that time had died, and his dead bodies carried with the other victims in a truck, then placed on a field, the bodies were lowered and then covered with straw. When searching for Jeong-dae's body, he was accompanied by Eun-sook, a female high school student, and Seon-ju, a worker at a boutique. Until one day, there was news that there would be an army coming. Jin-su, a student at Seoul who helps the corpses, says that the place will close at six and asks everyone to go home before nightfall.

Five years later, Eun-sook worked in a publishing office as an editor. She got seven slaps from the police investigator when she became the editor for a translator of the book containing the study of humanities that discusses the psychology of the mass. She tried to forget the seven slaps, one slap every day. But when she tries to forget the slaps, she always remembers the events of five years ago, when the demonstration happened.

Ten years after the incident, a professor who claimed to want to do a psychological autopsy on the death of Kim Jin-su came to one of Jin-su's cellmates while detained. Kim Jin-su - a student tasked with ensuring the victim's identity and overseeing the handling of the body- ended his life. In 2002 a professor contacted Seon-ju - now working in an office in the documentation section- to ask her to do an interview that would be used for his thesis. Seon-ju was caught while attending a demonstration in Gwangju. Seon-ju who was working at a boutique was caught along with other demonstrators. During his detention, the violence and abuse he received made him have to live his life now with fear and anxiety about the shadow of his past.

Feelings of sadness, anxiety and trauma overshadow the survivors and their families left behind despite 30 years of the event. Dong-ho's mother, after the death of her child she grieves every day. She feels a deep loss because of Dong-ho's death. In the end, the event became a deep sadness, a writer trying to tell how the incident occurred and what was experienced by the victim. The writer is looking for Dong-ho, who was once a student of his father, and he discovers his place of residence which has now been turned into a building shop. The traces of that event have faded, but the memories of the victims are still imprinted until then.

A literary work, a novel written is not always following the expectations of the reader. It also applies to this novel, some readers praise this work and some are not satisfied with this work. As Wilja said, he thinks that the writing style of Human Acts is confusing, the perspective and flashbacks of the past-present, making it difficult to understand the storyline of this novel. At the same time, Walters thought that this work was brilliant.

Emily thought that the book took her into a dark and strange allegory. That is why he was surprised that this book made him feel cold and separated. It feels so far and impersonal, it does not have a decent atmosphere for the subject matter. All chapters, though connected, feel like individual stories. Jumping from one perspective to another makes him never feel the attachment between their characters or stories. He claimed he could not connect with these books about the historical horrors in events in such a cruel way and lacked human emotions. Emily said that the book that made her, intentionally or unintentionally, felt emotionally cold, and this type of book was not the book she would like.

Marjorie said that this book is "a literary masterpiece about humanity". He believes that the author has an extraordinary talent in living the character. This book is very emotional and this is not a book for gentle people. Every scene in this book is presented in great detail, torture, violence. The scene about the censored drama was the most moving and powerful, so it was hard to forget. Han Kang has written equal awards for the victims of the Gwangju uprising. Highly recommended literary works.

Researchers have several reasons why choosing this novel in research. First, this novel tells about humanity and tells how an event can turn human lives upside down. Anxiety, fear to speak up haunt the victims for the rest of their lives and often end up ending their own lives

Second is the author's writing style, which can describe every detail of events. The setting and atmosphere painted in the novel are told in detail to bring the reader into the situation in the novel. Using a different perspective from each chapter in the novel makes each character look clear and attractive.

Third, this novel tells the story of the demonstration movement in Gwangju, South Korea, in 1980, where the incident caused many victims. Through this novel, we can better understand how the event occurred. For someone who did not know about the Gwangju demonstration movement, this novel can be an alternative to exploring the event's circumstances.

In this study, researchers used the psychoanalysis perspective. Psychoanalysis is the study of human behavior and personality, this theory seeks to explain the nature and development of human personality (Syawal & Helaluddin, 2018). Mollinger (1981) says the interrelationship of psychoanalytic studies of literary work itself is the interpretation of certain characters that appear in a novel and drama.

B. Research Question

The problem of the study is dissected further into the following research questions:

1. What are kind of anxiety experienced by the characters?
2. How is the anxiety reflected in the novel?
3. Why does the author address anxiety in the novel?

C. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

1. To identify the kind of anxiety experienced by the characters.
2. To describe how the anxiety reflected in the novel.
3. To reveal the author's reasons for writing this novel.

D. Significance of the Study

This research is expected to be beneficial both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, researchers hope that this research can contribute to science in general and literature studies, especially in the novel *Human Acts* (2016). Practically, the results of this study are expected to provide information to researchers and readers about data analysis in the literature. It is also expected that this research can provide an overview of the analysis of literary works using the psychoanalysis of Sigmund Freud.