

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

Since the early of 1990s, trauma theory has received significant attention in the realm of literary criticism, relying on Freud's theory of traumatic experiences and memories, as the first to explore this field. Some of the scholars who emerged to research trauma theory and its role in society and literature were popularized by Cathy Caruth, Shoshana Felman, and Geoffrey Harman. For example, the article "On Traumatic Knowledge and Literary Studies" (1995) by Geoffrey Hartman, presented a new perspective on the insight and thinking of human functions about literature. Cathy Caruth in *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, History* (1996), discussed the significance of trauma in the literature and the relationship of trauma to culture. Since then, as a theoretical basis for literary practice, trauma theory has been increasingly used.

The trauma theory itself emerged in the 1960s from various fields that became social problems in society at that time, such as; violence against women and children (abuse, rape), war or political / government conflict (e.g, Vietnam War veterans), and cultural rules of gender equality especially for non-western cultures where the society experienced those kinds of social problems, as a result of colonialism during the colonial period. As Caruth stated that trauma is not experienced as it occurs, but is only fully apparent in connection with other place

and in other time; the most direct viewing of a violent incident can occur as an absolute inability to comprehend it; that is, paradoxically, immediacy can take the form of lateness (Visser, 2011). Since then, in numerous postcolonial literary studies, trauma theory has been applied as a non-western literary mode of speech to communicate trauma in constructed literature, with the "postcolonial trauma novel" and the trauma novel.

We ought to question what exactly is understood by trauma to understand the trauma theory. Trauma indicates the repetition of stressor through thoughts, memories, dreams or any other various symptoms as expressing psychic disorder of trauma under Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder may begin within one month after a traumatic event, but symptoms may also not appear until years after the traumatic event. The traumatic event can repeatedly intrude on daily activities, such as daydreams, nightmares, flashbacks, and depression, but there can also be a full absence of reminders. PTSD thus provides a potentially problematic of symptoms for literary-theoretical purposes, together constituting a set of features that tend to be too diverse for a clear definition and perception of trauma in literature.

In relation to literature, trauma theory is a relevant assistive science because the process of understanding literary works can be drawn from psychological teachings and principles. It can be the result of human thought as a life picture which contains the values of beauty, as a means of entertainment and can provide life lessons to readers. In postcolonial literary studies, the trauma that was suffered by real traumatized person or by character in literary works has the

same level of empathy for its readers. The trauma theory can claim the audience empathy because the integrated in a model of "testifying" (J. Collin, 2011).

Literary works are also considered as a media of helping victims to tell unspeakable stories behind trauma, as Smith and Watson in trauma theory argued that narratives can reveal new stories that were not previously told (Visser, 2011). As Herman said that the traumatized people should be helped to speak about their terrible past, and reveal the truth that has to be said. Literature should completely understand as a concern of postcolonial "trauma fiction" writings as a medium for healing (J. Collin, 2011)

Literary works are often seen as an effort to represent factual events, therefore literary works are said to be imitation of factual events. Similar to literary works in the postcolonial period, they represent traumatic events / memories in novel, poetry, prose, movie or any other literary works. According to Kaplan trauma is transferred to viewers and readers of popular media (Visser, 2011). In this research, I used a psychological issue of mental health movie as a media of presenting trauma story. *Dear Zindagi* is interesting to be analyzed because it shows a great job as it tries to touch on various aspects of mental health. Mental illness is still considered as a taboo thing by public because it is invisible, our environment thinks that this illness is not something dangerous and does not cause death, even though mental illness is also important, such as physical illness. One of the reasons why people think this way is because of their limited knowledge about this harm. Therefore, it is important for everyone especially literary people to bring up this theme to their works, so that the people

who read or watch the works can increase their awareness and knowledge about this illness.

Indian movies are usually thick with weddings, dances, customs, and tragic love stories. It has become a characteristic of Indian movies (called as Bollywood) which distinguishes them from movies originating from other countries. However, it is different from *Dear Zindagi* by Gauri Shinde which does not focus on all of those elements. It is among the few produced movies that concentrate on trauma experiences. Its main character, Kaira, is a girl suffering from PTSD. As the character displays some signs of PTSD, *Dear Zindagi* can be called as a posttraumatic movie, described by Hirsch (2014), the effort to formally recreate for the audience an experience of unexpectedly witnessing the unexpected, less by a concrete picture content than by the attempt to find a way to present the content that mimics certain aspects of posttraumatic consciousness itself.

When *Dear Zindagi's* first trailer went public, the views of Indian observers and media were still negative. The storyline about psychological issues, the required treatment, and the meaning of life were completely unpredictable made critics predict that the movie made by Gauri Shinde would crash in the market. Moreover, this movie does not contain songs and dances, very different from Indian movies in general. However, a week after *Dear Zindagi* aired, all predictions turned out to be wrong. Reporting from DNA India, in just one week this movie successfully collected Rs 55 crore (around Rp 100 billion) in India, and more than Rs 100 crore (Rp 200 billion) worldwide. Also, Alia Bhatt who played

as Kaira in this movie won additional Filmfare (National Film Award) nominations for Best Actress in 2016.

This movie mainly tells about the struggle of Kaira's life as the main character that experienced a bad childhood which causes the trauma feeling in adulthood. Slightly different from previous researches on trauma caused by regulations under colonialism or government, the trauma that Kaira experienced was due to the bad experiences and neglect of her parents in her childhood. *Kaira: They leave me at my grandparents' house*. The neglect she felt continued until she was an adult. This anxiety happens not only once but repeatedly in other situation even influence her relationship with men. She felt depressed with that condition, so she decided to go to a psychiatrist Dr. Jehangir Khan, in order to heal her trauma. This research uses the psychoanalysis theory of trauma by Sigmund Freud to describe the history behind trauma, and methods of healing it. Then, to analyze the personality of traumatized character (main character) I use the theory of personality from Carl Jung.

B. Problems of Study

Based on the explanation of background study above, the researcher formulates the problems as follows:

1. How did the main character get the trauma from?
2. How did the main character overcome the trauma?

C. Objectives of Study

In the line with problem statements, the main objectives in this research as follows:

1. To analyze the background of the main character's trauma from.
2. To analyze the ways of main character to overcome the trauma.

D. Significances of Study

There are two kinds of significance in this research, which are theoretical and practical.

1. Theoretically, it is expected to help the readers' understanding and knowledge about the relation between literature and psychoanalysis. It is also expected to be a good reference in order to explore the content and how traumatic experienced by character applies in movie. Last, this research is hoped to be studied by students, lecturers, or other people who want to study this topic.
2. Practically, the result of this research is expected to give a better understanding to the readers in how to understand and face people who had traumatic experiences. It may give an explanation that people do something bad does not simply there are bad; there is a background to form it. Last, it also hoped to be used by lecturers as a supporting teaching source to study this topic.

E. Scope of Study

As the meaning of the movie title *Dear Zindagi* (Dear Life). This movie presents a life of a girl who had problems in childhood and cause trauma in adulthood. This research is going to focus on several problems that the main character, namely Kaira faced in childhood and the ways she used to heal the trauma.

