

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the study

People have had a lot of bad experiences and mishaps throughout their lifetimes. They may not always sustain physical injuries from the events and catastrophes, but they undoubtedly suffer from a variety of psychological traumas as a result. Stated differently, under such conditions, individuals are vulnerable to mental health problems. Day-to-day observations reveal that the effects of trauma on specific individuals are palpable because of behavioral abnormalities or differences in how they express their emotions, impulses, and lives. People who have experienced trauma often speak in a way that lacks structure and clarity, suggesting odd themes and communicating messages of loss, illogicalness, and flaws in human nature (Mohsin, 2018).

According to psychologists, trauma is a more severe form of stress that results from a person or series of events that exceed the person's typical coping mechanisms (Pearlman 1995; Van der Kolk 1998). As part of human nature, trauma has become one of the most common themes or reasons for actions to add depth and emotion to literary works. Literary works are believed to be imitations of true events since they are frequently perceived as attempts to depict real-life occurrences. In any literary work, including novels, poems, essays, movies, and other media, they depict painful experiences or memories. Therefore, to analyze this occurrence both literary and psychological approaches should be combined.

Psychology and literature are tied to one another. Literature captures human existence in all its manifestations, including emotions, ideas, perceptions, and thoughts that are open to interpretation. The psychological analysis of writers as creative processes is known as the psychology of literature. It is also a study of psychology in which the rules that influence readers' perceptions of stories in literature are presented (Welleck, 1970).

The term "psychology of literature" can refer to a variety of topics, including the psychological analysis of writers as individuals and types, the study of the creative process, the analysis of psychological types and laws found in literary works, and, lastly, the effects of literature on readers (audience psychology). In turn, psychology can be utilized to analyze and assess the literary works themselves. An author may hold a psychological theory that unconsciously or subconsciously fits a character or circumstance. According to Lily Campbell's argument, Hamlet is an example of the kind of "sanguine man's suffering from melancholy adust" that the Elizabethans were familiar with from their psychological theories (Welleck, 1956).

According to Baker (2012), literary theory is a subset of literary criticism in which specific academic, scientific, or philosophical methodologies are applied methodically to analyze literary works. However, literary theory typically focuses on a specific component of a literary text, whereas standard literary criticism tends not to do the same. To discover or develop fresh and original interpretations of literary texts that a traditional literary critic might not be intellectually capable of recognizing, literary theorists frequently adapt knowledge systems developed

primarily outside the field of literary studies and impose them upon literary texts. Literary theory proposes specific, systematic approaches to literary texts that impose a particular line of intellectual reasoning (Balaev, 2008). One of the ways to analyze literary works is by employing the personality theory by Sigmund Freud.

The trauma theory was developed in the 1960s in response to several issues that were then considered societal problems in society, including war, political unrest, and violence against women and children (rape, abuse, and violence against abuse), as well as veterans of the Vietnam War. and cultural norms about gender equality, particularly in non-Western countries where the colonial era caused those kinds of social issues in the community. According to Caruth, trauma is not felt at the time it happens but rather becomes fully apparent only when viewed in the context of another place and time. In other words, the most direct way to witness a violent incident is to be completely unable to understand it; paradoxically, immediacy can manifest as lateness (Visser, 2011).

Anybody can be impacted by a traumatic incident in life, and it can result in mental health problems. Among the psychological problems that can arise is post-traumatic stress disorder. Post-traumatic stress disorder is defined by Townsend & Morgan (2017) as an incident that follows a tragedy or calamity, such as an accident, natural disaster, war, or violence, and causes symptoms like anxiety and a loss of integrity.

To fully comprehend the trauma theory, we first consider what is meant by trauma. Under Post-Traumatic Stress Illness (PTSD), trauma is defined as the

recurrence of a stressor in thoughts, memories, dreams, or any other variety of symptoms that show a psychological illness related to trauma. Additionally, post-traumatic event symptoms could not manifest for years after the traumatic incident. The traumatic experience may recur frequently in day-to-day activities, causing nightmares and daydreaming. For literary-theoretical purposes, PTSD thus offers a potentially problematic set of symptoms. A precise description and understanding of trauma in writing about literature. Because psychological concepts and lessons can be used in the process of comprehending literary works, trauma theory is a pertinent assistive science. It might be the outcome of human cognition as a depiction of life that upholds aesthetic standards. as a kind of amusement and person or by a character in literary works shares the same degree of reader empathy. Because it is included in a "testifying" model, the trauma theory can demand empathy from the audience (Collin, 2011).

Researchers have examined this complex dynamic from several perspectives in earlier studies on trauma analysis, which has helped clarify how it is portrayed in literature and other media. The study fills in gaps in the literature about how trauma is portrayed in films and highlights how crucial it is for trauma sufferers to have professional support. The goal of the study is to investigate trauma in literature works by including the case potential which is eventually solves as assistance for trauma survivors by bridging the gap between psychology and literature and increasing awareness of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This study is important because it adds to the body of knowledge on trauma studies by shedding light on how trauma is portrayed and recovered from in films.

The goal of this study, "Trauma of the main character in the serial movie Dahmer - Monster: Jeffrey Dahmer Story" is to examine how trauma is portrayed on screen and how it affects the main character, Jeffrey Dahmer. This will help to clarify the complex connection between how experience turns into trauma and psychological discomfort.

Following a traumatic incident that puts your safety in jeopardy or leaves you feeling helpless, post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD, may develop. Individual differences exist in how PTSD manifests. Even though PTSD symptoms typically manifest in the hours or days that follow the traumatic event, they can occasionally take weeks, months, or even years to manifest.

Understanding the impact of trauma on individuals is challenging, but it is of utmost importance in the lives of individuals like as Jeffrey Dahmer. This comprehension is vital for the fields of forensic psychology and criminal profiling. The 2022 film "Dahmer" offers a distinctive chance to explore the harrowing facets of Dahmer's life through the medium of cinematic narrative, despite several studies attempting to reveal the enigmatic causes behind his horrifying deeds. The portrayal of Dahmer's formative years, familial connections, and proclivity for violence in the film raises fresh inquiries on the impact of trauma on Dahmer's transformation into a merciless killer. This research seeks to enhance our understanding of the intricate connection between traumatic occurrences and the development of criminal behaviors, as portrayed in the film "Dahmer." It attempts to deepen our comprehension of the psychological intricacies of individuals and the alluring allure of criminal activities. This study

employs Freud's personality theory to investigate the mechanisms and reasons behind the central character's experience of trauma. Additionally, the American Psychiatric Association's (2014) theory is utilized to analyze the specific types of trauma that the character has encountered. The subsequent conversation from the television series "Dahmer" exemplifies the relationship between PTSD and Freud's personality theory:

**Dad: Now I'm gonna show you how to put a worm on a hook. Let me get a nice big one here. Now this, this is the head, and you want to keep it wiggling.**

**So, I have to kinda imagine where the ass'd be. And, uh, that's where you get the hook to penetrate. Go ahead. It'll wiggle a little.**

**Young Jeff: Right there?**

**Dad: Yeah.**

**Dad (to the worm): Sorry, pal. That's gotta hurt. [laughs]**

**I don't know. Maybe it's, like, a girl worm. And maybe you're just stickin' it in her. I'm sure you and your buddies, that's all you talk about in school, right?**

**Jeff: Girls?**

Jeff's father showcases the process of attaching worms to a hook in the scene above. Simultaneously, his father draws a parallel between the activity and the act of behaving with a female. This could lead to Dahmer's distorted perspectives on the human body and sexuality. Regarding the notion of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), the depicted scene exhibits the manifestation of Negative Alterations in Cognition and Mood. As per the American Psychological Association (APA), this alteration pertains to enduring and distorted cognitions concerning oneself, others, or the external environment. Jeff's cognition and mood may be negatively affected by his father's informal and amusing approach to the matter, which could potentially strengthen incorrect notions about relationships or intimacy.

According to Freud's personality theory, Jeffrey's father in this interaction symbolizes the id. The id functions based on the notion of pleasure, pursuing instant satisfaction of impulses and instincts without regard for the potential outcomes. Within the conversation, the id can be symbolized by Dad's lighthearted and spontaneous comments regarding the worm and girls. The individual's use of humor and informal demeanor exhibits a lack of consideration for societal conventions and limitations, prioritizing the immediate gratification of amusement and lightheartedness. Overall, the chat above revealed that Dahmer's destiny could potentially be shaped by his father's actions and words during his childhood.

### **1.2 Problem of study**

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

1. What kinds of trauma did the main character get in the series?
2. How did the main character experience the traumas?
3. Why did the main character experience the traumas in the ways he did?

### **1.3 Objectives of the study**

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

1. To analyze the kinds of trauma experienced by the main character.
2. To elucidate the ways the main character experienced the trauma.
3. To explain the reasons for the description of the traumas.

#### 1.4 Scope of the study

The focus of the study will be on examining the past of the main character to identify the incidents or situations that resulted in the development of trauma. Its main goal is to comprehend the relationship between psychoanalysis and literature, particularly as it relates to how traumatic events are portrayed in literature and how they affect the characters. This research is going to focus on several problems that the main character, namely Jeffrey Dahmer, faced in childhood and the ways they will affect him in the future. The data was gathered from the dialogue between the characters in *Dahmer - Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer miniseries script*, which details the trauma's past, the main character's experience with it, and why it occurred. In this research, the researcher uses the theory by employing Sigmund Freud's characterization theory to examine how and why the primary character experiences trauma, as well as the American Psychiatric Association's (2013) theory to examine the kinds of trauma the character has encountered.

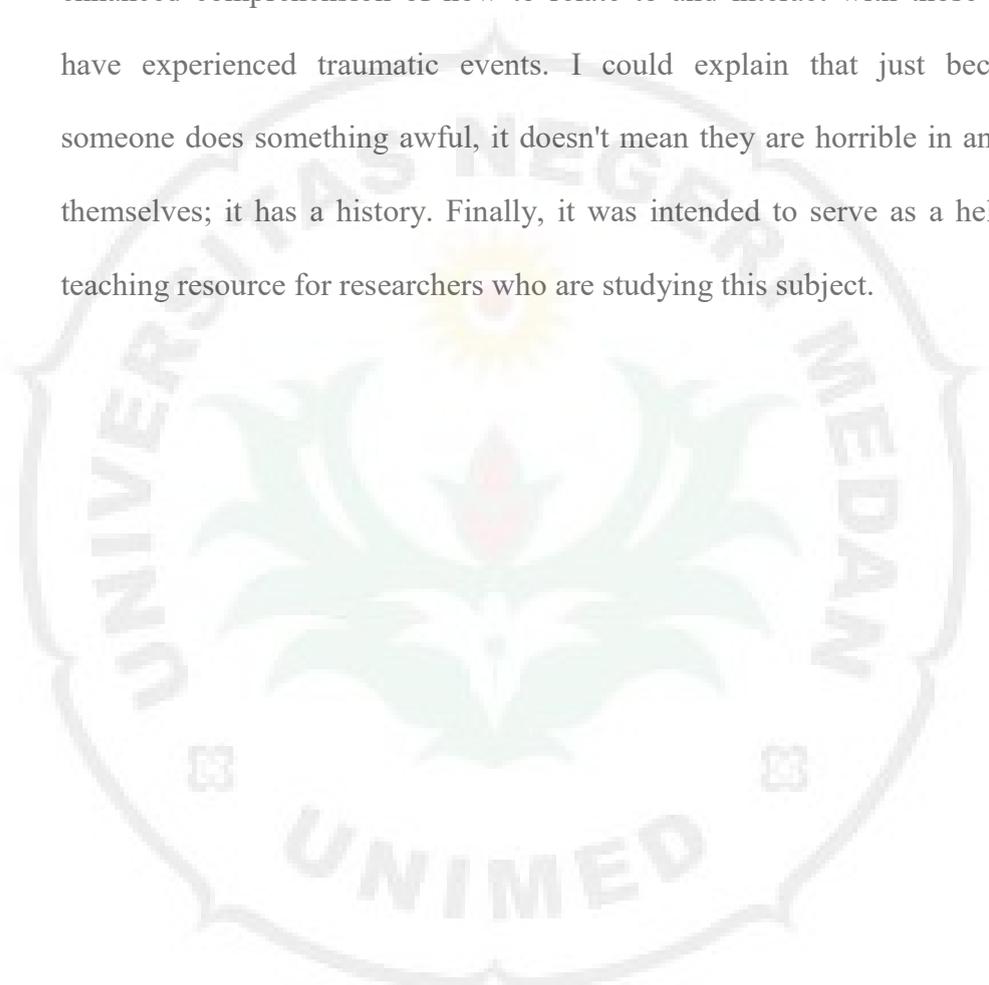
#### 1.5 Significances of the study

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

##### 1. Theoretically

- a. expected that the findings of the study enrich new horizons in the theoretical literature, particularly those related to psychological aspects.
- b. Secondly, the findings are expected to be references for further studies related to psychological aspects in literary works.

2. Practically, The anticipated outcome of this study is to provide readers with enhanced comprehension of how to relate to and interact with those who have experienced traumatic events. I could explain that just because someone does something awful, it doesn't mean they are horrible in and of themselves; it has a history. Finally, it was intended to serve as a helpful teaching resource for researchers who are studying this subject.

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