



A PSYCHOANALYTIC APPROACH ON MARAYO'S BEHAVIOUR AS THE IMPACT OF CHILDHOOD TRAUMA IN YEJIDE KILANKO'S *DAUGHTERS WHO WALK THIS PATH*

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini membahas tentang trauma masa kecil yang disebabkan oleh pelecehan seksual yang mengakibatkan perasaan yang tidak diinginkan seperti kecemasan, harga diri rendah, takut dikhianati, takut ditinggalkan, dan mekanisme pertahanan Marayo sebagai tokoh utama novel. Studi ini berpusat pada dampak trauma masa kecil yang mempengaruhi kepribadian dan perilaku karakter. Studi ini menggunakan teori psikoanalisis yang terkait dengan trauma masa kecil, kecemasan, dan masalah intinya. Dalam proses analisis, peneliti menggunakan metode kualitatif untuk mengumpulkan, mengklasifikasikan, dan menyimpulkan data. Novel *Yejide Kilanko's Daughters Who Walk This Path* sebagai sumber data primer dan jurnal, buku, dan artikel sebagai sumber data sekunder. Studi ini menetapkan beberapa informasi penting tentang bagaimana trauma masa kanak-kanak dapat mempengaruhi kepribadian dan perilaku seseorang. Ditemukan bahwa perilaku dan kepribadian memburuk karena pelecehan seksual. Akibat trauma masa kanak-kanak dapat menyebabkan seseorang merasa cemas yang dapat mengungkapkan beberapa masalah inti, yaitu takut ditinggalkan, takut dikhianati, dan rendah diri; bahwa kemudian dia menumbuhkan beberapa mekanisme pertahanan, yaitu penghindaran dan memori selektif.

Kata kunci: trauma masa kecil, takut dikhianati, takut ditinggalkan

ABSTRACT

This study discusses the childhood trauma caused by sexual abuse that resulted in unwanted feelings such as anxiety, low self-esteem, fear of betrayal, fear of abandonment, and defense mechanism of Marayo as the main character of the novel. This study centres on the impacts of childhood trauma that affect character personality and behaviours. The study uses a psychoanalysis theory related to childhood trauma, anxiety, and its core issues. In the process of analysis, the researcher uses a qualitative method to collect, classify, and conclude the data. *Yejide Kilanko's Daughters Who Walk This Path* novel as the primary data sources and journals, books, and articles as secondary data sources. The study set out some critical information about how childhood trauma can affect someone's personality and behavior. It found that behavior and personality are deteriorated because of sexual abuse. The consequence of childhood trauma can lead a person to feels anxious that can reveal some core issues, which are fear of abandonment, fear of betrayal, and low self-esteem; that later she grows some defense mechanism, which is avoidance and selective memory.

Keywords: childhood trauma, fear of betrayal, fear of abandonment

INTRODUCTION

Humans experience many incidents in their life, both pleasant and painful events (Christinawati & Pandin, 2019). The experience could have an impact on their life (Pandin, 2020). Someone who has experienced painful events can be said to have experienced trauma. This trauma can be felt by adults and children alike (Freud 1917, 241). Without realizing it, the trauma that has been shared by individuals during childhood will affect their behavior and personality. It does not only create the defense mechanism, which is defined

as a system used by someone to oppose their bad memories in the past but also difficult to forget, such as recollection of an insult or humiliation (Freud 1917, 64).

Trauma can lead someone to an anxiety feeling. Anxiety signals the organism to stop the danger and the instinct that puts the person into a dangerous situation. In this way, someone will feel pressured (Chapman 2007, 36). This anxiety can reveal the core issues such as fear of abandonment, fear of betrayal, and low self-esteem, affecting personality and behavior in someone's adulthood. Fear of abandonment is a feeling that will be felt by someone when they fear of being deserted by someone either physically and (Khosro and Amin 2016, 121). Fear of betrayal is a belief of being betrayed by someone who has been trusted. Low self-esteem is a belief when someone feels the inability to tolerate the influence of others (Khosro and Amin 2016, 127).

These things are summarized in the theory of psychoanalysis. The psychoanalysis theory is a concept that covers a full explanation of human behaviours. According to Freud, this theory cannot accept the conscious identity with the process of the nature of willing, thinking, and feeling. Instead, it can get a thing related to unconscious thinking and willingness (Freud 1917, 15). *Daughters Who Walk This Path* (2013) is a novel by Yejide Kilanko. This novel mainly tells a girl who experienced sexual abuse that leads her to childhood trauma and affects her life as an adult.

The story begins with Marayo, who experienced sexual abuse done by her cousin when she was 12 years old. Eventually, those abusive treatments lead her to feel childhood trauma. This trauma then creates her into a woman that has worsened behaviours in her adult life. When she becomes an adult woman, she often sleeps with a different man every day because she thinks she is a genuinely worthless woman. Marayo's happiness is changed when her cousin arrived home and raped her. Instead of defending and protecting Marayo, her mother pleaded to Marayo's father to still allow Bros T to live in their home. When she becomes an adult woman, she meets again with her cousin, which makes her defend herself from the anxiety.

The researchers want to analyze this novel with a psychoanalytic approach by Sigmund Freud, which has a primary focus on the behavior and personality caused by childhood trauma. Freud's original theory explained that sexual experience that is felt by someone in childhood would lead him or her to feel the traumatic incident (Freud 1917, 320). This study will further analyze how childhood trauma affects her behavior and personality and how it creates her defense mechanism. Whenever there is something that causes her to remember the trauma, she will feel anxious. In protecting herself from that anxiety, Marayo will defend herself so that she feels calm, which is good for her. Based on the issues, the research aims to answer two questions: How does childhood trauma affect Marayo's personality and adulthood behavior? How does Marayo's childhood trauma relate to her defense mechanism?

This research focuses its analysis on adulthood behavior and personality felt by the main character, Marayo (Al-Dmour 2019, 48). In the Freud concern, he also stated about anxiety and its core issues. Anxiety can also be a meaningful experience because it can reveal some core issues (Tyson 2015, 16). Low self-esteem is an emotional problem, which means a negative thinking scheme of oneself and unhealthily handled (Zyl, Cronjé dan Payze 2006, 181). Freud in Boeree stated that a defense mechanism is a technique to block the impulses or distorting them into a more acceptable and less threatening form (Boeree 2006, 7). Based

on Freud, the main character's family members that affect her personality and adulthood behaviours, such as anxiety, such as low self-esteem, fear of abandonment, fear of betrayal as the process of shaping behaviours and personality of the character in the novel, and also the defense mechanism used by the main character will analyze.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The researcher uses Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic approach that focused on the behavior and personality of the main character. Psychoanalytic is a term used for psychology theory set, and also a group of techniques which emphasizes the subconscious as the most critical factor in a person's adaptation process and behavior (M.Lipner dan Muran 2017, 2).

The researchers start the analysis by doing four steps: 1) the researchers read the primary source, which is Yejide Kilanko's *Daughters Who Walk This Path* that has the aim to find out Marayo's defense herself from the anxiety she experienced as a result of her trauma and also dig a deeper understanding of the issues that will be discussed; 2) the researchers analyze the impact of childhood trauma and the defense mechanism that is used by Marayo; 3) the researchers analyze and connects this impact of childhood trauma and defense mechanism by using psychoanalytic theory by Sigmund Freud and 4) the last step is that the researchers conclude the final part, which aims to give more understanding of the result of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Marayo's Behaviors and Personality as an Adult Woman

A few years after the traumatic incident had passed, Marayo now becomes an adult woman. All of the behaviours that she, when she becomes an adult woman, is the impact of the childhood trauma she felt. Behaviour is a process of an inner entity bringing about a bodily movement (Lazzeri 2014, 65). Since she lives in Lagos, Marayo often spends her time sleeping with many different men every day, even though she has a boyfriend. She conducts her behavior as a form of impingement. Marayo does not feel guilty for all the behaviours she does. She does not even listen to Mummy's anger (Kilanko 2013, 204). This behavior that she does has aimed to achieve her desire to gain pleasure. Freud stated that mental activity is directed towards avoiding pain and obtaining pleasure, which he came to refer to as the "pleasure principle" (Ozler dan Gabrinetti 2018, 3). Human behavior is the result of the interaction between the id, ego, and superego. A balance between the id, ego, and superego would transform a person as a balanced individual (Navaneedhan 2012, 222). Meanwhile, if someone cannot control the id, ego, and superego in balance, it makes inappropriate action obtained by that person.

Like what happened to Marayo, her behavior, which is changing sleeping partners every day, proves that she cannot balance between the id, ego, and superego. Marayo is more concerned with things that will make her satisfied, rather than slow down the instinct to get a feeling of satisfaction with physical needs. The id takes more roles in Marayo's self. The Id is

filled with energy that reaches from instinct that has no organization. It does not produce a collective will, but it only fights for what makes it achieve satisfaction (Navaneedhan 2012, 221).

Another behavior that she does is she asks her boyfriend, Ladi, to sleep with her. Nevertheless, Ladi always refuses her with a reason that he respects Marayo as a woman. The 'worthless' label, which is already attached to her, leads her to ask Ladi to sleep with her. Again, Marayo does that because she wants to satisfy her desire (Kilanko 2013, 213). Based on the conversation, unconsciously, Marayo intends to satisfy her sexual desire. She does not use her ego at all, where the ego can play an essential role in controlling Marayo's behavior. The ego does not work to prevent id satisfaction, but it tries to change or direct it according to reality. In fulfilling her pleasure, she wants to vent all the pain she felt in the past by satisfying all of her desires to achieve satisfaction.

Childhood trauma also affected Marayo's personality when she became an adult girl. Character is a mirror of what someone does and says (Alpatanni 2015, 5). According to Allport, the character is a dynamic organization that takes place inside the person, and it creates a person's characteristic patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behaviours (Alpatanni 2015, 5). Since then, she has become a stubborn woman and an arbitrary woman. It can be proven, and when her Aunty expressed that she doesn't like Marayo's behavior, she let Marayo think whether her behavior really could reduce her pain or not. Instead of thinking, Marayo goes out with a man named Dee to calm her mind from her Aunty's words (Kilanko 2013, 207).

Marayo's Childhood Trauma

All the behaviors that Marayo does during her adulthood were the result of childhood trauma. The trauma suffered by Marayo is a trauma caused by sexual abuse that occurred when she was 12 years old. Likewise, with Marayo's parents who have been instilled this value, they do not realize that the men they are afraid will bring adverse changes for Marayo, actually is their nephew.

At that time, Marayo's Aunty left her son—Bros T—in Marayo's house to stay there because of her family problem. Bros T is Marayo's cousin, who deliberately does sexual abuse on Marayo when no one was at home. He does that consciously and also take advantage of an opportunity where there is no one at home besides Bros T, Bros T's friends, and Marayo (Kilanko 2013, 68-69). Childhood trauma that she feels then affected her life; she feels anxiety due to childhood trauma. The trauma that occurred in Marayo's experience will allow Marayo to feel pain. Pain that is felt by someone is the result of some form of trauma (Chatira and Kanellopoulos 2014, 29). The memory of the trauma that Marayo feels will be difficult to forget and will continue to haunt her life. The trauma happened because of the painful incident experienced by someone in the past (Freud 1917, 241).

Anxiety Suffered by Marayo

The function of anxiety here is as a signal that is given by a person's ego of impending danger (Chapman 2007, 36). Marayo's anxious feeling appears whenever and wherever usually; these feelings arise due to a past trauma that is triggered. Anxiety can be defined as a word used to describe feelings of unease, worry, and fear (Marsh 2015, 4). All of the stress

she felt as a child and adult woman could not be separated from the figure of Katchi. Katchi is Marayo's first love that finally they meet again as an adult.

The anxiety appeared when Marayo faced the reality that Katchi is disappointed after Marayo told him about her past (Kilanko 2013, 258-259). After that, Katchi asks Marayo about her feeling to Ladi. Ladi was Marayo's boyfriend. Marayo's then answers that she does not love Ladi anymore. Katchi is someone she loves now (Kilanko 2013, 259). Katchi's disappointment can be seen from how he responds to Marayo's story silently and slams the door. The front door slammed shut, and he was gone (Kilanko 2013, 259).

Anxiety felt by Marayo is the fear that is based on reality (Schultz and Schultz 2009, 60). The fear of existence in this context is if Katchi will regret falling in love with Marayo after she tells all of her past, about that incident that leads her to feel childhood trauma. In the psychoanalytic approach, anxiety is a crucial term because by analysing more in-depth about the anxiety, we can find some pieces of information into someone's core issues (Sunardi 2016, 25). Marayo in *Daughters Who Walk This Path* novel has three major core issues, where these core issues arise as a result of the sexual abuse committed by his cousin named Bros T, which is included in the cause of Marayo suffered childhood trauma. These core issues are fear of betrayal, fear of abandonment, and low self-esteem.

Marayo's Fear and Abandonment

It is told that Marayo has a big hope in her family, especially her mother, to be a person whom she trusts can help her to get out of the traumatic hole and heal from her traumatic event. However, what was done by her mother was inversely proportional to what she expected. After Marayo told her parents what was happening that night, her mom indirectly defends what Bros T did (Kilanko 2013, 84). It can be seen that Mummy begged Daddy to still allow Bros T to live in this house because Bros T is one of her nephews who had been entrusted by her younger sister to live in Marayo's house. It means that Mummy cannot be trusted to protect Marayo from the trauma that she experienced. This fear of betrayal appeared shortly after Marayo's mother indirectly defended what Bros T had done to Marayo. From the words that are said to herself, Marayo felt that her mother could no longer be trusted as a mother who understood her situation. As someone who has a traumatized experience, Marayo needs a person that can be trusted to protect herself from unwanted feelings, such as anxiety.

According to Freud, fear of abandonment is a belief that our friends and loved ones are going to desert us (physical abandonment) or do not care about us (emotional abandonment) (Tyson 2015, 16). It is the same as what Marayo felt after the traumatized incident. After she was sexually harassed by her family member, her cousin named Bros T. Her life changed. Marayo felt fear that the people she loved would leave her due to her past (Kilanko 2013, 85).

Marayo explains that she keeps staring at the door, waiting for Mummy, she ensures that Mummy would come and look for her (Kilanko 2013, 85). Marayo's fear of abandonment can be proven from those sentences, which Marayo hopes that Mummy will come and take care of her condition as the first daughter that gets inappropriate treatment from the boy who was born by Mummy's younger sister.

Low self-esteem experienced by someone is a belief that they are worthless. Self-esteem will emerge from the recognition and views of others who acknowledge our abilities

(Brown dan Murphy 2011, 47). Marayo's low self-esteem can be seen from both of Marayo's parents' treatment to her, which are, treating Marayo with awkward silence (Kilanko 2013, 89). Based on the conversation and activities between her sister and her mother, of which Marayo is sitting among them, her mother does not consider the existence of Marayo even to have a small conversation with Marayo. Marayo feels that she is an unneeded child. Although her body gathers around with her family members, she thought that she no longer exists. This treatment further strengthened her feeling like a 'dirty' and worthless child from her family's perspective. The sense of low self-esteem that a person feels will influence their expected behavior.

Marayo's Defense Mechanism

The defense mechanism that is used by Marayo is a form of self-defense to relieve her feeling of anxiety; this feeling is caused by childhood trauma. In this study, the researchers found avoidance as the defense mechanism that is used by Marayo.

Avoidance is one of the defense mechanisms that is most often used by someone to relieve anxiety. It is a condition where the ego reacts to an external danger that leads someone to avoid objects that make someone feel anxious (Freud 1963, 132). According to Ritchie, avoidance relates more closely to a self-protective motive (Ritchie 2014, 1). Sometimes, if a situation starts to create anxiety, avoidance is the easiest way to do it. When she becomes an adult woman, she works in the same office with Bros T as the perpetrator of her sexual abuse and her supervisor. In Marayo's case, she tries to avoid meeting Bros T when she accidentally meets him in the office (Kilanko 2012, 293-294). Based on the narration above, it can be proven that Marayo wants to stop her anxiety feeling by asking Bros T to leave her. It means that she tries to avoid the existence of Bros T because it will remind her of her childhood trauma that is related to Bros T. Not only that, Marayo also tries to prevent Bros T in another opportunity (Kilanko 2013, 308). Until finally, her avoidance reaches its peak, where she really cannot resist the anxious feelings she feels while working in an office with Bros T. She chooses to get out of the office. Before she decides to get out of the office, she meets Bros T. Because of the feeling of anxiety that is overwhelming, Marayo then fainted. The next day, she decides to get out of the office (Kilanko 2013, 312). Marayo will not let Bros T takes the things she thinks are valuable for the second time, which is her virginity and the child she is carrying. That is why she chooses to resign from the office.

CONCLUSION

Childhood trauma has a considerable impact on Marayo's life. It affected Marayo's behaviors when she became an adult woman who often sleeps with different men and asks her boyfriend to sleep with her; another than that, and it also changes Marayo's personality into a stubborn woman, arbitrary woman. All of her behaviors and character are influenced by the Id impulse that aims to satisfy her desire and reduce pain and overrides the superego as the values that her parents instilled in her. All of her behaviors and personality are the impacts of sexual abuse, leading her to an anxiety feeling. Her feeling of anxiety arises from her childhood trauma that is triggered when Katchi asks Marayo to get married. This anxiety can reveal some core issues as the cause of her parents' treatment, where these core issues will forever be attached to Marayo.

Three core issues arise in Marayo, namely, fear of abandonment, which then leads her to feel fear of betrayal, and last is low self-esteem. Low self-esteem is the most attached core issue to Marayo; because of her childhood trauma, her parents treat her as a worthless girl, and which make Marayo do her adulthood behaviors. In this case, Marayo's childhood trauma also makes Marayo do avoidance. It is the defense mechanism used by Marayo when she meets Bros T—her cousin, perpetrator of her sexual abuse, and supervisor. Indirectly, the memory of childhood trauma arises when she meets Bros T, and right then, Marayo tries to avoid Bros T, who, in the end, is willing to get out of the office to find calmness.

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