

CHAPTER II

THEORY AND METHOD

2.1. Theoretical Framework

To conduct a thorough analysis of Miranda's superiority complex, it is essential to implement an appropriate theoretical framework that supports a comprehensive and reliable assessment. Theoretical frameworks used in this study are the theoretical framework of intrinsic elements and extrinsic elements.

2.1.1. Intrinsic Elements

This section consists of the intrinsic elements theory which focuses about character, characterization, setting, and conflict using a concept by Holman in his book entitled *A Handbook to Literature*.

2.1.1.1. Character and Characterization

A character is a fundamental element of a literary work. According to Holman, a character is a person who embodies a certain quality or figure in a story (1936:90). The character in literary work is formed into two types: protagonist and antagonist. The protagonist is the leading figure in literary work, they can gain the audience's interest and sympathy for their actions (1936:421). The antagonist, on the other side, is the type of character that stands directly opposed to the protagonist as their rivals (1936:30), they have a different way of thinking and often do something detrimental to the protagonist.

For a character to be well constructed, it needs to be created with credible qualities for it to exist as real within the boundaries of fiction for the reader (Holman,

1936:91), which is known as characterization. Holman classifies characterization methods into two types: direct and indirect characterization. Direct characterization is an explicit presentation through direct opposition and indirect characterization is the portrayal of a character's inner thoughts and personality without any explicit commentary (Holman, 1936:91). Direct characterization is often evident through straightforward descriptions of a character's physical appearance, while indirect characterization is typically conveyed through a character's actions and dialogue.

This study categorizes Miranda's character as the antagonist of the story. In addition, analyzing the direct and indirect characterization of Miranda's character will reveal what kind of person Miranda is through her physical appearance, as well as her implicit and explicit actions and words.

2.1.1.2. Setting

The setting in literature refers to the physical and sometimes spiritual background against which the action of a story takes place (Holman, 1936:491). The setting is essential in literature as it helps readers envision the characters and situations created by the author. The elements constituting a setting include place, time, and social environment.

The setting of the place is the location, the landscape, or the layout of the space (Holman, 1936:491). This can be a real location, such as a city, or a fictional world designed by the author to suit the narrative. The setting of time is the period when the story takes place (Holman, 1936:491). This could be a historical era from the past, to the contemporary moment in which human currently inhabit, or even an

imaginative future envisioned by the author, filled with possibilities and innovations. As for the setting of the social environment, it indicates the social and economic circumstances surrounding the characters. It reveals their statuses, relationships, and the influences these factors have on their actions and interactions throughout the story.

2.1.1.3. Conflict

The conflict in literary work has an important role as it is the driving force of the narrative that gives the elements of intrigue and tension. The conflict is the struggle that results from the interaction of the two opposing forces in a story (Holman, 1936:118). According to Holman, the conflicts faced by a character are divided into four types; the character struggles against the forces of nature; the character struggles against another person, usually the antagonist; the character struggles against society as a force; and the character struggles against the two elements within them (1936:118). The character's struggles against another person are referred to as external conflict, while the struggles within the character are known as internal conflict. In the novel, Miranda faces both types of conflict. By examining these conflicts, Miranda's superiority complex is observed in this study.

2.1.2. Extrinsic Elements

This section consists of the extrinsic elements theory which uses a superiority complex concept by Alfred Adler from a book entitled *The Individual Psychology of Alfred Adler* written by Heinz L. Ansbacher and Rowena R. Ansbacher. The concept of superiority complex used in this study focuses on the causes, signs, and impacts of superiority complex.

2.1.2.1. Superiority Complex in Individual Psychology

Superiority complex is a psychological condition in which an individual believes that their abilities and accomplishments are better than others in certain ways. The goal and purpose of their superiority differ for each person and depend upon the meaning they want to give to their life. The reasons for their sense of superiority can vary from person to person, depending on the meaning they wish to derive from their lives. How they express their superiority can also differ, but a common trait among them is an arrogant personality since they tend to assume that they are always right and superior to others. This superiority complex serves as a way to compensate for their feeling of inferiority which they cannot bear. Adler, in his theory of individual psychology, believes that within each individual's mind exists the conception of an ideal to surpass their current position and overcome current deficiencies and difficulties by setting a concrete goal for the future (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956:100). Human wish to overcome difficulties and their inferiority feeling, so they strive to reach a goal that will make them feel superior, strong, and complete either in the right or in the wrong way (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956:103-104). An individual with a great feeling of inferiority will make great efforts to fulfill their goal and to improve their circumstances. They may become the abnormal type that is going to put more pressure on themselves, be more ambitious, and have an urgent need to be superior in achieving it, making them more self-centred in their striving (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956:102). They will also attempt to self-hypnotize or become intoxicated with their own sense of

superiority (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956:257), making them believe that their actions and mindset are always right and better than others.

These exaggerated conditions of striving for superiority lead an individual to have a superiority complex because they eventually do something detrimental to other people in their attempt to overcome their sense of inferiority. Hence, it would not be surprising to see within the individual with a superiority complex, that there are always more or less hidden inferiority feeling.

2.1.2.2. Causes of Superiority Complex

Multiple situations or incidents may be the root cause of one's superiority complex. Adler points out that an individual expresses a superiority complex as compensation for their inferiority feeling. Their inferiority feeling drives them to strive to compensate for their shortcomings and achieve goals where they expect to feel superior (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956:118). An individual with a superiority complex also known to be lack social interest because they want to solve their life problems in a way as to obtain personal superiority without any admixture of social interest (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956:261) which leads them to overcome their weaknesses in a useless way that harms not only themselves, but other people as well.

Furthermore, the relationship of a person with their parents or family could also be the reason for the growth of a person's superiority complex, namely the parenting style. Children experience first cooperation through cooperation with parents and family (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956:375). Whether a person is pampered or

neglected in their family, would affect their behaviors and thoughts in the future. Therefore, the causes of the superiority complex that examined in this study are the feeling of inferiority, the neglected childhood, and the lack of social interest.

The Feeling of Inferiority

Adler asserts that to be human means to feel inferior. All humans must have experienced feelings of inferiority to some extent because there must be situations where they wish to improve, whether it is to be more healthy, successful, smart, pretty, or powerful. Adler believes that it is the inferiority feeling that drives humans to strive and develop normally in their lives (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956:258), from below to above, from being poor to being rich. Nevertheless, this feeling of inferiority can also be the core source of human problems since they all find themselves in positions in which they wish to improve. A feeling of inferiority cannot be experienced by human beings for a long time because it creates tension and requires some kind of action to improve the situation. However, if an individual is discouraged and cannot conceive that practical efforts will make things better, they will still be unable to tolerate their sense of inferiority feeling and struggle to overcome it by believing themselves to be superior (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956:257). Since the feeling of inferiority is often seen as a sign of weakness, there is a strong tendency to hide it. The effort to conceal it can be so great that the individual may not even realize they feel inferior, their entire mindset shifts automatically from feeling inferior to feeling superior without them even noticing as they are entirely focused on hiding it (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956:119).

Therefore, individuals with a superiority complex often fail to recognize how their actions could harm other people due to their lack of self-awareness.

Neglected Childhood

All early childhood experiences influence a person and shape their perspective, guiding them to establish a path toward achieving superiority (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956:367). The influence of parents, especially the mother, and siblings is invaluable as they have been there for a person since their formative years. When provided with appropriate guidance and support, an individual can grow into a well-adjusted and thriving member of society. However, if an individual does not receive proper care and the love they deserve, they may struggle to comprehend the principles of love and cooperation (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956:370). This lack of understanding can hinder their ability to demonstrate these qualities toward others, particularly if they have experienced neglect in their childhood. The neglected child will perceive society as cold and come to expect it to be that way when they grow up and encounter life's challenges. They will become distrustful of others by perceiving them as opponents, making them blind to the possibility of cooperation, become isolated, unable to interact with others, and completely ignorant of everything that would help them to live in association with human beings (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956:371). Consequently, they might fail to recognize that engaging in kind acts can not only benefit those around them but also create a positive cycle of respect and affection, helping them to thrive in social interactions.

Lack of Social Interest

In this world, humans essentially cannot survive on their own and are constantly in need of help from others. It is necessary that humans must be considerate, adaptable, and show interest in others (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956:132). Adler described this as the concept of social interest, the ability to become receptive to reality and bring justice to a community through positive interpersonal interactions with other people (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956:134). It is the most important thing humans must have because having an ideal social interest and the ability to get along with others shapes their way of living and, as a result, determines how well or poorly they handle every challenge that comes with it (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956:129), including the feelings of inferiority and striving for superiority. If their feelings of inferiority and striving for superiority are cultivated with social interests, they can contribute positively to life and achieve good things. However, if they lack social interest, they may not be well-prepared to solve their life problems (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956:156) since having social interest allows humans to understand things differently from what others understand.

The degree of a person's social interest always determines this kind of identification or empathy, as it is a component of social interest and necessary to the achievement of social living (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956:135-136). The degree and quality of the social interest help to determine the goal of one's dominance. A man is called good when he relates himself to other humans in a generally beneficial manner and called bad when he acts against the social interest

(Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956:139) because when the social feeling is lacking, the individual's focus becomes too self-centred, causing them to only think about themselves and not other people.

2.1.2.3. Signs of Superiority Complex

The signs of a superiority complex can be considered to be many and varied, as each individual has their own way of demonstrating that they are superior to others. Exaggerated demands on others, a sense of disdain, arrogance, excessive emotion, boastfulness, a tyrannical nature, nagging, a tendency to belittle others, a desire to associate with well-known people or snobbish, and the misappropriation of valuable ideas and actions to diminish others are further signs of a superiority complex (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956:261). Increased effects like anger, desire for revenge, inattentive listening, and directing the conversation to oneself also frequently indicate feelings of inferiority that lead to a superiority complex (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956:261). An individual with a superiority complex also tends to be more aggressive. They will appear aggressive and defiant in their external appearances with sudden outbursts of anger (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956:390). This aggressive behavior is triggered easily because their claims and perceptions typically lack factual support. They constantly argue with others out of fear that, if they are not the aggressor, the others will attack first (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956:390). Thus, they have the urgency to show they are the ones who have power over the people around them by bursting their anger whenever they want to. They may sometimes display a sense of suspicion and engage in accusatory behavior as a way to uphold their aggressive demeanor, which leads them to redirect

blame onto others for their mistakes (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956:270), refusing to accept accountability for their own deeds.

There are more variations of signs of a superiority complex that a person has than those already mentioned because for people with a superiority complex, they have carried out the appropriate behavior according to them to achieve what they consider to be a position of superiority (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956:188). In this study, the analysis of the signs of a superiority complex focuses on exaggerated demands, aggressiveness, accusative attitude, and snobbishness.

2.1.2.4. Impacts of Superiority Complex

It has been acknowledged that an individual who develops a superiority complex strive for personal superiority, they only care about their welfare and do not look for the interests of others, making them selfish and inconsiderate (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956:118), resulting in a lack of empathy towards others. They become more apathetic towards others and more sympathetic towards themselves. Hence, they continue to try to show their superiority in a way they think is right (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956:188) without considering whether it is detrimental to others or not, causing them to have no self-awareness.

Having lack of self-awareness can make it challenging for individual with a superiority complex to understand and accept behaviors that differ from their preferences. Consequently, it is not surprising that individuals with a superiority complex often struggle to form close relationships, as many people may be unwilling to associate with them.

2.2. Research Method

To carry out a structured and detailed analysis, an appropriate research method is essential in this study. This section consists of the research approach and method of data collection for this study.

2.2.1. Research Approach

By looking at the background of the study, the suitable approach to use in this study is the psychological approach. Psychological approach is a study of the human mind and how it affects behaviour in a certain contexts (Beard, 2001:160) since it is an approach to learning about behaviours, expressions, thoughts, and motivations. This study is also categorized as a qualitative method study since the results of this research are captured in words (George, 2008:7) that were conducted by an interpretation. A psychological approach is used in this study to analyze the development of Miranda's superiority complex by using Alfred Adler's concept of superiority complex in his Individual Psychology theory.

2.2.2. Method of Data Collection

This study use a library research method to collect the data and a close reading of the novel. The process of conducting library research involves identifying and finding sources that contain personal factual information or an expert's opinion (George, 2008:6). George also divides the two ways to obtain sources into primary and secondary sources. Primary sources are obtained first-hand, while secondary sources are based on the researcher's interpretation (2008:56). Lauren Wiesberger's novel *The Devil Wears Prada* is the primary data of this research thesis, whereas

the secondary data are gained from a variety of trusted and reliable sources such as books, e-books, journals, articles, and so on.

