

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In the realm of psychology, disorder refers to an individual's abnormality. An individual can determine to have a disorder through particular parameters such as disturbances in thinking, managing emotion or behavior that reflect dysfunction in psychological (American Psychiatric Association, 2013:20). There are so many kinds of psychological disorders, and one of them is post-traumatic stress disorder, often called PTSD. PTSD belongs to the part of a disorder triggered by trauma and stress (American Psychiatric Association, 2022:295). Trauma is an emotional response to a disastrous event, like an accident, natural disaster, or abuse. On the other hand, stress refers to someone's feeling of mental pressure and tension (Shahsavarani et al., 2015:1). PTSD is marked by symptoms such as nightmares, flashbacks, or avoidance, and this condition often leads someone to feel excessive fear and helplessness.

The case of PTSD can be reflected in literary work. One example of a literary work that reveals PTSD is the novel *The First Day*, written by Phil Harrison in 2017. Phil Harrison's *The First Day* is a novel that discusses Sam, someone who was born from infidelity between his parents. Sam is not close to either his biological mother or father, and his life is even more difficult because he has a trauma caused by a violent incident in his childhood by his half-brother. Sam lives in fear as his childhood memories always haunt him. Although he tries to face the

fear he has harbored for years, Sam still struggles to get through it, and his trauma then develops into PTSD.

The primary reason for selecting Phil Harrison's *The First Day* is because it illustrates a traumatic experience closely associated with PTSD, which is the focus of this research thesis. This aspect makes the novel *The First Day* a relevant study material. Following this reason, this research thesis aims to examine how PTSD, as a psychological phenomenon, is depicted in Phil Harrison's *The First Day*. In terms of academic contribution, this research thesis is expected to enrich literary studies on the representation of PTSD in literary works. Meanwhile, regarding pragmatic contribution, this research thesis is expected to spread awareness and understanding about PTSD to readers.

1.2 Research Problems

1. What are the symptoms of PTSD experienced by Sam in Phil Harrison's *The First Day*?
2. What are the causes of PTSD experienced by Sam in Phil Harrison's *The First Day*?
3. What are the effects of PTSD experienced by Sam in Phil Harrison's *The First Day*?

1.3 Objective of the Study

1. To analyze the symptoms of PTSD experienced by Sam in Phil Harrison's *The First Day*.

2. To analyze the causes of PTSD experienced by Sam in Phil Harrison's *The First Day*.
3. To analyze the effects of PTSD experienced by Sam in Phil Harrison's *The First Day*.

1.4 Previous Study

The writer of this research thesis has found teen previous studies of Phil Harrison's *The First Day*. The first is an academic book review written by Caroline Magennis in 2021, entitled *Northern Irish Writing After the Troubles (2021)*, in the subchapter *A New Form of Intimacy: Desire, Faith, and Textuality in Phil Harrison's The First Day*. This book review focuses on the intimacy between Orr and Anna, Sam's parents.

The second is a report published by The Irish Times in 2017, entitled "*The First Day: An East Belfast Story Caught in a Time Warp*". This report discusses *The First Day* as a profound psychological novel.

The third is a news published by The Irish Independent in 2017 entitled *The Preacher, The Affair and A Son's Retribution*. This news focuses on the infidelity between Sam's parents in *The First Day*.

The fourth is a book review written by Rachel in 2017, entitled *Review of The First Day by Phil Harrison*. This book review focuses on the portrayal of the female character in *The First Day*.

The fifth is a book review by Kirkus in 2017, entitled *Harrison's Elegant Prose and Deeply Felt "The First Day"*. This book review discusses the philosophy of *The First Day*.

The sixth is a book review written by Scott Manley in 2018, entitled *A Review of The First Day*. This book review focuses on the setting of time of *The First Day*.

The seventh is a book review written by Alan Meban in 2020, entitled *The First Day by Phil Harrison: A Tale of Biblical Knowledge, Love, Loss, and Revenge*. This book review focuses on the affair between Sam's parent in *The First Day*.

The eighth is an author interview conducted by Ryan Parker in 2017, entitled *A Conversation with Filmmaker & Author Phil Harrison*. This interview focuses on a discussion of the theological concept in *The First Day*.

The ninth is an author interview conducted by journalist Adriana Delgado in 2017 entitled *Interview: Phil Harrison, Author of The First Day*. This interview discusses the dynamics of infidelity and its impact in *The First Day*.

The tenth is an author interview conducted by Brendan Dowling in 2017 entitled *Phil Harrison on Finding the Joy in the Darkness of His New Novel*. This interview examines the influence of the setting in *The First Day*.

The main difference between the previous studies mentioned above and this research thesis lies in the topic used. This research thesis focuses on analyzing the

portrayal of PTSD in Phil Harrison's *The First Day* through the character Sam, the child of Orr and Anna.

1.5 Scope of the Study

The examination of Phil Harrison's *The First Day* involves internal and external elements. The internal elements include character and conflict. On the other hand, the external elements use a psychological perspective on the topic of PTSD, including the symptoms, causes, and effects based on the main theory by Gerald C. Davidson *et al.* By analyzing the novel using a psychological perspective, primarily through PTSD, the writer seeks to provide in-depth insight into how fictional characters can represent PTSD.

1.6 Organization of the Writing

The organization of this research thesis is arranged into chapters as follow.

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

This chapter includes background of the study, research problems, objectives of the study, previous study, scope of the study, and organization of the study.

CHAPTER II THEORY AND METHOD

This chapter elaborates on the theoretical framework and the method of this research thesis. The intrinsic elements are character, characterization, and conflict. At the same time, the extrinsic element consists of the theory of post-traumatic

stress disorder. In this research thesis, the research approach used is psychological. Then, the method of data collection is library research.

CHAPTER III ANALYSIS

This chapter is filled with discussions of the intrinsic and extrinsic elements of the research thesis object, which is *The First Day* by Phil Harrison.

CHAPTER IV CONCLUSION

This chapter presents the summaries from the analysis addressed in the previous chapter.

REFERENCES