

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

A character is an essential part of intrinsic elements in literary work. The character is important because it helps to develop the plot of the story. The main role of a character in delivering the literary work is moral value by her actions and dialogues. According to Abrams, a character in a literary work is one whose actions in the story, that shows her personality and emotions (2009:42). The character in a story has her behaviors and feelings based on her personality or her emotions. The character's emotions bring any feelings which can be seen explicitly or implicitly from the character's actions or dialogues.

Emotion resembles feelings, when someone is sad, she or he might be disappointed, hopeless, and giving up. One of normal feelings is inferiority feeling. Inferiority feeling is the feeling of inadequacy, weakness, and insecurity or not feeling good enough with the people around. Adler states that every human has inferiority feeling which starts to appear in early childhood with many reasons (1956:258). Human behavior and emotions develop at early childhood. An inferiority feeling of which is given from birth is to encourage someone to strive her self-perfection. Inferiority feeling becomes inferiority complex when there are the causes and compensations of his inferiority feeling. Moreover, the writer is interested in describing the main character's inferiority complex in the *Eighth Grade*, Kayla Day, using Alfred Adler's theory of inferiority complex.

One of the literary work genres is movies. *Eighth Grade* is a coming-of-age movie. This movie directed by Bo Burnham and was released in 2018. This movie brings a realistic presentation of the adolescent point of view. This movie talks about a 13-year-old introvert girl named Kayla Day. Kayla lives with her father and she is socially rejected by her schoolmates. She gets the ‘most quiet’ student label because she is considered a quiet and shy person.

The individual’s personality develops in early childhood. An individual’s personality influenced by the environment. There are extrovert and introvert personalities. According to Carl Jung’s theory in the thesis entitled “Introvertedness of Kayla in *Eighth Grade* Movie (2018) Directed by Bo Burnham: A Jungian Perspective” written by Shalsabila Luthfiah Astha in 2023, the characteristic of an introverted person is she usually prefers to be alone. Kayla Day, the main character, has been proven an introverted person. It can be seen from her introverted personality type of mind, feeling, sensing, and intuition. Kayla’s introverted personality types of feelings are quiet and shy. Therefore, from the result of this thesis, the writer considers Kayla as an introverted person who is quiet and shy but she still wants to have friends.

The writer would like to study the causes, the symptoms, the impacts of Kayla’s inferiority complex, and the psychological treatments that Kayla does to overcome her inferiority complex using Alfred Adler’s theory of inferiority complex. The writer uses Adler’s theory because it is the relevant theory to analyze a child or an adolescent’s inferiority complex in this coming-of-age movie, *Eighth Grade*. The writer chooses this movie because this is a great movie

that brings an honest representation of girlhood in the most awkward time or transition from junior high to senior high school. This analysis of the inferiority complex can be awareness of the importance of inferiority feeling for everyone. This problem suffers from all children including Indonesian girls.

Kayla's introvertedness might be the main cause of Kayla's inferiority complex in *Eighth Grade* uses Alfred Adler's theory of inferiority complex. The writer hopes this research of Kayla's inferiority complex can be a reminder that every human has an inferiority feeling that can change to be an inferiority complex if she has no strong motivation to overcome her inferiority. Moreover, an inferiority complex causes by anything and finish by accepting herself first. The writer also hopes this research can give many insights for future research that has similarity to the topic, theory, or movie.

## **1.2 Research Problems**

To know the Kayla's inferiority complex in *Eighth Grade*, the researcher has four research problems:

1. What are the causes of Kayla's inferiority complex in Bo Burnham *Eighth Grade*?
2. What are the symptoms of Kayla's inferiority complex in Bo Burnham *Eighth Grade*?
3. What are the impacts of Kayla's inferiority complex in Bo Burnham *Eighth Grade*?
4. What are the psychological treatments that Kayla does to overcome her inferiority complex in Bo Burnham *Eighth Grade*?

### 1.3 Objectives of the Study

In relevance to the research problems above, the objectives of this study are:

1. To describe the causes of Kayla's inferiority complex in Bo Burnham *Eighth Grade*.
2. To describe the symptoms of Kayla's inferiority complex in Bo Burnham *Eighth Grade*.
3. To describe the impacts of Kayla's inferiority complex in Bo Burnham *Eighth Grade*.
4. To describe the psychological treatments that Kayla does to overcome her inferiority complex in Bo Burnham *Eighth Grade*.

### 1.4 Previous Studies

The writer found 10 of similar previous studies about *Eighth Grade* movie to indicate the topic of this research is new. The 10 previous studies that the writer got written by Shalsabila Luthfiah Astha, Aida Nabila, Emma Moorhouse, Shauna Pomerantz, Célia Belim, Beatriz Mota Duarte, Kaleb A. Liermann, Hana Panggabean Herawati, Rustono Farady Marta, Changsong Wang, Meg Roberts, Jennifer Lee O'Donnell, and Hayuningrum Prabawanti.

There are no previous studies that discuss about Kayla's inferiority complex using Alfred Adler's theory of inferiority complex. The previous studies discuss about Kayla's introvertedness, *Eighth Grade's* politeness strategies, cinematic representation of girlhood in *Eighth Grade*, *Eighth Grade's* anxiety disorders depicted, the footage and the story of *Eighth Grade*, and the role of social media on identity shaping in *Eighth Grade*.

From the 10 previous studies, the first study is “Introvertedness of Kayla in *Eighth Grade* Movie (2018) Directed by Bo Burnham: A Jungian Perspective” by Shalsabila Luthfiah Astha in 2023. She is an English Education major from Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta. This thesis discusses the Kayla’s introvertedness based on Jungian perspective. The result of this study is Kayla is an introvert who still wants to making friends. Kayla shows introvert personality type through her behavior and speech.

From the 10 previous studies, the second study is “Positive and Negative Politeness Strategies from *Eighth Grade* Movie” by Aida Nabila in 2023. She is a student of English Literature in Nasional University. This thesis discusses positive and negative politeness strategies in *Eighth Grade* movie based on Brown and Levinson’s theory of positive and negative politeness strategies. The result of this study is negative politeness strategies is most dominant strategy used by all characters.

From the 10 previous studies, the third study is “*Eighth Grade* and *Booksmart*: Cinematic Representations of American Girlhood in 2010s” by Emma Moorhouse in 2022. She is a student of Lincoln School of Film, Media and Journalism College of Arts. The result of this study is *Eighth Grade* brings new uncommon genre. It represents a girlhood through the use of social media that influence the main character’s, Kayla, identity formation. Bo Burnham is considered to be successful to show the representation of generation ‘Z’ who obsess with social media. This movie also depicts a ‘profeminist’ fatherhood from daughter-father relationship. Kayla’s father encourages agency in his daughter.

From the 10 previous studies, the fourth study is “Immanent Cinematic Girlhoods: the ordinary affects in/of *Eighth Grade*” by Shauna Pomerantz in 2021. She is a student of Child and Youth Studies Brock University. This article discusses about immanent ontology through Kayla as the main character based on Kathleen Stewart’s concepts of worlding and ordinary affects. The result of this study is *Eighth Grade* movie presents immanent cinematic girlhood through the main character. *Eighth Grade* avoids the oversimplifications that plague many teen girl films in the twenty-first century. *Eighth Grade* reduces Kayla as a teenager who is uncommon girl and cannot be imagined, not as the static representation of a girl who depends on social culture and material.

From the 10 previous studies, the fifth study is “It is Represented in the Media, so it Exists: Anxiety in the Movies ‘Eighth Grade’ and ‘Silver Linings Playbook’” by Célia Belim from University of Lisbon and Beatriz Mota Duarte from Catholic University of Portugal in 2022. This article compares two movies about how they represent the anxiety disorders and the characters cope their mental illness. The results of this study are how does the moviemaker brings anxiety disorders representation through the physical, linguistic, and behavioral characteristic Kayla’s physical characterization can be seen from what she wears. Kayla’s linguistic characterization are she feels nervous when she talks to other people, she uses repetition word because of her hesitation, stuttering, and her difficulty when articulating words. Kayla’s behavioral characteristic is manifesting and initiating to be confident.

From the 10 previous studies, the sixth study is “*Eighth Grade: Found Footage and Found Story*” by Kaleb A. Liermann from Grand Valley State University in 2020. This article discusses the true meaning of the footages in *Eighth Grade*. The result of this study is Kayla is described as an adolescent who faces various adolescence problems.

From the 10 previous studies, the seventh study is “Social Media and Identity Formation: Content Analysis of Movie “Eighth Grade”” by Hana Pangabean Herawati, Rustono Farady Marta, and Changsong Wang from Atma Jaya Catholic University of Indonesia in 2021. This article discusses how the role of social media use affects young identity shaping effects based on Luyckx’s perspective on identity formation theory and the identity model of the deindividuation effect. The result of this study is Kayla shows a different identity in social media and her real life.

From the 10 previous studies, the eighth study is “Virtual Realities: Social Media and Coming of Age in *Eighth Grade*” written by Meg Roberts in 2019. This article discusses the realistic representation of adolescents nowadays. The result of this study is *Eighth Grade* brings adolescence or a time transition period and the adolescent’s problems during that time through the main character.

From the 10 previous studies, the ninth study is “Groomed for Capitalism: Biopower and the Self-care, Self-improvement Rituals of Adolescence in Bo Burnham’s *Eighth Grade* and Donald Glover’s *Atlanta*” by Jennifer Lee O’Donnell in 2020. The article discusses Kayla as the main character who is

searching for identity through social media that focuses on self-care and self-improvement. The result of this study is Kayla tries to improve her confidence by using social media, such as Instagram, Snapchat, and Youtube.

From the 10 previous studies, the tenth study “Kayla Day’s Identity Crisis Depicted in *Eighth Grade*” by Hayuningrum Prabawanti in 2019. She is a student of Brawijaya University. This thesis discusses Kayla’s identity crisis. The result of this study is Kayla’s identity crisis as a result of the pressure to fulfill social standards in the environment.

Based on the 10 previous studies above, this thesis is not similar to the previous studies. To indicate that this thesis has a new topic that is different from the previous studies, the writer would like to analyze the inferiority complex of the main character, Kayla Day, in *Eighth Grade* using Alfred Adler’s theory of inferiority complex. The writer found some evidences that is considered an inferiority complex, but the previous studies do not mention it, such as the causes, symptoms, impacts of Kayla’s inferiority complex, and the psychological treatments that Kayla does to overcome her inferiority complex.

### **1.5 Scope of Study**

The research discussion is based on the movie using the film script of *Eighth Grade* and the movie itself. This research focuses on Kayla’s inferiority complex in Bo Burnham *Eighth Grade*. This research describes the causes of Kayla’s inferiority complex, the symptoms of Kayla’s inferiority complex, the impacts of Kayla’s inferiority complex, and the psychological treatments that



Kayla does to overcome her inferiority complex using Alfred Adler's theory of inferiority complex.

## **1.6 Writing Organization**

The writer divides this research into four chapters to deliver clear explanations about the research problems in writing organization below.

### **CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION**

The first chapter consists of the background of the study, research problems, objectives of the study, previous studies, scope of the study, and writing organization.

### **CHAPTER II: THEORY AND METHOD**

The second chapter consists of theoretical framework and research methods. Theoretical framework delivers the intrinsic elements and the extrinsic elements. Research methods delivers the method of data collection and the method of data analysis.

### **CHAPTER III: DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

The third chapter contains the result of analysis regarding the research problems. This chapter describes Kayla Day's inferiority complex using Alfred Adler's theory of inferiority complex.

### **CHAPTER IV: CONCLUSION**

The last chapter delivers the conclusion of the analysis.