

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Intrinsic Elements

2.1.1 Character and Characterization

A character is the essence or role of “any of the persons presented in a story or play” (Johnson & Arp, 2018: 1635). Without characters, a story does not work, because characters play a crucial role in the storyline. Molinski and Slessor classify characters based on their importance, namely main, secondary, and minor characters. However, in this thesis, the writer focuses only on analyzing the main and secondary characters, since the characters to be analyzed fall into these two categories.

In defining the main and secondary characters, Molinski and Slessor state that “main characters are the most important to the action in the story” (2023: 74). This character appears most frequently in the story, is always connected to the main conflict, and is key to the development of the plot. A secondary character is a character that “written about often in the story and are important but not as much as the main character” (Molinski & Slessor, 2023: 74). Usually, these characters do not have deep inner conflicts. Main and secondary characters can be distinguished based on whether they are important figures because they are at the center of the story's conflict or not.

Characters have a very close relationship with characterization. Johnson and Arp define characterization as “The various literary means by which characters are

presented.” (2018: 1635). There are two methods to determine characterization in literary works based on the explanation from Johnson and Arp (2018). They are direct and indirect characterization. Direct characterization occurs when authors “tell us straight out, by exposition or analysis, what the characters are like, or they have another character in the story describe them.” (Johnson & Arp, 2018: 143). Direct characterization allows readers to immediately identify the character’s personality through the author’s description.

Indirect characterization occurs when “the author shows us the characters through their actions; we determine what they are like by what they say or do.” (Johnson & Arp, 2018: 143). Indirect characterization allows readers to analyze and carefully guess the character’s personality because the author does not write directly about it.

2.1.2 Setting

Setting is one of the intrinsic elements that greatly influences the storyline. Kenny defines setting as “the point in time and space at which the events of the plot occur.” (1966: 38). She divides the four elements that compose the setting into (1) geography; (2) occupations and modes; (3) time; and (4) the religious, moral, intellectual, social, and emotional/atmosphere of the characters. In this case, the writer focuses on discussing the geographical, time, and emotional/atmosphere settings, which greatly influence the analysis of Jenny Han’s novel *To All the Boys I’ve Loved Before* in this thesis. Geographical setting refers to “the actual geographical location, including topography, scenery, even the details of a room’s

interior.” (Kenny, 1966: 40). This setting is important because location can influence how characters live or the problems they face. To analyze the story, it is also necessary to consider the time setting, namely the period “in which the action takes place, e.g., historical period, season of the year.” (Kenny, 1966: 40). This setting illustrates how the situation is constantly changing and how the characters develop in response to it. Meanwhile, emotional/atmosphere setting is “a kind of mood or emotional aura suggested primarily by the setting and helping to establish the reader’s expectations.” (Kenny, 1966: 41). This setting makes readers feel as if they are experiencing the atmosphere of the literary work, not just “seeing” and imagining the place.

2.1.3 Conflict

Johnson and Arp define conflict as “a clash of actions, desires, ideas, or goals in the plot of a story or drama.” (2018: 1636). They believe that characters can experience two types of conflict in the story, known as internal conflict and external conflict. Internal conflict is a “conflict of person against himself or herself” (Johnson & Arp, 2018: 98). This conflict arises from a conflict of emotions, thoughts, or desires of the character, such as dilemma or doubt. External conflict is a “conflict of person against person” (Johnson & Arp, 2018: 98). This conflict emphasizes problems that arise from outside oneself. It is different from feelings of sadness or confusion experienced by the heart.

2.2 Anxiety

Anxiety is a psychological response that arises from the accumulation of excitation (or libido) that cannot be released. Freud *et al.* define anxiety as “a libidinal impulse which has its origin in the unconscious and is inhibited by the preconscious” (1959: 79). They also emphasize that anxiety is “a reaction to a situation of danger” (Freud *et al.*, 1959: 128). The reaction is to a dangerous situation, where emotions signal a threat. Anxiety often occurs as a result of psychological repression, where libidinal urges from the unconscious are blocked by the preconscious.

Freud divides anxiety into three types, namely realistic anxiety, neurotic anxiety, and moral anxiety. Realistic anxiety is “anxiety about a known danger” (Freud *et al.*, 1959: 165). Realistic anxiety is related to external and recognized dangers. For example, when an individual feel anxious because of a real reason, such as fear of school exams. The individual recognizes the cause of this form of anxiety.

Neurotic anxiety is “anxiety about an unknown danger” (Freud *et al.*, 1959: 165). Neurotic anxiety related to internal dangers that have not been consciously identified by the individual. For example, when an individual suddenly becomes worried that something bad might happen even though there is no apparent danger. This anxiety occurs without the individual knowing the exact reason.

Moral anxiety is a form of anxiety that perceives a threat from internal norms or values emphasized by the superego, such as guilt or fear of moral transgression.

Freud *et al.* compare moral anxiety to how “the father has become depersonalized in the shape of the super-ego, so has the fear of castration at his hands” (1959: 128).

2.3 Defense Mechanism

Defense mechanisms are ways used to deal with conflicts or threats arising from instinctual drives that are painful or unbearable. The aim is to protect an individual from excessive pain, anxiety, or psychological distress. Anna Freud emphasizes that “defense mechanisms are brought into operation against the instincts, with all the familiar results in the formation of neuroses and neurotic characteristics” (1966: 59).

Although there are many ways people use to protect themselves through defense mechanisms, in this thesis the writer focuses on the types of defense mechanisms most frequently used by the main character. The mechanisms discussed include projection, denial, and displacement. These three mechanisms are described in more detail in the following paragraphs.

First, projection is an action taken to shift unacceptable desires to other people. Anna Freud describes that “the effect of the mechanism of projection is to break the connection between the ideational representatives of dangerous instinctual impulses and the ego” (1966: 122). In other words, this mechanism frees a person from feelings of guilt because those negative impulses seem to come from someone else.

Second, denial is a form of refusal to acknowledge a threatening or painful reality. Denial based on “the fantasy of the reversal of the real facts into their

opposite, is employed in situations in which it is impossible to escape some painful external impression.” (Freud, 1966: 96). This quote shows that an individual will deny painful facts and create an opposing reality to protect their mental.

Finally, displacement is a form of self-protection by transferring emotions to other objects that are considered less threatening. Through displacement “prohibited forms of gratification are exchanged for other modes of enjoyment” (Freud, 1966: 155). Therefore, those emotions do not actually disappear but are simply being released through alternative methods that are considered safer.

