

INTROVERTNESS OF A MALE CHARACTER PORTRAYED IN STEPHEN CHBOSKY'S THE PERKS OF BEING A WALLFLOWER

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Abstract

The Perks of Being a Wallflower is a novel written by Stephen Chbosky. this novel is about a quiet boy who does not like school. He is always alone and likes to observe others. The aim of this study is to find out the characteristics of an introvert in the main character, the factors that cause introvertness, and the impact of introvertness on the main character. The method used in this research is qualitative research. The theory used is psychoanalysis theory by Carl G. Jung, they are personality theory, psychological types, and the theory of the unconscious. The writer applies psychological types theory since it covers some relevant aspects to answer the problem formulated. The result of this study can be formulated as follows. First, Charlie has five introvert characteristics observant, not like a crowded place, having a small circle of friends, spending time in his room, and being sensitive. Second, the factors that caused Charlie's become introvert are his unstable emotions and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and his family support. Third, the impact on his life is that he has an anxiety disorder and is called a freak, and is bullied by his friends.

Keywords: psychoanalysis, personality, introvert, characteristic, causes, impact.

INTRODUCTION

Personality is divided into two types extrovert and introvert. An introvert in Cambridge Dictionary is someone shy, quiet, and prefers to spend time alone rather than often being with other people. In other words, introvert people like a quiet place with fewer people as they will feel uncomfortable in a place full of people. Introvert people are not sociable but it does not mean that they are anti-social, it only drains their energy quickly. Introvert people usually recharge their energy when they have quality time alone. They are more comfortable with people in their small circle of friends, they choose to have a small number of people they are comfortable with than many people they find unfamiliar with. They spend their time mostly in their room, their most comfortable place to enjoy their time alone. Introvert people always think about everything carefully before deciding as they always think about any possibility before making a decision. Introvert people are one of the best listeners in conversation, they are also good observant. They have enormous knowledge about everything they are interested in.

An extrovert is the opposite of an introvert as Cambridge Dictionary said that an extrovert is an energetic person who enjoys being with other people. It means that extrovert people enjoy other people's company, and they enjoy the social event. They also avoid being alone for a long time as they will feel unenergetic while they are alone. They are fine with anyone as they always find a topic to talk about with different people. Extrovert people recharge their energy by socializing. They will be full of energy while they are in a circle full of new people. They are categorized also as the type who makes a decision quickly as they take action first before they think about the outcome. In a conversation, extrovert people are the one who starts a

conversation and talking more than listening as they always find a new topic to talk about. They also like to be the center of attention in every conversation.

The impact of introvert and extrovert personality can be seen in the pandemic period. Pandemic period means to lock down, it means that everyone has to stay at home and cannot go out of their house if it is not something important. The school was closed, many workplaces must take a rest and many workers have to lose their job, even marked have to closed for a period of times. People with introverted personality will be delighted in this period because it is mean that they can spend their quality time alone far away from social interaction. People with extrovert personality will find this period as something disastrous as they cannot get out of their house mean they cannot hang out with their friends and cannot enjoy any social interaction as it is prohibited. Spending all days inside the house will make extrovert people deplete their energy and they cannot recharge their energy fully as they cannot interact with many people. There is Berg an extrovert who shared about what he felt in this pandemic era, he said that he was desperate for the pressure-release valve found in the company of friends. But that valve — one through which he needed to externalize my despair — had been shut off. He also added that his wife who is an introvert is calmer in this situation (Berg, 2020). Despite that in one research done by the Swiss research team about the pandemic impact for introverts and extroverts they conclude that the findings revealed that those high in introversion who was able to draw upon these adaptive emotion-regulating strategies indeed were best able to preserve their well-being and relief from loneliness. Extroverts fared less well throughout the study primarily because rather than use adaptive emotion regulation strategies, they tended to suppress their despair (Whitbourne, 2020)

In this study, the writer will use Stephen Chbosky *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* novel as an object. *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* is the story of an introverted male student named Charlie, he never enjoyed his life with his friend in his school, or to be exact, he does not have someone to call a 'friend'. The story started with Charlie writing a letter to an anonymous person and telling them about his everyday life. he said that he hopes the school is quickly over even though the semester has just started. Because of his personality, many people are worried about him. His teacher even asks him to participate more in a social activity like an extracurricular or party which he never attends. One day, he meets Patrick and his sister Sam. After he met them, he started to participate in any kind of event and starts to meet new friends. Slowly as time flies, he started to be open up his heart to his friends and become happier and join in conversation not only listening (Chbosky, 1999). The writer will use it as object and tried to find out the characteristics of introvertness in the male character, the factors that cause the male character to be an introvert person, and the impacts of introvertness of the male character.

METHODOLOGY

The type of study in this research is qualitative research in nature. According to Creswell (2013), qualitative research is a research method to explore and understand the meaning that some individuals or groups of people think come from social or human problems (LP2M Universitas Medan Area, 2020). This study focuses on the context-oriented approach. The term context-oriented approaches refer here to a heterogeneous group of schools and methodologies which do no longer regard literary texts as self-contained, impartial works of art but attempt to area them inside a bigger context. Relying on the motion, this context can be history, social and political background, literary genre, nationality, or gender (M. Klarer, 2004). To make good and valid

results, the writer did several steps. First, the writer collected the data source for this research the first was Stephen Chbosky's novel *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*. It contains information about the main object of this research. The additional data source of this research came from other books, journals, and websites that relate to the topics of this research. Second, the writer read the data sources for this research and identified the object observation related to behaviors, actions, intentions, reasons, and effects and made it into a list. Third, the writer analyzed the list using psychoanalysis theory, especially Carl Jung's psychological types theory and theory of collective unconscious. And lastly, the writer had to interpret the objective of the study, that were to find out the characteristic, causes and the impact of the introvertness of the male character in Stephen Chbosky's novel *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*.

The theory that the writer used in this thesis is using Carl Jung's Psychoanalysis Approach: Psychological Types and Theory of Collective Unconsciousness. In psychological types, he divided personality into general types Introvert and Extravert and is influenced by an individual's adaptation or orientation to life. He also called introverts as general attitude types, since they are distinguished by the direction of general interest or libido movement, while extravert as function type. Extraverts usually show that objective value plays a greater role than subjective value to determine the factor of their consciousness. He was more focused on the external force, he got important and decisive determination from without (out of himself) or he expects it. Extravert actions are also governed by the influence of a person or things. Extravert types always have a way to adjust in any conditions. The extravert types are constantly tempted to give themselves in favor of the object and to assimilate the subject to the object. The measures of the extraversion in the conscious attitude entail a degree of infantilism and archaism in the attitude of the unconscious. The introvert relied on the outer impression of the subject. The introvert attitude is influenced by the psychological structure, which is determined by heredity but it always becomes a subjective factor to the subject. The Self is far more extensive than the ego because it included the unconscious, which is the latter is essentially the focal point of the consciousness. The contents of the collective unconsciousness are manifested in consciousness as different behavior or different ways of seeing things. (C. Jung, 1921)

In Theory of collective unconsciousness, Jung's stated that the entire personality is present from birth and that personality is not simply a function of the environment, as was thought at the time he was developing his ideas, but rather it brings out what is already present. The environment's role is to emphasize and develop aspects that are already present in the individual. Ego and the Self take a great part in bringing out people's personalities. The nature of the unconscious related to consciousness is investigated in an attempt to disapprove the psyche is equivalent to consciousness. The unconsciousness is made up of everything that has been forgotten, repressed, and perceived by the senses but not expressed. All future conscious mind contents that are recognized by the conscious mind developed in the unconscious, and the content of the psychoid system. It is assumed that they are much the same as the conscious ego when they are perception, feeling, thinking, violation, and intention all exist in the same way. The unconscious was a subconscious. Subconscious processes seem to stretch across a broad spectrum of behavior ranging from conscious to instinct. There is still one distinction, in the area of feeling complexes (C. G. Jung, 1975).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Characteristic of Introvert Portrayed by The Male Character of The Perks of Being a Wallflower

Based on Jung's Psychological Types, the writer find five introvert characteristic portrayed by the male character. They are observant, do not like crowded places, having a small circle of friends, like to spend time alone, and sensitive.

Being observant

The first characteristic is observant. It is a special trait of an introvert person that is shown clearly in Charlie's characteristics. Adding the fact that an introvert is a thinking type of person, is also the reason why an introvert is a good observant. They always think one to thousand ways of what will happen before ever starting do something. It made them think something deeply, it also applied when they observe someone or something. On many occasions in the story, the author always shows how Charlie observes others as he sits and watches people passing by. Then he will start to observe them and play some possibilities that will happen to them in his mind. He can take hours only to observe others, which made him not participate in any activity. He does it every time and everywhere. It started from he was a kid, he watches his family members and started to observe what they do. He also does it in school, as he rarely joins any activity, he spends his time observing others do their activity, in the hallway, or field. He was observing others at the dance party too, but he did not join, he stands to the side and watch his friends dance. In other places, he observes people in the mall, he got the nickname wallflower because of his observant nature, he neither asks nor talks, only listens and understands.

Charlie Does Not Like Crowded Places

This is one of the special characteristics of introvert people, they do not like crowded places full of people because it drained their energy faster. They need a peaceful place with a small number of people or they usually just spend their days in their room. Charlie also has this trait as he does not like to go to school, which is shown at the start of the story that he hates going to school and he wanted the school ends faster as he does not like attending it. On many occasions Charlie shows how much he does not like attending school. He said in the letter he sent to an anonymous person that he is afraid or most uncomfortable because he knows no one at his new school, and he has difficulties approaching others. it can be because he got unpleasant memories from middle school. It also can be because he feels uncomfortable in a school full of unknown people. It is one of introvert characteristic, which is they will feel uncomfortable around unknown people, moreover when the place is full of people.

Having a Small Circle of Friends

Introverts are typically had trust issue, they had a hard time opening up their heart to others. Their cold façade also made them look like ignorant who did not want to befriend others. They have a difficulty starting a conversation or even staying in a conversation. In middle school Charlie only have one close friend, Michael. After Michael passed away, he does not have any friends. It continues in high school until he meets Patrick and Sam who later become his close friends. Since introvert people usually only have small circle of friends they become possessive toward their friends. It also happens to Charlie, when Patrick and Sam get close to their boyfriends he become jealous, as they rarely spend their time with him. As he only has a few friends he treats them precious. We can see how precious friend is for introvert person, as they do not have many friends, they will do anything they feel is right to help their friends. He is ready to help Patrick anytime he can, he never leaves Patrick alone and be a good listener to everything he shared. Introvert usually treat their friendship precious and will do anything for their friends as long as it is within their capabilities.

Charlie Likes to Spend Time Alone

This is also one characteristic of introvert people, which mostly every introvert person possessed. As introverts, people do not like crowded places they usually need a quiet place to recharge their energy and the most effective choice is their house in their room, where they spend their spare time. This thing also applied to Charlie, when he was feeling down or feels too tired to attend any social occasion, he chooses to spend his time in his room, reading a book to avert his mind from tiring days. He also shows that he is spending his time alone sometimes. It happens when he feels tired from everything that happened to him for days. When he cannot take it anymore, he will choose to be alone. In the novel, it has shown a few times how Charlie chooses to spend his time in his room when he was tired of thinking or spend his time in school or other activities. Charlie usually spends his time reading books, as he stated that he likes to read books more than once. He also like to listen to music, listening to music is one of activities people do alone, they usually listen to music at their house or when they are outside they will use a headset so they can enjoy the music they like without any disturbance. It is a typical thing an introvert does to recharge themselves. Music has a calming energy, which helped people feel at ease, it also happens to Charlie, he listens to music to recharge his energy. He likes to walk alone after school, taking time walking around alone usually helps people to feel at peace. It is something an introvert needed after spending a long day in a crowd. Charlie is used to hiding from something he does not like. It is normal for introvert people to run away from something they do not like, they usually leave all the trouble and went to a quiet place to refresh their inner self.

Being Sensitive

Introvert people usually are sensitive; they easily feel sad or hurt. Despite never showing it outside which usually only shows a cold expression or not show any expression, their heart is soft and sensitive to negative feelings more than positive feelings. In the story, as it used Charlie's point of view, we can see how emotional he is, most of the time. It shows how it is also part of the introvert characteristic in Charlie's character. In the novel, we can find many times Charlie cannot stop crying. When his close friend passed away, after he beat his bully, and more. It shows how he has soft heart, as he become emotional almost immediately when something happens, like when he feels sad for his grandfather because of his sorrowful past. It was not something he needs to think about, but his sensitive hearth feels it, and hade him sad.

The Factors That Cause the Male Character to be an Introvert

In his theory, the collective unconscious, Jung's said that the unconscious was a subconscious. Subconscious processes seem to stretch across a broad spectrum of behaviour ranging from conscious to instinct. It can affect someone's personality, in this case, Charlie's introvert personality. In Psychological Types, Jung's also added that external factor also affects someone's personality. Although someone's personality is something that is determined from when they're born. But it also does not erase the probability of other factors changing it. Moreover, nowadays society has a variety of things whether positive or negative. The writer will divide the factors into internal and external.

Internal Factor

In this factor, the writer will apply the Unconscious theory by Jung to find out what the factor might be the cause of Charlie's Introvertness. Jung stated that someone's unconscious mind is the accumulation of forgotten, repressed, and perceived memory that has not been expressed. He also stated that it is one factor that established someone's personality. The first factor is unstable emotions. Charlie is someone who cannot express his feeling well, it made him repress them and forget about them. from the start of the story, it can be seen that he cannot

trust people easily, and choose to tell his story to an anonymous person whom he did not know. Charlie has unstable emotions from the start which made him harder to get close to others as it made others uncomfortable. Since it is rare for him to express his emotions, it made others happy when he finally showed it. His unstable emotions also shown when he lost his close friend who passed away because of suicide. It made him extremely upset, and it was hard to control his emotions. Because of his unstable emotions, his doctor prevented him to participate in any sports activity, because it made him more aggressive.

The second factor is he had Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). At the end of the story, it also shows that Charlie had some psychological problems, as in some parts of the story he talked about his psychologist or doctor's advice when him visiting them. First, when his best friend commit suicide, he said that it seems the psychologist know him even before he introduced himself. Second, when he said that he can never play a sport which made him aggressive and his doctor told her mother that he had to stop. At another time, he also said that he does not want to enter the hospital and made him stay there again. It some of the time when Charlie shows that he had some health problem, to be precise, psychological problem. And at the end of the novel, it is revealed that he had Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder or PTSD.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder is a psychiatric disorder that can occur in people who have experienced or witnessed a traumatic event such as a natural disaster, a serious accident, a terrorist act, war/combat, or rape, or who have been threatened with death, sexual violence, or serious injury. (Andreasen, 2011) Charlie's PTSD was related to his Aunt molesting him when he was a kid. In Charlie's case, his PTSD causes by his close friend suicide and aunt accident. He cannot forget it fully, but he does not want to made his family sad and send him to Psychiatric again. He ended up repressed his sadness and it built up inside him. And it made him forgotten about the real reasons of his traumatic accident.

External Factor

In Psychological Theory, Jung stated that external factors can influence someone's personality. It is common to assume that Family has an important role to build up someone's personality. Someone who lived in a strict family will make them have an introvert personality, whereas a family who gives their child freedom will make them more extrovert. In some cases, a parent who gave freedom to their children also has an introvert child, as they give support to them to build their personality. It applied to Charlie's family, who always support him in everything he chooses to do. It may have relations to his PTSD, so his family always tried to make him happy and fulfil his wishes. It can be seen at the start of the story when Charlie describes his family.

His family always showered him with care and concern, as he had unstable emotions, they tried to made him comfortable at home. He has the freedom to build his personality freely. As he had an introvert personality from the start, his family also did not mind it and always support him whether what he wants to do, which made him more secretive. He becomes talkative at home and become quiet when he was outside. He becomes an unsocial person, who likes to stay at home where his loved one is. But his family support his choice to stay at home and rarely goes out as they are worried about his unstable emotions and anxiety. It means that his family also takes a part of his introvert personality. In explicit or implicit ways, their ways of treating him at home made him spoiled and the outside world become a place that made him uncomfortable.

The Impact of Introvertness on the Male Character

In *Psychological Types*, Jung has showed how is the impact of introversion to the introvert person. In this study, the writer will use it as the foundation to find out the impact of introversion on Charlie, the main character of *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*. The writer will divide it into two, psychological aspect and Societal Stigma.

Psychological Aspect

An introvert has a nature to thinking about something deeper and mostly drowned in his own thought, sometimes it makes them forget about where and when they are. As Jung has stated that this nature makes Introvert has tendency of ferocious anxiety. It is not something special for introvert person to thinking something deeply, or play some plays in their head, but it becomes serious when an introvert cannot control their anxiety and drowned into it. Charlie also has tendency of it, as it is described in the story, Charlie has anxiety disorder. Anxiety disorders are one of the mental health, which happen when someone has an anxiety beyond the regular nervousness and slight fear you may feel from time to time. Some indicator of anxiety disorders are feelings of nervousness, panic and fear as well as sweating and a rapid heartbeat (Bertrand, 2020). In some moment, Charlie also shows those symptoms. Charlie has difficulty to concentrating on one thing, he will end up thinks about many things and they mostly flashed in his mind and he cannot control it. He also stated that he started to have a breathing problem as he cannot focus his mind on something. In other times he also started to throw up and he can stop thinking about stuff. All things come to him at the same time, which made him lose his focus and he started to lose his consciousness. It seems that he usually forgets about what happened when his anxiety disorder relapse, since the next time he does not remember everything that has happened to him.

Societal Stigma

Jung has said in *Psychological Types* that an introvert has an observant, cold, and inconsiderate characteristic, mostly find themselves cannot blend in with others, and turn out made themselves feel uneasy and uninvited. They also have a strong perspective on things that made them hard to be persuaded. It made them hard to blend into society, it also made society treat them as different creatures than them. As it is said that society is a mirror of yourself, it means that what happens in society is what you have done in them. An introvert could not care less about what they do in society, as they do what they like, they did not care about others judging them, that was one of their characteristics.

Charlie as an introvert has to encounter all stigma in society which causes by his natural character. The first societal stigma Charlie get is being bullied by his friends. It is normal for introvert people avoided or be ignored by others, only a few people will pay attention to them. Many people tried to avoid him on purpose and others wanted to bully him because he is different from others. In Charlie's case, the one who gives him attention is bullies. As introvert person is identical with nerd who is weak and afraid of others, he also got bullied, but he knows how to defend himself, since his brother taught him how to do it. Introvert people usually have a unique personality and it made him draw some unwanted attention from others. The second societal stigma is how others look at Charlie. He got special treatment from his surrounding as he is different from others. his ignorant characteristic shows clearly, which made others only look at him weirdly. He is well aware of why others look at him strangely, but he chooses to ignore it. Some kids look at me strange in the hallways because I don't decorate my locker, and I'm the one who beat up Sean and couldn't stop crying after he did it. The third societal stigma is Charlie got called a freak. Freak is used to describe someone or something abnormal. He got called that as he always doing unusual things. Such as rarely

talking to someone in the school, always getting straight A's, never joining any extracurricular, he ignored others and being strong-headed, he is always in his small world everywhere, and more. The fourth societal stigma is Charlie got called as teacher's pet because he always hangs around Bill, his English teacher. Introvert people tend to hang around people who made them feel safe and comfortable. In Charlie's case, he likes to hang around Bill as he made him feel comfortable. Since Bill always gives him exercise and help him to understand his surroundings. He got the nickname because others were envious of him, and thought that he got special treatment from the teacher.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion for this studies are follows. The first problem is about the male character's introverted characteristic. There are five characteristics that the writer found in Charlie, which show that he is an introvert. Those five characteristics are observant, not like a crowded place, having a small circle of friends likes to spending time in his room, and being sensitive. Those characteristics are analysed using the Psychological Types theory by Carl G. Jung. The method used in Psychological Types is describing how introvert characteristics from Jung's perspective.

The second problem is about the factors that cause the male character to have an introvert personality. There are two factors, internal and external. The internal factor is Charlie has unstable emotions, he cannot control his emotions effectively. He also repressed his emotion when he was a child after he lose his aunt and best friend, his loss was too much for him to handle but he does not want to make his family worried, and it made him has PTSD, which made him more closed to other people. The external factor is his family, his family knew that Charlie is an introvert, but they nevertheless accept him. They always made him comfortable with what he does, which made him comfortable at home and never go out of home except to school.

The third problem is about the impact of the male character's introvertness. His introvert personality has impacted him psychologically and others people's way to treat him. Psychologically, he had anxiety disorder caused by his thinking habit. His observant characteristic has made him think something too deep, and when he cannot control it sometimes it became anxiety. His anxiety started to become too much and he ended up having an anxiety disorder. Societal stigma Charlie accept are they called him a freak, because of his unique characteristics. They also bullied him and mistreat him in many ways, as they find him different.

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