



Charlie Davis's anxiety in Kathleen Glasgow *Girl in Pieces*

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Abstract. Anxiety disorder is an excessive fear and worry about something bad going on. Anxiety can bring influence in the someone's character. When a people feel anxious and uncomfortable, they can find ways to overcome their anxiety. This study discusses about the Charlie Davis's anxiety and the causes and effects of Charlie's anxiety. The method used is the descriptive qualitative method. Data is collected from every page of the novel which includes every quote or conversation by reading, highlights and repeating with everything related to this thesis. By combining theories by Sigmund Freud, Boeree, Nevid, and Narramore, this study aims to gain a more comprehensive understanding of anxiety because they are considered most appropriate for analyzing Charlie Davis' anxiety. After analyzing the novel, the writer finds that there are some anxieties experienced by Charlie Davis such as feelings of confinement and isolation, she has a selective mutism, difficulty breathing, panic attacks, inability to concentrate, hypervigilance, fear of something that happens in the future and avoidance behavior. There are several underlying causes why Charlie Davis develop the anxiety disorder such as her father committed suicide, sexual abuse, child neglect, violence by her mother, bullying, best friend died, homelessness and poverty. The causes of Charlie's anxiety affects her life. The effects are: she reserves herself, blame on her, lost trust in other, self-harm, drug and alcohol misuse. After that, the writer finds out how Charlie Davis overcomes her anxiety. There are several things that help Charlie Davis get better, the first is that Charlie finds a new environment that can understand her pain. Then, Charlie become a creative human being with art therapy. And Charlie makes the decision to move a new place to get a better life in Arizona.

Keywords: *Anxiety, Fear, Self-harm, Psychology, Effect*

INTRODUCTION

Health is not only seen from a physical point of view, but it can also be seen from mental health. The most common mental disorder occurs when a person experiences depression and anxiety disorders. Anxiety disorder is an excessive fear and worry about something bad going on. According to Freud's perspective, anxiety can be described as a sensation of being under threat, overwhelmed, and on the verge of collapse due to the weight of various circumstances (Boeree, 2016). Anxiety is characterized by physical symptoms such as physical tension and the presence of feeling of worry (Durand dan Barlow, 2006). The effects caused by anxiety include fear of being abandoned,

impulsive, anger, self-harm, suicide and poor interpersonal relationships. There are various ways that humans deal with psychological problems of anxiety with self defense mechanisms.

Literary works are closely relate to psychology because psychology studies human personality and behavior. The novel *Girl in Pieces* by Kathleen Glasgow's contains the problem of human psychological problems through her character. The novel consists of a psychological condition that is anxiety, one of the characters in the novel is Charlie Davis. Charlie Davis has lost her father by suicide, is physically abused by her mother, her best friend died, became homeless and poverty, threatening with rape multiple times. After receiving a diagnosis of non-suicidal self-injury, impulse control disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder, Charlie also experiences the additional challenge of selective mutism. After attempting to commit suicide, Charlie finds herself admitted to the Creeley Center, a group home specifically for girls who engage in self-harming behavior. The burden of her physical and emotional trauma becomes so overwhelming that it renders her unable to speak. The weight of her experiences takes away her voice. This experience has a great impact on Charlie's psychological condition which result in anxiety. . To overcome her anxiety, she develope defense mechanisms. Once her insurance at Creeley Center expired, she decide to travel to Tucson, Arizona to try to re-glue parts of herself. Therefore, the writer wants to analyze the way Charlie handles her psychological condition.

The writer formulates the research problem as follow:

1. How is anxiety depicted of Charlie Davis's anxiety in Kathleen Glasglow's *Girl in Pieces*?
2. What are the causes of Charlie Davis's anxiety in Kathleen Glasglow's *Girl in Pieces*?
3. What are the effect of Charlie Davis's anxiety in Kathleen Glasglow's *Girl in Pieces*?
4. How does the main character overcome her anxiety?

The writer main emphasis lies in conducting a psychological analysis based on the research problem presented in the novel *Girl in Pieces*. The writer limit this analysis to a focuses on the main character anxiety, the causes and effects of anxiety and how the main character overcome her anxiety. The writer focuses on psychological analysis related to the research problem presented in the novel *Girl in Pieces*. The writer limit this analysis to a focuses on the main character anxiety, the causes and effects of anxiety and how the main character overcome her anxiety.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Psychology and Literature

The relationship between literature and psychology is very related because they both influence and enrich each other. Literature is an imaginative theory that is varied and always changes (Wellek & Werren, 1990). Literature can explore the complexity of human emotions, motivations, and behavior in depth, and thus help us understand ourselves and others better (Shelah & Marsih, 2023). Psychology is the science of human behavior and thinking.

The Concept of Anxiety

Anxiety is an unpleasant feeling accompanied by physical sensations that warn people of imminent danger. The inability to control the mind is characterized by excessive feelings of fear and worry in the name of anxiety. Anxiety is considered a natural reaction to stress and threatening situations (Suwoto & Rahayu, 2022).

Characteristics of Anxiety

Nevid (2005:110) classifies anxiety characteristics into three types, which include the following:

1. Physiological

There are physical reactions in the body such as rapid heartbeat, trembling limbs, cold sweat, weakness or numbness, headache, anxiety, nervousness, dry mouth, selective mutism, difficulty breathing, trembling voice, stiff neck or back, abdominal pain or nausea, frequent urination, feeling sensitive or irritable.

2. Cognitive

Thoughts and feelings become uncontrollable such as worrying about trivial things, fear of something that happens in the future, difficulty concentrating, fear of losing control, fear of inability to cope with problems, thinking that everything can no longer be controlled, thinking about disturbing things repeatedly, thinking about things that interfere repeatedly, thinking about mixed or confused thoughts, worry about being left alone.

3. Behavior

Avoid anxiety-inducing situations or activities, close themselves off in social interactions, repeat certain actions repeatedly or perform excessive checking, develop self-harm behaviors as a way to relieve their anxiety, have difficulty making decisions due to excessive fear of the consequences of decisions made.

The Causes of Anxiety

A person may experience feelings of fear and guilt as a result of traumatic events in the past (Narramore, 1966: 42). Uncontrolled trauma or traumatic events can leave a deep impression on a person and cause ongoing anxiety, and affect with a person's ability to go about daily life normally.

Depression may manifest in individuals facing irregular circumstances, accompanied by symptoms like a diminished mood, pessimistic outlook, loss of spontaneity, and specific vegetative signs. Moreover, those experiencing depression often harbor thoughts that life holds little value for them (Rahmawati & Wahyono, 2022). Several factors have the potential to contribute to a period of compromised mental health. These include experiencing childhood abuse, trauma, or neglect, enduring social isolation or loneliness, facing discrimination and stigma, including racism, encountering social disadvantages such as poverty or debt, coping with bereavement (the loss of a loved one), managing severe or prolonged stress, dealing with a chronic physical health condition, experiencing unemployment or job loss, facing homelessness or residing in inadequate housing, assuming the role of a long-term caregiver for someone, struggling with substance abuse or alcoholism, being subjected to domestic violence, bullying, or other forms of abuse as an adult, and encountering significant trauma as an adult, such

as military combat, involvement in a life-threatening incident, or being a victim of a violent crime.

The Effects of Anxiety

One of the most significant effects of anxiety is its impact on social interactions. Social anxiety can occur in someone who has experienced trauma and affect their ability to interact with others in social situations. People with social anxiety may feel isolated and lonely because they find it difficult to establish relationships with others. In addition, anxiety can cause conflicts in relationships, as well as feelings of rejection and loneliness. Anxiety can have long-term effects on a person's mental health. This can increase the risk of developing depression and substance abuse disorders, non-suicidal self-injury as well as the development of other mental health conditions such as eating disorders and obsessive-compulsive disorder. Severe anxiety can cause a person to commit actions that harm themselves, such as self-harm. Self-harm can cause injury and increase the risk of infection if not handled properly. Anxiety can be a serious illness with a high risk of self-harm and suicide.

METHOD

In this thesis, the writer used psychological approach base on Wellek and Werren. Extrinsic Approach: The extrinsic approach, also known as the historical or contextual approach, considers the social, cultural, biographical, and historical factors that surround the creation and reception of a literary work (Wellek, 1967:73). In this study, The writer adopts an extrinsic approach to analyze the literary work, employing a psychological approach. The study primarily focuses on examining the causes and effects of anxiety specifically in the main character.

The writer used qualitative descriptive design. According to Creswell (2009: 4) states that qualitative research refers to a type of study that aims to investigate and comprehend the subjective meanings that individuals or groups attribute to a social or human problem. The research instrument used in this study is the researcher herself as the main instrument. That is, the researcher with all her knowledge tries to describe the inner conflict experienced by the main character.

The data source is the novel *Girl in Pieces* by Kathleen Glasgow. The first was published in hardback in New York in 2016. The data for this study are derived from multiple sources, including conversations among the characters, descriptions provided by the writer, and the thoughts expressed by the main character. These various sources contribute to the collection of relevant information and insights necessary for the analysis. The object of research is the sentences that reflect cause effect of anxiety and how the main character overcomes her anxiety through anxiety theory which will be applied in a novel called *Girl in Pieces* by Kathleen Glasgow.

The writer applies close reading techniques. In this study, the writer follows some steps, the first in collecting the data, the writer reads the novel thoroughly and evaluates specific passages that depict instances of anxiety. This evaluation aims to identify the psychological causes and effects of anxiety within the narrative. Second, the writer takes detailed notes and highlights relevant data by examining the actions of the main character, their speech, thoughts, and dialogues with other characters. This process helps in gathering pertinent information related to the portrayal of anxiety. Third, the writer classifies the collected data into appropriate categories. This classification facilitates organizing the data in a structured and meaningful manner, enabling further analysis and interpretation.

In analyzing the data, there are 3 steps of procedures, such as:

1. Reads the chosen data from the novel Girl in Pieces carefully and repeatedly.
2. The writer analyzes the written data based on the theories of anxiety and to connect the analysis to psychological approach.
3. The writer categorizes the discussion into four distinct sections, they are the main character anxiety, cause and effect of anxiety and how does the main character overcome her anxiety.
- 4.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Charlie Davis's Anxiety

Charlie Davis in the novel Girl in Pieces experiences various symptoms related to her anxiety, several symptoms are found namely she has feelings of confinement and isolation, she has selective mutism, difficulty breathing, panic attacks, inability to concentrate, hypervigilance, fear of something that happens in the future and avoidance behavior.

a. Feelings of confinement and isolation

Charlie felt confinement and isolation because in that room there was no way to hurt her. As in the following quote: "No doors, no lamps, no glass, no razors, only soft, spoonable food, and barely warm coffee. There's no way to hurt yourself here. I feel jangly and loose inside." (Glasgow, 2016:13). The quotation state that The place is described as having no doors, lights, mirrors, or razors. This indicates that the environment is designed to minimize the risk of injury or self-harm. Charlie feels nervous and anxious inside

b. She has selective mutism

She's silent and the other girls also seem annoyed with Charlie because of her selective mutism. . As in the following quote: "I take the pad of sticky notes and a pen from the countertop and write quickly. I hold up the sticky note. HOW LONG HAVE I BEEN HERE?." (Glasgow, 2016:14). This quote indicates her difficulty in using her voice and may suggest her fear of speaking up or being ignored.

c. Difficulty breathing

Charlie Davis experienced physical sensations of tightness in her chest and tingling in her fingers after coming across the words *fucker* and *pussy bitch* in her locker door. And it can be shown in this quote: "My fingers tingle and my chest feels tight. After I got kicked out of school, everything went haywire. Even more than before." (Glasgow, 2016:22). The physical sensations of tingling fingers and a tight chest can be indicative of heightened anxiety. The phrase "everything went haywire" implies a sense of disorder, instability, and a loss of control in various aspects of Charlie's life. In line with Nevid's perspective, which asserts that someone who experiences anxiety may have difficulty in breathing as experienced by Charlie Davis who felt chest tightness.

d. Panic Attacks

Charlie Davis would hurt herself to relieve the pain she felt. Like shown in the quote: "Was it Fucking Frank? Did he... did he come after you? Is that why you did it". (Glasgow, 2016:55). Charlie looked very panicked when someone said Frank's name. Charlie remembered what Frank had done to her. From this question "Was it Fucking Frank?" indicate that Frank has done something dangerous of Charlie. All she could do was scratch her finger against the wall with all her power to remove her panic attack and her fear.

e. Inability to concentrate

Many people have difficulty concentrating when they experience anxiety. As experienced by Charlie in the following quote: "When I get overwhelmed and I can't focus on just one thing, when all of my horrible hits me at once." (Glasgow, 2016:114). In this passage, Charlie describes the feeling of being overwhelmed and unable to focus on a single task when all of her problems seem to hit her at once. Her difficulty concentrating reflects the frequent impact on her traumatized and mental health problems.

f. Hypervigilance

Hypervigilance refers to a behavioral condition where an individual remains in a constant state of alertness or vigilance, actively seeking out potential threats or dangers. (Kimble et al, 2010:293). Charlie experienced hypervigilance, which can be seen in the following quote: "I need to be awake and aware. He could be anywhere. He could be here." (Glasgow, 2016:8). This passage reflects the Charlie's state of heightened anxiety, discomfort, and hypervigilance. It also suggests a history of trauma or a sense of being threatened, which fuels the Charlie's need to remain awake and alert.

g. Fear of something that happens in the future

Feeling of fear experienced by Charlie can be verified from the quote: "Please don't make me go back outside. I tell her about the man in the underpass, he broke my tooth and broke me, and it hurts swelling out of me." (Glasgow, 2016:68-69). This quote describe When Charlie received the news that she could no longer reside in the treatment center due to the high cost associated with it. She was scared that the dark event would happen again. She felt isolated by everyone, she was so scared of living outside, she didn't have anywhere to go.

h. Avoidance behavior

Certain individuals may attempt to evade any triggers that remind them of specific events or situations, including places, objects, and associated subjects, as a way to avoid resurfacing memories. Charlie also displays avoidance behavior similar to what is described in the quote. "Barbero thinks I'm afraid of him, but I'm not. There's only one person I'm afraid of, and he's far away, on the whole other side of the river, and he can't get to me here" (Glasgow,2016:14). It is clear that Charlie avoided the traumatic event.

Charlie experienced fear and avoidance behavior triggered by the shadow of her father's death through suicide in the river.

2. The Cause of Charlie Davis's Anxiety

There are several reasons why Charlie has anxiety. Charlie gets a pressure from her environment. And worsened by the lack of reliable support systems. Since her father's suicide she feels anxious. Although her mother was still alive, she felt lonely because her mother had treated her badly. The underlying causes of Charlie Davis experiencing anxiety are, her father committed suicide, sexual abuse, child neglect, violence by her mother, bullying, best friend died, homelessness and poverty.

a. Her father committed suicide

Charlie Davis almost lost everyone from her life. It started when her father tragically died. She faced a deep sense of sadness at the loss of her father figure. It can be seen in the following quote: "She wants to say My father is in the river down the street but she says nothing." (Glasgow, 2016:311). The tragic incident of her beloved father committing suicide in the river is still imagined in Charlie's mind. Until Charlie blamed herself for not being able to stop her father's actions.

b. Sexual abuse

Charlie experiences sexual abuse in the underpass by the man in that place. This is what causes anxiety. This can be seen in the quotation "I wish I knew how to tell her that my subconscious is broken, because it never took me away when Fucking Frank was threatening me, or when that man tried to hurt me in the underpass" (Glasgow, 2016:6). The quote shows the sense of powerlessness Charlie feels in the face of the effects of trauma when Charlie is in danger in the underpass. The introduction of "Fucking Frank" shows that Charlie has suffered some form of abuse and ill-treatment from Frank.

c. Child Neglect

She is also lonely. Her father has left and only her mother has stayed, but since she left home and lived on the streets, she has not received the slightest attention from her mother. This can be seen in the quotation "My mother is alive, but she's a ghost, too, her sunken eyes watching me from a distance, her body very still. There are so many people who are never coming back" (Glasgow, 2016:40). Through the quotation above, the description of the mother as a "ghost" suggests that her mother is physically present but emotionally unavailable or disconnected. The mention of "her sunken eyes watching me from a distance, her body very still" this portrayal conveys a sense of loss, Charlie wants her mother involved and present in her life.

d. Violence by her mother

Charlie Davis received a form of violence from her mother that made her feel threatened and hurt. This leads to the occurrence of anxiety disorders. The violence experienced by Charlie is stated in the quote: "I tell her: After my father died, my mother curled up into something tight and awful and there was no more music in the house, there was no more touching, she was

only a ghost that moved and smoked." (Glasgow, 2016:68). From the quotation above show that Charlie explains that after her father died, her mother underwent significant changes. These changes in her mother's behavior and the absence of emotional connection likely had a profound impact on Charlie's mental health.. The lack of music and touch in her home reflected the loss of warmth and intimacy that had ever existed.

e. Bullying

Charlie is often the target of bullying and ridicule from her friends at school. The following is a quote from Charlie's bullying experienced: "You can spot the girls who will have it easy. I don't even have to describe them for you. You can spot the girls who will get by on smarts. And then there's me, that one, that disheveled kid (say it, poor) who never gets anything right." (Glasgow, 2016:60). Based on the quotation above, Charlie sees herself as different from other girls. She described herself from a poor background. Charlie often gets comments that belittle her appearance, intelligence to her background. Charlie's bullying had an impact on her mental health.

f. Best friend died

Charlie lost her friend, Ellis. Losing someone close to her, especially in tragic circumstances, will cause deep sadness and emptiness in Charlie's life. The news of Ellis' death is contained in the following quotation "A little over a year ago, Mikey cried on the phone to me, "She never cut, that wasn't her thing. Why did she cut? You were right there." (Glasgow, 2016:40). Based on the quotation, It seems clear that Mikey explores his confusion and sadness to Charlie over the phone about why an Ellis harms herself. Mikey shares his perspective that cutting was not something Ellis had previously engaged in. Losing a friend can lead to feeling lonely.

g. Homelessness and Poverty

A limited financial situation affects her life in a number of ways. Charlie often struggles to meet her conscious needs, such as food, housing, and clothing. Charlie has difficulty obtaining professional help or necessary treatment. The economic limitations experienced by Charlie can be seen in the quote: "Your mother's not working right now, so there isn't any possibility of coverage. As I understand it, some of your stay has been covered by your grandmother, but she's unable to continue due to her own health and financial care issues." (Glasgow, 2016:65) In this quote, Casper tells Charlie about her mother's inability to provide support and the limitations of her grandmother's help.

3. The Effects of Charlie Davis's Anxiety

Charlie Davis in the novel also shows some effects of anxiety. There are several effects of anxiety suffered on Charlie, In *Girl in Pieces* novel, it is explained that the effect of Charlie's anxiety is that she reserved herself, blame on her, lost trust in other, self-harm, drug and alcohol misuse.

a. Reserved herself

Charlie's reserved nature comes from her trying to protect herself from pain or further damage. The attitude that shows reserved herself can be found in this quotation: "The girls piss and hiss about the schedule, the food, Group, the meds, everything, but I don't care. There's food, and a bed, and it's warm, and I am inside, and I am safe." (Glasgow, 2016:5). She may feel overwhelmed by her own experiences and emotions, making it difficult for her to actively engage in the therapy sessions. Her reserved nature and detachment serve as a way to protect herself.

b. Blame on her

Charlie Davis frequently blames herself for various situations and experiences she goes through. She carries a heavy burden of guilt and self-blame, often feeling responsible for the negative events that occur in her life. The quote that shows Charlie blame herself can be found in this quotation "I am dark, dark, all dark. I have to cut it out, this thing in me that thought I could better. I have to remember how stupid I was, how fucking stupid" (Glasgow, 2016: 286). This quotation Charlie referring to herself as "stupid". It suggests she feels disappointed or frustrated with her past actions or decisions. She is consumed by a sense of darkness until she deprecating herself.

c. Lose trust in other

Charlie's trust has been broken repeatedly, starting with the abuse she suffered in her childhood and continuing with her turbulent relationships and experiences of betrayal. This is a quote that shows Blame behavior: "I stand up, clumsily knocking into the table. She was getting too close, I was letting her. The food and her kindness made me sleepy and complacent. Always be alert, Evan would warn. The fox has many disguises." (Glasgow, 2016:113). The mention of Evan's warning about being alert and the metaphor of "the fox with many disguises" suggests that Charlie's past experiences have made her hyper-vigilant and cautious in her interactions with others. She is reminded to be on guard and not let her guard down too easily, fearing potential hidden motives or the possibility of being hurt.

d. Self harm

Charlie Davis, engages in self-harm as a way to cope with her emotional pain and trauma. This is a quote that shows self-harm behavior: "I need release, I need to hurt myself more than the world can hurt me, and then I can comfort myself." (Girl in Pieces:37). She had no one to talk to when she experienced the many things that happened in it. She wanted to tell someone who could understand her to express her sadness. She will start hurting herself when she feels the need to let go to relieve her pain.

e. Drug and alcohol misuse

Charlie Davis struggles with drug and alcohol misuse. Destructive behavior of drug and alcohol misuse are found in this quotation "I close my eyes, drink the last of the bottle, smash it against the wall. I am dark, dark, all

dark." (Glasgow, 2016: 286). Based on the data shows that Charlie's mindset and actions in this quote reflect the deep pain and turmoil he experienced. Charlie liked alcoholic beverages when she was stressed by trauma. The act of smashing the bottle against the wall suggests a release of frustration and self-destructive behavior.

4. Charlie Davis's Overcome Her Anxiety

Overcoming anxiety is a process that may require various strategies and approaches. Charlie Davis undergoes a journey of self-discovery and healing, gradually learning to cope with and overcome her anxiety. Here are some ways in which she addresses her anxiety:

a. Art therapy

Being a creative person offers numerous advantages and can bring happiness by enabling a person to momentarily escape their life's challenges. Creative individuals have the ability to cultivate their minds and engage in intriguing endeavors. This can be proven by the quote: "I draw them. I fill my paper with Ellis and Mikey, Evan and Dump, even DannyBoy. I fill every last pieces of paper until I have a whole world of missing." (Glasgow, 2016:65). In this quotation Charlie Davis engages in drawing as a means to cope with her intense emotions and overwhelming thoughts. By immersing herself in the act of drawing, Charlie finds temporary solace and a sense of control over her emotions. However, when she looks up from her drawings, she realizes that time has passed, and the world around her has changed. Based on the quote, the writer describes how drawing became Charlie's refuge, allowing her to escape the emotional turmoil of missing her late best friend, Ellis. It served as a way for Charlie to cope with her feelings and avoid being overwhelmed by them. The reality of not being able to reunite with Ellis, who had passed away, added to her longing and made drawing an outlet for her emotions.

b. Move out of the town to Arizona

This decision to relocate can be seen as a way for Charlie to seek a fresh start and escape the difficult circumstances and traumatic experiences she has faced in her current environment. This is a quote that shows Charlie move to Arizona: "My ticket says we'll drive through six states before we reach Arizona and that it will take one day, twenty-one hours, and forty-five minutes. The driver says he doesn't know how long until a new bus comes." (Glasgow, 2016:87). Based on the quotation, Charlie is on a bus journey to Arizona, a new place where she hopes for a better life. However, she feels a sense of sadness and loneliness without Ellis by her side. Charlie's journey to Arizona represents a chance for her to start a new and find a sense of stability and healing. However, her emotional struggles and longing for companionship remind us that the process of recovery and building a better life is not without its challenges.

CONCLUSION

There are some conclusions finds in the problems at story of Charlie life's in the novel. In this study there are two problems to be solved; Firstly, is to discover the form of anxiety that Charlie Davis experienced is feelings of confinement and isolation, she has selective mutism, difficulty breathing, panic attacks, inability to concentrate,

hypervigilance, fear of something that happens in the future and avoidance behavior. Secondly, it found that there are several underlying causes why Charlie Davis develop an anxiety disorder such as her father committed suicide, sexual abuse, child neglect, violence by her mother, bullying, best friend died, homelessness and poverty.

The cause of Charlie's anxiety affects her life. The effect is, Charlie's reserved behavior can lead to her feeling isolated and lonely, blame on her, lost trust in other, self-harm, drug and alcohol misuse. After that, the writer finds out how Charlie Davis overcome her anxiety. There are several things that help Charlie Davis get better, the first is a natural change from Charlie to push herself out of her comfort zone, she fights her urge to self-harm and manages to become a creative human being with art therapy. Art becomes a form of therapy and a means of self-discovery for Charlie. And Charlie makes a decision to move a new place to leave behind her dark past and get a better life in Arizona.

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