

Chapter I

Introduction

1.1 Research Background

Novel is one of the main genres of literature. In literature, novel has several roles. One of them is as the expression of the spirit of its age. Similar to poets, novelists are able to express the vague ideas and emotions of a society via precise and creative use of language and symbolism. In this way, their works appear to be the catalyst for change and to come before the spread of novel concepts and viewpoints. A lot of authors build their stories on real-life events that occur at specific times. The essence of a historical era, or the *Zeitgeist* as it is known in German, is often best appreciated after a considerable amount of time has passed, at which point a novelist may offer the finest summary of it (Britannica, 2024: 1). One of the examples of a novel that expresses certain age is a novel called *Catch-22* by Joseph Heller.

Most of the action in *Catch-22* is based on Joseph Heller's experiences as a young officer and bombardier stationed on Corsica, an island off the west coast of Italy, with the Army Air Forces in 1944. *Catch-22* is a satirical novel with black humor that argues war is insane, that the military is insane, and that, quite probably, modern life itself is insane too. *Catch-22* itself refers to any rules made by the authorities that should be obeyed by the society. This makes a person stuck in paradoxical and absurd situation that force them going back into a certain event they try to escape from because the authorities told them not to escape (Heller, 1961).

Catch-22 is outlining the story of Captain Yossarian, a bombardier from the US Air Force who wants to escape from the war very badly because he got sick of and had enough of endlessly being sent to do so many missions. He did everything he can to make commanding officers allows him to go home. He lies about having a sick liver condition so that he can be sent to the hospital instead of flying more missions.

Additionally, he begs Doc Daneeka who is the military doctor to ground him so that his mission can be ended. Furthermore, another reason of why he wants to escape the war is because he is scared to die in the middle of doing a mission. He witnesses one of his own Squadron members Snowden dies while flying a mission. Seeing that makes Yossarian doesn't care anymore about whether he hit the target or not, his only target while flying a mission is to come down alive. These kinds of portrayals tend to make him seen as antihero.

Antiheroes are characters that are lacking in largeness, grace, power, and social success. Although antiheroes lack accomplishment and strength, this does not make them utterly un-heroic. They can be magnanimous and can show courage or steadfastness under pressure. They can sometimes defend themselves when necessary. As Victor Brombert argues, anti-heroes are often "weak, ineffectual, pale, humiliated, self-doubting, inept, occasionally abject characters often afflicted with self-conscious and paralyzing irony, yet at times capable of unexpected resilience and fortitude" (Neimeh, 2013: 78).

Joseph Heller's *Catch-22* is somehow including those characteristics in his characters. The main character Yossarian cannot be considered fully as a hero if we make a comparison between him and classic heroes of mythology or legend, such as Homer's Odysseus. Classical heroes often possess remarkable physical prowess, talent, or natural charm. For instance, the gods granted Odysseus favor as a great warrior and enhanced or physically changed him when it was in his best interests. Such heroes are frequently members of the ruling class who outperform their contemporaries in courage and commitment to a cause. They are at their finest during war; they like engaging in combat and winning. They are men of action, and they do honorable things. Instead of dishonor, they would rather die. On the other hand, Yossarian as in the novel states that he is rather live forever or dies in the attempt. It means that he is not willing to sacrifice his life; he would rather die trying to

escape the war. The characteristic is aligned with what Theodore Ziolkowski implies which is war, conflicting values, cultural crisis and different aspects of modernity produces its own heroic model such as sick, anti-social, and introspective anti-hero whose salvation is individualistic in the midst of social and cultural disarray (Neimeh 2013).

As previously mentioned, Yossarian is considered as antihero because of the cowardice and selfishness that are displayed on his characteristic. However, as we all know that unarguably war costs lots of sacrifices and not everyone is willing to do it. Same case happened to Yossarian and his Squadron, the only thing that they want is escaping the madness of war. Therefore, the escape itself is simply the only coping mechanism they have left to stay sane.

The goal of coping is to detangle the anguish that has been entangled in the individual, the situation, and their connection. The process of coping occurs when an individual perceives a circumstance or condition as personally meaningful, demanding, or beyond their capacity for dealing. (Folkman and Lazarus, 1980: 223). The individual whose existence or purposed have been threatened, harmed, and in danger would stimulate intense negative emotion that can impact their perception of the coping process. During a difficult interaction, emotions remain crucial to the coping process as a result of reevaluating the situation, responding to newly received information, and adapting. If the interaction has a successful resolution, positive emotions will predominate; if the resolution is unclear or unfavorable, negative emotions will predominate. These negative emotions are what caused a maladaptive coping mechanism (Folkman and Moskowitz, 2004: 747).

Maladaptive coping mechanism is a short-term coping strategy that can make things easier temporarily before it gets harder in future. Maladaptive coping modes might buffer stress in the short-term in some contexts but promote actions that are the opposite of what resilient people do, so in the long term, they would be expected to increase the likelihood

of burnout (Smout, Simpson et al. 2021: 4). Thus, repeated use of developmentally primitive coping, lack of exposure to healthy alternatives, or repeated exposure to overwhelming stress may solidify a maladaptive style of coping—one that relies too much on primitive strategies such as avoidance and denial (Wadsworth 2015: 2). Additionally, maladaptive coping are broadly classified as emotion-and avoidance-based strategies, and include self-blame, denial, and rumination. (Schmied, Padilla et al. 2015: 11)

These maladaptive coping are shown in Yossarian's coping mechanism such as accusing and denying each other craziness. The reason why everyone accuses each other crazy is because of the desperation over the incapability of handling all kinds of positive and negative emotions that surrounded them. Yossarian called everyone crazy because everyone is trying to kill him. Clevinger denies the fact that everyone tries to kill Yossarian. Hungry Joe avoids meeting the military doctor (Doc Daneeka) despite his constant nightmares. Doc Daneeka always compare his struggles to others and blame them over the fact why he should be the one to make the sacrifices. These things are the projection of unorganized emotion that would later trigger the maladaptive coping mechanism.

Although there are already many studies discuss the characteristic of the main character in the novel, not many of them discuss the antihero characteristics of the main character. That's why the writer decided to take new perspective on analyzing the novel by combining psychology view in analyzing the antihero characteristic on the main character of the novel.

The writer uses a theory of coping proposed by Lazarus & Lazarus (1984). They used a rational approach to distinguish two major theory-based functions of coping: problem-focused coping, which involves addressing the problem causing distress, and emotion-focused coping, which is aimed at ameliorating the negative emotions associated with the problem. Some examples of problem-focused coping are making a plan of action or concentrating on the next step. Examples of emotion-focused

coping are engaging in distracting activities, using alcohol or drugs, or seeking emotional support (Folkman and Moskowitz, 2004: 751). By using Lazarus and Folkman theory of coping, the researcher would be able to analyze what kind of coping mechanism that the characters of Catch-22 use.

The writer also uses the theory of antihero by M.H Abrams (1999). He states that, “Instead of manifesting largeness, dignity, power, or heroism, the antihero is petty, ignominious, passive, ineffectual, or dishonest.” Therefore, based on this theory, the researcher would be able to analyze the antihero characteristic within Heller’s Catch-22 characters.

1.2 Identification of the Problem

As mentioned before, catch-22 is depicting the chaos of living a life in the World War II. The characters are facing the physical exhaustion due to the endless battle. There are so many traumatic events that the characters’ experienced but they have no time to reflect on their feelings towards everything. Eventually, they have to find their own way to cope regardless of whether it’s going to result in a good or bad outcome. But, due to the limited time and the major pressure to find a good coping mechanism, mostly, they tend to do maladaptive coping mechanism. Therefore, firstly, this study focuses on analyzing the maladaptive coping mechanism that the main character uses to overcome his traumatic experiences.

In addition, besides analyzing the maladaptive coping mechanism, this study is also analyzing the anti-hero characteristic within Yossarian’s portrayal. Antihero and maladaptive coping mechanism are linked in cause and effect situation. A cause is something or someone that creates an effect, brings about a result, has a consequence, or is the reason for a condition. An effect is a result, condition, or consequence brought about by something or someone. Causation in psychology can be defined as a situation in which systematic changes in one variable lead to changes in another variable. In Catch-22, the main character Yossarian is antihero,

that's the effect. And, the caused is the maladaptive coping mechanism that he uses. To analyze the antihero characteristic, the writer uses the theory of antihero by M.H Abrams (1999). Meanwhile, to analyze the maladaptive coping mechanism, the writer uses a theory of coping proposed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984).

1.3 Limitation of the Study

The focal point of this study is relied on the characters of Catch-22. The discussion specifically discusses about the antihero characteristic and the maladaptive coping mechanism and the relation between them. These variables are analyzed through the narrative texts and dialogues that appear in the novel Catch-22. Additionally, this study uses the theory of antihero by M.H Abrams and the coping theory by Lazarus and Folkman.

1.4 Research Problem

The presented problems above need to be modified and formulated in the form of questions. Thus, the writer designs three questions for the discussion of this study.

1. What are the antihero characteristics that display in the main character of Catch-22?
2. What are the maladaptive coping mechanisms that are used by the main character of Catch 22?
3. How do maladaptive coping mechanisms influence the main character's behavior?

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are constructed in a systematic arrangement in accordance with the research questions.

1. To discover the antihero characteristics that display in the main character of Catch-22. Hence, this study can function as a guide for the writer to learn more about analyzing an antihero character.
2. To discover the maladaptive coping mechanisms that is used by the main character of Catch 22. Hence, this study can level up the writer's

knowledge regarding the several coping mechanism for human to cope their problems.

3. To discover how the maladaptive coping mechanisms influence the main character behavioral. Hence, this study can enrich the writer's knowledge about the way human behave based on physiological study. Moreover, this study can also add the writer's experience in doing psychological analysis of literary characters as another way of conducting literary research.

1.6 Significances of the Study

The purpose of this study is to gather information that will be valuable to the English department, other students, and other relevant individuals. Therefore, the main significances to be gained from this research are:

1. The outcome of this study is expected to serve as a tool for applying psychoanalytic theories to literary work analysis. Consequently, it can also enhance the references that can be implemented in the Pasundan University English department's literary analysis, criticism, and appreciation.
2. The findings of this study can be used to assess the coping mechanism and antihero characteristics of literary characters using psychoanalytic literary theories. Therefore, it is expected that the study will serve as a reference for other academics and students who want to do research on a related topic.