

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background of Study

Traumatic event is an incident that can cause physical, emotional, or psychological damage to one's life, especially when the traumatic event happened in their childhood. According to *The National Child Traumatic Stress Network* more than 25% of American youth experience a serious traumatic event by their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday, and many children suffer multiple and repeated traumas. Common sources of trauma include bullying, natural disaster, war, neglect, and all forms of abuse; sexual, physical and emotional. Recently, researchers have focused on how trauma during early childhood impacts mental and physical health later in life. Symptoms of mental illness can manifest immediately after a trauma, but in some cases symptoms do not emerge until years later. PTSD, anxiety disorders, behavior disorders and substance abuse have all been linked to traumatic events experienced during early childhood (Kanel, 2015).

There are a lot of types of childhood trauma; one that can be mentioned is child abuse. Child abuse is a widespread epidemic that affected millions of children and it can occur in any cultural, ethnic or income group. Child abuse can result from physical, sexual, or emotional harm. Studies show that one in four girls and one in eight boys are sexually abused before the age 18 and that approximately one in 20 children are physically abused each year. Outcomes of child abuse can result in both short and long term injury, and even death. There are factors that contribute to the risk of child abuse such as parents' history of abuse, poverty, family disorganization, poor parent-child relationship and so on. The majority of children that have been abused suffer more emotional damage rather than physical damage. A child who has been mistreated may show signs of depression, withdrawal or violent behaviour.

There are a lot of movies that proved traumatic events can do such damage to one's life, one of them is *The Butterfly Effect* (2004) directed by Eric Bress and J. Mackye Gruber. Bress is an American screenwriter, film director and producer, he is best known for his work on the *Final Destination* series. He also frequently collaborates with his co-director in *The Butterfly Effect*, J. Mackye Gruber. Their most recent collaboration, *Blindsighted*, was released in 2010.

*The Butterfly Effect* starring Ashton Kutcher as Evan Treborn and Amy Smart as Kayleigh Miller, William Lee Scott as Tommy "Tom" Miller and Elden Henson as Lenny Kagan. This movie follows Evan Treborn, Kayleigh Miller, Tommy Miller and Lenny Kagan's life as they went through a lot of severe psychological traumas when they were kids. Especially Kayleigh and Tommy Miller who were repeatedly abused by their father; sexually, physically and emotionally. These traumas include being forced to take part in child pornography by Kayleigh and Tommy's father, accidentally killing a mother and her infant daughter while playing with dynamite.

The damages of the trauma these characters have are so impactful to their developmental. Especially Tommy who has the most damages later in life, throughout his childhood he has suffered abuse from his father and when he was an adolescent the effect of the trauma become more and more apparent. Therefore, In this paper the writer will address the impacts of abuse on the developing child using Erikson's theory of psycho-social development. Furthermore, to support this research the writer also does some research and collects thesis with similar topic or theory which is psycho-social development and trauma.

The first research is "Psychosocial and Posttraumatic-stress Disorder Analysis in Chbosky's *The Perks of Being A Wallflower*" by Nabila (2017) from Bina Nusantara University. The aims of the study are to analyze Charlie's personality development according to Erikson's psychosocial developmental stages, to find the relation between Charlie's character developments to his search for identity, and to analyze the relation between Charlie's identity confusion and trauma and how he overcomes his trauma. The results of this study found that the failure of Charlie's fourth and fifth stage in psychosocial development has caused Charlie to have unhealthy personalities development and it impacts his sense of identity in adolescence which cause him to have identity crisis. Moreover, this study also found that the trauma of being molested in childhood makes Charlie suffers from PTSD and the symptoms of PTSD that Charlie experienced affect Charlie identity confusion and psychological development. The research use qualitative method and library research to answer the problem formulation.

The second research is "Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder As The Result of Physical and Emotional Violence, on The Gambir Character in *Pintu Terlarang*, a Novel by Sekar Ayu Asmara" by Ruby (2006) from Sanata Dharma University. The aims of the study are to describe the source violence on children that is portrayed in the novel. To describe Post-

Traumatic Stress Disorder as the effect of physical and emotional abuse in the novel through the character Gambir. The result of this study found that from the analysis of the plot and characterization into the character of Gambir, is that Gambir's past was tragic and he experienced severe physical and emotional violence from his parents which lead Gambir to be an unhappy character and a victim of domestic violence. And from Gambir's past experienced he suffers from PTSD. The research use descriptive method and library research to collect the data and answer the problem formulation. Based on the two previous researches, both researches are analyzing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder as the result of past traumatic events. Meanwhile, this research is analyzing the character's development and how the past traumatic events affect the character's life and behaviour.

The writer's personal reason for this specific study is to build awareness of the serious effect that child abuse may cause because sometimes parents do not understand the effect of what they do, say or do not say to their child, even the smallest of things. It takes a lot of courage and experience to be good parents that eventually will result in the good upbringing of their child. Sometimes there are people who are not ready to be parents yet, or someone who does not have mental, physical and financial stability becomes a parent. Those kinds of things are one of the many causes of child abuse. Furthermore, children who are affected by abuse are more commonly to struggle with their life, emotion and physical or mental health. Thus, with this study the writer hopes that more people will acknowledge any symptoms in the victim of abuse and help them get the treatment they deserve.

## **1.2. Problem Formulation**

To properly conduct this paper, the writer provides questions as a guide for this research:

1. What traumatic events that happened in Tommy Miller's life?
2. How do the traumatic events affect the character development?

## **1.3. Scope and Limitation**

The scope of this research is literature work through movie entitled *The Butterfly Effect* with the approach of psychoanalysis and focusing on the Erik Erikson's psycho-social stages caused by the traumatic events in the characters' life. The limitation of this research is the character Tommy Miller.

#### **1.4. Goals and Functions**

The goals of this research, first is to find out the character's trauma and the effects it has to his life through Erikson's eight stages of psychosocial development, focusing on the stage of Industry vs. Inferiority and stage Identity vs. Role Confusion and second is to reveal the story of the movie through intrinsic and extrinsic elements. Meanwhile, the function of this research is to show how traumatic events in childhood can affect one's life physically and psychologically and it can affect how one's develop their life in the future.