

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with introductory explanations regarding the research which include the background of the study, the research question, the purpose of the study, the scope of the study, the significance of the study, the research methodology, the clarification of terms, and the organization of the paper.

1.1. Background of the Study

Young adult literature is a genre which is quite hard to be defined. However, some researchers and experts have proposed some definitions of young adult literature (Grenz in Nikolajeva, 1995; Trites, 2000; Trupe, 2006; Fox, 2010; Rosenberg, 2012). Young adult literature is considered as a genre intended for *adolescent* readers, specifically for individuals between the age of 10 and 19. It can also refer to books which consist of adolescent heroes and heroines (Grenz in Nikolajeva, 1995; Trites, 2000; Trupe 2006). Nikolajeva, as cited in Trites (2000) refers young adult literature in European countries to *jeans prose* due to “their emphasis on such artifacts of material culture as clothes, music, and language” (p. 7).

Trites (2000) mentions that the genre evolved historically from the term *Bildungsroman* which is introduced by a German scholar named Wilhelm Dilthey in 1870. It refers to “a related type of novel in which the adolescent matures to adulthood” (pp. 7-11). According to Trupe (2006), the modern young adult literature emerges in the 1960s. In modern sense, the publication of Hinton’s *The Outsiders* in 1967 marks young adult literature as literary cannon even though perhaps literary works which are meant for younger readers have been circulated in classical era (Rosenberg, 2012).

Young adult literature covers the recurring theme of coming-of-age, “an issue with which all young people must engage in on their road to adulthood” (Fox, 2010, p. 32). The characters are oftentimes faced with particular events that may trigger them to question the authorities, norms, and established orders. Nevertheless, it depicts how adolescents “disturb”

and “being disturbed” by the institution which construct their “universe” (Trites, 2000, p. xiv). Their struggle with the institutions drives them to question their identity. When a child matures to become an adult, they begin to construct meaning of the things they experience. The theme of coming-of-age then deals with the issue of identity which is “discovered and created through experiences with social systems and exploring one’s own belief systems and communities” (Fox, 2010, p. 32).

In constructing their identity, characters are oftentimes faced with their characteristic development. Janovsky (n.d) states that some characters develop throughout the story; they start in one way and end up differently. It proves that by revealing themselves and developing throughout the story, the characters become more complex. Researchers have conducted studies which connect the quest of identity with character development. According to their studies, in the process of its construction, identity changes along with the context and influences it and it is evolving to adapt through fragmentation of time into events which is collected from past to future (Kellner, 1992; Bauman, 1996; Gauntlett, 2002;).

To explore the issue of identity in young adult literature, this study uses a novel entitled *Kafka on the Shore*. *Kafka on the Shore* is written by Haruki Murakami, a Japanese well-known author, which was first published in 2002 in Japanese and translated into English by Jay Rubin in 2005. This novel has been categorized as one of the ‘10 Best Books of 2005’ by The New York Times (Updike, 2005; New York Times, 2005). As young adult literature, *Kafka on the Shore* triggers what Rosenberg (2012) called ‘sense of self’. Rosenberg emphasizes that the goal of forming identity is to be able to define one’s self (p.7). This statement is in line with what Kafka goes through as mentioned in the back cover of the novel. Kafka Tamura is described as a fifteen year old boy who is encountering an adolescent phase. He runs away from his home to elude his father’s oedipal prophecy in which he develops his personal values and judgments. Murakami creates another protagonist, an aging simpleton called Satoru Nakata, who also encounters an adventure when he tries to find a missing cat as his job. Nakata’s journey

seems to indicate that, like Kafka, he also runs away from his life to find the ‘sense of self’ and to gather what has been missing from his life.

From the summary in the back cover of the novel, it shows that *Kafka on the Shore* is a complex story with a unique type of narrative. Based on the explanation presented above, it may be said that *Kafka on the Shore* has a psychoanalytical tendency. However, there are still some other perspectives in approaching *Kafka on the Shore* which have not been explored. Therefore, this study is conducted to disclose the quest of identity and character development addressed in the novel by using the view point of young adult literature.

1.2. Research Question

This study focuses on the issue of identity and character development of the main protagonist, Kafka Tamura, in *Kafka on the Shore* to answer this following question:

- How is Kafka’s quest of constructing an identity depicted in the novel?

1.3. Purpose of the Study

This study aims to explore the issue of identity quest of the main protagonist character, Kafka Tamura, in Haruki Murakami’s *Kafka on the Shore* and how his character develops in the process from the perspective of young adult literature. In addition to giving a description or depiction of the identity quest, this study discusses what the quest means and its contribution to Kafka’s character development.

1.4. Scope of the Study

The analysis of the quest of identity and character development is limited around the main protagonist character of Haruki Murakami’s *Kafka on the Shore*. Supporting characters, antagonist characters, and nonhuman characters’ analysis may be presented briefly to support the analysis of the protagonists, not to be included as the focus of attention in the study. The

study also explores and treats *Kafka on the Shore* as a young adult literary work which focuses on the growth and development of the main character.

1.5. Significance of the Study

The result of this study is expected to give contribution to critical analysis of prose and young adult/adolescent literature, especially in terms of identity quest and character development. Further research regarding the quest of identity and character development is highly suggested to enrich the issue of identity in other characters of *Kafka on the Shore*, other novels, and/or literary works.

1.6. Research Method

This study will use a narrative approach in a qualitative method which will be descriptive and explanatory. This study will involve a critical analysis which seeks answer to the questions by examining various aspects of the novel (Sandelowski, 1991; Reisman, 1993). Sandelowski suggests that a narrative approach can give insight on how stories disclose a human being's experience in life.

This is the reason that this approach is chosen because it will be suitable for this study because it will help to discover and explore the identity issue in *Kafka on the Shore*.

1.6.1. Data Collection

Firstly, the data are gathered by identifying Kafka Tamura's characterization at the beginning of the novel. Secondly, the conflicts which appear in the plot of the novel, including the conflict between Kafka and other characters, and also the conflict between Kafka and himself (inner conflict), will be highlighted. After that, the highlighted conflicts will be identified as milestone in Kafka's quest of constructing a new identity. The amnesia that is experienced by Kafka will also be highlighted. The final step is to see how Kafka resolves each conflict, and how the conflicts contribute to his quest of identity and development. Since

qualitative method is the preferable method to be used in this study, literary journals and critics will be secondary sources as the references to analyze the novel. After that, the data will be transcribed, described, and lastly concluded to see whether or not the study meets a satisfactory outcome.

1.6.2. Data Analysis

Some textual evidences will be framed by using the chosen frameworks. First, Kafka's characterization will be analyzed by adapting several models of narrative characters. The issue of identity will be explored. The novel will be interpreted as a young adult literary work by using Trites's (2000) point of view on young adult literature. The analysis will be focusing on the way Kafka resolves the conflicts that he faces during his identity quest, and whether or not he is able to overcome his coming-of-age phase after he constructs his identity. There are three main points which will be the foci of attention: (1) authority figures; (2) Kafka's psychosocial development; and (3) peer influence. Lastly, the conclusion will be presented to see whether or not this study successfully meets its purposes and can be considered satisfactory.

1.7. Clarification of Terms

Some terms in this study may cause confusion and misunderstanding regarding the topics, contents, and/or concepts of this study, therefore this clarification of terms is presented to avoid the aforementioned matters. Those terms are:

1.7.1. Adolescence

Adolescence is a stage of an individual which is marked by certain gradual changes and transitions. As they develop, they are influenced by external factors, such as: "parents, peers, community, culture, religion, school, world events and the media" (Spano, 2004, par. 1). Spano has divided adolescence phase into three sub-phases: the early adolescence (approximately 10-14 years of age), middle

adolescence (approximately 15-16 years of age), and late adolescence (approximately 17-21 years of age) in which adolescents show development in their area of interest.

1.7.2. Coming of Age

Coming of age, a recurrent theme which is oftentimes found in young adult literature, is a term used to describe an issue representing a transition from childhood to adulthood (Rosenberg, 2012). Rosenberg explains that “Coming of age presents an opportunity to grow toward adulthood and gain certain power and privileges, while simultaneously losing certain power and privileges” (p. 6). It means that in order to experience coming of age phase, a child needs to experience his/her struggle to overcome power and also his/her state of being subdued by the power around him/her.

1.7.3. Identity

Hall (as cited in Du Gay et al, 2000) states that identity can be defined as characteristic attributes or expected behaviors that are never unified and fragmented. According to Barker (2000), identity is both “personal” or “social” which differentiate us or “mark” us from other people (p. 166). Further, Barker points out that “...identity is concerned with sameness and difference, with the personal and the social and with forms of representation” (p. 166)

Further explanation regarding these key terms will be presented in chapter two.

1.8. Organization of the Paper

This study is composed in this following organization:

1. Abstract

This section functions as summary of the paper presenting brief information about the content that will be elaborated further in the next sections.

2. Introduction

This chapter deals with the background of the study explaining what drives the writer to analyze the chosen topic, the purpose or personal intention of the writer in writing the study, the significance of the study describing what will be the study's contribution in an individual or a society, and presentation of research questions.

3. Literature Review

This part of the study examines the bases of theories (theoretical framework) used in the study and also what other researchers have found in the earlier studies.

4. Methodology

This section presents the methods used in the study and also the details such as: who are involved, where the data are obtained, and how the data are collected.

5. Findings and Discussion

This chapter deals with the findings when the study or analysis is finished.

6. Conclusion

This section sums up all the information from the chapters and concludes an idea as the result of the analysis. In this section, suggestions for further research are also presented.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Theoretical Framework

2.1.1. Young Adult Literature

Many researchers believe that young adult literature is a type of genre which does not have an exact definition. Young adult literature is oftentimes considered as a genre which is intended for *adolescent* readers or individuals between the age of 10 and 19. It can also refer to books which consist of adolescent heroes and heroines (Grenz in Nikolajeva, 1995; Trites, 2000; Trupe 2006). In a different point of view, young adult literature can also be categorized as a *jeans prose* according to Nikolajeva (cited in Trites (2000)). Nikolajeva refers young adult literature in European countries to jeans prose due to “their emphasis on such artifacts of material culture as clothes, music, and language” (p. 7).

Stallworth (2006, p. 59), as cited in Zdilla as cited in Alsup (2010), young adult literature is a “electrifying genre” to make this era’s adolescents explore their identity through reading literary works. It means that this genre is intended to make teens relate to the story and initiate to try out new things based on what they have read. According to Zdilla, young adult literature serves a significant purpose, which is to offer “a transition from children’s literature into the world of adult literature” (p. 195).

Zdilla presents a comprehensive list of young adult literature's characterization which is compiled by Herz and Gallo (pp. 10-11). The characteristics are:

- a. The main characters are teenagers.
- b. The length of the average book is around 200 pages, though it may be as brief as 100 pages or as long as 900 pages.
- c. The point of view is most often first person, and it is usually that of a teenager.
- d. The narrator is most often the main character.
- e. The story is usually told in the voice of a teenager, not the voice of an adult looking back as a young person.
- f. The language is typical of contemporary teenagers, and the vocabulary is manageable by readers of average ability.
- g. The setting is most often contemporary, but also can be historical, futuristic (as in science fiction), or imaginative (as in fantasy)
- h. The books contain characters and issues to which teenagers can relate.
- i. In a majority of the books, parents play a minor role or are "the enemy."
- j. The plot and literary style are uncomplicated but never simplistic, though the plots of a few books are quite complex.
- k. The outcome of the story is usually dependent upon the decisions and actions of the main character.

- l. The tone and outcome of the novels are usually upbeat, but not in all instances.
- m. With the exception of complicated plotting, all the traditional literary elements typical of classical literature are present in most contemporary novels for young adults—well-rounded characters, flashbacks, foreshadowing, allusions, irony, metaphorical language—though they are used less frequently and at less sophisticated levels to match the experiential levels of readers.
- n. The very best YA books can be as appealing to adult readers as they are to teens.

(Zdilla, pp. 194–195)

2.1.1.1. The Brief History of Young Adult Literature

Young adult literature is originated in the twentieth century indicated with the use of the word “adolescent” which was common usage in postbellum America (Trites, 2000, p. 8). Literature which is specifically written and intended for

The genre evolved historically from the term *Bildungsroman* which is introduced by a German scholar named Wilhelm Dilthey in 1870. It refers to “a related type of novel in which the adolescent matures to adulthood” (pp. 7-11). There is a significant difference between *Bildungsroman* and *Entwicklungsroman*. *Entwicklungs-*

roman is a broad category of novels which depicts the growth of an adolescent character. Basically, Entwicklungsromane can be considered as novels of development, whereas Bildungsromane are novels which consist of coming of age issues, and they are sometimes referred to as “apprenticeship novels” (p. 10).

2.1.2. Character and Characterization

2.1.3. Identity

Definition of identity and questions regarding the subject have been widely debated in social theory. However, Hall (as cited in Du Gay et al, 2000) states that identity can be defined as characteristic attributes or expected behaviors that are never unified and fragmented. Among the arguments of answering ‘what is identity?’, the issue of identity then emerges as an important theme of Cultural Studies in 1990s (Barker, 2000, p.165). In comprehending identity, the correlation and indivisible concept of identity and subjectivity are important to be remembered. They refer to certain conditions and processes of becoming a person. There are two types identity, which are *self-identity* (the idea one holds to one’s self) and *social identity* (other’s expectation) which both use ‘narrative’ and ‘story-like’ form. Identity is expressed through forms of representation; therefore, it can be considered as an ‘essence’ which can be signified through signs. Barker also

emphasizes that identity “is best understood not as fixed entity but as an emotionally charge description of ourselves” (pp. 165-166). In relation with issue of identity, Olsson (1999) analyses Foucault’s notion about identities that identities are ‘representation’ or ‘fixation’ that are neither fixed nor stable (as cited in Torres, 2008, p. 2).

2.1.4 Erik Erikson’s Psychosocial Development

2.2. Previous Research

Wattanagun and Chotiudompant (2009) have conducted research on the quest and reconstruction of identity in *Kafka on the Shore*. In their research, they present two view points of the quest of identity depicted in the novel. By showing identity quest in a capitalist society, the characters of Hoshino and Nakata reveal that individual identity is constructed by symbolic consumption which may lead into alienation. In contrast with Hoshino and Nakata, the character of Kafka Tamura develops by delving deep down into his inner realm, and his identity is constructed through redefinition of others’ stories or memories.

In his analysis of *Kafka on the Shore*, Jeng (2008) shares the similar topic of individuality with Wattanagun and Chotiudompant. What distinguishes them is the center of attention of the analysis. Jeng focuses on the amnesia which refers to the deconstruction of narrative order. Based on Jeng’s analysis, amnesia is a result of a gesture of denial to the main

protagonists' traumatic experience. He also connects the taboo of incest and patricide to personal recognition in discovering new identities for them.

Another research on Murakami's works is conducted by Atkins (2012). Atkins, in her thesis about literary landscape in Murakami's works, focuses on time and space which hold important meanings. In *Kafka on the Shore*, for example, Murakami uses forest and woods to "evoke the past, the lost, and the dead" (p. 97). He also explores the concept of time by using precise "recording of events" to blur the "real and unreal", and distinguish the "psyche and reality" (p. 161). By analyzing the significance of time and space in constructing the characterization of the two protagonists, Kafka and Nakata, Atkins points out that "Murakami adds deeper and textured dimension to the story of Kafka's self-introspection and the transformative experience of his conscious" (p. 163).