



# **CHAPTER II**

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

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#### 2.1 Theoretical Framework

This section lays the groundwork for the study by defining and discussing essential concepts and theoretical frameworks drawn from literary studies and psychology.

##### 2.1.1 Literature and Literary Psychology

Literature is a creative project that describes human presence within a civilization. Literary works exist to be enjoyed, understood, and utilized, while also serving as a reflection or expression of life itself (Meyer, 2018). Literature is also often defined as the art of using language to express something. Its forms are various, such as short stories, novels, plays, and poetry (Ramrao, 2016). However, literature is not just about art; it also requires systematic study, which is typically divided into the disciplines of literary history, literary theory, and literary criticism (Bruçaj, 2020). In its development, literature often interacts with various other disciplines. In the world of education, literary works are frequently used as teaching materials to enhance students' literacy. Beyond that, literature also finds common ground with psychology. In the context of psychology, literature is considered capable of enriching and deepening our understanding of literary works themselves. It is from this intersection that literary psychology emerged, a branch of

study that combines literary analysis with psychological theory. Its goal is to further understand characters, themes, and various other elements within literary works.

Therefore, literary psychology can be understood as an approach where literary works are analyzed through a psychological lens, and psychological knowledge can be obtained from literary works (Emir, 2016). This area of study highlights how literary works can mirror and portray human experiences, and how psychological theories can unlock more profound interpretations of these narratives, leading to rich and complex discussions. The relationship between these two fields can offer broad insights, such as through psychoanalysis of the author and the text, or the relationship between the reader and the work (Santos et al., 2018). Psychoanalysis is a discipline established by Sigmund Freud over a century ago that provides a range of theories about unconscious processes, methods for investigation, and approaches to treating psychological disorders.

In the book *Literary Psychology: Works, Methods, Theories and Case Studies* by Albertine Minderop, suggested that both literature and psychology can reflect the process of intellectual activities. This study is a specialty of literary psychology that reflects literary psychology in the characters' selves, which in turn can reflect the author's psychology in an interesting narrative.

## 2.1.2 Narrative Analysis

In literary studies, narrative analysis is an important method for understanding how a story is constructed and told. Seymour Chatman (1978) developed a structuralist approach that divides narrative into two main components, story and discourse. Story refers to the content of the narrative, such as the sequence of events, characters, and setting, while discourse refers to how the story is told through point of view, order of delivery, and narrative style. This approach is particularly useful for examining structure and meaning in works of fiction, as it allows readers to see not only what is told but also how the story is constructed to produce a particular effect.

In this study, the analysis of the narrative will focus on intrinsic elements such as characters, setting, conflict, and point of view that directly contribute to the development of the theme and the representation of dissociative identity disorder (DID) in the characters.

### 2.1.2.1 Theme

A theme is the main idea or central message an author wishes to convey. Themes can be explicit or implicit, and serve as the conceptual foundation that unites all elements of a story. Themes often reflect important social, psychological, or philosophical issues. In psychological fiction like *Behind Her Eyes*, themes of identity, consciousness, and trauma are central to the narrative. As explained by

Wellek and Warren (1956), theme can be thought of as “the meaning conveyed by the overall structure of a literary work.”

### 2.1.2.2 Character and Characterization

Characters are the main part of any story.

In literary terms, a character can be any real or imagined person, animal, or entity within a narrative that possesses distinct traits and plays an active role in how the story unfolds. Characters do more than just act out the plot, but they often carry the values and themes the author wants to convey. Literary characters play a crucial role in shaping literary works, functioning as both structural and semantic elements that captivate and involve readers.

According to Abrams (2015), characters can be generally categorized in a few ways, flat characters and round characters. Flat characters are characters who are often simple, somewhat one-dimensional, and don't change much throughout the story. While round characters are complex, multi-faceted, and capable of surprising the reader believably. These characters have an inner life that allows them to grow and change.

The process of creating and developing these characters is known as characterization.

Characterization can be done directly or indirectly as the below,

a) Direct characterization

When the author explicitly tells the reader about a character's traits or personality.

b) Indirect characterization

Indirect characterization is more subtle and requires the reader to infer personality traits. The author shows the character's personality through their actions, speech, thoughts, physical appearance or how other characters react to them. This method allows readers to build their understanding of a character through their interactions with the text and the narrative suggestion provided by the author (Schneider, 2001).

In the context of Sarah Pinborough's *Behind Her Eyes*, characterization is essential for portraying the dissociative identity disorder (DID) experienced by the main characters, Adele and Louise. Pinborough often uses indirect characterization to build an aura of mystery around them. Adele's sometimes contradictory behaviour that sometimes shifts from gentle to aggressive, which can mirror the identity

alterations typical of dissociative identity disorder (DID).

Furthermore, the use of multiple points of view in the novel significantly strengthens the characterizations of these individuals. Point of view isn't just a storytelling device but a mechanism of exploring the fictional minds of characters (Palmer, 2004). In *Behind Her Eyes*, switching perspectives between Adele and Louise can create a disorienting effect for the reader and force readers to question the reality of their identities. Symbolism, such as dream sequences and astral projection, also serves as a metaphor to depict the fragmentation of self that characters with dissociative identity disorder (DID) might experience. The representation of dissociative identity disorder (DID) through characterization in *Behind Her Eyes* not only advances the plot but also explores deeper psychological themes. By building characters through these indirect methods, readers can experience a process of investigation and discovery regarding identity.

a) Point of view

The perspective used in storytelling which effects how the narrative is received and interpreted by the reader or listener.



b) Temporality

The way in which chronology is organized in the story, either linearly or by non-linear techniques such as flashback, which contributes to the dynamics of the narrative.

c) Characterization

The portrayal of character through dialogue, action, and narration, which helps form an emotional connection between the character and the audience.

d) Narrative voice

The tone and style of the narrator's delivery which can be personal, authoritative, thus affecting the perception and credibility of the story.

### 2.1.2.3 Plot

Plot is an essential element of narrative for organizing and giving meaning to a story (Egan, 1978). It can be seen as the arrangement of incidents within a narrative or structuring operation that develops meaning through the order of events. Plot often includes a sequence of stages, including introduction, rising conflict, climax, and resolution (Nurhidayati, 2017). Egan argues for a more precise understanding of a plot, drawing an analogy with linguistics. He suggests that plot functions similarly to syntax,



organizing the events of a narrative to create meaning. Understanding the plot is crucial for analyzing narrative forms and their significance in literature.

In analyzing the plot, we can refer to the several structures proposed by (Kiosses, 2021) in their research, the key stages in plot can be categorized as follows,

a) Exposition

This is the beginning of the story where it gives introduction to characters and the story world, establishing the background necessary for understanding the conflict.

b) Conflict development

It is events that increase tension and clarify the characters' objectives.

c) Climax

This is the peak of the story that determines the story's direction.

d) Resolution

This is the end of the story. The resolution of conflict and the impact of previous events on characters and the story world.

#### 2.1.2.4 Setting

Setting in a literary work refers to the place, time, and atmosphere in which narrative events take place. Setting not only serves as a physical backdrop, but also plays a crucial role in

supporting themes, shaping characters, and creating a specific atmosphere. According to Klarer (2014), setting can be divided into three main aspects,

a) Spatial setting

The physical location where the story's events take place (e.g., a mental hospital, an apartment, a city, or the outdoors). The setting can indicate stability or tension in a character's life.

b) Temporal setting

The time period or chronology of events (e.g., past, present, season, time of day). The setting can influence the atmosphere and provide historical or psychological context for the narrative.

c) Atmosphere setting

The emotional tone or atmosphere felt in a scene (e.g., suspenseful, melancholic, strange). The atmosphere often reflects the psychological state of the characters.

In the context of psychological fiction like *Behind Her Eyes*, understanding setting is crucial because space and time in the narrative often represent the characters' inner states. For example, a closed space or a dreamlike setting can be interpreted as a metaphor for a character's isolation, fear, or identity conflict. Therefore, in

the study of psychological literature, setting is also seen as a projection of a character's emotions and psychological state (Abrams & Harpham, 2015).

#### **2.1.2.5 Point of View**

Point of view is a narrative position that determines who "speaks" in a story and how much information is conveyed to the reader. The choice of point of view significantly influences the reader's perception of the characters and events in the narrative. Genette (1980) calls this focalization, which influences how information is shared and how readers understand the events and characters in the story. Point of view can be first-person, third-person limited, or omniscient, and the choice will influence the emotional connection between the reader and the character.

##### **a) First-Person Point of View**

The character in the story narrates directly from the "I" perspective, giving the reader a subjective view of the character's internal experiences.

##### **b) Third-Person Point of View**

The narrator is outside the story but only knows the thoughts and feelings of one character. This creates limited information and emotional intimacy.

##### **c) Omniscient Point of View**

The narrator knows everything about all the characters and events. This provides a broad perspective but can diminish the psychological intensity of the characters.

d) Multiple Focalization

The story is told from several characters' perspectives, alternating between them. This technique is often used to show inner conflict or identity confusion, as in *Behind Her Eyes*.

In literary studies, understanding point of view is crucial because it plays a role in shaping perceptions of reality and the structure of the narrative itself. Point of view can also be used to create effects of disorientation, irony, or limited information, often in narratives that address psychological issues such as identity disorders. Characters who recount experiences from their own perspectives allow readers to directly experience their mental state, but can also raise doubts about their reliability (Phelan, 2005).

### 2.1.3 Understanding Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID)

Dissociative disorders involve issues with memory, identity, emotions, perception, behavior, and self-awareness. These symptoms can disrupt various aspects of mental functioning. Dissociation refers to

disconnection between an individual's thoughts, memories, feelings, actions or sense of identity. One of the types of dissociative disorders is dissociative identity disorder. This disorder is characterized by the presence of two or more distinct identities or personality states within a single individual.

All of this explanation of disorder is found in a book or references titled *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition, Text Revision (DSM-5-TR)* which is published by the American Psychiatric Association (APA). The APA is the main professional organization for psychiatrists in the United States and the largest psychiatric organization in the world. *DSM-V-TR* is the foremost comprehensive, current, and basic resource for clinical hone accessible to today's mental wellbeing clinicians and analysts.

In addition to the information provided in the *DSM-5-TR*, dissociative identity disorder is one of the theories in the science of psychological dissociation or abnormal psychology, which is a condition where a person's consciousness suddenly changes and affects their memory and identity. This means that people with this disorder cannot remember the events they experienced, their identity, and can even form a new identity. Many studies show that childhood trauma, such as violence or sexual abuse, is the cause of dissociative identity disorder (DID) (DeMicoli, 2023).

Dissociative identity disorder has long been a subject of debate in the psychiatric literature. A study showed that people with DID have positive symptoms and more severe psychological disorders than people with schizophrenia. However, schizophrenia patients have more severe negative symptoms (Ellason, 1995). It is also added by (Pedersen, 2022) that the negative symptoms referred to in schizophrenia are such as social withdrawal or lack of passion. This disorder, formerly referred to as multiple personality disorder, refers to a condition where an individual has more than one identity present in the body and soul of the same person. The DSM-IV-TR defines individuals who experience dissociative identity disorder as alternating, the existence, feelings, and behaviors of their multiple identities do not affect each other. This means that a person with DID generally experiences split-personality, where there is an alternation from one identity to another.

To understand more about dissociative identity disorder (DID), it is necessary to know the symptoms that characterize this disorder. According to (Kristiani, 2016), the symptoms that can be mentioned as dissociative identity disorder called by are as follows,

- a) Derealization and depersonalization, when the sufferer experiences feelings of unreality and feels physically and mentally separated from the real self.

- b) Amnesia and time distortion, sufferers sometimes discover things they never knew or realized.
- c) Headaches sufferers usually experience headaches and often hear voices in their heads.
- d) Changes in self-images, for example when identity or personality 'A' appears and then switched to personality 'B', the special abilities possessed by identity 'A' will disappear and special abilities possessed by personality 'B' will appear.

Furthermore, one of the main characteristics of DID, often mentioned in the clinical literature, is the phenomenon of shifting control, or the shifting of conscious control from one identity (alter) to another. Each identity can have distinct memories, behaviors, and thought patterns, so individuals with DID often lose awareness of actions occurring when another identity takes over their body (APA, 2022; Brand et al., 2022). This phenomenon reinforces the concept that identities in DID are fragmented and can shift control abruptly.

While dissociative identity disorder (DID) is widely accepted as a trauma-related disorder, recent interdisciplinary debates question the singularity of this explanation. The Trauma Model (TM), rooted in psychiatric literature and codified in the DSM-5-TR (APA, 2022), argues that DID is caused by chronic childhood trauma that fractures the development of a unified self. This model is heavily supported in clinical studies (Brand et al., 2022), which emphasize the



dissociation mechanism as a defense against overwhelming experiences.

In contrast, the Sociocognitive Model (SCM) posits that DID is a socially constructed phenomenon influenced by media, suggestive therapy, and cultural expectations. Lynn and colleagues (2024) argue that narrative shaping, including therapy-induced identities, plays a significant role in DID formation, thereby questioning its neurobiological or trauma-exclusive origin. This model interprets DID as a form of learned role enactment, shaped through therapeutic and cultural scripts.

These competing frameworks have significant implications for literary interpretation. If the trauma model is used, character multiplicity in *Behind Her Eyes* can be viewed as a direct psychological response to abuse or emotional neglect. However, under the sociocognitive model, Adele's multiple identities might reflect a culturally influenced performance, one that is enabled by the narrative elements themselves, rather than trauma alone.

The Trauma Model offers an initial perspective for understanding Adele's or Rob's fragmented identity in *Behind Her Eyes*. Rob's manipulation and act of switching bodies can be interpreted as responses to unresolved trauma and a sense of powerlessness rooted in childhood or experiences of institutional confinement. From this viewpoint, the story can be seen as a metaphor for the psychological break caused by trauma. However,

the interpretation becomes more nuanced when the Sociocognitive Model is considered. Rob's development of alternate identities and his repeated efforts to maintain control through lucid dreaming and astral projection suggest behaviors that are socially learned. These actions may be influenced not only by trauma, but also by exposure to cultural narratives found in fantasy literature, therapeutic discourses, and media representations. The inclusion of astral projection introduces a supernatural dimension that challenges a purely clinical understanding and aligns more closely with the sociocognitive idea that DID is shaped by social and narrative contexts rather than being caused solely by trauma.

Rather than promoting one model as more valid than the other, the novel presents DID as a condition formed through both psychological and social processes. It is triggered by trauma, yet sustained through the influence of cultural storytelling. In this way, *Behind Her Eyes* can be read as a metafictional reflection on identity, showing how it can be constructed, revised, and inhabited in ways similar to the creation of fictional characters.

Further complexity arises when literary scholars engage with Narrative Identity Theory, which proposes that individuals construct their sense of self through internalized life stories (McAdams, 2020). When fragmented narratives and non-linear perspectives dominate a novel, as they do in *Behind Her Eyes*. The reader may experience dissociation-like disorientation

mirroring the character's fractured psyche (Farzand, 2024). Thus, the form of the novel itself can be interpreted as enacting dissociation both thematically and structurally.

This theoretical debate strengthens the analytical framework by showing that dissociative identity disorder (DID) in literature is not a fixed entity but an interpretative construction shaped by intersecting models: trauma, social performance, and narrative form.

#### **2.1.4 Representation**

Representation is an important concept in literary studies, referring to the way an object, idea, or experience is presented again through language, symbols, or narrative. In a literary context, representation refers not only to the direct depiction of reality, but also to the construction of meaning formed by the text and interpreted by the reader (Hall, 1997).

In contemporary literary studies, representation is understood as a cultural process and semiosis, namely how texts shape our understanding of the social and psychological world. Representation is never neutral, it always involves choices, omissions, and perspectives shaped by ideology, genre, and form (Selden, Widdowson, & Brooker, 2005). Therefore, through works of fiction, psychological conditions such as mental disorders can be presented not only factually, but also through symbolic, metaphorical, and structural constructions.

In this case, fictional narratives can act as a medium for representing psychological phenomena. For example, as Leudar & Thomas (2000) point out, mental disorders in literature are often represented through specific narrative techniques such as unreliable narrators, multiple perspectives, or fragmented plots.

For this study, the concept of representation is used to analyze how the symptoms of Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID) are presented in the characters Adele and Louise in the novel *Behind Her Eyes*. This representation is not only clinical, but also narrative and aesthetic, through the use of elements such as shifting perspectives, identity fractures, and narrative techniques such as astral projection as a literary metaphor.

## 2.2 Previous Study

In this research, the thesis or research used as a comparison is the work of A. Isa, W. Mahmud, H. Hassan, Anita, and Morah Abas entitled “An Analysis of Contravening Religious & Cultural Content in The Netflix Original First Season *Behind Her Eyes* in Malaysia”. In previous research, it was mentioned that there were many elements that were very contrary to religious and cultural values in Malaysia in *Behind Her Eyes*, which is certainly different from the purpose of this research.

The second research is a term paper entitled “The Reflection of Parasomnia (Night terrors and Sleepwalking) and Lucid Dreaming That Leads to Out-of-Body Experience in Sarah Pinborough's Novel *Behind Her Eyes*” by Zahra Fiqiah in 2021.

This research focuses on the reflection of sleep problems such as lucid dreaming, night terrors, and sleepwalking depicted in the novel *Behind Her Eyes*. Based on this research, the author, Zahra Fiqiah, found that *Behind Her Eyes* incorporates the concept of sleep disorders such as night terrors, sleepwalking, and lucid dreaming deeply into the plot and characters to create conflict and tension.

The third research is a thesis entitled “The Reflection of Rob Hoyle’s Obsessive Love Toward David Martin in Sarah Pinborough’s Novel *Behind Her Eyes*” by Tiara Ananda in 2019. This research focuses on exploring how Rob Hoyle’s obsessive love towards David Martin affects the behavior and interactions between characters in the novel *Behind Her Eyes* by Sarah Pinborough. Based on the research, the researcher found that Rob’s obsessive love for Martin is displayed through various actions and thoughts that show extreme emotional and unhealthy behavior.

The fourth study is entitled “Obsessive Compulsive Personality Disorder of Rob Hoyle as the Male Character in *Behind Her Eyes* (2021) Novel Adaptation” by Lintang Galuh Savitri from Diponegoro University in 2023. This research focuses on the obsessive-compulsive personality disorder in the character Rob Hoyle in the novel *Behind Her Eyes* by Sara Pionborough. The researcher found that the character’s id, ego, and superego, as well as the character’s abuse of astral projection methods.

The last study is entitled “Dissociative Identity Disorder in K. Webster’s Novel *Whispers and the Roars*” by Fira Rosa

Nasution from Harapan University of Medan in 2022. This research focuses on the psychological aspects of dissociative identity disorder (DID) in the novel *Whispers and Roars* by K.L. Webster, along with its causes. The researchers found that in the novel *Whispers and Roars*, there are aspects of Dissociative Identity Disorder where the main character experiences a bad experience that causes the formation of several multiple personalities or alters in his mind, such as a vengeful personality, a protective personality, a child personality, and a persecutor personality.

The previous studies exposed above have different main focuses, the first study focuses on the controversy of social culture that exists in the object. Then the second research focuses on the presence of elements of sleep disorders such as night terrors, sleepwalking, and lucid dreaming in the object. Tiara Ananda explores Rob Hoyle's obsessive-compulsive personality disorder in Rob Hoyle's character. The last one focuses on analyzing Dissociative Identity Disorder in the novel *Whispers and Roars* by K. Webster. Meanwhile, this research focuses on analyzing Dissociative Identity Disorder in the characters of Adele and Louise in the novel *Behind Her Eyes* by Sarah Pinborough, as well as the symptoms they experience, so as to provide a new perspective on the literary works and how this affects public perception of the disorder. However, the previous research does not deeply explore the psychological construction of identity as portrayed through multiple narrative viewpoints, which this study attempts to investigate.

