



**TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCE RESULTING FROM SEXUAL ABUSE IN  
STEPHEN CHBOSKY' *THE PERKS OF BEING A WALLFLOWER***

**A THESIS  
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for  
The Sarjana Degree Majoring American Study in the English Department  
Faculty of Humanities Diponegoro University**

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## **PRONOUNCEMENT**

The writer honestly confirms that she compiles this thesis entitled “Traumatic Experience Resulting from Sexual Abuse in Stephen Chbosky’ *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*” by herself and without taking any results from other researches in S-1, S-2, S-3 and in diploma degree of any university. The writer ascertains also that she does not quote any material from other publications or someone’s paper expect from the references mentioned.

Semarang, November 2016

Fenita Austriani

## MOTTO AND DEDICATION

*So, which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?*

(Al Quran, Surah Ar-Rahman 55:18)

*“We’ve all got both light and dark inside us. What matter is the part we choose to act on. That’s who we really are.”*

(Harry Potter and the Order of Phoenix)

*“We are who we are for a lot of reason. And maybe we’ll never know most of them.”*

(Charlie – The Perks of Being a Wallflower)

*This thesis is dedicated to*

*My beloved family and*

*Everyone who helped me accomplished this thesis*

**APPROVAL**

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The writer realizes that this thesis is not perfect. Therefore, the writer will be glad to receive any constructive comment and recommendation in order to make this thesis better. At last, the writer expects that this thesis is useful for anyone who reads this thesis in order to learn about traumatic experience.

Semarang, November 2016

Fenita Austriani

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis analyzes traumatic experience in Stephen Chbosky's novel entitled *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*. The novel describes about the life of Charlie as a young boy who suffers from traumatic experience. The purposes of this thesis are to explain Charlie's personality and traumatic experiences resulting from sexual abuse. The methods that are used in this thesis are library research and psychological approach. The writer uses the novel as the main data and several books, journals, and online documents as the supporting data. In analyzing intrinsic elements, the writer uses theme, characters, setting, and conflicts. Moreover, in analyzing extrinsic aspects, the writer uses Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) from American Psychiatric Association (APA). Based on APA, there are five symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder; exposure to stressor, re-experiencing of traumatic event, avoidance, arousal, and duration. The result proves that Charlie suffers from PTSD. Charlie's personality is also affected by the symptoms of PTSD.

Keywords: *trauma, experience, PTSD, sexuality, abuse*

## ABSTRAKSI

Skripsi ini menganalisis tentang pengalaman traumatis dalam novel yang berjudul *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* oleh Stephen Chbosky. Novel ini mendeskripsikan tentang kehidupan Charlie sebagai anak remaja yang mengalami pengalaman traumatis. Tujuan dari skripsi ini adalah untuk menjelaskan kepribadian dan pengalaman traumatis Charlie akibat dari kekerasan seksual. Metode yang digunakan dalam skripsi ini adalah metode studi pustaka dan pendekatan psikologi. Penulis menggunakan novel sebagai data utama dan beberapa sumber buku, jurnal dan sumber-sumber online sebagai data pendukung. Dalam menganalisis unsur intrinsik, penulis menggunakan tema, karakter, latar, dan konflik. Selain itu, untuk menganalisis unsur ekstrinsik, penulis menggunakan teori gangguan stress pasca trauma yang berasal dari Asosiasi Psikiatris Amerika. Berdasarkan Asosiasi Psikiatris Amerika, ada lima gejala gangguan stress pasca trauma: terpapar oleh pemicu stress, mengalami kembali peristiwa trauma, penghindaran, kebangkitan dan durasi terjadinya gejala. Hasil analisis membuktikan bahwa Charlie menderita gangguan stress pasca trauma. Kepribadian Charlie juga dipengaruhi oleh gejala-gejala dari gangguan stress pasca trauma.

Kata kunci: *trauma, pengalaman, gangguan stress pasca trauma, seks, siksaan*

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Most people have an unforgettable series of event in their life. It can be good as it will always be memorized or it also can be bad as it can be hard to forget until it makes someone trauma about it. Trauma is a state of mind that causes injury. According to Heidarizadeh in his journal article *The Significant Role of Trauma in Literature and Psychoanalysis*, trauma is an event which involves feelings and emotions. It sometimes causes negative effect to the sufferer.

Past trauma and traumatic memories affect the mind of the characters. Confusion and insecurity cause trauma; typical causes of psychoanalysis trauma are sexual abuse, employment discrimination, police brutality, bullying, domestic violence, and particularly childhood experiences. Significantly, childhood trauma can lead to violent behavior (2014:788-789)

One of the most damage type causes of psychoanalysis trauma is child sexual abuse. Child sexual abuse is a term of mental health that is used to explain sexual activities between adults and children. As stated by Susan A. Clancy in *The Trauma Myth*, there are a lot of child sexual abuses happened in the United States.

According to epidemiological data, representative populations from the United States, gathered and analyzed using advanced and sophisticated social science research methods, about one in ten men and about one in five women in United States today has had sexual experience as a child with an adult (2009:2)

According to the data from U.S. Department of Justice, during 1980s, the court has reported the increasing number of child sexual abuse victims. The case has being

highlighted by the department as a crime against children series. It is being a massive attention by child advocates, experts, and professionals.

During the 1980's, increasing numbers of victims were identified each year (American Association for the Protection of Children, 1988) and concerns about this crime intensified. However, a dramatic shift in child sexual abuse trends has occurred. (2001:1-2)

Almost 7.7 million American adults suffer from trauma caused by child sexual abuse in childhood. Based on the data, In 1980, the American Psychiatrist Association decides to add the traumatic disorder from child sexual abuse in their diagnostic of mental disorder. The disorder is known as post-traumatic stress disorder (2001: 3).

The reactions of the victims of sexual abuse are varied. One of the most common reactions is depression. They, who experienced sexual abuse as children, suffered from depression, anxiety disorder, personality disorder also relationship and sexual problems. The effect of sexual abuse for each victim can be different according to their problems. Most of physicians agree that knowing from the victim's past event can help to cure them (2009:4-5).

The sexual abuse resulting traumatic experience is also explained by Sigmund Freud who is famous on his psychoanalysis theory. He stated in his book that anxiety and depression can cause failed sexual pleasure and develop into mental disease. Moreover, the tendency to do sexual abuse is caused from childhood experience (1920:322). He also said that traumatic experience is a short event that forces our mind to do more than usual. Therefore it causes continuous problem in the

distribution of energy to our mind. Freud also classified a trauma as memorable experience from deepest feeling of patience (1920:293).

The Writer chooses Stephen Chbosky's novel entitled *The Perks of Being Wallflower* as the object of the study to discuss because it depicts about traumatic experience that gives an example to the reader as reflected in the main character. As it can be known from the novel, Charlie is a freshman in High School. He is introvert, nerd, and shy person. He struggles alone as an abandoned student in his school until he meets Sam and Patrick who accept him and change his life. The novel also depicts about Charlie's psychology regarding to sexual abuse that he experienced in his childhood.

The facts that Charlie's personality in *The Perks of Being Wallflower* is different from other boys at his age makes the writer curious to analyze his past event. Those fact is the reason why the writer chooses "Traumatic Experience Resulting from Sexual Abuse in Stephen Chbosky's *The Perks of Being Wallflower*" as the title.

### **1.2 Scope of the Study**

The discussion is limited on two elements, there are intrinsic and extrinsic elements. The intrinsic elements include narrative elements such as characters, setting, and conflict. Meanwhile, the extrinsic aspects will analyze about the traumatic experienced that influence Charlie's personality. Both of the aspects are based on the novel "*The Perks of Being Wallflower*" by Stephen Chbosky.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The aims of this thesis:

- 1) To analyze intrinsic elements in *The Perks of Being Wallflower* which consist of theme, conflict, character, and setting.
- 2) To analyze Charlie's personality as the impact of traumatic experience in *The Perks of Being Wallflower*.
- 3) To analyze the effect of traumatic experience resulting from sexual abuse as reflected in *The Perks of Being Wallflower*.

### **1.4 Method of the Study**

Method of the study is helping the writer to create the method of collecting data related to the topic of the study. The writer uses method of research and approach in collecting data.

#### 1.4.1 Method of Research

- a) Main data: Stephen Chbosky's *The Perks of Being Wallflower*.
- b) Supporting data: The Supporting data are collected from the books, articles from internet, and theory needed by the writer.

#### 1.4.2 Method of Approach

The writer uses psychological approach to analyze Charlie's personality that causes traumatic experience. Based on Albertine Minderop, psychological approach is one of literary approach that reflects psychiatry activities. It is important to analyze the involvement of author's psychology and author's ability to depict imaginary characters which have mental problem (Minderop, 2010:54-55). In analyzing *The*

*Perks of Being Wallflower*, the writer uses post-traumatic stress disorder by American Psychiatrist Association as a developmental concept of shell shock or war neurosis by Sigmund Freud. The post-traumatic stress disorder or PTSD is written in *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder* (DSM) as a manual used by clinicians to diagnose mental disorder.

### **1.5 Organization of the Study**

The organization of this paper is made as follows:

**Chapter I : INTRODUCTION**

It contains of background of the study, scope of the study, purpose of the study, methods, and organization of the study.

**Chapter II : SUMMARY OF THE NOVEL**

It contains the summary of the novel. This chapter will help the reader who has not read the novel in discovering the characters, theme and story.

**Chapter III : THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This chapter tells about the theories supporting the discussion of the topic. It also describes the narrative elements of the novel such as character, theme, setting, conflict, and also extrinsic element that describe about traumatic experience and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Chapter IV : TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCE RESULTING FROM  
SEXUAL ABUSE IN STEPHEN CHBOSKY'S THE PERKS  
OF BEING WALLFLOWER

Chapter V : CONCLUSION

This chapter contains the summary of the topic analysis that  
has been discussed.



## CHAPTER II

### *THE PERKS OF BEING WALLFLOWER*

*The Perks of Being Wallflower* is a story of freshman named Charlie who has no friend at school. He has mental problem that he gets from his childhood. In the middle school, he loses his best friend, Michael, who committed suicide. He also receives sexual abuse from his aunt when he was a little boy. He is an introvert student until Sam and Patrick come to his life to change everything. Charlie meets them in the high school football game because he used to go on the football match with Michael.

Charlie finds perfect friends who could respect and go along with him just the way he is. At first Patrick introduces himself to Charlie. That is the first time Charlie met Patrick and his stepsister, Sam. During his school life, Charlie becomes one of Patrick and Sam's group of friend. They go to a homecoming school party together which is impossible for a freshman like him.

At a summer holiday, Charlie spends his days at his parent's hometown and goes to his Aunt's cemetery. Aunt Hellen is Charlie's favorite person because she is kind to him. However, his Aunt is dead when he was seven. It happens at Charlie's seventh birthday party. One day, there was a policemen comes to his house to tell that there is a woman who dies because of car accident. At first Charlie does not believe,

but when his mom goes out to check it, he starts to blame himself. The last time Aunt Hellen speaks to Charlie is when she goes out to buy him birthday present. It was the day when Charlie feels very sad and thinks that her death is because of him.

After that tragedy, his parents start to take him for a treatment at mental hospital. Every week, he has to deal with a lot of question and it makes him very upset. It only takes a while to do the treatment after the incident and Charlie shall not have to see the doctor anymore. However, Charlie sometimes feels bad every time he remembers his Aunt especially when he thought about his birthday. That is the reason why he hates birthday party.

In the weekend, Charlie's family goes to Ohio where his father's family lived. They spend a night in there with his grandmother. On the way to back home, his family decides to visit Aunt Hellen's cemetery. Suddenly, his mother tells him the truth why she lets Aunt Hellen to live with them until she dies. Charlie's mother feels sorry about Aunt Hellen because she is molested by a friend of her family.

On December 24 1983, there are policeman come to Charlie's house. The Policeman said that Aunt Hellen got a car crash. The Policeman tells Charlie's mom that Aunt Hellen has passed away. That is the first time Charlie goes to psychiatrist because of his Aunt death, he starts to blackout every time he remembered her.

As the school year ends, Sam is accepted in summer college-preparatory program. Charlie worries if he will lose Sam and never has a friend anymore. When Charlie helps her to pack stuff, Charlie confes his feeling that he loves Sam after all

this time. She is upset that he never tells the truth. Then, they begins to kiss each other but Charlie suddenly stopps her because he feels uncomfortable.

After Sam leaves the town, Charlie feels terrible and unwell. He goes back home and is found naked in the living room. He does not remember at all. His family putts him to mental hospital again. Charlie starts to realize what has happened to him in the past. His memory drives him back to when Aunt Helen is still alive.

It reveals that his aunt abuses him when he was a child but his undying love for his Aunt causes him to repress those awful memories. Charlie begins to realize that his sexual intercourse with Sam bring him to repressed his memories of aunt Helen when he was a child. It happens when Charlie was at home, alone with Aunt Helen. She abuses him every Saturday when his parents left home.

Charlie has to stay at hospital for two months. His family and friends visit him every day. Surprisingly, Sam and Patrick who has already moved out of town also visit him to support Charlie. After discharged from mental hospital, his family and his friends starts to take care of him whenever he feels upset. They support Charlie as could as they can to make him feels better.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **3.1 Intrinsic Aspect**

Intrinsic aspect is the most important aspect to build a story. It is considered as a foundation of the literary work. However, the writer only analyzes theme, character, setting and conflict to support the data.

##### **3.1.1 Theme**

Theme is a determined aspect which concludes the genre of the story and it is considered as the main idea of the story. Obviously, it can be seen in the whole of the story. According to Holman, theme is dominating idea in a literary work that is always being discussed as the general topic. (1972: 486)

##### **3.1.2 Character**

Character is one of the important aspects in building a story. According to James L. Potter, he states that Characters is fundamental aspect in literature and substantial part to be concern to. Characters can be appeared as a person, yet it can be just someone's talk. There are two types of characterization according to Forster in Potter; flat and round.

Flat characters are types of caricatures, as Forster says, while round characters have the variety and inconsistency of traits that make people human. A truly characters behavior is always obviously consistent with his single trait. A round character can sometimes surprise us, at least for the moment. (1967:19)

It can be concluded that round character is more entertaining than flat character. Therefore, it can attract the reader by knowing that the story is unique. Round character is difficult to describe because it can change based on its author. Sometimes round character may surprise the reader in the story.

Beside flat and round character, there are also two types of character which are protagonist and antagonist. According to Jens Eder in *Characters in Fictional Worlds*, protagonist is a first player in Greek performance, while antagonist is the opposite of protagonist which is the second player. The other terms of antagonist is minor character, opponent, or parallel (2010: 26)

### **3.1.3 Setting**

Setting is about explaining place and time where the story happened. As it is told by M.H Abrams in his book, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, setting is one of narrative element that shows about historical time, and social circumstances where the story occurs. However, James L. Potter explained in his book *The Elements of Literature* that setting can affect the story. He said that setting can influence the events in the story by affecting the characters and by encouraging the events (1967: 27-28). Based on the definition above, setting is divided into three kinds; time, place, and social setting.

### **3.1.3.1 Setting of Time**

Setting of time is an aspect where the story happened. Setting of time can be a date, month, or year. The condition when the event is happened can be categorized as a setting of time such as in the morning, or evening.

### **3.1.3.2 Setting of Place**

Contrast with setting of time, setting of place is where the story happened. Setting of Place can represent a nation, building, a train or other places which supports the storyline. It can determine the presence of the character in the story and also can depict the environment itself.

### **3.1.3.3 Social Setting**

Social setting is one of setting's aspect that depicting social environment in the story. In other words, social setting is a setting that is made by society with concerning social aspects in the story or literary works.

### **3.1.4 Conflict**

Conflict is a literary aspect that involves character's struggle in a story. Conflict is not only about the struggle of character against someone but also against himself to achieve something. (1967:105) Potter also said that to produce a conflict, it takes two sides of an argument. If there is no contrary argument, there will be no conflict and without a conflict, there is no plot. (1967:25-26). There are two types of conflict, they are internal and external conflict.

#### **3.1.4.1 Internal Conflict**

Internal Conflict happens when the character struggles against their own mind. It can be seen when they feel hesitate or struggles to reach some goal to be achieved.

#### **3.1.4.2 External Conflict**

External Conflict happens when the character struggles against society and other outside aspects depends on the story. According to Holman, a main character may be involved in four different kinds of conflicts. There are (1) conflicts against nature; (2) conflicts against another person; (3) conflicts against society; (4) conflicts against fate or destiny.

### **3.2 Extrinsic Aspect**

#### **3.2.1 Traumatic Experience and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder**

Traumatic Experience is unbearable situation that force our mind to rethink memory in the past. It is introduced by Sigmund Freud that a situation which happens in a short time, that “increase the strength of a given stimulus” which affecting someone to create fear abnormally. Therefore, trauma also called as wound or brain injury (1920:241-242).

Most of traumatic experience cases are combat victim, disaster, witness of murderer, and child sexual abuse. According to Finkelhor in Bagley (1990:44) the victim of child sexual abuse suffers from psychological trauma rather than physical trauma. Children who are experiencing repeated or multiple traumatic experiences tend to show a post-traumatic stress disorder symptom in adolescence. Since children

are more vulnerable to attack because they are small, dependent, powerless, and defenseless.

According to Freud, Traumatic experience causes post traumatic syndrome called shell shock or war neurosis. The term of shell shock or war neurosis is inherited from his patient who was a victim of World War I. However, the post traumatic syndrome resulting from combat is similar to rape or violent crime. (2005:146-147) His concept is developed by The American Psychiatric Association (APA) with a new term called Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

According to APA, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder is a part of anxiety disorder that is happened by extreme or memorable events cause to extreme psychological trauma followed by repeated emotional act. (1994:274) The information regarding to post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms are collected in *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder* (DSM) in the first publication at 1980. DSM is the manual used by psychiatrist and researchers to diagnose mental disorder.

### **3.2.2 Characteristic of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder**

According to DSM IV, there are four diagnostic symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder:

#### **3.2.2.1 Exposure to Stressor**

According to Marshall, stress is a disparity between society's pressure to conform to extreme events with individual's capability to adapt to those events. In other words, stress is the result of individual's inability to adapt to the extreme events. Those extreme events are usually known as stressor. Stressor is an extreme



event that can cause excessive stress (i.e threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence). As a result, when someone experiences those events, then he will be traumatized (2000:11). Meanwhile, exposure is the state of being exposed, in this case is related to stressor. The way, stressor is exposed are in the following:

1. Experiencing the traumatic event.
2. Witnessing the events as it experiences to other people.
3. Learning the traumatic event happened to a close family member.

#### **3.2.2.2 Re-experiencing of Event**

PTSD can be known as a fear of extreme memories of traumatic event that repeatedly experienced by someone. The following intrusion symptoms connected with the traumatic events such as:

1. Recurrent, involuntary, and intrusive memories (images or thoughts,)
2. Recurrent, distressing dreams are related to traumatic events.
3. Dissociative reaction such as; experiencing illusions or hallucinations, having flashback episodes).

#### **3.2.2.3 Avoidance**

People with PTSD commonly avoid some events related to traumatic experience. The avoidance occurred in the beginning after the traumatic events happened, as indicated by the following:

1. Making attempts to avoid images, feelings, or conversation that remembering one of the traumatic events.

2. Feeling fear, guilt, sadness, shame or confusion after the traumatic event occurred.
3. Shutting out the memories of painful periods and experiencing amnesia.

#### **3.2.2.4 Arousal**

Arousal is a state where nervous system is sensitive to an overwhelming trauma, so the traumatic experience becomes elevated in the worse way. The symptoms of arousal occurred in the beginning or worsening after the traumatic events such as:

1. Reckless or self-destructive behavior.
2. Irritability or outburst of anger.
3. Blackout in specific case such as; depersonalization and derealization.
4. Exaggerated startle response.
5. Difficulty concentrating.

#### **3.2.2.5 Duration**

The symptoms described above (Re-experiencing of Event, Avoidance, and Arousal) exist longer than one month.

#### **3.2.2.6 Life Disrupted**

The disturbance causes distress or impairment in society. Schiraldi defines life disrupted as a PTSD symptom that can disturb life and relationship. It could be avoiding people, social situation and hostility or anger. (2009:12)

## CHAPTER IV

### TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCE RESULTING FROM SEXUAL ABUSE IN STEPHEN CHBOSKY'S *THE PERKS OF BEING WALLFLOWER*

#### 4.1 Intrinsic Elements

##### 4.1.1 Theme

In the novel *The Perks of Being Wallflower*, the main theme is about friendship. The theme is shown in the beginning of the story when Charlie tells about his best friend, Michael, who has been died of committing suicide. They both are best friend since junior high school. Charlie misses his only one friend because Michael is the one who can understand him. "*The last time I had a friend over to dinner was Michael last year. We had tacos. The really great part was that Michael stayed over to sleep*" (1999:55). According to quotation above, Charlie feels happy when Michael sleepover at his home and have a dinner together. It is shown that Michael is the last friend of Charlie has ever got before he enter high school.

When Charlie enters high school for the first time, he has no friend. He is even bullied by some of popular student. That is why he tends to be passive student until he meets Patrick and Sam. Patrick joins his class for a remedial but they never talk to each other. Then, both of them meet in a football match, this time Patrick brought his step sister named Sam. Patrick and Sam are senior in Charlie's school.

"Hey, you're in my shop class!" He's very friendly person.

"I'm Charlie." I said, not too shy.

"And I'm Patrick. And this is Sam." He pointed to a very pretty girl next to him. And she waved to me.

"Hey, Charlie." Sam had a very nice smile.

They both told me to have a seat, and they both seemed to mean it, so I took a seat (1999:19).

In the novel, it is shown the journey of their friendship between Charlie, Patrick, and Sam. Since their meeting in the football match, they always spend time together. Patrick and Sam often invite him to a party, such as homecoming party. They also introduce him to their friends; Alice, Mary Elizabeth, and Bob even though they are all seniors. Since then, Charlie knows the new side of teenage life with a lot of things in it, such as partying, smoking pot, and using drugs

I ate the brownie, and it tasted a little weird, but was still a brownie, so I still liked it. but this was not an ordinary brownie. Since you are older, I think you know what kind of brownie it was...

“Are you seeing anything, Charlie?”

“Light.”

“Does it feel good?”

“Uh-huh.”

“What would you like to drink?”

“A milkshake”

And everyone in the room, except Sam, erupted in laughter.

“He’s stoned.” (1999:35)

The conversation above indicates that one of his friends is using brownies to cover up the drugs. He uses marijuana as additional ingredients in the brownies in order to make a good taste. Since then, Charlie tries drugs and starts to smoke. Charlie is close to Patrick and Sam because they always look happy every time he gives something to them. They also accept Charlie as a friend as the way he is. When his friends make toast to him, he feels appreciated. That makes him feels special.

I didn’t know that other people thought things about me. I didn’t know that they looked. I was sitting on the floor of a basement of my first real party between Sam and Patrick, and I remembered that Sam introduced me as her friend to Bob...

...Bob raised his drink and asked everyone to do the same.

“To Charlie.”

And the whole group said, “To Charlie.”

I didn't know why they did that, but it was very special to me that they did. Especially Sam. Especially her. (1999:38)

When Charlie exchanges Christmas presents, he gives the presents to all of his friends including Alice, Bob, and Mary Elizabeth. He gives a special gift to Sam which is old 45 record of Beatles song “Someday”. That present is actually a gift from aunt Helen to Charlie when he was a little. The writer thinks that Charlie gives it to Sam because she is very special to him. Sam accepts Charlie as the way Charlie is, with all of his weirdness. He also feels that Sam is a representation of aunt Helen. It can be inferred when Sam says thanks to Charlie because the present is very precious.

Sam looked at me soft. And she hugged me. And I closed my eyes because I wanted to know nothing but her arms. And she kissed my cheek and whispered so nobody could hear.

“I love you.”

I knew that she meant it in a friend way, but I didn't care because it was the third time since my aunt Helen died that I heard it from anyone. The other two times were from my mom. (1999:69)

Charlie also cares about his friends. The time when all of his friends have decided to choose university, Charlie gives them a farewell gift. Charlie knows exactly what his friends really love. He gives them all the things that they ever mentioned even though they never talk about it to Charlie

After the dance club, we went back to Peter's apartment, and I gave everyone their graduation presents. I gave Alice a film book about *Night of the Living Dead*, which she liked, and I gave Mary Elizabeth a copy of *My Life as a Dog* on videotape with the subtitles in it, which she loved.

Then, I gave Patrick and Sam their presents. I even wrapped them up special. I used the Sunday funny papers because they are in color. (1999:193)

Charlie has planned the presents, special for his friends who will continue to study in the university. It makes them quiet and speechless about what Charlie has been doing to them. They never know about it. That makes Charlie sad because he will miss the people who accept him completely.

#### **4.1.2 Character**

In the *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* novel, the writer decides Charlie as the main character and Aunt Hellen as the minor character to be analyzed because she is related to Charlie's past event and causing his traumatic experience.

##### **4.1.2.1 Charlie**

Charlie is 15 year-old-boy who has just entered high school. He is described as a bookworm and nerd student. He always reads a book whenever he has free time. Charlie is also the main character as well as the narrator. From the beginning of the story, Charlie starts to write a letter to anonymous person. In this novel, He tells us all of his experiences, his friends, and his problems at home through the letters that he writes.

After meeting Sam and Patrick, Charlie has changed significantly. Sam influences him to be confident and participate to other people. She often invites Charlie to hang out at the bar or have a party with their friends.

Sam told me during the game that they were going over to their friend's house later for a party. Then, she asked me if I wanted to go, and I said yes because I had never been to a party before. (1999:29)

It indicates that before he met Sam and Patrick, he never hang out with his friends and join a party before. The writer also thinks that Charlie never socializes with other people except Michael. Charlie changes his personality from being antisocial into socializes person.

Tomorrow, I start my sophomore year of high school. And believe it or not, I'm really not that afraid of going. I'm not sure if I will have the time to write any more letters because I might be too busy trying to "participate(1999:213)

As being told in the conversation above, it is taken when Charlie starts his second grade of high school. It means that his friends are moved to college now. He used to scare and afraid to go to school, because of his introvert behavior. However, at the end of the story, he is now open to other people. He says that he will be busy trying to participate with other people.

Moreover, there are bad and good influences from both of his friends. Patrick introduces him to the teenage life that he has never experienced before. Patrick influences Charlie to smoke a cigarettes, drugs and alcohols. It happened when Patrick has a problem with his boyfriend then Charlie tries to calm him down and accompany him to have a drink "*Patrick and I have been spending a lot of time together. We drink a lot. Actually, it's more like Patrick drinks, and I sip.*"(1999:161) It is the first time when Charlie drinks an alcohol.

Before meeting Sam and Patrick, Charlie is described as an antisocial person. One of his best friends, Patrick, describes Charlie as an antisocial or in the story it is called as a wallflower. The term of Wallflower is a metaphor of a flower vine on the

wall. As Patrick says to Charlie “*You see things. You keep quiet about them. And you understand*”(1999:37). It indicates that Charlie does not participate with people around him. That makes him has no friend when he enters high school until he meets Patrick and Sam who changes his life.

Before meeting Sam and Patrick, Charlie is described as an emotional person. Every moment when he feels upset he is always crying and angry. It is shown when Michael, his best friend, dead of suicide and he cannot endure his tears.

The counselor said that he suspected that Michael had “problems at home” and didn’t feel like he had anyone to talk to. That’s maybe why he felt all alone and killed himself.

Then, I started screaming at the guidance counselor that Michael could have talked to me. And I started crying even harder.(1999:4)

Every time he feels upset or misses someone that he loves, He uses his emotion to express his feeling. For example when Charlie had a birthday party, he remembered the day his dearest Aunt died.

I hope it’s okay that I’m telling you this. I just don’t know what else to do. I always get sad when this happens, and I wish Michael were here. And I wish my Aunt Helen were here. I miss my Aunt Helen like this. Reading the book isn’t helping either. I don’t know. I’m just thinking too fast. It’s like tonight. (1999:75-76)

His statement above indicates Charlie’s grief of the people whom he loves. On his birthday, he always feels sad instead of being happy. His birthday reminds him about a tragedy in the 1983, the night before his birthday party. It is told from the story that Aunt Helen died of car accident on that night. Suddenly, Charlie felt miserable and started to blame himself, because Aunt Helen was going to buy him a present.



Charlie is also a grumpy person. When Sam's boyfriend was cheating on her, Charlie was mad at him and revenge on Sam's boyfriend. Although his appearance looks like a nerd, he is a vindictive man when someone hurts people whom he loves. He wants to make Sam's boyfriend hurt but Sam prevents him and lets the air out of his tires as the best thing they can do.

She calmed me down, and I guess I'm glad she did because I think I would have gotten even madder if I started hitting Dave, and his girl stopped me because she loved him. I think I would have gotten even madder about that.(1999:32)

The changing behavior and attitude of Charlie makes the writer decides to categorize Charlie as a round character. It is shown from the beginning to the ending of the story.

#### **4.1.2.2 Aunt Helen**

In the novel, Aunt Helen is a minor character. She passed away when Charlie was a little boy. Aunt Helen is described as a smart fat woman who loves to read books. It is shown when Charlie says "*The nice thing was my Aunt Helen was never on a diet. And my Aunt Helen was "corpulent". Hey, I did it!*"(1999:12). Aunt Helen is described as a corpulent who is never on diet. It means that aunt Helen is fat and she is keen on eating. She is also a book lover so it drives Charlie likes books as well.

Aunt Helen was my favorite person in the whole world. She was my mom's sister. She got straight A's when she was a teenager and she used to give me books to read...

....

My Aunt Helen lived with the family for the last few years of her life because something very bad happened to her. Nobody would tell me what happened then even though I always wanted to know.(5)

According to the quotes, the word straight A is used to explain her cleverness. It means that aunt Helen is smart. She is adored by Charlie because of her intelligent, kindness, and affection. It can be seen when Charlie says that aunt Helen was his favorite person. In the story, aunt Helen is also described as a generous and affectionate woman. She always takes care of Charlie and his family when his parents are not at home.

My Aunt Helen would always let us kids stay up and watch Saturday Night Live when she was baby-sitting or when she was living with us and my parents went to another couple's house to get drunk and play board games.(1999:16)

Aunt Helen lives with Charlie family when he is a little boy. She mostly takes care of Charlie because he is the youngest on the family. Charlie's mother or aunt Helen's sister lets her stay together with them because she feels pity on her. Aunt Helen lives at Charlie' family because she has a terrible life. She has an awful childhood which affects her behavior. Then, she also has a bad relationship with his boyfriend.

Aunt Helen' childhood is so terrible. Her father always beat her just because she has a bad result on math. When Charlie goes to his grandfather house to have thanksgiving, he tells a story about aunt Helen childhood.

I came home at two in the morning ... pissed and pissed ... your grandmother showed me their report cards ... C-plus average ... and these were smart girls. So, I went into their room and I beat some sense into them ... and when it was done and they were crying, I just held up their report cards and said... 'This will never happen again.'(1999:58)

The quotation above indicates that aunt Helen's father is a tough person. It can be seen when he beats aunt Helen just because she has C-plus. Her father's behavior towards aunt Helen makes her feel depressed. It makes her feel unhappy in her entire life. Besides that, aunt Helen is molested by her family relatives. Unfortunately, no one of his family member helps her. Even her father does not believe of what she said. She wants to be protected by his father, but it is getting worse. The man who abuses aunt Helen keeps coming to her house.

I will not say who. I will not say when. I will just say that my aunt Helen was molested. I hate that word. It was done by someone who was very close to her. It was not her dad. She finally told her dad. He didn't believe her because of who it was. A friend of the family. That just made it worse. My grandma never said anything either. And the man kept coming for visits. (1999:89-90)

Hearing the word "molested" makes Charlie angry because someone has hurt aunt Helen. The traumatic experience of aunt Helen makes her abuse herself. Although she looks like a kindhearted woman, she has a wound in her heart deep down inside.

My aunt Helen drank a lot. My aunt Helen took drugs a lot. My aunt Helen had many problems with men and boys. She was a very unhappy person most of her life. She went to hospitals all the time. All kinds of hospitals. Finally, she went to a hospital that helped her figure things out enough to try and make things normal, so she moved in with my family. (1999:90)

Her chaotic life makes her release the distress by hurting herself. Drinking alcohol and using drugs are the form of her self-destructive behavior. The writer thinks that she uses drugs in order to make her life feel better. One day, aunt Helen goes to mental hospitals to end her addictive to drugs and also look for a solution for her life. According to the quotation above, it indicates that aunt Helen goes to mental

hospital to cure her problems and look for a solution. That is why she ends up living with Charlie and his family, because she thinks Charlie' family can help her.

The relationship between aunt Helen and Charlie are just like mother and son. He thinks that aunt Helen is his favorite person because only her that makes Charlie thinks special "*When I was driving home, I just thought about the word "special." And I thought the last person who said that about me was my aunt Helen* (1999:182). This statement happens after the meeting with his teacher, Bill. Bill considers him as a special student that he ever taught before. It reminds him that the last one who tells him special was aunt Helen. According to what Charlie says, the writer concludes that the relationship between Charlie and aunt Helen are uncommon. It is shown when aunt Helen says to Charlie that he is special person to her.

The static character of aunt Helen who is described by Charlie's perspective, is always good towards Charlie's family from the beginning until her death. Her generosity towards Charlie whom does not change makes aunt Helen is categorized as flat character.

### **4.1.3 Setting**

#### **4.1.3.1 Setting of Time**

*The Perks of Being Wallflower* occurs between 1991 until 1992. It is opened by Charlie's anonymous letters. It is written on August 25, 1991 and ended on August 23, 1992. Basically, Charlie writes the letters for a year.

According to the novel, the story takes the setting of time during a school day until Christmas holiday and last semester break. As it explained in chapter 2 which start from November to December indicates that Christmas holiday is coming soon.

Charlie encounters re-experiencing criteria of traumatic event two times. The first time is when Charlie and his friends have a secret Santa for Christmas Party. It happens on December 21 1991. The second one is when Sam invites him to farewell party. On that day, Charlie writes a letter on June 22, 1992. It indicates that the incident happens during new semester break .

#### **4.1.3.2 Setting of Place**

Charlie does not write the address where he lives or where the letters are from. However, there are some evidence that shown the location of where the story of *The Perks of Being Wallflower* happens. The first one is when Charlie goes back home with Patrick and Sam. They ride Sam's pickup truck and pass through Fort Pitt Tunnel. As reported via online media cbslocal.com, Fort Pitt Tunnel is a bridge connecting Downtown Pittsburg and West End neighborhood which is located in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. In addition, as it is explained by Charlie that his brother went to Penn state and also is Sam, the writer concludes that the story happened in Pittsburgh, in the USA state of Pennsylvania.

The setting where most of the story takes place is at school. It can be seen in the Charlie's second letter. Charlie first meeting with Patrick and Sam is at school yard, where the football match is started. Sam's house is also considered as a setting

of place. It is because Charlie starts to kiss Sam and re-experiences the trauma in that room.

“Charlie, I have to pack up some things. Would you stay with me for a while?”

I nodded, and we went upstairs.

As we entered her room. I noticed how different it looked from the night Sam kissed me. (1999:199)

According to conversation above, it can be seen that Charlie and Sam are fooling around in Sam’ room. That is also the place where Charlie is showing the characteristic of post-traumatic stress disorder.

#### **4.1.3.3 Social Setting**

Charlie’s family is from middle class society. It can be seen from his parents’ wealth that indicated by their Camaro’ car. Moreover, they are also capable to take Charlie to a mental hospital. Even though the story does not mention the occupation of his parents, we can see from how his parents raise two children one of them is still on high school and the other one is in college. His brother goes to Penn State which is one of top university in America. It also indicates that his parents are from middle class society. In addition, his parents take him to a mental hospital where he starts to blackout and spent two months in there is also a prove that they are not from poor family. Since they can pay two months of hospital bill.

However, the social environment of Aunt Hellen does matter. She is raised nearby the mill because her father was working on the mill. She was also molested by her father’s friend who also works at the mill. It can be concluded that aunt Helen

social environment when she was a little is from lower class society. The writer thinks that it is why she is often abused because of his rough life.

Charlie's teenage life is also important in this story. His life represents an American teenage life on that era. In the era 1990s most of teenager plays records and mixtape. "*The first present is going to be a mix tape. I just know that it should. I already have the songs picked and a theme*" (1999:61). Another example of teenage life is party, drugs, smokes, and free sex. In the story, most of Charlie's friends smoke pot and have a free sex after party. That makes Charlie and Sam are influenced and Charlie starts to rethink his past memory where aunt Helen abused him when he was a little.

#### **4.1.4 Conflict**

##### **4.1.4.1 Internal Conflict**

Conflicts become the central issue to make the story is interesting. In the novel *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, there are two conflicts occurred; internal and external conflict. The internal conflict in Charlie happens when he starts to remember his aunt. It is happened the day after his 16<sup>th</sup> birthday party. He used to visit aunt Helen graveyard to mourn. He starts to talk about his friends who accept him as the way he is.

I remember when I was just about to say goodbye to my aunt Helen, I started crying. It was a real kind of crying, too. Not the panicky type, which I do a lot. And I made aunt Helen a promise to only cry about important things because I would hate to think that crying as much as I do would make crying for aunt Helen less than it is. (1999:93-94)

He talks to himself and starts to cry. Every time he remembers his aunt, he is always being emotional. It makes him a sensitive and emotional person. He just cannot accept that aunt Helen has to die without saying goodbye to him. They make a promise not to cry the unnecessary things anymore. When Patrick, Sam and their friends move to college, especially the day Sam goes to Penn State, he starts to confuse and worried.

I don't know what's wrong with me. It's like all I can do is keep writing this gibberish to keep from breaking apart. Sam's gone. And Patrick won't be home for a few days. And I just couldn't talk with Mary Elizabeth or anybody or my brother or anybody in my family. Except maybe my aunt Helen. But she's gone. And even if she were here, I don't think I could talk to her either. Because I'm starting to feel like what I dreamt about her last night was true. And my psychiatrist's questions weren't weird after all. (1999:205)

Charlie starts to confuse about himself. He feels that Sam's gone is similar with aunt Helen's gone. He dreams about the day aunt Helen molested him, then he starts to realize that something is going wrong with him. The day when he sees his psychiatrist that talks about his past memory has revealed the truth. This is the beginning of all his secrets revealed.

#### **4.1.4.2 External Conflict**

##### **4.1.4.2.1 Charlie and His Friends**

In this story the external conflict happens between Charlie and his friends. When Charlie's friend will move to college, Charlie starts to feel lonely because no one will be there for him.

“When I came back, they all looked at me and I said, “ I'm going to miss you all very much. I hope you have a great time at college.” And then I started crying because it suddenly hit me that they were all leaving” (1999:194).



After crying in front of people, Peter, one of Charlie's friends thinks that he is strange. Then, Sam takes him to the kitchen and convinces him to stop crying. She also says that she will remember Charlie whenever she feels upset at college. It indicates that Charlie cannot be separated from the people he loves. It is also happened when he is separated from aunt Helen. He gets fear and insecure whenever he remembers his aunt.

## **4.2 Extrinsic Aspects**

According to DSM fourth edition, there are five diagnostic symptoms of PTSD; exposure to stressor, re-experiencing event, avoidance, arousal, duration of the symptoms and life disrupted. The writer analyzes Charlie, the major character of The Perks of Being Wallflower novel, who shows PTSD criteria.

### **4.2.1 Exposure to Stressor**

According to APA, the first PTSD criterion is experiencing exposure to a stressor. As being explained from the previous chapter, exposure to a stressor is the state of being exposed to an extreme event causing excessive stress. The writer will discuss sexual molested as one of the stressors.

#### **4.2.1.1 Charlie is Directly Experiencing Traumatic Event**

Charlie is the object of the discussion because he experienced the traumatic event that is molested by aunt Helen. According to DSM IV, there are three ways stressor exposed. However, in The Perks of Being Wallflower, there are only two

types of the way stressor is exposed, one of them is directly experiencing the traumatic events. It is happened when aunt Helen lives with Charlie's family. She molested Charlie every weekend alone at his home when he was six years old.

I don't really want to talk about the questions and the answers. But I kind of figured out that everything I dreamt about my Aunt Helen was true. And after a while, I realized that it happened every Saturday when we would watch television (1999:208-209).

Charlie is the victim of sexual molested. It can be seen when Charlie has a dream of his aunt. He is dreaming about aunt Helen who molested him in a couch every Saturday. From the quotation above, Charlie does not remember the event yet he can dream about it. When aunt Helen molested him, that is the criteria where Charlie is exposed to stressor. It makes him unable to adapt to early sexual behavior.

#### **4.2.1.2 Charlie is Learning Traumatic Event That Happened to Aunt Helen**

The second way is learning that traumatic event happened to a close family member. Charlie's mother told him that aunt Helen's life was never happy. His mother says that aunt Helen had once been sexually abused when she was a child. She is molested by her father's friend.

I'm talking about the bad thing that happened to aunt Helen they wouldn't tell me about when I was little...It is the one thing that makes me deep down sad. I will not say who. I will not say when I will just say that my aunt Helen was molested. I hate that word (1999:89-90)

Knowing that bad event, Charlie is so angry by stating the word" I hate that word" like the quotation above. He is also sad about what happened to his lovely aunt. Therefore, aunt Helen's childhood story makes him stimulate his thought

excessively and makes him stress. Since Charlie adores aunt Helen so much and she is also the closest person among his family members.

#### **4.2.2 Re-experiencing of Event**

In DSM V, re-experiencing of event is the criterion of how Post Traumatic Stress Disorder appears. In this criterion, Charlie is re-experiencing the extreme event repeatedly and forcing him to rethink the past event.

##### **4.2.2.1 Charlie is Experiencing Recurrent Memories**

There are some intrusion symptoms that are related to Charlie's traumatic experience. One of them is recurrent memories. According to the story, Charlie is having a recurrent memory when He kisses Sam. It happens when Charlie and his friends are having Christmas Eve party. When they are exchanging presents, Sam invites Charlie to her bedroom.

Surprisingly, Sam has a special present for him which is a typewriter. He feels so happy and special. Then, they sit in Sam' bed and start to talk intimately. At that moment, Charlie knows that Sam has a terrible childhood. She says that she has been kissed by one of her father' friend. Sam feels bad when she tries to remember about her past.

“I want to make sure that the first person you kiss loves you. Okay?”

“Okay.” She was crying harder now. And I was, too, because when I hear something like that I just can't help it.

“I just want to make sure of that. Okay?”

“Okay.”

And she kissed me. It was the kind of kiss that I could never tell my friends about out loud. It was the kind of kiss that made me know that I was never so happy in my whole life (1999:70).

At that moment, Sam wants Charlie to have a first kiss from someone who loves him, even though their relationship is considered as a best friend. After that, Charlie is kissed by Sam for the first time. It shocks him and starts to realize that actually he is never happy. He feels so sad by his first kiss with Sam. He should be happy because Charlie is in love with Sam and adores her so much. However, he still thinks that there is something wrong with him. From the quotation above, it can be concluded that Charlie is experiencing a recurrent memories when aunt Helen abused him through Sam's kiss.

Another recurrent memories experienced by Charlie is when he attends farewell party at Sam's house. The night before Sam leaves the town and moves to college, she holds a farewell party in her home. Charlie is invited in the party even he is not graduated yet. After the party ends, she asks Charlie to help her pack up for tomorrow. They enter Sam's room and start to pack. Sam talks about a lot of things to Charlie. She talks about what a college life would be like and what a long trip she will have tomorrow. Then, she gives advice to him to do what he wanted to do and be honest with himself. Suddenly, Charlie confesses that he loves Sam. He never tells Sam because he thought Sam would not like it. Without hesitation, he kisses Sam right after he confesses everything.

So I kissed her. And she kissed me back. And we lay down on the floor and kept kissing. And it was soft. And we made quiet noises. And kept silent. And still...

...

She took my hand and slid it under her pants. And I touched her. And I just couldn't believe it. It was like everything made sense. Until she moved her hand under my pants and she touched me.

That's when I stopped her (1999:202)

From the dialog, it can be seen that the re-experiencing event is happening. He starts to remember the day when aunt Helen does the same thing like what Sam does to him that day. They almost have a sexual intercourse in Sam's room. Meanwhile, when Sam is almost touching Charlie's genital, Charlie feels uncomfortable and is not ready for that. That is why he suddenly stops her. Charlie remembers the time when aunt Helen molested him by rubbing his genital. When he stopped Sam, He says that he cannot do that any further but in his mind he is talking to someone else instead of talking to Sam.

#### **4.2.2.2 Charlie is Having Distressing Dream about Aunt Helen**

Re-experiencing of the event is also shown when Charlie has a dream about aunt Helen. After Charlie stops their sexual intercourse with Sam, he says that he cannot do that any further. Suddenly, he feels bad and looks pale. Sam forbids him to go home alone and asks him to stay a night because she is worried about him. Then, she lets him to sleep on the couch. When he sleeps, he is dreaming about aunt Helen who watches television with him, his brother, and his sister. He feels that aunt Helen is doing what Sam has done to him yesterday.

When I fell asleep, I had this dream. My brother and my sister and I were watching television with my aunt Helen. Everything was in slow motion. The sound was thick. And she was doing what Sam was doing. That's when I woke up. And I didn't know what the hell was going on (1999:204).

Charlie's dream represents the characteristic of re-experiencing the traumatic event. The dream makes him stress and forces him to rethink the past event. He slowly remembers his childhood memory. From the quotation above, it can be seen that all this time aunt Helen who is loved by Charlie, has been harassing him. It makes Charlie has failed to have sexual relationship with Sam.

#### **4.2.2.3 Charlie is Experiencing Hallucination**

Besides having recurrent memories, Charlie is also experiencing hallucination. It is happened after seeing Sam and Patrick off to college. On the way back to his home, Charlie is having hallucination. It happens when he is driving his car home.

I got in my dad's car, and drove away. And I could hear all these songs on the radio, but the radio wasn't on. And when I got into the driveway, I think I forgot to turn off the car. I just went to the couch in the family room where the TV is. And I could see the TV shows, but the TV wasn't on(1999:205).

From the quotation above, Charlie hears a sound that does not exist. He hears the sound of the radio that is not on. He also sees the TV that is also off. He says that he can see the TV shows running but he realizes that the TV is turned off when he comes home. The hallucination that is encountered by Charlie is the result of the criteria of recurrent memory.

After re-experiencing the traumatic event with Sam, Charlie is hallucinated by a glimpse of aunt Helen memory. It is proven by the activity that is always done by aunt Helen and Charlie a long time ago. Charlie starts to remember the TV shows that they used to watch with aunt Helen. When Charlie is experiencing hallucination, it

proves that he shows characteristic of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in the criteria of re-experiencing the traumatic event.

### **4.2.3 Avoidance**

According to *Diagnostic Statistical Mental Disorder IV*, someone who suffers Post Traumatic Stress Disorder will try to avoid thoughts related to traumatic experience. They might block their thoughts, or feelings about the event.

#### **4.2.3.1 Charlie is Avoiding His Childhood Memory**

People with PTSD are always trying to avoid bad thoughts about their traumatic event. This condition is also experienced by Charlie. It happens after his friends are having a prom night. At that moment, Charlie feels sad and bad because his friends will be leaving the town and moving to college. The saddest part is when Sam will leave in two weeks. After that, he decides to talk to his psychiatrist because he thinks that everyone will be busy with college life.

So, then the only person I would have to talk to would be my psychiatrist, and I don't like the idea of that right now because he keeps asking me question about when I was younger, and they're starting to get weird. I'm just lucky that I have so much schoolwork and don't have a lot of time to think (1999:173).

When he sees the psychiatrist, he wants to talk about how lonely he is. However, the psychiatrist is just asking him about his childhood. He feels weird about why the psychiatrist is asking about his childhood. He says that he did not like to talk about his childhood. It indicates that he avoids thoughts or memory regarding to his past event. He also says that his homeworks help him to distract from it. The way he

avoids his psychiatrist questions and his efforts to not think about traumatic event indicates that he is actually in avoidance criteria.

#### **4.2.3.2 Charlie is Fear of Remembering Aunt Helen**

Another criteria of PTSD is feeling fear after the traumatic event occurred. This criteria is shown by Charlie when he is in the mental hospital. He is taken to the mental hospital by his parents. His parents find him having blackout in the couch. In the hospital, the doctor asks him about his life so far. He says that when the doctor asked him a question about aunt Helen, he started to cry (1999:208). According to his statement, Charlie is fear of remembering aunt Helen. He starts to realize that all this time, his aunt is not a good person. When he remembers aunt Helen, he starts to cry. It indicates that he has a fear of remembering aunt Helen. His doctor asks him a question about aunt Helen and his childhood. From that moment, he starts to figure things out that everything he dreams about aunt Helen is true.

#### **4.2.3.3 Charlie is Experiencing Amnesia**

Before knowing that Charlie is molested by aunt Helen, he suffers from amnesia. After taking Sam and Patrick off to college, Charlie drives back home and feels so crazy. Arrived at home, he cannot talk and communicate with anyone. He feels so confused and depressed. Then, his parents find him having blackout in a couch. Soon after that, his parents take him to the hospital. He does not remember anything about the incident when aunt Helen is rubbing his genital every Saturday. Charlie does not remember anything after his parents find him blackout. He states



*“All I remember is putting the letter in the mailbox. The next thing I knew, I was sitting in a doctor’s office. And I remembered my aunt Helen.”* (1999:208). The quotation above indicates that his memory is lost when he re-experiences a traumatic event.

Spending two months at hospital, the doctor is asking about Charlie’s childhood. When he is asked about it, he is always depressed and sad. Then the doctor is persistently insisting to tell about his childhood. He just knows that after all this time the person who bothers his mind is aunt Helen. At that moment, he realizes that he is shutting his unpleasant memory to avoid painful feelings of being molested by aunt Helen. Therefore, when he is having sexual intercourse with Sam, he feels terrible and depressed. In addition, Charlie also figures out that aunt Helen was rubbing his genital when he was a little. It is just similar as what Sam has done to him at the night before she left to college.

#### **4.2.4 Arousal**

In DSM V, PTSD is also characterized by extreme physical arousal. It happens when the nervous system is triggered by overwhelming trauma. In Arousal, Charlie is only showing three criteria, such as having a self-destructive behavior, blackout, and difficulty concentrating.

##### **4.2.4.1 Charlie’ Self-Destructive Behavior**

Charlie’ self-destructive behavior is shown after he kisses Sam. Charlie still remembers the kiss and he still feels bad about it. He does not know what to do to get

rid of the bad feelings. He tries to go to aunt Helen graveyard to tell about it but it does not work and it is getting worse. On that moment, he suddenly wants to end his life.

I don't know if you've ever felt like that. That you wanted to sleep for a thousand years. Or just not exist. Or just not be aware that you do exist. Or something like that. I think wanting that is very morbid, but I want it when I get like this. That's why I'm trying not to think. (1999:94)

According to the quotation above, Charlie feels so bad after kissing Sam and remembering aunt Helen. He feels something bad between him and aunt Helen regarding Sam' kiss. In order to escape from bad feeling, Charlie wants to end his life by sleeping for thousand years. He also wants to disappear from his life every time he remembers aunt Helen. The way Charlie wants to end his life is considered as self-destructive behavior to avoid traumatic event.

Another Charlie' self-destructive behavior is shown when he starts to take drug. He starts to consume it after having a New Year Eve party at Bob' house. It happens the day after Charlie feels that he wants to end his life. He takes LSD or known as "acid" from Bob. When he uses the drug, the effect does not work well in his body. At first he wants to get rid of his problem by using LSD, but it is getting worse than before. He says that he decided not to consume LSD anymore (1999:100) It means that he has a bad experience with the drug. The drug is only strengthen bad feelings that already existed in Charlie' mind. He is found unconsciousness laid down on the snow. It proves that Charlie is going to escape from his problem but it ends up by destructing himself. Therefore, he says that he would not take the drug again.

Another self-destructive behavior that is achieved by Charlie is when he unconsciously cuts his hair. It happens when he also uses LSD. He is found sleeping in a snow after the New Year Eve party. His sister recognizes his messy hair and tries to fix it.

My sister said that she could help me fix up my hair. It was weird to have them pay so much attention to me.

“What do you mean? What’s wrong with my hair?”

My sister just kind of looked around, uncomfortable. I reached my hands up to my hair and realized that a lot of it was gone. I honestly don’t remember when I did it, but from the look of my hair, I must have grabbed a pair of scissors and just started cutting without strategy. Big chunks of it were missing all over the place.(1999:100)

After Charlie is found by his parents, they go back to home. His sister said that his hair is messy. He realizes that he must have been cutting his hair. Charlie does not know why and when he did that. He only remembers the bad thoughts after taking LSD. It proves that Charlie is so depressed with his life. He cuts his hair unconsciously just to feel better. The way he cuts his hair proves that he has a self-destructive behavior.

#### **4.2.4.2 Charlie is Having Blackouts**

In *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder*, Someone with PTSD criteria is experiencing blackout when he is triggered by overwhelming trauma. It can be depersonalization or derealization. Depersonalization is a condition where someone feels separated from his body. He feels like an outside observer of himself. While derealization is a condition where someone feels like the event is not really happening. He thinks that world is like a dream. Both of them are the characteristic of

post traumatic stress disorder. However, in Charlie's cases, he shows depersonalization symptoms. It happens in the next morning after he had sexual intercourse with Sam.

Finally, Sam climbed into her pickup, and Patrick started it up. And a great song was playing. And everyone smiled. Including me. But I wasn't there anymore.

It wasn't until I couldn't see the cars that I came back and things started feeling bad again..(1999:204-205)

According to the quotation above, Charlie and his friends come to Sam' house to say goodbye and see her off to college. He feels bad to see his beloved friend leaving. Moreover, he had sexual intercourse the day before which makes him rethink the traumatic event. It makes him feels worse. When he says he was not there, it indicates that he experienced depersonalization. The way he portrays his condition concludes that he is having blackouts. It concludes that his traumatic event with Sam becomes elevated in the worse way.

Another blackout symptom experienced by Charlie when he is found naked at home. After seeing Sam off to college, Charlie feels very bad and decides to go home. He is found naked in the couch by his parents.

I've been in the hospital for the past two months. They just released me yesterday. The doctor told me that my mother and father found me sitting on the couch in the family room. I was completely naked, just watching the television, which wasn't on. I wouldn't speak or snap out of it, they said. My father even slapped me to wake me up, and like I told you, he never hits. But it didn't work.(1999:208)

Charlie does not remember anything after he is back from Sam' house. He only remembers when he arrived at home and wrote a letter. The next thing he knew

that he sat at doctor' office. He is told by the doctor that he was having blackout. He is also experiencing depersonalization because he cannot feel his whole body. He feels detached from his body indicates that the impact of his traumatic event became worse.

#### **4.2.4.3 Charlie is Having Difficulty Concentrating.**

People with PTSD also experience difficulty concentrating. It happens after he takes Sam off to college. He decides to go back home rather than hangs out with the others. He feels something wrong with him after he had sexual intercourse with Sam yesterday. After that, he goes back home with his bad feelings and starts to write a letter "*I don't know what's wrong with me. It's like all I can do is keep writing this gibberish to keep from breaking apart*"(1999:205). According to the quotation, he keeps writing a nonsense letter. He actually does not know what he writes about, so he says he was writing a gibberish letter. It indicates that Charlie lost his concentration in writing a letter. He does not know what exactly he writes about because his mind is disturbed by a traumatic event.

#### **4.2.5 Duration of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder**

According to *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder IV*, the duration of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder criteria lasts longer than two months. In *The Perks of Being Wallflower*, Charlie encounters his PTSD for 7 months. It can be seen when he has a recurrent memory at Christmas Eve party in December, 1991. The symptoms always continue until June, 1992 when he is taken to the mental hospital.

#### **4.2.6 The effect of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder**

According to DSM IV, The disturbance of the symptoms affect someone life and relationship. In *The Perks of Being Wallflower*, it also happens when Charlie is in the mental hospital. “*They told me I didn’t speak or acknowledge anyone for a week.*”(1999:208) It means that he is avoiding people around him even Patrick, his best friend. The disturbance is also affecting Charlie’ behavior. It makes him an antisocial and emotional person.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSION**

Traumatic experience is a short event that forces our mind to rethink memory in the past. Most of the people who have traumatic experience tend to show a post-traumatic stress disorder. The characteristics are exposure to stressor, re-experiencing of event, avoidance, and arousal. Those characteristics last longer than one month and cause life disruption. The writer found that Charlie, the main character of the novel, is suffered from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

The writer concludes that, Charlie shows some PTSD symptoms. First, Charlie is having hallucination about his traumatic experience with aunt Helen. Second, Charlie is avoiding his childhood memory. Third, Charlie is having difficulty concentrating and trying to destruct himself. This PTSD symptoms are the impact of Charlie's traumatic experience from sexual abuse.

Furthermore, the symptoms of PTSD affect Charlie' personality. By avoiding people or memory related to traumatic experience, it makes Charlie as an antisocial person. Also Charlie' self-destructive behaviors make him an emotional person. As the conclusion, Charlie suffers from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder as a result of traumatic experience from sexual abuse.

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