THE CAUSES OF CHRISTIAN GREY’S SEXUAL SADISM DISORDER AS SEEN IN E.L. JAMES’ FIFTY SHADES OF GREY

AN UNDERGRADUATE THESIS

Presented as Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Sarjana Sastra in English Letters

By

NIMAS SEKAR SUDARTA
Student Number: 124214097

ENGLISH LETTERS STUDY PROGRAM
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LETTERS
FACULTY OF LETTERS
SANATA DHARMA UNIVERSITY
YOGYAKARTA
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Defended before the Board of Examiners on August 25, 2017 and Declared Acceptable

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Yogyakarta, July 24, 2017

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Yang menyatakan,

Nimas Sekar Sudarta
Don't cling to a mistake just because you spent a lot of time making it

~Spirit Science~
To those who is not afraid to be different
To those who dare to speak up for themselves
To those who believe in love
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ABSTRACT


The object of this thesis is the romance-erotic novel entitled Fifty Shades of Grey written by E.L. James. This novel is the first book of the trilogy novel, the second one is Fifty Shades Darker and the third one is Fifty Shades Freed. Fifty Shades of Grey consists of 26 chapters and 514 pages.

There are two objectives in this study. The first objective is to describe Christian Grey as a sadist and his personality that indicates his sexual sadism disorder. The second objective is to examine the possible causes of Christian Grey’s sexual sadism disorder.

The method that is used by the researcher in completing the objectives is library research. The primary source that is used by the researcher is the novel by E.L. James entitled Fifty Shades of Grey. The secondary sources that are from books, or articles that contain necessary theories that are necessary to complete the objectives of this study. The theories are: character and characterizations, sexual sadism, and four basic concepts of psychoanalysis. Several studies that are related to this thesis are also reviewed in this thesis.

There are two findings in this study. The first one reveals that Christian Grey is a sadist based on the way he gains sexual excitement by inflicting pain, suffering, and humiliation. Besides, he also demonstrates a sadomasochistic sexual intercourse through spanking, whipping, blindfolding, and physical bondage. Next, he has a personality that indicates his sexual sadism disorder which are secretive, possessive, and controlling. The second one reveals the main possible causes of Christian Grey’s sexual sadism disorder is that the past distressing experience that he has with Mrs. Elena Robinson influences him to be a sadist. The sadomasochistic sexual intercourse is projected to Anastasia Steele.


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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Sex is a part of human life, in which human being engages in a sexual intercourse in order to achieve the sexual pleasure. In gaining the sexual pleasure, there are several ways to gain it, one of them is through sadism. Whitbourne (2015: 1) states that sadism may refer to “a predilection for cruelty stands on its own in understanding why one person would want to harm another”. Based on her statement, sadism means the tendency of cruelty possessed by a person that leads him or her to impose harm to another person. In particular, the display of sadism can be seen through a sexual intercourse as a means to achieve someone’s sexual gratification. Such condition undergone by a person is named sexual sadism disorder.

Based on American Psychiatric Association, sexual sadism disorder is “the condition of experiencing sexual arousal in response to the extreme pain, suffering or humiliation of others” (2013: 1). Thus, it is valid that a person undergoing sexual sadism disorder can achieve the sexual arousal through the display of extreme pain or suffering to others. One of the novels that discusses about gaining sexual pleasure through sadism (sexual sadism disorder) is *Fifty Shades of Grey* by E.L. James. It tells about the main character who engages in sadistic sexual activities with Anastasia Steele.
Anastasia Steele is a female protagonist character in the novel. In this novel, she is shown to be stubborn but shy and kind-hearted. She is deeply falling in love with Christian Grey and wants to have love relationship with him. In the first part of the novel, Christian, a young rich businessman, is interested with Anastasia and starts to build a relationship with her. After they get to know each other, they construct a relationship, but the relationship is not conventionally built with a status of “a couple”. Instead, they make a pact that is ratified through a contract where Christian acts as the dominant, and Anastasia acts as the submissive. The pact or agreement also states that their relationship should not be grown with shared mutual feelings, but shared mutual benefits. The mutual benefit that Christian expects to share is the sexual arousal that both can get through the sadistic sexual intercourse made by Christian. It is consented by Anastasia, considering that she is a masochist, which means she can achieve sexual arousal through receiving pain or suffering.

In this thesis, the writer is interested in examining Christian Grey further, especially the cause of his sexual sadism disorder. In order to achieve the outcome of examining the cause of Christian Grey’s sexual sadism disorder, this thesis deals with the analysis of Grey’s characteristics which indicate his sexual sadism disorder, and identifies the causes of sexual sadism disorder in Grey.

In discussing the cause of sexual sadism, it is stated by Fahmy that “there is no universally accepted cause or theory explaining the origin of sexual sadism, or of sadomasochism” (2008: 1049). However, Fahmy conveys that the most influential cause of sexual sadism is that “they may experience distressed or
impaired functioning because of the sadistic behaviors or fantasies” (2008: 1050). Fahmy also elaborates that “this distress or impairment may be due to the fact that the partner is not consenting” (2008: 1050). Based on Fahmy’s point, the researcher tries to identify the distressing experience of Christian Grey due to Miss Robinson’s sadistic sexual fantasies. It is important to observe his distressing experience because this is contributive to the finding of the possible causes of Christian Grey’s sexual sadism disorder. After seeing the possible causes, this study relates the possible causes with his action and characteristics in the story for strengthening the valid cause of his sexual sadism disorder.

B. Problem Formulation

In order to guide the study under discussion, there are two problems that are formulated as follows:

1. How is Christian Grey as a sadist depicted in Fifty Shades of Grey by E.L. James?
2. What are the factors that cause Christian Grey’s sexual sadism disorder in E.L. James’s Fifty Shades of Grey?

C. Objectives of the Study

The writer’s purposes in writing this thesis are firstly to analyze how Christian Grey is depicted as a sadist in the novel. The first objective is strengthened with Christian Grey’s personality which indicates his sexual sadism disorder. The characteristic in the first objective of the study is important in order
to provide more supporting evidences that can be related to the second objective. The second objective is to analyze the causes that contribute to Christian Grey’s sexual sadism disorder. The possible causes are related to his characteristics as a sadist to support the findings.

D. Definition of Terms

1. Sexual Activity

According to Chandra, Mosher, and Copen, sexual activity is “a sexual contact that refers to vaginal intercourse, oral sex, anal sex, either with opposite-sex or same-sex partners” (2011: 3). Thus, it means that sexual activity has many forms, such as vaginal intercourse, anal sex, oral sex between homosexual or heterosexual couple. Moore elaborates that purposes of sex are “to achieve procreation, masturbation, bestiality, sexual orgasm, and sexual penetration” (2005: 65). Based on Moore’s elaboration, it can be referred that there are many purposes of sexual activity that one can achieve.

2. Sadism

In elaborating the idea of person diagnosed with sadism, Brockway emphasizes that sadists lack empathy, and they possess an internal motivation to hurt others. However, they are unlikely to act in a way that would be criminal or dangerous — at least in most contexts, where such behavior is met with social disapproval or punishment (2016).

Seeing the statement above, it can be inferred that a sadist does not have the ability of showing any empathy due to their intention to hurt others. However,
the act of sadism is not classified as a criminal act, but it is only disapproval in certain social context.

3. **Sexual Sadism**

   Based on Brockway (2016), sexual sadism may refer to “sexual pleasure or gratification in the infliction of pain and suffering upon another person”. Krafft-Ebing elaborates that sexual sadism is the experience of sexual pleasurable sensations (including orgasm) produced by acts of cruelty, bodily punishment inflicted on one’s own person or when witnessed in others. It may also consist of a desire to humiliate, hurt, wound, or even destroy other to gain a sexual pleasure in one self (2011: 137).

4. **Sexual Sadism Disorder**

   According to Cantor and Sutton, sexual sadism disorder refers to “recurrent and intense sexual arousal from the physical or psychological suffering of another person, as manifested by fantasies, urges, or behavior” (2014: 696). In other words, sexual sadism disorder is a disorder that leads a person to enjoy sexual pleasure by inflicting physical and psychological suffering to another person repeatedly or intensely.
A. Review of Related Studies

In this part, the studies that are related to this study are reviewed by the writer in order to show the stance of this study towards the reviewed study. It can be either developing other studies reviewed in this part or discovering something new from the reviewed studies. Since this study employs psychoanalytic approach to examine the sexual sadism depicted in E.L. James’ Fifty Shades of Grey, the writer discusses the other studies that also discusses about psychoanalytic approach in E.L. James’ Fifty Shades of Grey or other literary work, issues related to sexual intercourse, or other issues discussed in E.L. James’s Fifty Shades of Grey.

The first study is an undergraduate thesis by Monika Sunarto (2015) entitled “Feminine Oedipus Complex in Fifty Shades of Grey by E.L James”. This thesis has two objectives. The first objective is to analyze how Anastasia Steele is depicted in Fifty Shades of Grey by E.L. James and second objective is analyze how feminine Oedipus complex causes Anastasia Steele’s masochism. In her thesis she uses theory character and characterization and defense mechanism to analyze the first objective. To analyze second objective, she uses the theory of feminine Oedipus complex.

In Sunarto’s findings, Anastasia seems to be a person that has low self-esteem can be seen from her thought, for instance: thinking that she does not fit to Grey’s office (2015: 27). She prefers to be alone seen through her speech that she
prefers to read literature during her spare time (2015: 28). She is also an obedient person (2015: 29). Sunarto also concludes that Anastasia’s masochism is based on her abnormal infantile sexuality due to the inexistence of her biological father and her mother’s four mornings (2015: 39).

This thesis is similar to the study above in terms of the same approach which is psychoanalytic approach, including the idea of defences as the specific concept of psychoanalytic approach. However, the difference lies on the objectives. Sunarto analyzes Anastasia Steele’s masochism through the idea of feminine Oedipus complex while this thesis concerns on Christian Grey’s sexual sadism disorder through the idea of castration anxiety. Thus, this thesis intends to discover something new in E.L. James’s *Fifty Shades of Grey*.

The second study is an undergraduate thesis by Fadhliah Anwar entitled “The Childhood Trauma of Prince Albert’s as Seen in David Seidler’s *The King’s Speech*”. This thesis has two objectives. The first objective is to analyze the causes of Prince Albert’s childhood trauma and the second objective is to analyze the effects of his trauma to his Kingsmanship (Anwar, 2013: 6). In her thesis she uses psychoanalysis theory as the basic of the analysis (2013:20). In elaboration, the writer specifies the psychoanalysis into two theories.

The first theory derived for Anwar’s study is theory of anxiety. Anwar uses neurotic anxiety, moral anxiety, and realistic anxiety to the causes of Prince Albert’s childhood trauma (2013: 10-11). The second concept derived from the psychoanalytic theory is the theory of defense mechanism involving repression, fixation,
rationalization and displacement. This theory is used in order to answer the second objective which to identify the effects of his trauma to his Kingsmship (Anwar, 2013: 11). In her findings, she found that the physical child abuse that was undergone by Prince Albert is the main source of realistic anxiety which influences his childhood trauma (Anwar, 2013: 47). She also found out that Prince Albert concealed his anxiety by shifting the anger to someone else, which projects his Kingsmship as dominant due to his display of anger to his members (Anwar, 2013: 48).

In terms of approach, both Anwar’s study and this study applies the same approach which is psychoanalytic approach, including the idea of defences or defense mechanism as the specific concept of psychoanalytic approach. However, Anwar’s study mainly focuses on the idea of anxiety and fixation to analyze the cause and effects of the main character’s trauma while this study uses the defences made by Christian Grey as a complementary reason to elaborate the causes of Christian Grey’s sexual sadism disorder. This study also uses Murphy’s nine ways of characterization beforehand to identify Christian Grey’s characteristics which will be related to the causes of Christian Grey’s sexual sadism disorder.

The third study is an article entitled Relational Patterns Associated with Sexual Sadism: A Study of 20 Wives and Girlfriends written by Janet I. Warren and Robert R. Hazelwood (2002). In their article, Warren and Hazelwood intends to “explore sexual preferences of sexually sadistic males in terms of their consensual sexual relationships” (2002: 1). In their findings, they conclude that people prefer to be sexually sadistic because “the dominance, control, and humiliation have become
eroticized and integrated into the sexual fantasy life and sexual arousal of the male” (2002: 13). This study is contributive to the writer’s study in terms of explaining the preference of sexual sadists like Christian Grey. The difference is that this study is more extensive in terms of analyzing why the sadists want to possess control and domination to impose humiliation to his sexual partners. This study is also more extensive in terms of employing the psychoanalytic approaches which are defences, and castration anxiety in order to achieve the study’s objective (finding the cause of sexual sadism disorder).

B. Review of Related Theories

1. Theory of Characters and Characterizations

In a story, character is the most important part. Character must be having the important role in story. Abrams states that characters are the “persons represented in a dramatic or narrative work who are interpreted by the reader as being endowed with particular moral, intellectual, and emotional qualities” (1999:34). Based on Abrams’s point, characters are people who are involved in a story that can be assessed by the readers based on the characters’ personal qualities. The personal qualities of a character may consist of one’s emotional quality, intellectual quality, or moral quality.

Murphy states that, in literary works, there are some aspects to analyze characters which are from physical appearance, direct speech from the author, description from the other characters, conversation that describe the characters by the
other characters, the characters speech, past life, thought, manner or their habits and reaction toward various events or situations (Murphy, 1972:161-171).

2. Four Basic Concepts of Psychoanalysis

According to Barry, psychoanalysis itself is “a form of therapy which aims to cure mental disorders by investigating the interaction of conscious and unconscious elements in the mind” (1995: 96). Referring from Barry, psychoanalysis deals with the conscious and unconscious mind of a human being. Barry also emphasizes that the classic method of examining the conscious and unconscious mind of a human is “to get the patient to talk freely, in such a way that the repressed fears and conflicts which are causing the problems are brought into the conscious mind and openly faced, rather than remaining ‘buried’ in the unconscious” (1995:96).

Therefore, psychoanalytic theory examines the human being through one’s repressed fears or conflicts that are influential to the construction of their conscious mind. Besides, the notion of the unconscious is defined as “the part of the mind beyond consciousness has a strong influence upon our actions” (Barry, 1995:96). Thus, it is valid to say that sometimes one’s action is a result of the influence from his or her unconscious mind that leads him or her to conduct certain action.

In order to analyze the conscious and unconscious mind of a person, Bressler (1999: 86) establishes four basic concepts of psychoanalysis. Firstly, “a distressing event or situation that occurs in youth is repressed into the unconscious”. It means that character during childhood may undergo distressing event or situation that repressed into unconscious mind. Destructing their psychological development (birth
of sadistic behavior). Secondly, the repressed feelings are buried in our unconscious through the use of defenses. The existence of defenses can be seen through denial, avoidance, displacement, and projection.

First of all, denial is a condition when a person or character denies one’s distressing situation. Second of all, avoidance is when a person or character keeps themselves away from the distressing past experience to return they even any possible things that may recall their past painful memory. Third of all, displacement is a situation when people take out their resentment about something or someone in order to achieve the sense of relief. Fourth of all, projection is a condition when people project or transfer problem to someone else to portray that they don’t have the problem (Bressler, 1999: 86).

Based on the defenses above, it means that a person can bury his or her repressed feelings or past distressing experience through denial, avoidance, displacement, and projection. After that, the repressed feeling that is defended by someone may result into core issues which are the third idea. According to Bressler, core issues come up from powerful buried experienced (1999: 86). There are five core issues that generally happen in human’s life which are low self-esteem, insecurity, fear of abandonment, fear of intimacy, and oedipal fixation.

The first, low self-esteem is a belief that we are less worthy than others that jeopardize self-acceptance and self-confidence. The second, insecurity is the inability to sustain a feeling of personal identity. The third, the fear of abandonment is a belief that our loved ones are going to leave us. For example, family, friends and spouses.
The fourth, fear of intimacy is a maintenance of emotional distance from others to protect from a serious damage imposed by unshakeable emotional closeness. The fifth, oedipal fixation is a dysfunctional bond with a parent of the opposite sex that disallowed us to mature into adult relationship with others (Bressler, 1999: 86).

Fourthly, core issues will result on certain “self-destructive behaviors and may show up in the recurrence of disturbing dreams”. The recurrence of disturbing dreams is the clue to the existence of unconscious problem that justify tendency of them to be defensive through behavior, such as: choosing unhealthy friends or romantic partner, displaying inappropriate social behavior, engaging in violent behavior, engaging substance abuse, etc. (Bressler, 1999: 86).

3. Theory of Sexual Sadism

Sadism and masochism are classified into paraphilia. As stated by Davison and Neale, paraphilia is described as being sexually attracted to unusual things or activities (1996: 339). Sue elaborates the unusual things or activities in paraphilia is non-human objects for sexual arousal, as in fetishism (using underwear to gain sexual pleasure), transvestism (gaining sexual arousal by wearing the opposite sex apparel), real or simulated sufferings, as in sadism and masochism, or sexual activity with non-consented partners which can be seen in exhibitionism (revealing genitals to strangers), voyeurism (observing other’s genitals to gain sexual pleasure), and pedophilia, a sexual contact or intercourse with children (1986: 342).

Sexual sadism is defined by Fahmy as “the feeling of sexual excitement resulting from administering pain, suffering, and humiliation physically and
psychologically” (2017). It is also elaborated that the person diagnosed with sexual sadism is referred as sadist (Fahmy, 2017). On the other hand, masochism is a “sexual preference to increase sexual gratification by being inflicted with pain and humiliation (Davison and Neale, 1996: 345-347).

Davison and Neale also elaborate that the forms of sadomasochistic (relationship between a sadist and a masochist) sexual intercourse are varied, such as restraint (physical bondage), blindfolding (sensory bondage), spanking, whipping, electrical shocks, cutting, and humiliation. In specific, Hill et. al state several indicators that can be categorized as sexual sadism (2006: 4) which are attempted or completed sexual intercourse, victim’s being left nude or semi-nude, insertion of foreign objects into the victim body’s cavities, sexual fantasies admitted by the offender, and sadistic fantasies admitted by the offender.

Hill, Habermann, Berner, and Briken state that “sexual sadistic offenders showed significantly more childhood behavior problems” (2006:8). It is elaborated that sexual sadistic offenders with overall childhood behavior difficulties may reflect either relational problems or opposition (2006:13). Based on the point, it is relevant to say that “sexual sadistic offenders had suffered more often abuse during childhood” (2006:13). It is elaborated that one of the abuse is sexual abuse that defined as “sexual activity of a child with an adult or a person at least five years older, to which the child or adolescent was forced or did not consent to” (Hill et.al, 2006:4).
The idea that sexual sadistic offenders suffered sexual abuse during childhood is elaborated by Freund and Kuban (1994) that “childhood sexual abuse is more likely associated with pedophiles or child molesters” (qtd. in Hill et.al, 2006:13). Thus, their points portrays that the tendency of pedophilia or child molester can cause a childhood sexual abuse which imposes either physical abuse or mental abuse towards the child.

In elaborating the cause of sexual sadism disorder, Fahmy states that “there is no universally accepted cause or theory explaining the origin of sexual sadism, or of sadomasochism” (2017). However, Fahmy conveys that “they may experience distressed or impaired functioning because of the sadistic behaviors or fantasies” (2017).

C. Theoretical Framework

In order to answer the two problems formulated in the previous chapter, the first theory that is employed by the researcher is Davison and Neale’s theory of sexual sadism. Other than describing Christian Grey as a sexual sadist, the theory of character and characterization by Abrams in A Glossary of Literary Terms (1999) and Murphy in Understanding Unseen (1972) are used to describe Christian Grey’s characteristic in the story. After depicting Christian Grey as a sexual sadist and his personality that indicates his sexual sadism disorder in the first objective of the study, the second theory that is used by the researcher is the basic concepts of
psychoanalysis proposed by Bressler in *Literary Criticism: An Introduction to Theory and Practice* (1999).

These four basic concepts are used to analyze Christian Grey’s causes of sexual sadism disorder. Those basic concepts are repressed memory, defense mechanism, displacement and projection. Apart from the Bressler’s basic concepts, this study employs the theory about sexual sadism from Fahmy to reveal the factors that cause his sexual sadism disorder.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

A. Object of the Study

The object of this study is a romance-erotic novel by E.L James, *Fifty Shades of Grey*. *Fifty Shades of Grey* is a controversial novel published in 2011 by Vintage Books. In March 2012, it was sold more than 100 million copies in 37 countries. Actually *Fifty Shades of Grey* is a trilogy novel. The second novel is *Fifty Shades of Darker* and the third is *Fifty Shades of Freed*. This novel became very controversial because E.L James put BDSM or sadomasochist issue in her novel.

The first point of view of this novel is a young girl Anastasia Stele. Like another romantic novel, this novel is about a love story between a man and a woman. Christian Grey and Anastasia Steele are the name of main character. Christian Grey as the main character in this novel described as a successful, rich, handsome and mysterious businessman while Anna Steele is a beautiful young woman who is innocent.

This novel mainly talks about a love story between Christian and Anna. The story begins with their first meeting in Christian’s office when Anna helps her best friend to interview Christian for a magazine article. After their first meeting, they become closer day by day and decide to build a relationship by approving a contract and signing some agreements.
B. Approach of the Study

This study employs psychoanalytic approach. As stated by Bressler, psychoanalytic approach is “a method of treating emotional and psychological disorders” (1999: 148). The psychoanalytic approach is used in this study because this approach is strategic to find the reason behind Christian Grey’s psychological disorder as a sadist, or sexual sadist in specific. Considering that sadism is a destructive behavior possessed by Christian Grey, psychoanalytic approach is assumed to be the most strategic approach to explain Christian Grey’s destructive behavior because psychoanalytic approach explains about how “life events, as we grow up, that shape our psychological development, and these early experiences tend to play out in adult lives” (Bressler, 1999: 84).

Seeing Bressler’s explanation above, it means that people are unconsciously shaped by the moments in their life. Every moment in their life gives certain problems. Bressler argues that naturally, the problems that cannot be overcome or problems that are distressing are repressed by their minds (1999: 84). This repression can lead them to do certain destructive behavior such as what happens to Christian Grey as a sadist in the story. In conclusion, psychoanalytic approach is the most applicable approach to examine the causes behind Christian Grey’s sexual sadism disorder.
C. Method of the Study

The method of this research is library research. There are some books, undergraduate theses, journals, and articles that are necessary to support this study. The primary source is a novel written by E.L. James entitled *Fifty Shades of Grey*. The goal of examining E.L. James’s *Fifty Shades of Grey* is to analyze Christian Grey’s sexual sadism disorder that is indicated through his display of sadism to his submissive partner, Anastasia Steele, in their sexual intercourse. The secondary sources are several books that are contributive to the findings of this study. The first book is a book entitled *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Theory and Practice* by Peter Barry. By this book, the writer takes a theory that is psychoanalytic approach proposed by Sigmund Freud.

The second book is written by Charles Bressler entitled *An Introduction to Theory and Practice*. By this book, the writer derives the basic concepts of psychoanalytic approach that is contributive to the findings in the second part of analysis which deals with the possible causes of Christian Grey’s sexual sadism disorder. The third source is an encyclopedia of mental health discussing “sexual sadism” written by Ali Fahmy. In this encyclopedia, the writer elaborates the possible causes of Christian Grey’s sexual sadism disorder due to having no universally accepted cause or symptom behind sexual sadism or masochism.

This thesis analyzes two elements. The first is intrinsic element. The writer analyzes the characteristic of Christian Grey which is one of the intrinsic elements in
E.L. James’s *Fifty Shades of Grey*. In order to do that, the writer uses the theory of characterization by Abrams and Murphy. The characteristics of Christian Grey are contributive to know the causes that make Christian Grey become a sadist. The second is extrinsic element analyzed in the second objective of this study. In order to accomplish the second objective, the writer analyzes how Grey’s repressed distressing experience influences his sexual sadism disorder. In order to analyze the extrinsic element, the writer applies the four basic concepts of psychoanalysis by Bressler and the cause of sexual sadism to get the answer of what causes Christian Grey’s sexual sadism disorder.
CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS

This chapter discusses two formulated problems mentioned in Chapter I. The discussion is divided into two parts of analysis. The first part of analysis deals with the depiction of Christian Grey as a sexual sadist in E.L. James’s *Fifty Shades of Grey*. The second part of analysis examines the factors that cause Christian Grey’s sexual sadism disorder in the story.

A. The Characteristics of Christian Grey

In this subchapter, the explanation about Christian Grey is divided into two parts. The first part describes Christian Grey as a sadist in the story. The second part describes Christian Grey’s personality that indicates Christian Grey’s sexual sadism disorder. The second part is important to answer the second part of analysis, which is finding the factors of Christian Grey’s sexual sadism disorder.

1. The Description of Christian Grey as a Sadist

a. Gaining Sexual Excitement by Inflicting Pain, Suffering, and Humiliation

As stated by Fahmy, sexual sadism is “the feeling of sexual excitement resulting from administering pain, suffering, and humiliation physically and psychologically” (2008: 1049). Fahmy also mentioned that the one that has this feeling is referred as sadist. Therefore, this section describes the sexual excitement
felt by Christian Grey as a sadist when he gives pain, suffering, and humiliation to Anastasia Steele. During the discussion between Anastasia Steele and Christian Grey, Christian mentioned that he wanted Anastasia to surrender fully to him in the following quotation:

“It means I want you to willingly surrender yourself to me, in all things.”
I frown at him as I try to assimilate this idea.
“Why would I do that?”
“To please me,” he whispers as he cocks his head to one side, and I see a ghost of a smile (James, 2011: 72).

By looking at the above quotation, it shows that Christian Grey aims to please himself by wanting Anastasia to surrender herself. He admits that he can gain the sense of pleasure by Anastasia’s submission: “I will gain a great deal of pleasure, joy, even in your submission. The more you submit, the greater my joy – it’s a very simple equation” (James, 2011: 73). He also admits in the following quotation, “I will punish you when you require it, and it will be painful” (James, 2011: 76) which shows that he likes to give pain to Anastasia by punishing her.

The example of Grey having the pleasure by giving pain to Anastasia is when he pulls her hair, it can be seen through the quotation below:

He gasps, and he pulls my hair tighter, painfully, so I release him.
“Naughty, sweet girl,” he whispers, and then reaches over to the bedside table for a foil packet. “Stay still, don’t move,” he orders as he releases my hair (James, 2011: 86).

Through the quotation above, when he whispers “Naughty, sweet girl” after he pulls her hair painfully, it proves that Christian gains the pleasure from it. It is strengthened by the following quotation:
“Oh, please,” I beg. I’m not sure I can take much more. My body is wound so tight, craving release.
“I want you sore, baby,” he murmurs, and he continues his sweet, leisurely torment, backward, forward (James, 2011: 87).

Based on the quotation, it is valid that Christian loves to see Anastasia suffers from pain, by saying “I want you sore, baby” because by that, he can gain certain pleasure from it. In the book, Christian Grey also mentions that he has made a room that is made for his submissive partner to receive pain, the room is called Red Room of Pain. However, Christian said, “Red Room of Pain? It’s mostly about pleasure, Anastasia. Believe me” (James, 2011: 95). It means that Christian Grey thinks that pain of his submissive partner is equal to his pleasure.

Other than Red Room of Pain, Christian states that pain and pleasure is two things that are the same through the following quotation:

“Discipline. There’s a very fine line between pleasure and pain Anastasia. They are two sides of the same coin, one not existing without the other. I can show you how pleasurable pain can be. You don’t believe me now, but this is what I mean about trust. There will be pain, but nothing that you can’t handle. Again, it comes down to trust. Do you trust me, Ana?” (James, 2011: 156).

b. The Display of Sadomasochistic Sexual Intercourse

According to Davison and Neale in Chapter II, the forms of sadomasochistic sexual intercourse are restraint (physical bondage), blindfolding, spanking, whipping, electrical shocks, cutting and humiliation. In this case, the book also strengthens this theory through the rules made by Christian Grey in Anastasia Steele’s contract. It can be found through the following quotations:
The Dominant may discipline the Submissive as necessary to ensure the Submissive fully appreciates her role of subservience to the Dominant and to discourage unacceptable conduct. The Dominant may flog, spank, whip, or corporally punish the Submissive as he sees fit, for purposes of discipline, for his own personal enjoyment, or for any other reason, which he is not obliged to provide (James, 2011: 119).

According to the quotation above, it is clear that a sadist can flog, spank, whip the submissive partner for several purposes. One of them is to gain personal enjoyment or pleasure. In this section, Christian, as sadist, uses several methods mentioned above in his sexual intercourse to gain the personal enjoyment. The first one is spanking. Christian Grey can gain certain pleasure through spanking her when he said, “I enjoy punishing you. I’ve wanted to spank you since you asked me if I was gay” (James, 2011: 201). Based on his statement, it shows that he enjoys giving punishment to Anastasia by spanking. However, the enjoyment of Christian Grey has to require Anastasia’s pain in her butt. In the book, she thought “I have to concentrate to handle this pain. My mind empties as I endeavor to absorb the grueling sensation. He doesn’t hit me in the same place twice in succession – he’s spreading the game” (James, 2011: 193). According to her thought, it shows that by spanking, Christian attempts to spread the pain to her. She even felt the pain, but it gives the joy to Christian by the following quotation:

“Aargh! I cry out on the tenth slap – and I’m unaware that I have been mentally counting the blows. “I’m just getting warmed up.” He hits me again then he strokes me softly (James, 2011: 193).

When Christian mentions “I’m just getting warmed up”, it indicates his joy to continue the spanking. It is strengthened by the fact mentioned by Anastasia that
Christian spanks her eighteen times. It is proven through this quotation: “He hits me again. . .this is getting harder to take, eighteen slaps in total” (James, 2011: 193).

Other than spanking, whipping is also the way of him giving pain to Anastasia, the example is when he wants to whip Anastasia six times to punish her. It can be seen in the quotation: “We’re here because you said yes, Anastasia. And you ran from me. I am going to hit you six times, and you will count with me” (James, 2011: 350). Although whipping can be considered as something painful, Christian sees that as exciting in this quotation: “I am doing this so that you remember not to run from me, and as exciting as it is, I never want you to run from me,” he whispers (James, 2011: 350). Based on the quotation, it proves that Christian thinks whipping Anastasia is exciting, and he expects Anastasia not to run from him, to make sure that he can do the same thing again.

Another method used by Christian Grey in his sexual intercourse with Anastasia is blindfolding and physical bondage. In the book, he ties Anastasia to the bed, and blindfolds her. It can be seen through this quotation: “I am going to tie you to that bed, Anastasia. I’m going to blindfold you first” (James, 2011: 338). The main purpose of the blindfolding to make Anastasia question and submit to everything that Christian Grey is about to give to Anastasia, including pain.
2. Christian Grey’s Personality that Indicates his Sexual Sadism

a. Secretive

Christian Grey is depicted as a secretive person. This characteristic can be seen through his speech in the beginning of the story. In the beginning, Anastasia holds an interview with Christian Grey as the interviewee at his office. Throughout the interview, Christian Grey declares himself as a secretive person as he said, “I’m a very private person, Miss Steele. I go a long way to protect my privacy. I don’t often give interviews” (James, 2011:7). Based on his explicit statement, it is believed that Christian Grey is even aware of himself as a secretive person due to his will to protect his privacy.

The fact that he is a secretive person can be strengthened by the way he avoids questions related to this personal life asked by Anastasia Steele.

“How old were you when you were adopted?”
“That’s a matter of public record, Miss Steele.”
“You’ve had to sacrifice a family life for your work.”
“That’s not a question.” He’s terse.
“Sorry.” I squirm, and he’s made me feel like an errant child. I try again.
“Have you had to sacrifice a family life for your work?”
“I have a family. I have a brother and sister and two loving parents. I’m not interested in extending my family beyond that.” (James, 2011:7).

Reflecting from the conversation above, it is shown that Christian Grey directly responses Anastasia’s point of him having to sacrifice a family life for his work by saying, “That’s not a question”. His statement implies that he does not want to respond or answer Anastasia’s point about him having to sacrifice his family life by clarifying that it is not a question (that he should answer). Other than that, he
limits his answer by only saying that he has two siblings and parents without extending further when he said, “I’m not interested in extending my family beyond that”. Seeing his speech, it shows that he does not have any interest to share deep information in regards to his family, thus maintaining his status as a secretive person for keeping privacy about his personal life, *i.e.* family.

Furthermore, his characteristic as a secretive person can be seen through Anastasia’s thought. In the story, Anastasia suspects that Christian’s answers to her questions are arranged carefully in order to hide certain things. She thought, “I’m truly perplexed as to what makes someone so driven to succeed, some of his answers were so cryptic – as if he had a hidden agenda” (James, 2011:11). Through Anastasia’s thought, it can be inferred that the answers from Christian are delivered as if he has a hidden agenda, which affirms that he has something to hide seen through his cryptic answer. This thought is strengthened by another thought from Anastasia that Christian avoids to talk about himself or his family. She thought, “His eyes cloud with irritation. He doesn’t want to talk about his family or himself” (James, 2011: 30).

Anastasia keeps questioning about what Christian Grey is hiding in her thought in the middle of her conversation with Christian Grey when he tries to sway the conversation by saying, “It’s beautiful. Have you been?” (James, 2011: 30). After Anastasia answers, “I’ve never left mainland USA”, she thought “So now we’re back to banalities. What is he hiding?” (James, 2011:30). The previous sentence proves
how Anastasia keeps questioning Christian Grey even in the middle of their conversation, thus affirming that Christian is indeed a very secretive person that leaves so many questions to Anastasia.

To some extent, Anastasia’s anxiety that keeps her questioning Christian Grey is seen through the story. However, her anxiety is threatened by Christian Grey’s warning that she would not want to see him again after she knew the truth. It can be proven by Christian when he said, “Once you’re enlightened, you probably won’t want to see me again” (James, 2011:128). His threat to Anastasia here shows that Christian Grey tries to show a justification behind his privacy, by saying that people will not want to see him again once he or she is enlightened with the truth about Christian Grey. Anastasia responds the threat coming from Christian Grey by keep questioning him from her thought:

*Holy shit. What does that mean? Does e white-slave small children to some Godforsaken part of the planet? Is he part of some underworld crime syndicate? It would explain why he’s so rich. Is he deeply religious? Is he impotent? Surely not, he could prove that to me right now. Oh my. I flush scarlet thinking about the possibilities. This is getting me nowhere. I’d like to solve the riddle that is Christian Grey sooner rather than later. If it means that whatever secret he has is so gross that I don’t want to know him any more then, quite frankly, it will be a relief. Don’t lie to yourself – my subconscious yells at me – it’ll have to be pretty bloody bad to have you running for the hills (James, 2011:50).*

Anastasia’s thought above confirms that there are lots of possibilities in regards to Christian Grey. Thus, she thought that Christian Grey is indeed having a secret that he hides, thus it raises her eagerness to know about the secret. It can be
indicated by her thought, “I’d like to solve the riddle that is Christian Grey sooner rather than later” (James, 2011: 50).

Christian’s privacy can also be affirmed through Anastasia’s frustration when she thinks, “It’s so frustrating trying to guess” (James, 2011:67). Even worse, Christian orders Ana to do the same thing with him. In this case, maintaining the same privacy through his command, “It means you cannot disclose anything about us. Anything, to anyone” (James, 2011:64). His command strengthens his state of being private by ordering Anastasia to disclose anything about them, such as their “dominant-submissive” agreement that is ratified through a contract, their rigorous and intensive sexual intercourses, and other things shared between them. Thus, not only Christian Grey is very secretive in regards to his family life but also he is very secretive about his relationship.

Based on Anastasia’s thought, she is totally aware of the fact that she cannot question Christian Grey further, she thought, “Oh…. that surprise me. Before I can question him on this revelation further, he interrupts my trains of thought” (James, 2011:71). Based on her thought, it shows that Christian usually interrupts her attempt to think of a further question about anything related to himself, thus it confirms that Christian would do any means possible to maintain his privacy.

Ana also admits that Christian Grey is a mysterious person as seen from her thought, “Am I prepared to give him that? Am I even capable? I am plagued by one question – why is he like this? Is it because he was seduced at such young age? I just don’t know. He’s still such a mystery.” (James, 2011:128). Her thought explicitly
proves that Christian Grey is such a mystery because she is confused why Christian Grey is a very secretive person.

b. Possessive

Christian Grey is described as a possessive person, indicated by Anastasia’s thought and Christian Grey’s speech throughout the story. First of all, Christian Grey’s possessiveness can be indicated by Anastasia’s thought. The thought is a result from the conversation between Christian Grey and Anastasia Steele. During the conversation, Christian Grey asks whether Jose is Anastasia Steele’s boyfriend.

“I see. Is he your boyfriend?”
“Whoa…What?”
“Who?”
“The photographer, Jose Rodriguez.”
I laugh, nervous but curious. What gave him that impression?
“No, Jose’s a good friend of mine, that’s all. Why did you think he was my boyfriend?”
“The way you smiled at him, and he at you.” His gray gaze holds mine. He’s so unnerving. I want to look away but I’m caught – spellbound.
“He’s more like family,” I whisper.
Grey nods slightly, seemingly satisfied with my responses and glances down at his blueberry muffin. His long fingers deftly peel back the paper, and I watch, fascinated (James, 2011: 28).

By the conversation above, Anastasia Steele’s thought shows that Christian Grey is seemingly satisfied by her response. The satisfaction is there due to the fact that Anastasia Steele does not have any boyfriend which opens the chance for Christian Grey to be her boyfriend, therefore, it shows that Christian Grey is indeed possessive for not wanting Anastasia to be someone else’s boyfriend.
The description of Christian Grey as a possessive person can also be indicated through the speech uttered by Grey in the middle of Anastasia’s conversation with Jose. During their conversation, Anastasia and Jose are both drunk which leads Jose pressuring Anastasia to kiss him, until Christian Grey shows up out of nowhere and rescues Anastasia from Jose’s grip in order to ensure that Jose does not kiss Anastasia.

“Ana, please,” he whispers, and now he’s holding me in his arms, pulling me close.
“Jose, what you doing? You know I like you, Ana, please.” He has one hand at the small of my back holding me against him, the other at my chin tipping back my head. Holy fuck… he’s going to kiss me.
“No, Jose, stop-no.” I push him, but he’s a wall of hard muscle, and I cannot shift him. His hand has slipped into my hair, and he’s holding my head in place.
“Please, Ana, carina,” he whispers against my lips. His breath is soft and smells too sweet – of margarita and beer. He gently trails kisses along my jaw up to the side of my mouth. I feel panicky, drunk, and out of control. The feeling is suffocating.
“Jose, no,” I plead. I don’t want this. You are my friend, and I think I’m going to throw up.

Based on the interruption made by Christian Grey, he can be referred as a possessive person because he restricts any man to have a romantic physical contact with Anastasia, including Jose who wants to kiss Anastasia Steele. Grey also reminds Anastasia that she is only his, not someone else’s belonging. It is proven by his conversation with Ana, when he said, “You’re mine,” he whispers. “Only mine. Don’t forget it” (James, 2011:87). His statement to Anastasia shows that he does not want Anastasia to be with somebody else. It is indicated by the phrase “Only mine”
which directly commands Anastasia to be his, in this case, his submissive partner for a sexual intercourse and someone with whom Christian can share a consented relationship. Therefore, Christian’s statement serves as the indicators of his characteristic of being possessive.

Christian’s possessiveness can be strengthened by Christian’s speech that implies the possessive characteristic possessed by him. It can be seen through the conversation below:

"I’ll just make a call,” I murmur. I just want to hear Kate’s voice. He frowns. “The photographer?” His jaw clenches, and his eyes burn. I blink at him. “I don’t like to share, Miss. Steele. Remember that.” His quiet, chilling tone is a warning, and with one long, cold look at me, he heads back to the bedroom.”(James, 2011:107).

Seeing the conversation above, there are two indicators of Christian’s possessiveness. The first one is when he directly asks if Anastasia wants to make a phone call with the photographer which refers to Jose, a guy that Christian Grey is jealous of due to his long-term friendship with Anastasia. The second one is when he explicitly states, “I don’t like to share, Miss Steele” which indicates that he does not like Anastasia to share what they have to another person, including Jose, the photographer. It is even strengthened by Anastasia’s thought that Christian’s statement sounds like a warning which is shown by his tone and look. Therefore, those two indicators affirm Christian’s possessiveness displayed in the story.

Not only Christian does not want to share Ana with others but also he explicitly shows his anger due to his jealousy caused by the fact that Ana went with
another guy. It can be seen through his speech: “I’m mad because you went drinking with that guy who tried to seduce you when you were drunk” (James, 2011:239). His statement explains two things. The first one is that Christian is mad when Ana decided to have a drink with another guy, he said, “I’m mad because you went drinking with that guy”. The second one is that he despises the fact if there is another guy who tried to seduce her when she was drunk, which shows that Christian does not allow Anastasia to be an object of seduction for people, except himself. Thus, his madness shows that he is a possessive person by intolerating Anastasia’s interaction with another man.

Based on the speech uttered by Christian Grey, it can be referred that he is possessive based on two reasons. The first is Christian puts Anastasia as an “exclusive” belonging that cannot be shared to others, for it is only owned by one Christian Grey. The second is Christian explicitly shows his jealousy and anger whenever Anastasia tries to interact with another man.

In the context of the sexual intercourse between both Anastasia and Christian, Christian aggressively pushes Anastasia until she is hurt during the sexual intercourse. It can be proven by this quotation: “He increases the rhythm infinitesimally, ad his breathing becomes more erratic. My insides start quickening, and Christian picks up the rhythm” (James, 2011: 87). Furthermore, Christian keeps reminding Ana that Ana can only be with Christian.
c. Controlling

Christian is described as a controlling person. It can be indicated through the description of Anastasia when she said, “You sound like control freak” (James, 2011: 6). After talking to Christian Grey, Anastasia assumes that Christian Grey is a control freak seen through the way he speaks. It can be seen through his direct response to Anastasia through the following quotation:

“Oh, I exercise control in all things, Miss Steele”, he says without a trace of humor in his smile. “Besides, immense power is acquired by assuring yourself in your secret reveries that you were born to control things,” he continues, his voice soft. “I employ over forty thousand people, Miss Steele. That gives me a certain sense of responsibility-power, if you will (James, 2011: 6).

The conversation between Anastasia and Christian provides an information that Christian exercises control in all things. He also elaborates that by being in control, he can acquire an immense power, thus he informs the reason why he has a controlling personality. He also said that by having forty thousand people as his employees, it gives him the sense of responsibility and also power within him. Other than using control as a tool to acquire power and responsibility, he also prefers to have a control within himself when he said:

“A man who acquires the ability to take full possession of his own mind may take possession of anything else to which he is justly entitled. I’m very singular driven. I like control – of myself and those around me” (James, 2011: 7).

Based on the statement from Christian Grey, it indicates that not only he likes control of himself and those around me, but also he thinks that he acquires the ability to fully possess such control, therefore he maintains a controlling personality.
It is also responded by Anastasia that “His tone is stern, authoritative” (James, 2011: 9). Anastasia thought that Christian’s tone when speaking is indeed controlling or authoritative. For instance, in their conversation:

“Anastasia, where are you, tell me now.”
His tone is so, so dictatorial, his usual control freak. I imagine his an old time movie director wearing jodhpurs, holding an old fashioned megaphone and a riding crop. The image makes me laugh out loud. “You’re so…domineering.” I giggle (James, 2011: 39).

Seeing through Anastasia’s thought above, she claims that Christian Grey’s tone is so dictatorial like a usual control freak. The other conversation that shows Christian as a controlling person can be seen below:

“When people always do what you tell them?”
“Usually, if they want to keep their jobs,” he says, deadpan.
“And if they don’t work for you?”
“Oh, I can be persuasive, Anastasia. You should finish your breakfast. And then I’ll drop you home. I’ll pick you up at Clayton’s at eight when you finish. We’ll fly up to Seattle” (James, 2011: 51).

The sentence “Usually, if they want to keep their jobs” uttered by Christian shows that Christian imposes a threat in order to make sure that he can control certain people. For instance, if people who work for him wants to keep his or her job, he or she must comply with the orders of Christian. He also emphasizes his persuasive skill that can lead to people to be persuaded to bow down to his control. Therefore, persuasion and threat become the tools for him to exercise his control.

The following conversation between Anastasia Steele and Christian Grey can also be another indication that Christian Grey is controlling. The conversation is about how Christian Grey threatens Anastasia for doing stunts that are not
satisfactory to him, which implies that he is controlling, indicated through the way he wants Anastasia to behave as he prefers.

“Are you going to continue to scold me?”
“Is that what I’m doing?”
“I think so.”
“You’re lucky I’m just scolding you.”
“What do you mean?”
“Well, if you were mine, you wouldn’t be able to sit down for a week after the stunt you pulled yesterday. You didn’t eat, you got drunk, you put yourself at risk.” (James, 2011: 46).

The conversation above shows that Christian Grey takes a full control on Anastasia Steele, by restricting Anastasia to do things, such as skipping food, being drunk, or risking herself. Thus, his controlling characteristic is also seen from his speech.

Other than the conversation between Anastasia and Christian, this characteristic can also be seen in the context of their relationship. Before they start their agreed-upon relationship, Christian commands Anastasia, “I have rules, and I want you to comply with them” (James, 2011: 68). The fact that Christian has certain rules that he wants others to comply shows an example of the way he controls people surrounding him. This is also the indication of him being a dominant in his agreed-upon relationship with Anastasia. For example, he ordered Anastasia to exercise, “Anastasia, I need you supple, strong, and with stamina. Trust me, you need to exercise” (James, 2011: 72).

In the context of their agreed-upon sexual intercourse, it can be seen that Christian also controls Anastasia by saying:
The ownership thing, that’s just terminology and goes back to the principle of obeying. It’s to get you in the right frame of mind, to understand where I’m coming from. And I want you to know that as soon as you cross my threshold as my submissive, I will do what I like to you. You have to accept that and willingly. That’s why you have to trust me. I will fuck you, any time, any way, I want – anywhere I want. I will discipline you, because you will screw up. I will train you to please me. But I know you’ve not done this before. Initially, we’ll take it slowly, and I will help you. We’ll build up to various scenarios (James, 2011: 150).

The speech uttered by Christian above shows that he exercises control to Anastasia, even in the context of their sexual intercourse by putting her as the submissive in their sexual intercourses. He even said, “I will do what I like to you. You have to accept that and willingly” which shows that Christian forces Anastasia to accept every single order or action that is made by Christian himself. He also said that he would like to discipline Anastasia to ensure that she will not screw up. Consequently, he exercises his control to Anastasia through discipline.

B. Factors that Cause Christian Grey’s Sexual Sadism Disorder

From the previous depiction of his personality, this part aims to analyze the factors that may cause Christian Grey’s sexual sadism disorder. The factors later are related to Christian Grey’s quality depicted in the first part of analysis in order to see the relevance between the factors of his sexual sadism disorder with his personality. His personality in the first part of the analysis supports the cause why he displays sadism in sexual context.

In order to accomplish the second part of analysis, the theory from Bressler in Literary Criticism: An Introduction to Theory and Practice that is reviewed in
Chapter II is used by the researcher. In his book, Bressler simplifies four concepts of psychoanalysis to analyze Christian Grey’s sexual sadism disorder. The first concept of Bressler is a distressing event or situation occurring in childhood that is buried into unconscious mind. Bressler states that

The clearest sign that an emotional problem is being repressed is the repetition of a self-destructive behavior, such as choosing unhealthy friends or romantic partners, displaying inappropriate social behavior, engaging unwarranted violent behavior, engaging in substance abuse, and the like (1999: 83).

Based on Bressler’s statement, it is clear that Christian Grey’s destructive behavior in this novel is his sadism due to his choice of being a sadist and chooses Anastasia Steele to be his submissive masochist to become his romantic partner to display inappropriate social behavior and unwarranted violent behavior (sadomasochistic relationship). In order to examine the reason behind Christian Grey’s destructive behavior (sexual sadism disorder), it is important to know the distressing event or situation occurring in his childhood that he represses. Christian Grey’s adolescence was taken away due to his state of being a submissive in a dominant-submissive relationship with Ms. Elena Robinson as the dominant. Ms. Elena Robinson is Christian’s longtime friends and business partner. She entered Christian’s life as a friend to his adoptive mother and they began an affair when he was 15 years old. The affair made Mrs. Robinson introduced him to the BDSM (Bondage, Discipline, Dominance, and Submission, Sadomasochism) lifestyle. Mrs. Robinson acted as the dominant one and Christian as the submissive one. It is clearly stated by Anastasia Steele that
He’s such a complicated person. And now I have an insight as to why. A young man deprived of his adolescence, sexually abused by some evil Mrs. Robinson figure...no wonder he’s old before his time (James, 2011: 116).

Seeing from the statement above, it can be inferred that Christian Grey is a complicated person and Anastasia has discovered the reason behind his complicated personality. One of the main reasons is because of Christian Grey’s past life that is abused by Mrs. Robinson that causes Christian Grey to lose his adolescence. After knowing that Christian Grey’s childhood was trapped with a sexual abuse by Mrs. Robinson, it is also discovered that he was collared before by Mrs. Robinson during their sexual activity:

“I don’t know yet. I haven’t made up my mind. Will you collar me?”
He raises his eyebrows.
“You have been doing your research. I don’t know, Anastasia. I’ve never collared anyone.”
Oh...should I be surprised by this? I know so little about the scene...I don’t know.
“Were you collared?” I whisper.
“Yes.”
“By Mrs. Robinson?”
“Mrs. Robinson!” he laughs loudly, freely, and he looks so young and carefree, his head thrown back, his head thrown back, his laughter infectious (James, 2011: 140).

After discovering the fact that Christian Grey has ever been collared by Mrs. Robinson, Anastasia Steele wonders how Mrs. Robinson inflicts the damage to Christian Grey, she evens labels Mrs. Robinson as a child molester for taking away Christian Grey’s adolescence:

Why can’t he see her for what she is - a child molester? I switch off the light, seething, staring into the darkness. How dare she? How dare she pick on a vulnerable adolescent? Is she still doing it? Why did they stop? Various scenarios filter through my mind: he had had enough, then why is he still
friends with her? Ditto her – is she married? Divorced? Jeez – does she have children of her own? Does she have Christian’s children (James, 2011: 286).

Anastasia Steele’s statement above shows that Christian Grey represses his distressing event that occurs in his childhood, which is giving up his adolescence to become Mrs. Robinson’s submissive partner for their sexual intercourses. Anastasia’s frustration “Why can’t he see her for what she is – a child molester?” shows that Christian Grey does not want to admit his past life with Mrs. Robinson.

The second basic concept used from Bressler is the defenses made by a person to protect their mind from the repressed distressing experience. As mentioned previously, the distressing event in Christian Grey’s childhood is she was the submissive partner of Mrs. Elena Robinson when he was still an adolescent. The event, of course, is repressed by his mind as it is classified as a painful memory. In order to protect his mind from the memory, he attempts to make defenses, and the common four defenses mentioned by Bressler are: denial, avoidance, displacement, and projection.

The first defense is denial. Denial is “when we believe that an emotionally painful situation does not exist or an emotionally painful event never occurred” (Bressler, 1999: 84). The memory that Christian Grey wants to deny is the fact that Mrs. Robinson was oppressive and traumatizing to him in their past relationship. It can be seen through the way he denies Mrs. Robinson as his source of trauma

“Why can’t I look at you?”
“That’s a Dom/sub thing. You’ll get used to it.”
Will I?
“Why can’t I touch you?”
“Because you can’t.”
His mouth sets in a mulish line.
“Is it because of Mrs. Robinson?”
He looks quizzically at me.
“Why would you think that?” And immediately he understands. “You think she traumatized me?”
I nod
“No, Anastasia. She’s not the reason. Besides, Mrs. Robinson wouldn’t take any of that shit from me (James, 2011: 156).

The fact that Christian Grey denies his past life with Mrs. Robinson can also be seen through the way he describes her as a force of good, despite the fact that Mrs. Robinson has stolen away his adolescence by making him submit to a (Bondage, Domination, and Sadomasochistic) BDSM relationship with her. The conversation below shows that Christian Grey is in denial towards his past event with Mrs. Robinson

He frowns at me, bewildered. I continue.
“She took advantage of a vulnerable fifteen-year-old boy. If you had been a fifteen-year-old girl and Mrs. Robinson was a Mr. Robinson, tempting you into a BDSM lifestyle, that would have been okay? If it was Mia, say?”
He gasps and scowls at me.
“Ana, it wasn’t like that.”
I glare at him.
“Okay, it didn’t feel like that to me,” he continues quietly. “She was a force for good. What I needed.”
“I don’t understand.” It’s my turn to look bewildered (James, 2011: 293).

The way Christian states “Okay, it didn’t feel like that to me” shows that he attempts to deny the fact that Mrs. Robinson took an advantage to 15-year-old Christian in the past who was vulnerable. The denial by Christian Grey stays still even though Anastasia Steele has discovered his scars that are caused by Mrs. Robinson in the novel.
“What is it?” Christian’s face is wide-eyed with alarm.
“Your scars,” I whisper. “They’re not from chicken pox.”
I watch as in a split second he closes down, his stance changing from
relaxed, calm, and at ease, to defensive – angry, even. He frowns, his face
darkening, and his mouth presses into a thing, hard line.
“No, they’re not,” he snaps, but he does not elaborate further. He stands,
holds his hand out for me, and hauls me to my feet.
“Don’t look at me like that.” His voice is colder and scolding as he lets go of
my hand.
I flush, chastened, and stare down at my fingers, and I know, I know that
someone stubbed cigarettes out on Christian. I feel sick.
“Did she do that?” I whisper before I can stop myself.
He says nothing, so I’m forced to look at him. He’s glaring at me.
“She? Mrs. Robinson? She’s not an animal, Anastasia. Of course she didn’t.
I don’t understand why you feel you have to demonize her (James, 2011: 299).

Based on the conversation between Anastasia and Christian, it can be seen
that Christian Grey denies the fact that Mrs. Robinson has stubbed cigarettes to
Christian’s body. Thus, his distressing event with Mrs. Robinson mentioned
previously is indeed the object of Christian Grey’s denial. In the book, Christian
obviously informs something to Anastasia without any further elaboration most of the
time. He does not elaborate further due to the fear that Anastasia may know his
darkest secret, especially his childhood experience with Mrs. Robinson. Therefore, in
the relation to the first part of the analysis, Christian is described as a secretive person
which means he tends to keep secret for himself, in this case such denial strengthens
the fact that he is a secretive person due to the fear that people may know his darkest
secret that he sees as distressing.

The second defense is avoidance. Avoidance is “when we stay away from
people, places, or situation that might stir up the memory of repressed experience”
(Bressler, 1999: 84). It is needed to protect one person from remembering the painful memory that has been repressed into one’s unconscious mind. In this case, Christian Grey tries to avoid Anastasia Steele’s question in regards to Mrs. Robinson.

“Yes, we’re business partners. The sex is over between us. It has been for years.”

“Why did your relationship finish?”

His mouth narrows, and his eyes gleam.

“Her husband found out.”

Holy shit!

“Can we talk about this some other time – somewhere more private?” he growls.

“I don’t think you’ll ever convince me that she’s not some kind of paedophile.”

“I don’t think of her that way. I never have. Now that’s enough!” he snaps.

“Did you love her?”

“How are you two getting on?” My mother has returned, unseen by either of us.

In the above quotation, Christian tries to avoid further questions about Mrs. Robinson that are thrown by Anastasia. He avoids the memory of his sadomasochistic relationship with Mrs. Robinson since he becomes the submissive one, thus sacrificing his adolescence for Mrs. Robinson’s sexual pleasure. He requests Anastasia to talk about it some other time in a place that is more private as a way to avoid further discussions about himself and Mrs. Robinson in the past. As mentioned earlier, the childhood problem suffered by Christian may be the indication of his sexual sadism. Through the quotation above, it is clear that Christian denies and avoids the fact of having a childhood problem with Mrs. Robinson.

The third defense is displacement. Displacement is “when we take out the negative feeling about one person on someone else so that we can relieve our pain or
anger without becoming aware of the real cause of our repressed feelings” (Bressler, 1999: 84). Christian Grey’s displacement can be seen by the way he inflicts an oppression or punishment.

“I have rules, and I want you to comply with them. They are for your benefit and for my pleasure. If you follow these rules to my satisfaction, I shall reward you. If you don’t, I shall punish you, and you will learn,” he whispers. I glance at the rack of canes as he says this.

“And where does all this fit in?” I wave my hand in the general direction of the room.

“It’s all part of the incentive package. Both reward and punishment.”

“So you’ll get your kicks by exerting your will over me.”

“It’s about gaining your trust and your respect, and so you’ll let me exert my will over you. I will gain a great deal of pleasure, joy, even in your submission. The more you submit, the greater my joy – it’s a very simple equation” (James, 2011: 68).

Seeing the quotation above, Christian takes out his negative feeling about Mrs. Robinson’s domination or oppression during their relationship in Christian’s childhood on every submissive female, including Anastasia to gain the sense of pleasure or joy.

In relation to the first part of analysis, we know that Christian is a controlling person, thus when he possess control over his submissive girls, including Anastasia, he gets to make them submit to gain the pleasure or joy while displacing his negative feelings to Mrs. Robinson.

The fourth defense is projection. Projection is “when we believe, without real cause that someone else feels the same way we feel, specifically that someone else has the problem we want to deny that we, ourselves, have” (Bressler, 1999: 84). In this case, Christian Grey projects his problem of being dominated to Anastasia, in
order to show that he has the autonomy, something that Mrs. Robinson possessed over him in the past.

“You’re jealous?” He stares at me, dumbfounded, and his eyes soften slightly, warming.
“Yes, and angry about what she did to you.”
“Anastasia, she helped me, that’s all I’ll say about that. And as for your jealousy, put yourself in my shoes. I haven’t had to justify my actions to anyone in the last seven years. Not one person. I do as I wish, Anastasia. I like my autonomy. I didn’t go and see Mrs. Robinson to upset you. I went because every now and then we have dinner. She’s a friend and a business partner (James, 2011: 293).

Based on the quotation above, Christian projects his autonomy to Anastasia Steele, by saying I like my autonomy. That is the reason why he is a controlling person, because by possessing autonomy, he can project his distressing experience of being dominated to someone else, in this case, Anastasia Steele.

The third basic concept used from Bressler is the core issues that are derived from repressed or buried experience. Core issues is a psychological problem that is the underlying cause of some sort of recurring self-destructive behavior, whether that behavior is something as seemingly wild as being habitually late for important appointments or something as serious as being habitually involved with abusive romantic partners (Bressler, 1999: 84).

The human’s core issues are low self-esteem, insecurity, fear of abandonment, and fear of intimacy. In accordance to Bressler, Christian Grey has a recurring self-destructive behavior by being habitually involved with abusive romantic partners during his adolescence that leads him to have several core issues mentioned previously. The first core issue is self-esteem. According to Bressler, low self-esteem is “the unwarranted belief that we are less worthy than other human
beings, and therefore, don’t deserve attention, love, or any other form of life’s rewards” (1999: 84). Christian Grey, is depicted as someone that has a low self-esteem. He always thinks that he is not perfect, and he is insecure due to the fact that he is surrounded with a perfect family, thus he feels like he doesn’t deserve love and attention. It is shown by this quotation:

“I would probably have gone the way of my birth mother, had it not been for Mrs. Robinson.”
Oh! I blink at him. Crack addict or whore? Possibly both?
“She loved me in a way I found…acceptable,” he adds with a shrug.
What the hell does that mean?
“Acceptable?” I whisper.
“Yes.” He stares intently at me. “She distracted me from the destructive path I found myself following. It’s very hard to grow up in a perfect family when you’re not perfect.” (James, 2011: 299-300).

In reflection to the quotation above, it can be referred that Christian finds the love he deserves when he is with Mrs. Robinson, that is the reason why he consents to being her submissive partner. The second core issue is insecurity, it is a condition “when we are unable to sustain a feeling or personal identity, unable to sustain a sense of knowing oneself” (Bressler, 1999: 84). Looking back at the novel, there is a clear depiction that Christian Grey feels like he does not have the self-worth in himself, thus he prefers to be with Mrs. Robinson because he feels worthy when he is with her based on this quotation:

“Does she still love you?”
“I don’t think so, not like that.” He frowns as if he hasn’t thought about the idea. “I keep telling you it was a long time ago. It’s in the past. I couldn’t change it even if I wanted to, which I don’t. She saved me from myself.” (James, 2011: 300).
The third, fear of abandonment. It is “the unwarranted nagging belief that our friends and loved ones are going to desert us (physical abandonment) or do not really care about us (emotional abandonment)” (Bressler, 1999: 84). In this one, Christian shows the sign on fear of abandonment when he reveals to Anastasia that it is hard for him to live with the condition of his family, thus needing Mrs. Robinson to erase his fear of being abandoned from his perfect family:

“She loved me in a way I found…acceptable,” he adds with a shrug. 

“What the hell does that mean?

“Acceptable?” I whisper.

“Yes.” He stares intently at me. “She distracted me from the destructive path I found myself following. It’s very hard to grow up in a perfect family when you’re not perfect.” (James, 2011: 300).

In relation to his personality, the fear of abandonment is the main reason why Christian is very possessive towards Anastasia Steele. It can be seen through the way that he is very hostile to every man that is significant to Anastasia’s life, for instance Jose, Anastasia’s friend. The fourth, fear of intimacy. It is “an unwarranted but unshakeable and overpowering feeling that emotional closeness will seriously damage or destroy us and that we must, therefore, protect ourselves by remaining at an emotional distance from others” (Bressler, 1999: 85).

This core issue may occur in Christian Grey’s personality since he never wants an intimate relationship with any woman because he prefers the dominant-submissive kind of relationship. Because of that, this core issue exists in Christian Grey as shown in the following quotation:

‘Anastasia, you should steer clear of me. I’m not the man for you.’
‘I don’t do the girlfriend thing.’
‘I’m not a hearts and flowers kind of guy.’
‘I don’t make love.’ ‘This is all I know,’
(James, 2011: 162).

The fourth basic concept is “the repetition of certain self-destructive behavior” (Bressler, 1999: 86). Applying this concept, this thesis aims to examine Christian’s core issue that leads to his sadism. Looking back at his core issue, the fear of abandonment, and low self-esteem become the main reason of his sadism. By putting Anastasia as his submissive partner, Christian will feel an entitlement to Anastasia, thus Anastasia will not abandon himself which is true due to Anastasia’s feeling to him. The next is his low-self esteem that makes him into a dominant in order to strengthen his self-esteem when lots of girls want to be his submissive partner.

Other than the core issue, it is stated by Hill et al. that “sexual sadistic offenders showed significantly more childhood behavior problems” (2006:8). In this case, we can see that Christian Grey suffers from physical abuse and sexual abuse, proven by the scars (stubbed by cigarettes) and his state of being Mrs. Robinson’s submissive partner. Such abuse has been repressed and defended by Christian Grey through his denial, avoidance, displacement, and projection. Therefore, it can be concluded that Christian Grey’s core issue and his past childhood problem (sexual abuse) becomes the main reason why he shapes himself as a sadist because he is able to transfer that back to his submissive masochist, including Anastasia Steele.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, this thesis discusses the conclusion of the analysis in the previous chapter. There are two objectives of this study. The first objective covers the description of Christian Grey as a sadist and his personality that indicates his sexual sadism disorder in Fifty Shades of Grey by E.L. James. The second objective of this thesis is to examine the causes of Christian Grey’s sexual sadism disorder based on Christian Grey’s personality and past distressing experience.

The first objective of this study is the depiction of Christian Grey. The first finding is the indicators that show Christian Grey as a sadist. There are two indicators that show him as a sadist. Firstly, Christian Grey gains sexual excitement by inflicting pain, suffering, and humiliation. Secondly, Christian Grey actively engages to sadomasochistic sexual intercourse with Anastasia Steele by whipping, spanking, and restraining her with blindfolds or physical bondage. After describing Christian Grey as a sadist, the personality of Christian Grey is analyzed based on his action and speeches. Christian Grey is described as secretive, possessive, and controlling. The way he shows himself as a secretive can be seen through the way he keeps so many secrets about himself, especially the information related to his personal life. He can be perceived as possessive based on his action to restrict Anastasia to have a decent interaction with any other man. Last but not least, he is seen as a controlling person by dominantly controls or dictates Anastasia to comply every order made by Christian himself.
The second objective of this thesis is to know the cause of Christian Grey’s sexual sadism disorder. In order to accomplish that, we need to see the defenses made by Christian Grey using Bressler’s basic concepts of psychoanalytic approach. The basic concepts are important to discover the distressing experience that is repressed with Christian Grey’s defenses.

In his defense, it can be discovered that Christian Grey represses his past distressing experience which is his childhood. In his childhood, Christian Grey is trapped into a sadomasochistic relationship as well with Mrs. Robinson when he became the submissive partner. This childhood memory is repressed by Christian Grey through several defenses, such as denial, avoidance, displacement, and projection. Furthermore, his defenses is supported with his core issues as a human being which are low self-esteem, insecurity, fear of abandonment, and fear of intimacy.

Looking back at his core issue, the fear of abandonment, and low self-esteem become the main reason of his sadism. By putting Anastasia as his submissive partner, Christian feels an entitlement to Anastasia, thus Anastasia will not abandon himself which is true due to Anastasia’s feeling to him. The next is his low-self esteem that makes him into a dominant in order to strengthen his self-esteem when lots of girls want to be his submissive partner.

However, being possessive, secretive, and controlling are not the determining cause of someone to have a sexual sadism disorder. In this thesis, the personality of Christian Grey which are possessive, secretive, and controlling are used to support the cause of Christian Grey’s sexual sadism disorder, which are
defenses he made in the story and the core issues of Christian Grey that are seen in the story. Therefore, it can be concluded that Christian Grey’s core issue and his past childhood problem (sexual abuse) becomes the main reason why he shapes himself as a sadist because he is able to transfer that back to his submissive masochist, including Anastasia Steele.
APPENDIX

Summary of E.L. James’ Fifty Shades of Grey

The story begins with a fresh-graduate named Anastasia Steele, who replaced Kate Kavanagh to do an interview with a rich CEO named Christian Grey. They met for the very first time in CEO of Grey Enterprises Holding Inc. After they met for the first time, Christian was attracted to her, and he started to follow her and find the information about Anastasia Steele. Because he was stalking Anastasia Steele, they often met each other in different occasions.

After they shared their first kiss, which made Anastasia fell in love with Christian even more, Grey took her to his apartment. From his apartment, he started to inform Anastasia about his private life. Through the information, Anastasia learned that Christian was not someone who did “the boyfriend thing” which means he did not want to be the typical boyfriend that has a relationship with someone based on emotional attachment. He preferred to have a partner who could be his submissive partner for a sexual intercourse without emotional attachment. After that, Christian offered a deal which required Anastasia to be his submissive, and he was the dominant one. He also offered a Bondage, Discipline, Dominance, and Submission (BDSM) relationship.

After Anastasia agreed to the deal, Christian started to give pain, suffering, and humiliation to Anastasia, because it gave him the sexual pleasure which could not be gotten from a “vanilla sex” (an ordinary sexual intercourse). On the other hand, since Anastasia was a masochist, she enjoyed the satisfaction
of getting a physical and psychological suffering. Unfortunately, as their relationship continued, Anastasia demanded more on Christian, because she felt that it was not enough by only sadomasochistic sexual intercourse. She demanded Christian to love him with affection, and emotional attachment, not just sexually.

However, Christian did not fulfill Anastasia’s demand because he said that he wanted to be emotionally distant. Anastasia discovered that Christian was a submissive to Mrs. Robinson in the past. It means that Christian had ever felt the pain, suffering, and humiliation as a submissive, just like Anastasia. It disappointed Anastasia and she returned home to Georgia to see her mother and to avoid Christian. Her attempt to stay away from Christian failed because Christian found out that she was in Georgia. At that moment, Anastasia shared her feelings to Christian.

Eventually, they returned from Georgia to Christian’s place. In Christian’s place, he demanded to hurt Anastasia sexually. Being curious, Anastasia wanted to know how hard it was. Therefore, Christian whipped her six times which led her to be unable to take the pain anymore from Christian. She was disappointed when Christian did not want her to love him, because she thought that Christian was only seeing her as a tool to satisfy his sexual pleasure. In the end, she decided to leave Christian Grey because she could not get the love that she wanted.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


