

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of The Study

Novels under the theme thriller-espionage have always captured the hearts of its audience. Readers of this type of novels enjoy how a spy accomplishes his mission, how he pretends to be someone else, how he hides his actual identity. The spy is required to quickly adapt and transform himself according to his social circumstances. Thus, the spy's skill in manipulating many people due to his transformation and adaption without leaving any suspicion is very interesting for everyone. This is what causes the thriller-suspicion novels to be very popular in the community.

One of the thriller-suspicion novels that successfully attract its readers is *Paranoia* by Joseph Finder. *Paranoia* tells the story of an employee named Adam Cassidy, whose pranks jeopardize his job at a tech startup. His boss gives him a chance to save his job if he agrees to perform an undercover corporate espionage assignment at a rival company (Finder, 2004). Cassidy is facilitated and required to construct his social identity from an insignificant employee to someone with a high title for the sake of a chip that he must steal from a rival company. Therefore, *Paranoia* describes Adam Cassidy's construction of his new social identity as a corporate spy.

What distinguishes *Paranoia* from other thriller-espionage novels lies in its unique narrative approach. While many thrillers typically highlight intense suspense, frequent action sequences, and the skillful execution of espionage tasks by spies, Joseph Finder as the author, takes a different path. He places a significant emphasis on delving into psychological state of Adam Cassidy, the protagonist, as he immerses himself in the world of corporate espionage within Trion.

Rather than solely focusing on fast-paced plot twists and high-stakes action, although it remains in the novel, Finder crafts a narrative that intricately explores Cassidy's internal struggles, moral dilemmas, and the complex dynamics he navigates within the corporate hierarchy. This approach not only enriches the story by providing deeper understanding of Cassidy's motivations and challenges, but also invites readers to contemplate the other side of humanity behind the violent undercover intrigues and action scenes commonly associated with espionage thrillers. As such, *Paranoia* stands out not only for its gripping plot, but also for its exploration of character psychology within a backdrop of corporate espionage.

Finder is very smart in this regard. Determining the plot, creating characters with different problems, typical action-thriller scenes that readers love, not too tough but clever enough, and how each character in the novel has a role made the ending of this novel unpredictable until its last sentence. However, despite the above reasons, the researcher thinks that Finder has a different point of view in creating the figure of Adam Cassidy as a spy in the novel *Paranoia*. Unlike many other thriller-espionage novels telling the tension and shrewdness of the spy, Finder focuses more on how Cassidy constructs his new social identity as a high level staff

with a kind of way of surviving-pretending his actual identity as an insignificant employee. Hence, by the reasons and considerations above, researcher decided to choose *Paranoia* as an object of this research.

Another reason why researcher choose this object for this thesis is because the novel's awards. *Paranoia* is considered Finder's breakthrough novel and became a *New York Times* best-seller in the early 2000s. *Paranoia* was also successfully filmed on the big screen 9 years later when it was directed by Robert Luketic. After the success of *Paranoia*, Finder created more great works that won several nominations, such as the International Thriller Writers Award for his novel *Killer Instinct* (2007), followed by the Gumshoe Award in the same year for *Power Play* (2007). In 2010, Finder introduced a series character "private spy" named Nick Heller in 6 novels; *Vanished* (2010), *Buried Secrets* (2011), *Plan B* (2011), *Good and Valuable Consideration* (2014), *Guilty Minds* (2016), and *House on Fire* (2020). Years later, *Suspicion* (2014), *The Fixer* (2015), *The Switch* (2017), and *Judgement* (2019) were included in the *New York Times* best-selling suspense novels. He is currently a founding member of the International Thrillers Writer Association and regularly writes espionage and international affairs for publications including *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* (About Joe, n.d.).

In *Paranoia*, Adam Cassidy, Wyatt Company's employee, committed a fool by using the company's credit card to get to a loading dock's retirement party. Apparently, he is caught by his boss, Nick Wyatt, and threatened and given two options; to get into jail or spying on the rival company owned by Wyatt's former mentor, Jock Goddard. He was forced to change and construct his social identity

from a low-level employee to someone with a high-ranking role in Goddard's company, Trion. For once, he had to strengthen and hide his social identity. On the other hand, Cassidy enjoyed being part of Trion. The comfortable life, luxury cars and steady job made him complacent about his new identity. But he remained on a mission to spy for Wyatt. Therefore, Cassidy managed to steal Goddard's files from the laptop of Elena Jennings, a woman he recognized as well as being the Head of Marketing at Trion. He thought he was done with these espionage things and felt his social identity as Wyatt's spy was over either, but that's ain't what Wyatt wanted. He wanted Aurora, a revolutionary prototype cell phone developed by Goddard. Cassidy becomes increasingly unstable once the apartment he lives in is monitored by dozens of CCTVs on Wyatt's orders. He feels that his new society and circumstances have constructed his social identity, not on his own. Onwards, he became more depressed until his dad passed away. Ever since his father passed away, his psychological well-being has been peaking on its edge. On top of that, the persistent pressure exerted by Wyatt has added to his emotional burden, leading to a noticeable decline in his mental stability. Cassidy almost ruins her existing social identity and makes people paranoid. Cassidy's story is all the more interesting because he's not an ex-cop or a criminal with espionage experience, he's just a charismatic slacker who makes a silly mistake, gets caught by his boss, and then sees his life turned upside down. And this is the moment of change in Cassidy's social identity that makes him fearful, suspicious and makes it hard for others to trust him. This is called paranoia.

Based on the synopsis given earlier and the reasons for choosing this subject, the researcher intends to investigate the various experiences that Adam Cassidy had while operating as a spy at Trion. This study aims to comprehensively explore the sequence of events that influenced his psychological well-being and subsequently shaped his social identity development. Through this investigation, the researcher sought to uncover the interplay between Cassidy's undercover activities, the challenges he faced, and their profound influence on the formation of his personal and social identity.

Hence, the researcher chose to analyze the figure of Adam Cassidy in the novel *Paranoia* with social identity theory. This theory involves the stages that make up individual's social identity and is intricately linked to their psychological state. Classified under social psychological theory, this framework was determined by the researcher to be suitable for examining Cassidy's character as portrayed by Joseph Finder in the *Paranoia*. The researcher believes that this theory will appropriately explain how Cassidy's experiences developed at Trion, which affected his psychological well-being and the construction of his social identity. Therefore, the researcher gave the title *Social Identity Construction of Adam Cassidy in Joseph Finder's Paranoia*.

B. Problem Formulation

According to the text above, the problem formulation discussed in this research is what are the multiple stages involved in the construction of Adam

Cassidy's social identity in the *Paranoia*, as seen through the lens of Social Identity Theory.

C. Objective of The Study

Retrieved from the questions before, this research aims to examine and analyze the sequential stages in the construction of Cassidy's social identity utilizing the framework provided by Social Identity Theory by Henri Tajfel.

D. Reviews on Related Study

In this case, researcher discovered previous research which were considered relevant and related to this research. Some are written in the form of journals, articles or theses.

The first journal is entitled *Work Capacity of the Elderly: Assuming Another Social Identity in the Contemporary World*, written by João Henrique de Moraes Ribeiro, Raul Paiva dos Santos, Deusdete Inácio de Souza Junior, Daniele Sirineu Pereira, José Vitor da Silva, and Maria Angélica Mendes (2015). This journal was published by Scientific Research Publishing. Henrique and his friends analyze the work capacity if elderly people based on the Social Identity Theory. Thus, they are assuming that society characterizes the elderly people as belonging to the retired group, and from a capitalist perspective, considers these people as unproductive (Henrique et al., 2015).

The second is a thesis by Ummu Maryam (2010) entitled *Social Identity Formation of White and Aboriginal Mixed-Blood Children and its Effect on Intergroup Conflict in the Movie Rabbit-Proof Fence*. The thesis was written as a graduation requirement from the English Department, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, University of Indonesia. Ummu applied Henri Tajfel's Social Identity Theory on white and aboriginal mixed blood children identity construction from each point of view and its social impact that might have appeared because of the identification. This thesis reveals the strong existing impact from the ideologies of both races to identify another member of the group (Maryam, 2010).

The third is also a thesis by Zelika Amanda Amrullah (2019) entitled *The Process of Social Identity Formation in the Online Ojek Driver Community*. This thesis is written as a graduation requirement from Sociology Department, Faculty of Social Science and Political Science, Syarif Hidayatullah Islamic State University. Zelika found out from several researches, news and information that various things could construct and form social identity from each group of Online Ojek Driver Community. She used SIT from Tajfel to identify and describe social identity formation in the Ojek Community. Also, this thesis is supposed to be a measurement of how relevant social identity theory with the qualitative methodology applied in this research (Amrullah, 2019).

According to these three previous researches, all of them were using Social Identity Theory (SIT) by Henri Tajfel. Hence, the researcher will use social identity theory which is suitable for analyzing the figure of Adam Cassidy in the novel *Paranoia*.

E. Method of Research

1. Source of Data

The data used in this research is divided into two types, primary and secondary data. The primary data is taken from the novel itself, *Paranoia* by Joseph Finder. Published by St. Martin Press hardcover edition in 2004 in the United States of America. The secondary data is the application of the novel itself in the form of a movie entitled *Paranoia* directed by Robert Luketic in 2013. Although the *Paranoia* movie received some negative reviews because it seemed unoriginal, as a secondary data, this movie is only used to the primary data and the depiction of Adam Cassidy's social identity construction. Additional secondary data is a review of journals and articles taken from the internet which are relevant to the theory that will be used to analyze this research.

2. Method and Technique of Collecting Data

This research was qualitative research with a literary study method. Therefore, the methods of collecting data are taken and reconstructed from books, journals, and other existing written sources (Andini et al., 2022). In this case, the researcher divides the data collection methods into two stages. First, researcher read the primary data in the form of a novel from the first page to the last one. As a researcher delves into the reading, he carefully evaluates numerous paragraphs and maybe sentences to determine its relevances to the stages on the Social Identity Theory. It aims to understand and comprehend the storyline without any errors

during the interpretation of the literary work. It also aims to observe the words or sentences in the primary data which can later be analyzed with the related theory. In the second stage, the researcher collected observed words and sentences and transcribed them into direct quotes in chapter analysis.

3. Method and Technique of Analyzing Data

Researcher considers the qualitative descriptive data analysis technique will be suitable with the data sources and the method of collecting data mentioned above. This was based on an observation method which is part of the qualitative descriptive analysis. This analysis is supported by a related theory, Tajfel's Social Identity Theory. The theory requires the researcher to thoroughly analyze and articulate its concepts through direct quotations, reflecting the criteria of the descriptive analysis method. This approach necessitates a careful examination of the theory's principles, using direct quotations to validate interpretations within the framework of descriptive analysis. Then, the data that has been collected and transcribed, reviewed and analyzed with the theory, presented through direct quotes, are appropriated to this analysis technique. After the data had been analyzed, the researcher wrote the conclusion in the last chapter.