

## PSYCHOPATHIC PERSONALITY DISORDER IN LARSSON'S "THE GIRL WITH THE DRAGON TATTOO"

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### ABSTRACT

This paper investigates how childhood trauma causes someone to suffer from a personality disorder. The narrative discussed in this paper is *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* by Stieg Larsson (2005). The main character of the story, Martin Vanger, is unable to comprehend other's feelings and gets pleasure from hurting women. These psychopathy behaviors are triggered by the traumatic events he endured during childhood. He was sexually assaulted by his father and was forced to watch him killing women. These experiences are the seeds of crimes that Martin commits as an adult. By using descriptive analysis, this paper explores how Martin, who was once a victim of child abuse, turns into the abuser. Freud states that someone's personality is influenced by the interaction of id, ego, and super-ego (1961). Furthermore, Erikson believes that someone's personality is also shaped by nature and nurture (1977). Therefore, psychoanalysis theory along with psychological approach is applied to examine the character's psyche, mainly to reveal the causes of psychopathic personality disorder suffered by the main character. The result shows that traumatic experiences during childhood generate anxiety; guilt, shame, and agony affect the character's psychosocial development.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

There is a strong relationship between psychopathic personality disorder and childhood trauma (Dargis, Newman, & Koenigs, 2016). Psychopathy refers to behaviors and a set of personality traits that often associated with the lack of remorse and empathy, high impulsivity, pathological lying, and impaired social reasoning (Hare, 1996; Andersen & Kiehl, 2014). Psychopathic personality disorder is one of the most indelible characters portrayed in far-famed media today. These characters such as Ramsay Bolton from *Game of Thrones* series, Joker from *Joker*, Patrick Bateman from *American Psycho*, Hannibal Lecter from *Hannibal Rising*, and so on, are often depicted as a charming, dishonest, guiltless, sadist, and terrifying. In the real world, there are also myriad historical psychopath figures include Ted Bundy, Richard Ramirez, Ed Gein, Jeffrey Dahmer, too many to mention. Psychopathy is often used to label people that we do not like, cannot understand, or construe as evil; psychopathy is a conflux of several different personality traits, rather than one personality disorder as it has been assumed so far (Skeem, Polascheck, Patrick, & Lilienfeld, 2011). Psychopathy is a complex, multifaceted condition marked by a combination of personality traits representing a different level of disinhibition, cruelty, and boldness.

In literary works, one of the recent examples of a fictional character with psychopathy as a result of childhood trauma is Joker from the movie with the same title produced by DC Films (2019). The presented story claims that the protagonist's psychopathic tendency is triggered by the



unbearable trauma during childhood that repressed unconsciously and then materialize into destructive actions. Arthur Fleck, who later on impersonates Joker is unable to feel sympathy towards others. He was once abused physically by his mother and his mother's boyfriend. As a result, he suffers from brain malfunction which then leads to his inability to get a proper job. Being treated unfairly by others, Joker shows his anger, disappointment, and sadness by hurting people. The movie suggests that someone's personalities are shaped through nature and mostly nurture. The victim of child abuse who fails to overcome the trauma may develop a psychopathic personality disorder.

Child abuse, in this case, is a part of violence that takes place in a family or committed by, but not limited to, the family member. Children experiencing or witnessing abuse in their childhood life, are prone to do violent crimes when they become adults (Official for National Statistics, 2017). Terrifying crimes of child abuse can be seen back and forth in the news media and represented also in many literary works such as novels or poems. Therefore, child abuse is one of the relevant issues to be discussed to as numberless writers have captured this issue in the various angle of points of view which mostly are dark and redden the eyes; they depict how the victims struggle to face the abusers, how they overcome the traumatic events and even fight for their rights by throwing revenge in many forms. Based on that phenomenon, it is necessary to discuss a literary work in which the story represents the issue of personality disorder caused by child abuse experience.

Several studies have been conducted to discuss psychopathic personality disorder associated with childhood trauma. A study from Sakthiyani, Ratih, & Widisanti (2019) argues about E.L. James' *Fifty Shades Darker* main character, Christian Gray. The study concludes that psychological trauma of the main character due to external factors in the form of socio-economic conditions, and direct exposure to unnatural sexual relationship with another character named Elena, affect his psychopathic behavior which makes him become a sexually sadistic psychopath. Following that is a study conducted by Yaridha & Mariana (2019) which similarly proposes that the main character in Stephen King's *Misery* novel, Anna Wilkes, possesses a tendency of psychopathy marked by traits including egocentric, lack of empathy and concern, shallow emotion, cruel relationship with others. Because the aim of the study only focuses to reveal psychopathic traits, it does not explain the root of traits or how they develop.

This paper, however, uses Stieg Larsson's *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* novel (2005) as the corpus; psychopathic personality disorder and its characteristics are presented to find out its interconnectedness with childhood trauma. The analysis focuses on Martin, one of the major antagonist characters in the novel depicted as a serial killer and rapist. The novel portrays how traumatic events shape Martin's psychopathy tendency marked by his sadistic, manipulative behaviors, and how he gets pleasure from hurting women. These psychopathy behaviors are triggered by the traumatic events he endured during childhood. He was sexually assaulted by his father and was forced to watch him killing women. These experiences become a starting point of Martin's personalities and attitudes that lead to crimes.



## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Psychopathy and Childhood Trauma in Psychoanalysis Perspective

Discussing psychopathy issues in a literary work requires a psychoanalysis perspective. Psychoanalytic theory is a theory of human personality and behavior, and its dynamic development to conduct method or therapy to treat psychopathology. Psychopathology is a scientific study of mental disorder and its related causes such as genetics, biological and psychological measures. The goal of the treatment is to heal the sufferers by releasing their repressed emotions or memories. Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, stipulates the id, ego, and superego; the tripartite of one's personality structure (1961). The id is the impulse that based on pleasure principle producing the selfish, primal, wild urges. The superego consists of the morality concept which relies on societal values, and the ego plays as the bridge between the forcing drives of the id and the morals offered by the superego. Furthermore, these elements of psyche never work separately, when the superego cannot feed what the id desires, the ego comes as the negotiator bringing another way to satisfy the craving. The ego has to run the primary and secondary processes involving the conscious and unconscious mind. The process, most of the time, overwhelms the ego and resulting in anxiety. Freud also defines the traumatic experience as *"an experience which within a short period of time presents the mind with an increase of stimulus too powerful to be dealt with or worked off in the normal way, and this must result in permanent disturbances of the manner in which the energy operates"* (1917, p. 1395). In other words, the traumatic experience is something that too excessive for the individual to bear or understand. Freud believes that, as he developed his theory, this something that excessive to bear is early childhood abuse (1917).

Moreover, Anna Freud, the daughter of Sigmund Freud, supports her father's ideas by expanding the defense mechanism used for reducing anxiety that causes by impulses the ego cannot process properly (1993). The extensive use of defense mechanisms, however, will result in personality disorders (Bowins, 2010). People with personality disorder have problems with the way of thinking, feeling, and behaving as a result of expectations of the cultures that causing the stress or anxiety and lasts over time (Robitz, 2018). Personality disorders are often associated with psychopathy, primarily known as an antisocial personality disorder, a developmental disorder characterized by shallow emotional responses, lack of empathy, impulsivity, and persistent antisocial behavior (Andersen & Kiehl, 2014). The psychopathy stems from genes (nature) (Hall-Flavin, 2017), while sociopathy is the result of the environment (nurture). Considering these perspectives, the tendency to psychopathy closely relates to one's developmental stages and the construction of personality in which id, ego, and superego combined with defense mechanisms play their roles significantly.

### 2.2 Human Developmental Stages in Psychosocial Theory

Related to that, Erikson who also supports Freud's ideas declares that child development is constructed in several stages (1977). However, unlike Freud's theory on psychosexual development, Erikson puts his concern on the impacts of social aspects in the process of the human life span. Freud's and Erikson's theories emphasize the critical influence of someone's early life stage in the development of someone's personality.

The first stage, according to Erikson, is "trust versus mistrust" (1977, p. 222) starting from birth to 1.5-year-old of age. It is when infants entirely rely on the primary caregiver, resulting in



hope when their needs are fulfilled, otherwise, it will build fear. The second is called “autonomy versus shame & doubt” at age 1.5-3 (Erikson, 1977, p. 226). It is when infants grow physically and become more active. They begin to learn their ability and skill and success during this stage will lead to the virtue of will. Failure in this stage will construct shame or a lack of self-esteem. The third is “initiative versus guilt” (Erikson, 1977, p. 22); a 3 to 5-year-old child begins to learn a sense of initiative and gains security in his/her ability and learns to make a decision. When support on this stage is lacking, it will lead to a decrease in creativity and build the guilt. Efficient encouragement will shape purpose.

At age 6-12, children start to feel the need for the approval of their competencies. The lack of encouragement will affect their potentials to drop and brings in the feeling of inferiority. It is called the “industry versus inferiority”, the fourth stage (Erikson, 1977, p. 232). The next stage is called “identity versus role confusion”; the transition period from childhood to adulthood (12-18 years) when adolescents start to seek their self-identity (Erikson, 1977, p. 234). The knowledge they absorbed from the previous stages will form their personality, goals, and value. Thus, when there is inferiority, they will confuse to place themselves in society. However, when they comprehend their potentials or competencies, the sense of fidelity grows and makes them capable to accept the difference of other’s ideology or views.

Comes at the stage “intimacy versus isolation” (18-40 years), the individual begins to develop commitment, care, and treatment for the relationship (Erikson, 1977, p. 237). However, unsuccessful attempts in the earlier stages will lead to isolation, loneliness, and depression, and fear of building the relationship with others. Next is the “generativity versus stagnation” at age 40-65; productivity, self-worth, and accomplishment are planted and fixed when the earlier stages are managed successfully (Erikson, 1977, p. 240). Instead, it will lead to a sense of stagnation, unproductive, and uselessness if there is a failure of making a contribution to society in the previous stages. The last stage is “ego integrity versus despair” (65-death); an individual in this stage will begin to contemplate his/her accomplishments which develops integrity (Erikson 1977, p. 241). In this stage, people who feel guilty, regretful because they cannot complete their life goals will become dissatisfied, which then leads to depression and hopelessness.

### 2.3 Types of Violence against Children

WHO (2020) defines violence against children includes all forms of violence against people under 18 years old, and for younger children or infants, it particularly entangles to child maltreatment including physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect. These types of abuse often occur simultaneously and in various context i.e., at school, in the family, in public, war situation, and across borders. Physical abuse tends to become the most common form of violence against children that occurs in the purpose of discipline. Physical abuse conducted by parents or caregivers mostly appears as a way of punishment. The investigation conducted by Gateway Child Welfare Information in (2020) points out that effects of physical abuse including physical health problems (brain damage, functional limitation/difficulties in doing activities), psychological consequences (poor mental and emotional health, attachment and social difficulties, posttraumatic stress), and behavioral health (drug use/alcoholism, unhealthy sexual activities, juvenile delinquency that leads to adult criminality, future perpetration of maltreatment).





Sexual abuse, according to the American Psychological Association (2020) occurs when sexual activity is unwanted and done by force, threats, or when the perpetrator takes advantage of the victim who cannot give consent. Hall & Hall (2011) state that childhood sexual abuse has been correlated with higher levels several consequences include depression, guilt, shame, self-blame, eating disorders, somatic concerns, anxiety, dissociative patterns, repression, denial, sexual problems, and relationship problems. Furthermore, emotional or psychological abuse is a form of abuse that is not physical, involving humiliation, discrimination, manipulation, and the use of fear. The perpetrator of emotional abuse uses emotion as a weapon to control or dominate the victims. Consequences of emotional abuse, among others, posttraumatic stress disorder, early sexual initiation or sexual risk behavior, and aggression (Petersen, Joseph, & Feit, 2014).

### 3. METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative method that relies on the interpretation of text analysis (Hammarberg, Kirkman, & de Lacey, 2016). All the data gathered from the novel were classified based on the context of the problem which includes passages that portray trauma from child abuse, its impacts on the development of the character's personality, and how it can form psychopathic attitudes of the character. The selected data were elaborated by applying Sigmund Freud's (1961) and Anna Freud's (1993) psychoanalytic theories, Erik Erikson's psychosocial theory (1977), as well as psychological approach to find out the causal relationship between abuse in childhood and psychopathic personality disorder. Internet-based research was conducted by collecting supporting information related to child abuse and psychopathic personality disorder from online academic journals, e-books, thesis, and articles.

### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this paper, psychopathic personality disorder associated with abuse in childhood portrayed in Stieg Larsson's *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* novel is presented based on types of abuse that affect and shape Martin into a serial killer and rapist.

#### 4.1 Neglect

Neglect is the continuing failure of parents or caretakers in providing safety and the basic (physical, mental, and emotional) needs of a child (Alsehaimi & Alanazi, 2017). WHO defines abuse and neglect as child maltreatment that include all types of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, negligence and commercial or other exploitation results in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power (2020).

In the novel, Mikael Blomkvist takes on a missing girl case assigned by Henrik Vanger, the retired CEO of the Vanger Corporation who believes that one of his family members was responsible for the girl's disappearance. The missing girl is Harriet, Henrik's niece, Martin's younger sister. Blomkvist gathers information about the Vanger family and their pasts. He finds that Martin and Harriet are the second generations in the Vanger's family raised by parents whose marriage was complicated "[t]heir marriage is totally haywire" (Larsson, 2005, p. 254). Martin's parents either fought and party, could turn up like everything in their life was wrecked in one day, and the other day showed as if they had a totally fine relationship. In addition, Henrik also unveils that Martin and Harriet's "*childhood was chaotic with a mother who was forever leaving them and*



*a father who was virtually an alcoholic*" (Larsson, 2005, p. 99). This indicates that Martin and Harriet were neglected by their parents; from their father's alcohol problem and mother's abandonment. In this case, negligent treatment comes from the lack of a support system from parents due to parental conflict. With effects such as lack of trust and relationship difficulties, feeling of being valueless, and trouble in regulation emotions, neglect may be as endangering as physical and emotional abuse (Smith, Robinson, & Segal, 2019). Later, this factor will lead to several types of abuse these two siblings have to face.

Moreover, negligent treatment is also depicted in a passage, "[s]he mostly left the children to their own devices" (Larsson, 2005, p. 147). Here, 'she' refers to Martin and Harriet's mother, Isabella, who abandoned her children and was unable to provide her children with care, love, and safety as a mother used to do. However, it is shown in another passage that Isabella pretended everything in her family is well managed, "[n]othing ever happened in our family without Isabella knowing. But she ignored everything that was unpleasant or showed her in a bad light" (Larsson, 2005, p. 539). It explains that Isabella did not want people to regard her as a bad mother or a failed wife. It also denotes that she knew about the circumstance in the house, including maltreatment that her husband, Gottfried, did to their children but took no action to prevent or stop it. Isabella did not do the physical abuse but she did neglect them. She abused her children by letting her husband mistreated them right under her nose.

Growing up as a child who was neglected by parents, especially by the mother, shaped Martin as a misogynist. Misogyny is known as hatred towards women which often derived from trauma relating to or involving female figures. Erikson (1977) points out that during an early stage of 1-5 year of age, infants solely rely on the mother or caregiver as they learn to trust that their mother or caregiver will provide their basic needs. If these basic needs inconsistently met, anxiety, mistrust, and suspicion develop. As negligent treatment continues, the seed of Martin's misogynistic attitudes grows bigger. Martin chooses women as his victims not only because he considers them as weak targets, but also as the representative of his hatred to his mother who neglected him since childhood.

#### 4.2 Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse occurs when sexual activity is unwanted and done by force, threats, or when the perpetrator takes advantage of the victim who cannot give consent. Martin was sexually abused by his father and forced to watch the murder and rape that his father conducted to his victims. "*Many times Martin came along. He forced both me and Martin to do things with him. And he held my arms while Martin...had his way with me*" (Larsson, 2005, p. 540). With 'he' refers to Gottfried and 'things' to rape and molestation, this passage exposes that Gottfried raped both the daughter and son, Harriet and Martin. The line '*many times Martin came along*' represents the frequency of molestation to be watched and carried out by Martin. Moreover, Gottfried initiated and assisted Martin to rape Harriet. Here, the parents' function in constructing virtue to their children was failed. As children might imitate what parents do because they consider it simply as the tenet of life, what Gottfried did linger on his childhood memories, and that way, it is reasonable if Martin mimics his misconduct in the next phase of his life, regardless of how bad the actions are.

Furthermore, sexual abuse is also depicted in other quotes, "*I've never touched another man, as a matter of fact, ... except for my father. That was my duty*" (Larsson, 2005, p. 496). It



implies that his father molested him and he considered it as a requirement. The *duty* signals that sexual assaults happened regularly and Martin accepted this *duty* because he did not have a choice. Though the rape and abuse damaged his heart, little Martin learned that obedience was the best way to avoid him from getting other forms of abuse. Molestation gradually turns to be commonness as Martin rationalizes all the pain and despair, taking it as tasks. In this vein, the rationalization can be associated with the sense of belonging and the instinct of children to cope with abuses themselves when the people to whom they may trust are absent.

*Children have an instinctual need to belong to a life sustaining family system, but this survival trait has a design flaw. Children continue to obsess for the familiar, even when the familiar harms rather than nurtures. Even if parenting becomes abusive, children choose to fit and adjust rather than protest and risk ostracism.*  
(Canning, 2008, p. 91)

The statement above clarifies that children will try to adapt to any situation for the need for attachment. Hence, as a child, Martin strived to accept the abuses as normal things. He regarded his father as someone to whom he must devote his life and find satisfaction after completing his duties. Rationalization is also a form of a defense mechanism that involves explaining an inadmissible feeling or behavior in a rational/logical manner to make it less threatening or more acceptable to take, neglecting the true reason behind it (Freud, 1993). Experiencing and witnessing abuse during his childhood have led Martin to copy such action in his adulthood. The trauma has stuck unconsciously and the primal impulse strongly demanded, Martin's ego reacts to deal with it; resulting in anxiety to which he adapts by rationalizing all misconducts his father did.

How Martin conducts the torture after his father died is uttered by Harriet, “[h]e came up to me, grabbed me by the hair, and led me back to the cabin—to Gottfried’s bed. He tied me up and raped me while our father was still floating in the water” (Larsson, 2005, p. 541). The passage discloses Martin raped his sister on their father’s bed, and such action implies as a celebration of his freedom and probably the death of his father, too. It signifies a form of Martin’s emotional reaction when witness that an influential person in his stage of life was dead. He did not care about his father’s floated body for he was delighted with the death, because it means he was now free from the oppressor. As for raping Harriet, Martin intended to claim his father’s role; asserting his sole domination over his sister, as well as a warning for Harriet not to even try to disobey him. In this case, during adolescence, one begins to form his/her identity based on exploration and experience in the childhood period (Erikson, 1977). Since Martin has been raised by an abusive father and a mother who failed to look after him, he observed that it is fine to do the torture and hurt people; a boy who was once a victim now becomes the abuser.

As Martin witnessed Harriet killed Gottfried, he took advantage of it to control Harriet’s life. For Martin, the death of his father means not only he is now free from the assault but also it gives him the ability to take over the control. Living with a father who filled him so much loathing, and misogyny, has made him sees his sister as a prey, an object to reign over. Moreover, Harriet’s statement, “‘he expected me to become his lover and he thought it was perfectly natural for me to submit to him’” (Larsson, 2005, p. 540), indicates Martin takes over his father's footsteps, blindly follows what was being taught by his father. The phrase ‘expected me to become his lover’ signifies the misconception of a male-female intimate relationship. Martin considers that incest is a normal relationship between family members since he accustomed to seeing this behavior performed by



his father (when he raped him and Harriet). Martin employs a threat to coerce Harriet into intimate relations is in consequence of his father's inappropriate behavior that he observed during childhood. However, the saying also points out the strong demand for the libidinal impulse that is unbearable to tackle. Martin does not care about Harriet's situation and lets the wild urge took over his mind. In this case, Martin identifies, imitates, and implements all that he has watched and experienced, which then affect his traits.

### 4.3 Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is a form of abuse that is not physical, involving humiliation, discrimination, manipulation, and the use of fear. Emotional abuse includes witnessing the abuse of others and domestic violence. This section presents evidence of how Martin experienced childhood emotional abuse and how this affects his personality. “*He was the one who taught me. He initiated me when I was fourteen. Uddevalla. Lea Persson. Aren't you clever? Yes, I was there. I only watched, but I was there,*” (Larsson, 2005, p. 488). The line displays emotional abuse; ‘he’ refers to Gottfried, while ‘taught’ refers to the killing, the tactics, and activities related to it that Gottfried wanted Martin to master. Therefore, the passage ‘*He was the one who taught me*’ shows that Martin considers his father was someone who introduced him with the murder; a role model whose steps must be followed. It also indicates that Martin accepts the crimes his father did as a learning process that he must continue later on. The line ‘*when I was fourteen*’ implies two meanings. First, Martin wants to emphasize that he is indeed skillful in murdering for he has learned it since he was a teen. In this case, he is proud of the crime he commits and hunger for acknowledgment. Martin behaviors represent grandiosity and fantasies of power that can be categorized as a mental illness called megalomania or publicly known as Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) (Kacel, Ennis, & Perreira, 2017). Second, it implies that Martin could not disobey his father's orders because, at that age, he was unable to escape from the situation and has no choice but to do so. If he refused, he would end up being beaten. Here, fear is the reason why Martin complied with his father's order. Meanwhile, the phrase ‘*Yes, I was there*’ indicates that he witnessed the execution of murder conducted by his father. Martin's confirmation ‘*I only watched, but I was there*’ reveals that he did not commit the murder. However, based on the investigation, it was Martin who tortured the bird that found lay near the victim's body, Lea Persson. Martin tied the bird's neck and pulled it through the hole of the flower pot bottom. In this term, Martin aimed to shift tension associated with fear of his father by transferring it into things or persons that less threatening or even powerless. It is mentioned earlier that Martin chooses women as his victims as representative of his hatred towards women and his mother but the information that he throws the anger and painful feeling into the animals also adding that he releases his anger, helplessness, and frustration through less intimidating objects.

Another passage depicts emotional abuse can be seen in “*It was the first time I had a woman. My father taught me. I was the one who strangled her*” (Larsson, 2005, p. 488). Again, through the phrase ‘*My father taught me*’, Martin clarifies that he carries out the murder because his father made him do so. It seems that Martin follows the order from his father and does the murder himself by copying the action (torturing the victim). It also stresses out that Martin was under pressure to do the crime. However, this phrase seems to express that Martin admires his father as a teacher. Such a sense of admiration can display a self-protective defense; Martin projects his feeling of





hate onto his father. Martin hates his father for abusing him, for making him powerless as he had to obey his abusive father. By mentioning twice that he was taught by his father also denotes that Martin blames his father for doing so. Meanwhile, the utterance *'It was the first time I had a woman'* indicates a sexual activity and the torture that Martin does, as well as represented in *'I was the one who strangled her'*; strangulation is torture that Martin has learned from his father. Further, the phrase *"I've always wondered how a man tastes"* (Larsson, 2005, p. 496) represents Martin's intention to rape Blomkvist before killing him as indicated by the word *'tastes.'* It also implies that Martin never killed a man before, so he wonders how it feels and muses on it. This action suggests that Martin wants to overstep his father's deed by raping a man, not a boy. The urge to compete with his father seed from being tortured and wrongly treated as a child. The rivalry between Martin and his father may not be obvious since Martin hides it out of fear. This relationship is called "ambivalence," where there are two sets of feelings (hate and love), at the same time, towards an object, a person, or an action. In this case, obedience and rivalry represent the inner conflict that occurs unconsciously (Freud, 1919, p. 39). In association with the development of psychosocial stages, such a condition connects to the confusion that happens during the puberty period (Erikson, 1977). In this stage, children at the age of 13-19, attempt to develop identity including ideas about goals, strengths, weaknesses, and gender roles. In Martin's case, he witnessed the first killing when he was fourteen, and then two years later, he started his debut in murdering women. The experiences as the abused victim have made him blindly realizes that torturing and killing women is a way to win his father's attention and recognition, and drives him to always steps ahead and wants to be more superior than his father.

Martin's statement, *"'You are a very ordinary little person, Mikael. You would not be able to understand the godlike feeling of having absolute control over someone's life and death'"* (Larsson, 2005, pp. 488-489) demonstrates belittlement and grandiosity. Grandiosity is a sense of superiority and seeing others with disdain (Kacel, Ennis, & Perreira, 2017). It is associated with Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) as a result of the lack of empathy during childhood development from the parents. Furthermore, Martin's statement implies that he enjoys killing. It can be assumed that Martin feels powerful because he is the one who can decide whether the victims will live or not; he has the control on hands. This condition stems from affection deficiency and social deviancy (Hare, 2003). This corresponds to the background of Martin's childhood where the parents' attachment was not there. On top of that, Martin admits the sequence of the perpetrations. He begins his crime by kidnapping the victims, raping, and killing them. Despite that, Martin believes that the killing is a natural action, *"'I'm more of a serial rapist than a serial murderer. In fact, most of all I'm a serial kidnapper. The killing is a natural consequence, so to speak, because I have to hide my crime'"* (Larsson, 2005, p. 489). Here, Martin categorizes himself as a rapist, a murderer, and a kidnapper. It gives the impression that Martin has no remorse because he considers torture and murder are common things.

Moreover, the passage below represents the interconnection between the id, ego, and superego.

*Of course my actions aren't socially acceptable, but my crime is first and foremost a crime against the conventions of society. Death doesn't come until the end of my guests' visits here after I've grown weary of them. It's always so fascinating to see their disappointment.* (Larsson, 2005, p. 489)



Martin understands that his actions against the law but, he still does the crimes. It also shows that he enjoys his power and considers it as his superiority because he is the one who decides the life and death of his victims. Martin can kill his victims anytime, whenever he gets tired of torturing them. The line *'it's always so fascinating to see their disappointment'* indicates that Martin manipulates his victims by acting to let them free. Martin gets pleasure from despairs filled in his victims' eyes when they realize that he will kill them instead of releasing them. Furthermore, Martin uncovers more about his feelings while conducting his crimes, *"but the excitement comes from planning a kidnapping"* (Larsson, 2005, p. 489). He carries out observations on his victims by collecting personal information about them. He uses this method to gain his victims' trust. This condition displays manipulation, another sign of NPD. When Blomkvist asks him the reason for his killings, Martin says *"human beings are shell made of skin keeping the cells, bloods and chemical component in place. Very few end up in history books. Most people succumb and disappear without a trace"* (Larsson, 2005, p. 494). In other words, killing people, especially women, is not a big deal to debate for Martin. Holding this concept allows him to dismiss guilty of breaking the law as well as violating someone's rights to live.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The traumatic events that Martin endured during his childhood cannot be erased from his memory; making him fails to deal with frustration, anxiety, guilt, and agony during the teen period. Sexually assaulted by his father and forced to watch him killing and torturing women are the seeds of crimes that plant and grow in Martin's lifespan. All these occurrences of child abuse affect his behavior and personality and slowly turn him into a person who sees other people merely as the construction of flesh, bones, and blood. Martin, who was once the victim of abuse, turns into the abuser, rapist, and killer at the same time. As the superego develops primarily from parental instruction and roles, as well as cultural achievement, it can be concluded that Martin's inability to feel others' suffering is a product of the inappropriate parental upbringing and the lack of his ego functions in bridging over the conflicts driven by the id and the demand of the superego.

The unconscious process of reducing anxiety and anger which derived from maltreatments his parents did is a vital aspect that builds Martin's personality. By displacing the painful feelings to the object and person who possess less power than himself, Martin enjoys the feeling of superiority. Rationalizing the occurrence of abuse in his childhood drives Martin to think that violence is a natural tactic to gain the instinctual desire while projecting the misconduct to helpless women boosts him to deny his conscience. The maladaptive defense mechanisms that Martin uses are dangerous because they become automatic responses to the stressful events which prevent him from seeing the reality and his true feelings. He performs the crimes as a state of power and becomes addicted to it because he considers it is an effective painkiller which is effectual to satisfy the demanding id generating from his trauma in childhood. All those processes and activities unconsciously develop Martin's personality and behavior and become the basic root of his psychopathic attitudes.

Through the story of Martin, it is clear to see that child abuse can damage the victims' life in a long-time period because the mental recollections stay forever in their minds, especially, when the abuse is repeated. Thus, it can be concluded that the victims of child abuse weighing the painful



recollections wherever they go, it affects everything they do. It kills hope; it darkens one's soul, and therefore, the survivor of abuse needs long-term treatment and care to heal.

As the focus of this study is the occurrence of child abuse suffered by Martin that shapes him into a serial killer and rapist, the analysis and concern only discuss a few harmful effects and consequences of child abuse. There are numerous negative impacts, both psychologically and physically, that detrimental to the development of children and can have serious consequences. Thus, the improvement and broader points of view are necessary to bring into consideration for further research. Students, researchers, and enthusiasts who are interested to explore child abuse are suggested to deeply look at the issue by using other theories or choosing another standpoint.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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