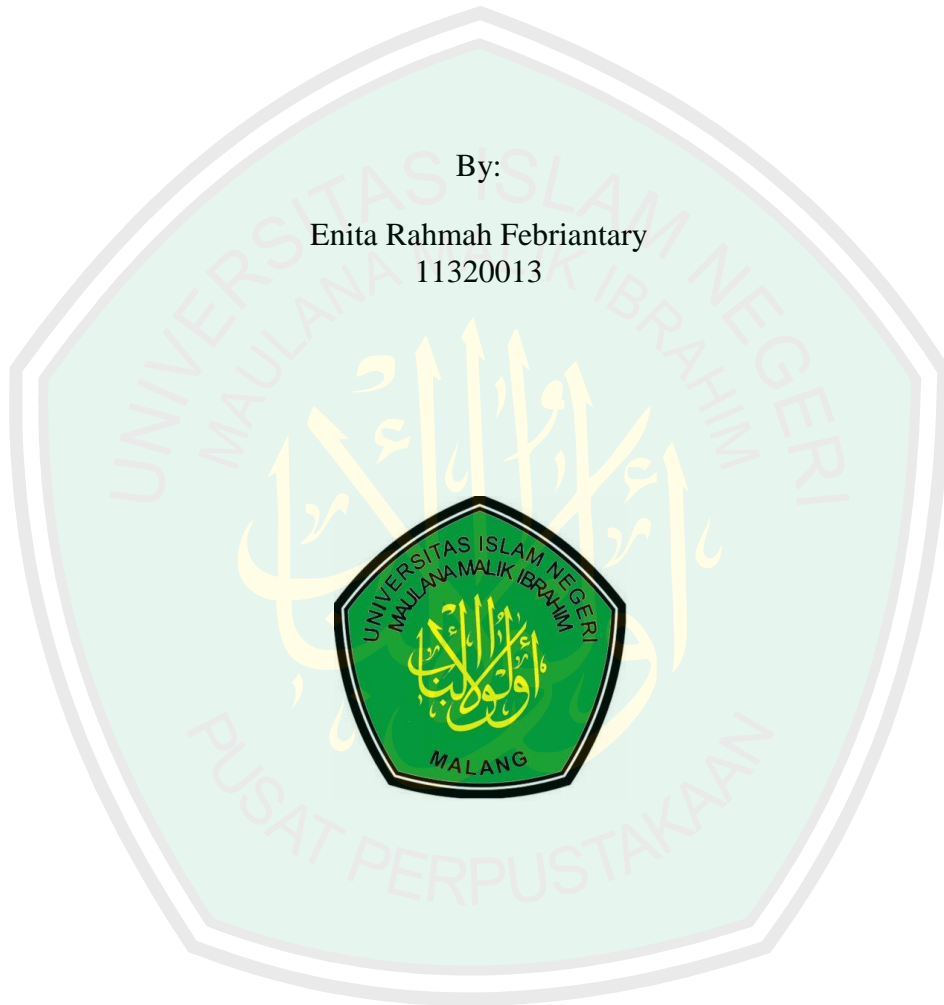


**POSTTRAUMATIC GROWTH EXPERIENCED BY THE MAIN CHARACTER IN  
STEPHEN CHBOSKY'S *THE PERKS OF BEING A WALLFLOWER***

**THESIS**

By:

Enita Rahmah Febriantary  
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**ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LETTERS DEPARTMENT**

**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES**

**MAULANA MALIK IBRAHIM**

**STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY, MALANG**

**2015**

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STEPHEN CHBOSKY'S *THE PERKS OF BEING A WALLFLOWER***

**THESIS**

Presented to

Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University, Malang  
in partial fulfillment of the requirementst for the degree of *Sarjana Sastra (S. S.)*

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**2015**

## APPROVAL SHEET

This is to certify that Enita Rahmah Febriantary's thesis entitled "Posttraumatic Growth Experienced by the Main Character in Stephen Chbosky's *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*" has been approved by the thesis advisor for further approval by the Board of Examiners.

Malang, June 23, 2015

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Malang, June 23, 2015

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## APPENDIX

### A. SYNOPSIS

This novel tells about a 15 years old freshman of first year senior high school, Charlie, set in Pittsburgh suburb, early 1990s. The story illustrates how Charlie struggles with his identity. His personality character is built from traumatic experience when he was child. His aunty who a person really cares about him passed away, it made him loose control by himself. In addition, the suicide tragedy of his friend when he was in junior high school, made him hard to make a friend in senior high school. However, he still tried to do it, yet in other way. He wrote some letters to anonymous friend to tell everything he feels, thinks, and faces in one day or some days. One day, he meets two seniors, Sam and Patrick. They are a step-sibling who “introduces” Charlie to a new world of drugs, love, sexuality, parties, relationship, friendship. After he met his two seniors, he able to adapt himself to his new society, in effect, he stops writing letter for his anonymous friend, then starts to be busy with his real life as a senior high school student.

### B. DATA

No.	QUOTATION	CATEGORY
-----	-----------	----------

1.	<p>“My Aunt Helen lived with the family for the last few years of her life because something very bad happened to her. Nobody would tell me what happened then even though I always wanted to know. When I was around seven, I stopped asking about it because I kept asking like kids always do and my Aunt Helen started crying very hard. That's when my dad slapped me, saying, "You're hurting your aunt Helen's feelings!" I didn't want to do that, so I stopped” (p.12).</p>	Charlie’s curiosity
2.	<p>“She wrapped herself in a coat. I handed her the car keys because I was always the one who could find them. I asked Aunt Helen where she was going. She told me that it was a secret. I kept bugging my aunt Helen, which she loved. She loved the way I would keep asking her questions. She finally shook her head, smiled, and whispered in my ear” (p.101).</p>	Charlie is humorous
3.	<p>“I told my aunt Helen all about my life. About Sam and Patrick. About their friends. About my first New Year's Eve party tomorrow. I told her about how my brother would be playing his last football game of the season on New Year's Day. I told her about my brother leaving and how my mom cried. I told her about the books I read. I told her about the song "Asleep." I told her when we all felt infinite. I told her about me getting my driver's license. How my mom drove us there. And how I drove us back. And how the policeman who ran the test didn't even look weird or have a funny name, which felt like a gyp to me” (p.103).</p>	Charlie is talkative
4.	<p>“I am writing to you because she said you listen and understand and didn't try to sleep with that person at that party even though you could have. Please don't try to figure out who she is because then you might figure out who I am, and I really don't want you to do that. I will call</p>	Charlie is an introverted boy

	people by different names or generic names because I don't want you to find me. I didn't enclose a return address for the same reason. I mean nothing bad by this. Honest” (p.8).	
5.	“I should probably go to sleep now. It's very late. I don't know why I wrote a lot of this down for you to read. The reason I wrote this letter is because I start high school tomorrow and I am really afraid of going” (p.12).	Charlie is a shy boy
6.	“"Hey, you're in my shop class!" He's a very friendly person. "I'm Charlie." I said, not too shy. "And I'm Patrick. And this is Sam." He pointed to a very pretty girl next to him. And she waved to me. "Hey, Charlie." Sam had a very nice smile. They both told me to have a seat, and they both seemed to mean it, so I took a seat” (p.27).	Charlie feels comfortable with his two seniors
7.	“It's funny, too, because boys and girls normally weren't best friends around my school. But Michael and Susan were. Kind of like my Aunt Helen and me” (p.13).	Opening to experience
8.	“I guess I forgot to mention in my last letter that it was Patrick who told me about masturbation. I guess I also forgot to tell you how often I do it now, which is a lot. I don't like to look at pictures. I just close my eyes and dream about a lady I do not know. And I try not to feel ashamed. I never think about Sam when I do it. Never. That's very important to me because I was so happy when she said "Charlie-esque" since it felt like an inside joke of sorts” (p.35).	Managing distress emotion
9.	“Bill smiled and continued asking me questions. Slowly, he got to "problems at home." And I told him about the boy who makes mix tapes hitting my sister because my sister only told me not to tell mom or dad about it, so I figured I could tell Bill. He got this very serious look on his face after I told him, and he said something to me I don't think I will forget this semester or ever. "Charlie, we accept the	Getting closer with other



	love we think we deserve." I just stood there, quiet. Bill patted my shoulder and gave me a new book to read. He told me everything was going to be okay" (p.32-33).	
10.	"I have decided that maybe I want to write when I grow up. I just don't know what I would write. I thought about maybe writing for magazines just so I could see an article that didn't say things like I mentioned before. "As -- -- wiped the honey mustard off of her lips, she spoke to me about her third husband and the healing power of crystals." But honestly, I think I would be a very bad reporter because I can't imagine sitting across the table from a politician or a movie star and asking them questions. I think I would probably just ask for their autograph for my mom or something. I would probably get fired for doing this. So, I thought about maybe writing for a newspaper instead because I could ask regular people questions, but my sister says that newspapers always lie. I do not know if this is true, so I'll just have to see when I get older" (p.53-54).	Considering to be part of social environment
11.	"With that, Sam left. She really did look sad, and I wished I could have made her feel better, but sometimes, I guess you just can't. So, I stood alone by the wall and watched the dance for a while. I would describe it to you, but I think it's the kind of thing where you have to be there or at least know the people. But then again, maybe you knew the same people when you went to your high school dances, if you know what I mean" (p.125).	Developing narrative and wisdom
12.	"It's like if I blamed my aunt Helen, I would have to blame her dad for hitting her and the friend of the family that fooled around with her when she was little. And the person that fooled around with him. And God for not stopping all this and things that are much worse. And I did do that for a while, but then I just couldn't anymore. Because it wasn't going anywhere. Because it wasn't the point" (p.227).	Forgiving
13.	"So, I guess we are who we are for a lot of reasons. And maybe we'll never know most of	Wise

	<p>them. But even if we don't have the power to choose where we come from, we can still choose where we go from there. We can still do things. And we can try to feel okay about them” (p.227-228).</p>	
14.	<p>“Tomorrow, I start my sophomore year of high school. And believe it or not, I'm really not that afraid of going. I'm not sure if I will have the time to write any more letters because I might be too busy trying to "participate." So, if this does end up being my last letter, please believe that things are good with me, and even when they're not, they will be soon enough. And I will believe the same about you” (p.230).</p>	Perseverance



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## CERTIFICATE OF THESIS AUTHORSHIP

I declare that the thesis I wrote to fulfill the requirement for the degree of *SarjanaSastra* (S1) in English Language and Letters Department, Faculty of

Humanity, Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University, Malang entitled “Posttraumatic Growth Experienced by the Main Character in Stephen Chbosky’s *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*” is my original work. It does not incorporate any materials previously written or published by another person except those indicated in quotations and bibliography. Therefore, I am the only person responsible for the thesis is any objections or claim from others.

Malang, June 23, 2015

The Researcher,

**Enita Rahmah Febriantary**

NIM. 11320013

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**Appendix**





## **MOTTO**

**DO what you LOVE**

**LOVE what you DO**

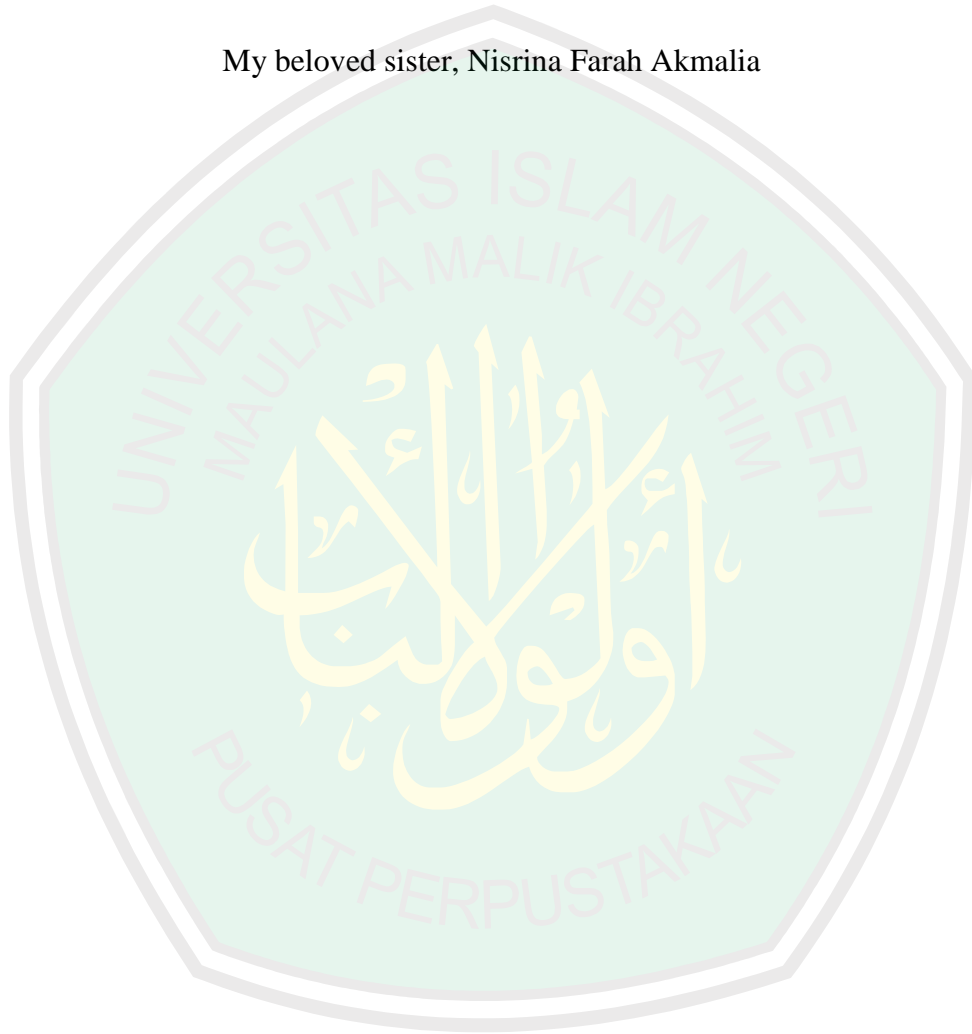


## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work for my beloved parents,

Taufik Rahman Arif Wijaya and El Nurul Indahwati

My beloved sister, Nisrina Farah Akmalia



## ABSTRAK

Febriantary, E.R. 2015. **Posttraumatic Growth Experienced by the Main Character in Stephen Chbosky's *The Perks of Being a Wallflower***. Skripsi Jurusan Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Humaniora. Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Dosen Pembimbing: Miftahul Huda, M.Pd.

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Kata kunci: Psikologi Positif, Posttraumatic Growth

Skripsi ini meneliti lebih dalam tentang posttraumatic growth yang dialami tokoh utama bernama Charlie dalam novel *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*. Posttraumatic Growth adalah perkembangan psikologi setelah mengalami pengalaman trauma. Charlie memiliki dua pengalaman traumatik yang membuat kepribadiannya berkembang.

Tujuan dari skripsi ini adalah menjelaskan pengaruh-pengaruh dari pengalaman traumatik dan pengaruh-pengaruh dari hubungan sosial setelah mengalami pengalaman trauma. Data dalam skripsi ini diambil dari novel berjudul *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* (1999) oleh Stephen Chbosky. Fokus utama dari studi ini adalah tentang hubungan antara Charlie dengan teman-temannya, gurunya, dan bibinya karena perubahan kepribadian Charlie terjadi karena hubungannya dengan mereka.

Skripsi ini menggunakan teori baru dari Analisa Psikologi yang diperkenalkan oleh Martin Seligman dan Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi pada 2001 yang disebut 'Psikologi Positif'. Lebih lanjut, skripsi ini menggunakan salah satu dari konsep dalam Psikologi Positif, yaitu Posttraumatic Growth oleh Richard G. Tedeschi dan Lawrence G. Calhoun. Konsep ini membantu dalam menerangkan bagaimana peran positif psikologi dalam menguraikan secara rinci proses seseorang untuk menjadi bahagia setelah mengalami pengalaman-pengalaman trauma.

Hasil skripsi ini menunjukkan bahwa lingkungan adalah faktor pendukung utama bagi seseorang (dalam hal ini adalah Charlie) mengubah kepribadiannya setelah mengalami pengalaman trauma. Charlie menyadari bahwa ia harus melakukan sesuatu yang benar dalam hidupnya daripada menyalahkan dirinya sendiri atas kejadian yang menimpa bibi dan temannya. Ia melanjutkan hidupnya menjadi lebih baik dengan melakukan sesuatu sesuai dengan apa yang ia suka atau berdasarkan kemampuan yang ia miliki. Ia menjadi aktif dalam kegiatan sekolah, berani membangun sebuah hubungan pertemanan dengan teman-temannya, dan mulai memikirkan pekerjaannya nanti sebagai seorang jurnalis karena kemampuan menulisnya.

## ABSTRACT

Febriantary, E.R. 2015. **Posttraumatic Growth Experienced by the Main Character in Stephen Chbosky's *The Perks of Being a Wallflower***. Thesis English Letters and Language Department, Faculty of Humanities, Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University, Malang. Supervisor: Miftahul Huda, M.Pd.

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Key words: Positive Psychology, Posttraumatic Growth

This study examines the posttraumatic growth experienced by the main character namely Charlie in the novel *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*. Posttraumatic Growth is the psychological growth after experiencing a trauma. Charlie has two traumatic experiences which develops his personality.

The aim of this study is describing the influence(s) of traumatic experiences and the influence(s) of relationship with others after having traumatic experiences. The data in this thesis are taken from a novel entitled *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* (1999) by Stephen Chbosky. The main focus in this study is about the relationship between Charlie and his friends, teacher, and aunt because the change of Charlie's personality occurs due to his relationship with them.

This study uses a new theory of Psychological Analysis introduced by Martin Seligman and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi in 2001 called 'Positive Psychology'. Moreover, this study uses one of concepts in Positive Psychology, i.e. Posttraumatic Growth by Richard G. Tedeschi and Lawrence G. Calhoun. This concept helps this study to describe the role of positive psychology in expounding the process of someone to be flourished after having traumatic experiences.

The result of this study shows that the environment is the main point to support someone (in this case is Charlie) develop his personality after experiencing a trauma. Charlie realizes that he has to do something right in his life rather than blaming himself for his aunt and friend's accident. He moves forward to make his life better by doing something based on what he likes or his skill. He is being active in the school activities, brave to build a new relationship with his friends, and starting to consider his job in the future as a journalist because of his writing skill.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents several points about the analysis. The first is background of the study explaining the reason for selecting the topic of the study and the novel to be analyzed. The second is statements of the problem mentioning three problems which become the keys of conducting the study. The third is objectives of the study, which explain the research aims. The fourth is scope and limitation expounding the problem(s) becoming the focus and its bounding. The fifth is significance of the study providing the theoretical and practical benefit of the study. The sixth is research method which is divided into four elements, i.e., research design, data sources, data collection, and data analysis. The last is definition of key terms which explain some important words used in this study.

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

*The Perks of Being a Wallflower* is a coming-age story, and the first novel by Stephen Chbosky published on February 1, 1999 by Pocket Books, America. *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* is a best-selling novel which has appeared for six times on list of 10 most-frequently-challenged books for its content on American Library Association (Beckerman, 2004). In addition, the story is dealing with the standard of teenage issues which triggers the curiosity to explore deeply about psychological teenage by understanding its problems. This novel was adapted into movie in 2012 with the same title, starring Logan Lerman as Charlie, Emma

Watson as Sam, and Ezra Miller as Patrick, and Stephen Chbosky as the director of this movie.

Before this study exposes briefly about the story, comprehending the genre of this novel might be useful to understand the story thoroughly. The coming-age story, sometimes called “literature of initiation”, describes the story where the main character is a young person who ignores about his or her surrounding or introvert, yet he or she changes the character to be more open-minded, in other words, the main character changes from innocent to be more experienced by learning something he or she previously does not know from people who already know (Thornton, n.d.). In this novel, Charlie is the main character who changes his personality because of his condition as a senior high school student. After meeting with his two seniors, he starts to actively participate in his school life.

This novel tells about a 15 year old freshman of first year senior high school, Charlie, set in Pittsburgh suburb, early 1990s. The story illustrates how Charlie struggles with his identity. His personality character is built from traumatic experience when he was a child. His aunty, the one who really cares about him, passes away. It causes him losing control. In addition, the suicide tragedy of his friend when he was in junior high school makes him hard to make a friend in senior high school. However, he still tries to do it in other way. He writes some letters to an anonymous friend to tell everything he feels, thinks, and faces in one day or some days. One day, he meets two seniors, Sam and Patrick. They are a step-sibling who “introduce” Charlie to a new world of drugs, love, sexuality, parties, relationship, friendship, and lies (Vicente, n.d.). After he meets

his two seniors, he is able to adapt himself to his new society. Consequently, he stops writing the letter to his anonymous friend and starts to be busy with his real life as a senior high school student.

In regard to the psychological phenomena in the novel, psychological analysis employed in this study. Basically, there are two kinds of field which become the concern of psychological analysis in literary works. The first is understanding the behaviors of the characters in literary work. The second is finding the psychological conflict.

This study focuses on the personality of the main character in *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, Charlie. Therefore, this study analyses the novel employing the positive psychology perspective, a quite new theory rarely used in literary analysis. This theory has a goal to understand and foster the factors allowing individuals, communities, and societies to flourish (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000 cited in Fredrickson, 2001). There are several concepts in relation to this theory. However, this study employs the concept of Post-traumatic Growth by Richard G. Tedeschi and Lawrence G. Calhoun.

There are some analyses focusing on this novel using psychoanalysis theory. The first is *Ego Defence Mechanisms of Charlie as the Main Character in Chbosky's The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Raden Ulfa Dzikriya (2014). This analysis examines the ego defense mechanisms of the main character, Charlie. The second analysis is *The Perks of Being a Wallflower Essay* by Kassandra Vicente. This mini essay explains the psychological aspect of the characters as

well. Then third is *Through the Eyes of Freud: A Psychoanalytic Reading of The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Teodoro Jose Bruno and Angelique Frances Gaudiel (2012). This study uses Psychoanalysis theory by Sigmund Freud in seeking the outline how the main character manifests, and fits in, Freudian mould. The point which makes this research is different with three analysis above is the story makes the researcher assumes that traumatic experience not only brings someone to be lack in the society, but also changes someone to be different in positive way. Moreover, this research is following the rule of Posttraumatic Growth concepts based on *Posttraumatic Growth: Conceptual Foundations and Empirical Evidence* by Richard G. Tedeschi and Lawrence G. Calhoun (2004). For developing Posttraumatic Growth concepts, those psychologists took the result based on review on responses to highly stressful events and from interviews with persons who experienced spousal loss, physical disabilities, and other life crises.

## **1.2 Statements of the Problem**

With regard to the previous explanation, the problems of the study are formulated as follows. They are:

1. What is Charlie's personality before experiencing a trauma as revealed in *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*?
2. How does Charlie develop his personality after the traumatic experience?
3. How is the new personality of Charlie constructed following the Posttraumatic Growth in *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*?



### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

For exploring the case, this study uses a new theory, Positive Psychology. This theory has a goal to analyze how Charlie's personality before experiencing a trauma is, to analyze how Charlie changes his personality after experiencing a trauma, and to analyze what Charlie's new personality based on Posttraumatic Growth concepts.

### **1.4 Scope and Limitation**

This study focuses only on the changing process of Charlie's character. The novel has four parts telling Charlie's life. However, this study solely focuses on Charlie's relationship with his Aunt Helen, friends, and his teacher. This study does not focus on Charlie's relationship with his family, because the change of his personality occurs due to his relationship with his Aunt Helen, friends, and teacher.

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This study uses psychological concept for analyzing the data. By identifying the main character's personality development process, this study can find out the influence(s) of traumatic experiences and the influence(s) of relationship with others after having traumatic experiences.

Moreover, this study has both practical and theoretical goal. The practical goal is this study expected to give a chance to another analysis uses another theory. Then, it will bring the another result also. Finally, the theoretical goal of

this study is this study expected to give an explanation how a literary work is analyzed by psychological concept.

## **1.6 Research Method**

### **1.6.1 Research Design**

This study uses a new theory of Psychological Analysis, introduced by Martin Seligman and Mihaly Csikzentmihalyi in 2001 called 'Positive Psychology'. This theory is chosen because the novel shows the change of identity by the main character, which later makes him realize what he should do in his life.

In addition, the theory helps this study to point out what actually happens to the main character in the novel by using one of concepts in Positive Psychology, i.e. Posttraumatic Growth by Richard G. Tedeschi and Lawrence G. Calhoun. This theory helps this study to explain the role of positive psychology in expounding the process of someone to be flourished after having traumatic experiences.

Based on Seligman and Csikzentmihalyi (2000), there are three levels in Positive Psychology; subjective, individual, and group level. The main character in this novel is examined in terms of his reasons and his process on deviating his identity. The subjective level is about his subjective experience, such as well-being and satisfaction (past); flow, joy, the sensual pleasures, and happiness (present); and constructive cognitions about the future—optimism, hope, and faith. The individual level is about personal traits—the capacity for love and vocation, courage, interpersonal skill, aesthetic sensibility, perseverance,

forgiveness, originality, future mindedness, high talent, and wisdom. The group level is about the civic virtues and the institutions that move individuals toward better citizenship: responsibility, nurturance, altruism, civility, moderation, tolerance, and work ethic.

For more deeper explanation, this study examines the change of the main character in novel *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by following the process of PTG according the research by Tedeschi and Calhoun (2004). Those psychologists divide the process into five parts; they are Individual Characteristic, Managing Distress Emotions, Self-disclosure, Cognitive Processing of Traumatic Event or Rumination, and Wisdom and Narrative Development. Additionally, there are domains of Posttraumatic Growth; greater appreciation of life and changed of sense priorities, warmer, more intimate relationships with others, a greater sense of personal strength, recognition of new possibilities or paths for one's life, and spiritual development.

#### **1.6.2 Data Sources**

The data in this thesis are taken from a novel entitled *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* (1999) by Stephen Chbosky. Published by POCKET BOOKS, Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020. Moreover, the data is taken from all of the chapter.

#### **1.6.3 Data Collection**

There are some steps for collecting the data. They are reading the whole novel for understanding the story. After that, reading thoroughly the parts when

Charlie is living with Aunt Helen, his friends, and his teacher. For the changes of the main character's identity are mostly shown in those pages.

#### **1.6.4 Data Analysis**

After getting the data, the phenomenon of the changes of the main character's identity caused by the traumatic experience is analyzed using Positive Psychology perspective. Respectively, it is explored deeply by using Posttraumatic Growth theory. Based on Tedeschi and Calhoun (2004), there are five process of Posttraumatic Growth. By analyzing the data in the novel, then this study explains about each process of growth.

#### **1.7 Definition of Key Terms**

1. Positive Psychology: the theory which looks the bad phenomenon by the positive side.
2. Posttraumatic Growth: the changing process of personality of someone after experiencing a trauma.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter provides explanations about the theory in the study. It starts with explanation about Literature and Psychology. Then, Psychological analysis. Next part of this chapter explains deeply about Positive Psychology, Post-traumatic Growth, and the detail points of those theories.

#### 2.1 Literature and Psychology

Klarer (1999) defines literature as derivative of the Latin word “litteratura” is derived from “littera” (letter), which is the smallest element of alphabetical writing. The word text is related to “textile” and can be translated as “fabric”: just as single threads form a fabric, so words and sentences form a meaningful and coherent text.

Then, according Crow and Alice (as cited in Zuhairini, 2010), the term “psychology” is derived from two Greek words; they are *psyche*, which means soul, and *ology*, which means study of. The definition of psychology is the study about the process of behaviour and mental (Siswanto as cited in Zuhairini, 2010). Psychological study on literary works might take the writer as an individual, psychological study of the creative process, psychological study of work, or psychological study of the reader (Welleck & Warren, 1993).

In literary works—novel, drama, poetry, short story, etc—the characters and the problems are the reflection of what happens in the real life. In other

words, literary works are the mirror of the real life. The researchers who analyse the literary works cannot do their research without examining the character in the works itself (Minderop, 2010).

Moreover, when researchers try to find the reason why one character or more in the literary works do something, actually they analyse the psychology aspect of the story. Therefore, understanding about psychology aspect in literary work analysis is the important thing for the researchers.

There are two basic relations between literature and psychology (Minderop, 2010). The first relation is literature and psychology talk about human in individual aspect and social aspect. The second relation is literature and psychology use the experience of human as the study in own field.

## **2.2 Psychological Analysis**

Literary works represent human behaviour in social life. Exploring characteristics of human being is carried out by using Psychological Analysis. There are three areas of Psychological Analysis in literary works; they are the condition of the author, the literary work itself, and the readers (Endraswara, 2003).

According to Endraswara (2003), the first area is called expressive approach. In this area, the point is the psychological condition of the author. This factor will affect the literary work itself because the author will write what he or she feels or what happens in his or her life. For example, if the author has experience about car accident then he or she is afraid of driving a car, then it is a

big possibility that the author will write a literary work about the car accident or having a trauma about driving a car.

The second area is the literary work itself or textual approach (Endraswara, 2003). In this area, the analysis is not about the author. The analysis does not have connection with the psychological condition of the author. Yet it is purely about the character and characterization in the literary work.

The third area is the readers known as receptive-pragmatic approach (Endraswara, 2003). In this area, the analysis will focus on the psychological condition of the readers. Because it influences the impression that the readers feel after reading the literary works. The impression probably will be different between one reader with others, because each reader has their own psychological condition. Yet, the impression probably will be the same for some readers who have almost the same psychological condition.

Psychological analysis has some theories. Such as Classical Psychoanalysis by Sigmund Freud, which discusses id, ego and superego, and Hierarchy of Needs by Abraham Maslow, which discusses the physiological needs, safety needs, love needs, self-esteem needs, and self-actualization needs (Alwisol, 2009). This study uses a new theory of Psychological Analysis, introduced by Martin Seligman and Mihaly Csikzentmihalyi in 2001 called 'Positive Psychology'.

### 2.3 Positive Psychology

Positive Psychology is the new theory in Psychological Analysis.

Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi are the psychologists who found this theory in 2000. The aim of this theory is building the new concept of worst things in life to best things (Seligman, 2000). According to Seligman, the positive experience was an almost completely unexplored field. Positive Psychology is about the strengths rather than the weaknesses. It is about:

- *A pleasant life*: seeking success and positive emotions of past, present and future.
- *A good life*: building major life themes such as in work, love, and family living.
- *A meaningful life*: serving a greater cause or belief beyond our immediate needs.

Positive Psychology has three pillars. They are:

1. The study of positive emotion;
2. The study of positive traits, which means not only the strengths and virtues, but also the abilities, such as intelligence and athleticism; and
3. The study of positive institutions, such as democracy, strong families, and free inquiry (Seligman, n.d.). From those pillars, Positive Psychology divides three levels for analyzing the case; they are subjective, individual, and group levels (Seligman, 2000).



### **2.3.1 Three levels in Positive Psychology**

There are three levels in Positive Psychology. The first is Subjective level. This level is talking about positive subjective experiences, such as well-being and satisfaction (past); flow, joy, the sensual pleasures, and happiness (present); and constructive cognitions about the future—optimism, hope, and faith. The second is Individual level. At this level, the analysis will be focused on personal traits—the capacity for love and vocation, courage, interpersonal skill, aesthetic sensibility, perseverance, forgiveness, originality, future mindedness, high talent, and wisdom. And the third is Group level. This last level is about the civic virtues and the institutions that move individuals toward better citizenship: responsibility, nurturance, altruism, civility, moderation, tolerance, and work ethic.

### **2.4 Posttraumatic Growth Concept**

Tedeschi and Calhoun emphasized that stressful experience can bring someone to the posttraumatic growth event in life, in other words it is called positive psychological change experienced as a result of the struggle in challenging circumstance (as cited in Wortman, n.d.). This theory focuses on positive changes after having stressful, traumatic, and loss experienced.

However, Tedeschi and Calhoun emphasized that this theory does not describe that traumatic experienced condition can change easily, yet it describes that the growth has some process. PTG (Posttraumatic growth) explains another

phenomenon of traumatic events in life. Every person ever has those experiences in his or her life, yet not every of them realizes that the result of their struggle to survive in the condition can bring them to the positive events. Then, Posttraumatic growth describes the development of individuals' psych before and after having traumatic experience, and how their effort to survive to the better live.

In Positive Psychology, there are four concepts which are similar to Posttraumatic growth. The four concepts are *resilience*, *hardiness*, *optimism*, and *sense of coherence*. Tedeschi and Caloun explained about the distinctions between those four concepts with Posttraumatic growth as follows:

- *Resilience* is about the ability of individuals to move on after hardship and adversity in their life, or continue their life with better way after having stressful experience.
- *Hardiness* is a condition making the individuals curious and active. They believe that they can influence the events in their life and expect to challenges of life that can develop their life better. It is more about their commitment to responds their events in life in a good way.
- *Optimism* is involved with the belief of individuals that they can get or will in positive position in their events of life although it is not as easy as they think.
- *Sense of coherence* describes the individuals who are in the best position to manage their stress or adversity condition because they can understand or can read how the events happen and what they should do for managing those events in better way.

From those explanations, the researcher finds similarities between *resilience, hardiness, optimism, sense of coherence*, and posttraumatic growth. The concepts explain about the ability of person to manage their stress or adversity in life. In contrast, posttraumatic growth is more about the resistance of individuals against their stress. They admit not to be damaged because of their stress. Then, they change their action or adapt themselves into the condition in order to find the way being “the new person” or transforming into the better person. In other words, posttraumatic growth is the process of individuals finding their new way of their lives after having traumatic experienced, and trauma is the crucial topic in posttraumatic growth (Tedeschi&Calhoun, 2004).

In addition, posttraumatic growth is inapplicable to young children because it is a process of change which needs more awareness and takes a long time for transforming to be “the new person” after having traumatic experience. Therefore this concept is more applicable to the adolescent or adults than to young children (Tedeschi&Calhoun, 2004). Also, the younger people will experience more changes or growth in their life than the older people do. Tedeschi and Calhoun (2004) explained it occurs because the younger people are more open minded to the new events in life, or more flexible to transforming to other character in their life for making their life. In contrast, the older people assumes that they have already knew about life then go on with their lives as what they got from their life’s lesson.

### **2.4.1 Domains of Posttraumatic Growth**

Tedeschi and Calhoun (2004) developed PTGI (Posttraumatic Growth Inventory) in 1996 for measuring five domains of growth to allow quantification of the experience of growth. Those psychologists developed PTGI based on review on responses to highly stressful events and from interviews with persons who experienced spousal loss, physical disabilities, and other life crises.

According to the result of the analysis, Tedeschi and Calhoun conclude that there are five domains of posttraumatic growth.

#### **1. Greater appreciation of life and changes of sense priorities**

The appreciation in life influences the change of sense priorities for the individuals who struggle with their difficulties in life. It might occur even to those who have struggled. Because they will consider what they did was good for others. It will make them change their priorities to increase what they do to get more appreciation and start to recognize that what they do formerly is granted;

#### **2. Warmer, more intimate relationships with others**

This domain was developed by study of posttraumatic growth in bereaved parents in 2000. One of bereaved parents said when her dad died people just came out of the woodwork, after that event now she is more careful with the relationship with others. Moreover, she cherishes her husband more. The change or personality in this domain is about caring of others. It occurs along with the loss or disappearance of relationship with someone, then makes individuals consider the importance of relationship with others;

### **3. A greater sense of personal strength**

This domain is also based on the study of posttraumatic growth in bereaved parents. Another bereaved parent said that after her parents died, she able to handle everything. However, this personal strength has a combination between an increased sense of strength and paradox meaning with an increased sense of being vulnerable. It occurs because the individuals who is growing in this domain will struggle with their responsibilities, not only the smallest but also the biggest one;

### **4. Recognition of new possibilities or paths for one's life**

Another participant tells that personal loss made her struggle to be an oncology nurse, where she could try provide care and comfort the others with her treatment. This phenomenon is called as being “a new person” with “new possibilities” for others’ life;

### **5. Spiritual development**

Post-traumatic growth can occur in spiritual aspect too. In addition for someone who is religious. He or she will struggle in their life, then get what they want, and recognize that he or she cannot do anything without God’s help. Another participant of the interview said that he considers what he does formerly because of God, although it was not good for him. Yet, he tried to see another point that there is always God who helps him.

### **2.4.2 Posttraumatic Growth Process**

This study examines the change of the main character in the novel *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by following the process of PTG as proposed by Tedeschi and Calhoun (2004). They divided the process into five stages:

#### **1. Opening to experience**

In this part, there are two basic personality qualities which might happened to individuals after having traumatic experience. Those are extraversion and openness to experience. These actions help the survivors start to try new things which they never do before because they still afraid of doing things after experiencing a trauma.

#### **2. Managing Distress Emotion**

A person who has struggled in his or her life must find ways to manage the emotion. Managing distress emotion assist the person to lead from previous goals and assumptions to the clear and new goals. However, this process might be taken long time for many people. They are in stuck point after trying to be strong again. They, who survive traumatic events, report that this occurs because managing distress emotion is the process which is involves “grief-work” (Tedeschi&Calhoun, 2004). Yet, if the person keeps trying to manage his or her distress emotion although this process takes long time, it will assist him or her to be in maximum degree of posttraumatic growth. The person eventually will be able to take the belief back to his or herself.

### **3. Getting closer to others**

In this process, “support by others” is the crucial factor for them who have struggled in traumatic events. The way to get the support is telling the traumatic events to others. The important of telling these stories to those who have “been there” is developing the survivor to reconstruct their belief and strength to the next life events. In bereaved parent support groups, the member often talks that the group is their family because this “new society” is more open to accept them with their problems or traumatic experiences before.

### **4. Considering to be part of social environment**

According to Tedeschi and Calhoun (2004), in concept of posttraumatic growth lies additional complication that people who report growth must disengage, or give up, the previous goals and assumptions, yet at the same time they have to persist in building the new goals and assumptions.

The cognitive process occurs when the individuals disengage or give up about their unattainable goals, or there is no chance in the worldview to accomodate, then the trauma or distress experience will be able to lead them move forward towards the new goals which they can reach it. This process has the relation with self-disclosure in supportive social environment. In short, the key of cognitive process is the discouragement of the survivors itself. The survivor might be told about their distress experience by direct social contact or through write a personal journal.

## 5. Developing narrative and wisdom

The changes of the individual who have struggled in their traumatic events are ongoing, and this condition makes them able to develop the general wisdom of life and the general framework. They who have faced major challenges in their lives will also be able to develop the ability to balance reflection and action, more openly and satisfactorily address the fundamental questions of human existence.

In addition, individuals who have experienced the crises in their lives are often conceptualized about “after-before” events in their lives, and this condition is assisting them to be more careful not only about themselves but also about the others.

### 2.5 Previous Studies

There are three previous studies discussing about Stephen Chbosky's *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, they are *Ego Defence Mechanisms of Charlie as the Main Character in Chbosky's The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Raden Ulfa Dzikriya (2014), *The Perks of Being a Wallflower Essay* by Kassandra Vicente (n.d.), and *Through the Eyes of Freud: A Psychoanalytic Reading of The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Teodoro Jose Bruno and Angelique Frances Gaudiel (2012).

Thesis by Dzikriya (2014) analyzes the ego defence mechanisms of the main character, Charlie. Dzikriya uses library research method and approach for finding references dealing with the object of analysis. Then, there are two approaches in the thesis; structure and psychological approaches. The researcher uses the structure approach for analysing the structural elements of novel, such as



character, steering, and conflict. While the psychological approach is used for analysing the ego defence mechanism of Charlie after having traumatic experienced when he was a child. The main character was sexually molested by his own Aunt.

The result of the thesis shows that the main character in *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, Charlie, is a loner, sentimental, open to experience, honest, aggressive, observant, and optimistic. He also experiences the external conflict with some people he knows, such as Sam, Mary Elizabeth, his sister, Aunt Helen, Patrick, and Brad. Finally, Charlie becomes the “new person” because his ego defence mechanism helps him to ease his anxiety. In addition, he accepts his past, participates more in real life, falls in love, cherishes his friends, and moves on with his life.

The second previous study is from Vicente (n.d.), *The Perks of Being a Wallflower Essay*. Although this is only an essay, Vicente explained about the psychological aspect of the characters very well. In the essay, Charlie is portrayed as an innocent and anti-social freshman. Then, Sam and Patrick—his new senior friends—expose him to new world which Charlie did not know before. Sam and Patrick asked Charlie to some parties, let him try the drugs, make him know about sexual relationship, bring him to the friendship, and open his experience about love and lies. Finally, the role of his seniors made Charlie realizes that to be different is okay. After his seniors graduate from senior high school, Charlie becomes stronger and he is able to face his life with new situation.

The last study on *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* was admitted by Teodoro Jose Bruno and Angelique Frances Gaudiel, *Through the Eyes of Freud: A Psychoanalytic Reading of The Perks of Being a Wallflower*. This research used Psychoanalysis theory by Sigmund Freud in seeking the outline of how the main character manifested, and fits in, Freudian mould. The death of Charlie's aunt, Helen, influences Charlie's personality because Aunt Helen resembles the motherly figure for Charlie. In Psychoanalysis, the phallic stage which a child desires the opposite sex parent while the same sex parent tempers it is crucial. The loss of this mother figure, makes Charlie's id develop to be a pleasure-seeking, pessimistic, and an impulsive person. Yet, the ego defence mechanism helps him whenever he is threatened.

Based on those previous studies, the researcher concludes that the novel *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* has been widely analyzed using Psychoanalysis. However, this study analyzes the main character uses Positive Psychology in Posttraumatic Growth concept. This concept elaborates how the changing process of Charlie's personality after experiencing a trauma.

## CHAPTER III

### ANALYSIS

This chapter provides some explanations about Charlie's personality. It starts when Charlie did not have traumatic experiences, then after Charlie has traumatic experiences (regarding Charlie's personality after having traumatic experiences, the warm condition with his two seniors, and the change process of Charlie's personality because of the supportive condition), and finally when Charlie changes his personality. Those will be explored by using Posttraumatic Growth Concept from Richard G, Tedeschi and Lawrence G. Calhoun.

#### 3.1 Charlie's Personalities Before Experiencing a Trauma

The data in *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, show that Charlie is an introverted, whine, and shy boy. However, those personalities are shaped after he undergoes the traumatic experiences. This part will specifically elaborate the personality of Charlie before it shifts.

First, Charlie is a boy who has a high curiosity. He keeps asking Aunt Helen questions. Nevertheless, if the questions can hurt his aunt, he prefers to stop asking about that.

"My Aunt Helen lived with the family for the last few years of her life because something very bad happened to her. Nobody would tell me what happened then even though I always wanted to know. When I was around seven, I stopped asking about it because I kept asking like kids always do and my Aunt Helen started crying very hard. That's when my dad slapped me, saying, "You're hurting your aunt Helen's feelings!"

I didn't want to do that, so I stopped” (p.12).

Based on the quote above, there are two personalities of Charlie shown, i.e. that he is an active and caring boy. Even though Charlie keeps asking his aunt and it causes her aunt crying, it was the way how Charlie shows his affection toward his aunt. Moreover, when his dad says that Charlie's questions makes his aunt sad, Charlie chooses to stop asking. Those are Charlie's way to show that actually he is a caring boy.

The third personality of Charlie is that he is humorous. When Charlie is with Aunt Helen, he likes to joke around. He is the one who always finds the key of Aunt Helen's car.

“She wrapped herself in a coat. I handed her the car keys because I was always the one who could find them. I asked Aunt Helen where she was going. She told me that it was a secret. I kept bugging my aunt Helen, which she loved. She loved the way I would keep asking her questions. She finally shook her head, smiled, and whispered in my ear” (p.101).

From the quotation above, Charlie is described as a kid who keeps bugging his Aunt Helen. Yet, that is not in negative purpose, for it is intended to be a joke. It is proven from his Aunt Helen who is never mad at him because of that bugging. Instead, Aunt Helen loves the way Charlie keeps bugging her.

The other personality of Charlie before experiencing a trauma is being talkative. The description below is evident how Charlie tells his experiences when he sees Aunt Helen at the grave as a proof if Aunt Helen still alive, Charlie would

not write any letter to an anonymous friend because he can share countless things to Aunt Helen.

“I told my aunt Helen all about my life. About Sam and Patrick. About their friends. About my first New Year's Eve party tomorrow. I told her about how my brother would be playing his last football game of the season on New Year's Day. I told her about my brother leaving and how my mom cried. I told her about the books I read. I told her about the song "Asleep." I told her when we all felt infinite. I told her about me getting my driver's license. How my mom drove us there. And how I drove us back. And how the policeman who ran the test didn't even look weird or have a funny name, which felt like a gyp to me” (p.103).

The quotation indicates that Charlie is actually easy to communicate with others, especially with her aunt. He tells everything about his experience in his school, his friends, his brother, his mother, and his driving experience. As mentioned before that it has a big possibility if Aunt Helen is still alive, Charlie will not write any letter to an anonymous friend. The way Charlie writes or tells everything in his letter describes that actually he is not really an introvert boy.

### **3.2 The Development of Charlie's Personalities due to the Traumatic Experiences**

#### **3.2.1 Charlie's Personalities Change**

The story of the novel begins after Charlie's traumatic experiences. At the beginning of the story, Charlie is described as an introverted boy.

“I am writing to you because she said you listen and understand and didn't try to sleep with that person at that party even though you could have. Please don't try to figure out who she is because then you might figure out who I am, and I really don't want you to do that. I will call people by different names or generic names because I don't want you to find me. I didn't enclose a return

address for the same reason. I mean nothing bad by this. Honest” (p.8).

The sentence “Please don't try to figure out who she is because then you might figure out who I am, and I really don't want you to do that” emphasizes that Charlie is an introvert. Based on the first paragraph on Charlie’s letter, it shows that Charlie does not want “the friend” will know or meet him in the real life although he wants “the friend” listen to his story. Moreover, the overall of this novel is about the letters which Charlie writes for the anonymous friend and never tells about it to other people. This is a prove that Charlie actually is an introvert. In addition, that quote shows that Charlie does not want to be known by “the friend”.

In addition, Charlie thinks that being an active student is not necessary. Bill, his English teacher, tries to give him a suggestion that Charlie needs to participate in school activities and be active.

“Do you always think this much, Charlie?”  
“Is that bad?” I just wanted someone to tell me the truth.  
“Not necessarily. It's just that sometimes people use thought to not participate in life.”  
“Is that bad?”  
“Yes.”  
“I think I participate, though. Don't you think I am?”  
“Well, are you dancing at these dances?”  
“I'm not a very good dancer.”  
“Are you going on dates?”  
“Well, I don't have a car, and even if I did, I can't drive because I'm fifteen, and anyway, I haven't met a girl I like except for Sam, but I am too young for her, and she would always have to drive, which I don't think is fair”” (p.32).

That is the conversation between Charlie and his English teacher, Bill. He tries to figure out what actually Charlie always thinks about. Bill finally knows

that Charlie does not really participate in his society. Unfortunately, Charlie does not realize that his reluctance to socialize with other people like what Bill means is actually a bad act as a person. Again, the quote shows that Charlie simply wants to be alone. In other words, Charlie has a problem in building a relationship with others.

The second personality of Charlie found in the novel is being whine. The passage on page 32 above, describes how hard Charlie cries because of Michael's suicide case. Charlie actually wants to say like what he writes. However, he cannot manage his emotion. He cries a lot and cannot talk clearly in the office at his school.

“Well, I think that Michael was a nice guy and I don't understand why he did it. As much as I feel sad, I think that not knowing is what really bothers me.”  
I just reread that and it doesn't sound like how I talk.  
Especially in that office because I was crying still. I never did stop crying”(p.10).

“Then, I started screaming at the guidance counselor that Michael could have talked to me. And I started crying even harder. He tried to calm me down by saying that he meant an adult like a teacher or a guidance counselor. But it didn't work and eventually my brother came by the middle school in his Camaro to pick me up” (p.10).

Michael's suicide is one of the second traumatic experience which Charlie undergoes. This case causes the difficulty for him to make a friend. Michael is his close friend when he was in junior high school, but he does not know if Michael had problems at home. That is why Charlie suffers a lot from losing Michael. This



situation shows that Charlie hopes he can help Michael if he has problems at home. Therefore, the suicide accident made him blame himself indirectly.

The next data shows that Charlie is a shy boy. This is one of Charlie's personality after having the traumatic experiences.

"I should probably go to sleep now. It's very late. I don't know why I wrote a lot of this down for you to read. The reason I wrote this letter is because I start high school tomorrow and I am really afraid of going" (p.12).

The quote above describes that Charlie is a shy boy. This condition occurs because Charlie is still afraid of friendship after Michael's suicide. Although he wants to have a friend whom he can talk a lot with, Charlie does not know how to make a good relationship with his friends in senior high school. In addition, the introverted personality makes Charlie believe that he will be fine even though he is alone. If "the friend", the one Charlie "correspond" with, does exist, he will be able to talk about his worry to start the senior high school life.

"I feel very ashamed. I went to the high school football game the other day, and I don't know exactly why. In middle school, Michael and I would go to the games sometimes even though neither of us were popular enough to go" (p.26).

"But this time, I went alone because Michael is gone, and Susan hangs around different boys now, and Bridget is still crazy, and Carl's mom sent him to a Catholic school, and Dave with the awkward glasses moved away" (p.26).

At those quotes, Charlie starts with a simple sentence that he is really shy because he goes to the football game alone. He also mentions when he was in junior high school he went to the football game with Michael. Michael is the close friend of Charlie that they usually spend the time together. For that reason, Charlie did not feel shy at all because he was not alone although for going to



watch the game. However, by the time he writes that letter, Michael is already gone, and he does not have any friends to accompany him to watch the football game.

However, when Charlie is a senior high school student, he tries to go to the football game, although he is very shy. At the time he watches the game, he meets his two seniors, one of whom yells loudly to the one of the football game players.

““Can'mon, Brad!" That's the name of our quarterback. Now, normally I am very shy, but Nothing seemed like the kind of guy you could just walk up to at a football game even though you were three years younger and not popular” (p.26).

This quote shows that Charlie is really in an awkward situation just by looking a senior named “Nothing” yelling out to the one of football players from his bleacher. Charlie thinks how can someone—in this case is Nothing—yells confidently like Nothing does. Moreover, Charlie thinks that Nothing is the nice person. He thinks that he could make a friend with him and will be able talk or doing other activity although Charlie is not a popular student.

### **3.2.2 The Posttraumatic Growth Process of Charlie's Personalities**

At the first time, Charlie is afraid of going to his senior high school, yet when he comes to the football game he meets with two seniors, Patrick and Sam.

““Can'mon, Brad!" That's the name of our quarterback. Now, normally I am very shy, but Nothing seemed like the kind of guy you could just walk up to at a football game even though you were three years younger and not popular” (p.26).

At the time, Charlie thinks that he can talk to Patrick by seeing him expressively yelling to the Brad, one of the football players from the bleacher. Therefore, he starts to have a conversation with those seniors.

““Hey, you're in my shop class!" He's a very friendly person.  
"I'm Charlie." I said, not too shy.  
"And I'm Patrick. And this is Sam." He pointed to a very  
pretty girl next to him. And she waved to me.  
"Hey, Charlie." Sam had a very nice smile.  
They both told me to have a seat, and they both seemed to  
mean it, so I took a seat” (p.27).

The quote shows that the way of those seniors look at Charlie at the first time makes Charlie feel comfortable. This event is the first sense of warm environment which Charlie feels at his school. From this data, it shows that Charlie keenly feels about the importance of relationship with others after having traumatic experiences.

Besides starting to make friends, Charlie falls in love with Sam. Even, Charlie has dreamt of Sam at the night before.

“Sam then gave me a hug, and it was strange because my family doesn't hug a lot except my Aunt Helen. But after a few moments, I could smell Sam's perfume, and I could feel her body against me. And I stepped back” (p.30).

At the quote above, Charlie compares between Sam's hug and Aunt Helen's. It makes him realizes that there is someone who will hug him like Aunt Helen did.

Charlie starts to consider the importance of relationship with others. Moreover, warmer situation which is described at the quote below is about the act of Sam. Charlie tells her that he dreamt of her the night before. Charlie feels that it is bad because he dreamt of Sam and him wearing no clothes.

“I told Sam that I dreamt that she and I were naked on the sofa, and I started crying because I felt bad, and do you know what she did? She laughed. Not a mean laugh, either. A really nice, warm laugh. She said that she thought I was being cute. And she said it was okay that I had a dream about her. And I stopped crying” (p.29).

The warm situation which Charlie feels when Sam smiles makes him stop crying. It means that Charlie feels comfortable with what Sam does, and the intimate relationship after Aunt Helen's death is found again by this situation. It occurs because Sam does not angry or mad at Charlie although she is described naked at Charlie's dream. Sam even tries to explain that it is not bad at all. She says it is cute, and it is not Charlie's fault for dreaming about her like that. She asks him if he likes her indirectly by asking a question about her physical appearance. From this circumstance Sam knows that Charlie likes her, yet Sam does not have the same feeling like Charlie feels towards her. However, Sam tries to understand Charlie's feeling by not showing her discomfort. Sam gives Charlie a question which means that they will not be together because of their different age.

The following action of Sam feels warmer. Sam and Charlie walk together to meet his stepbrother, Patrick. This situation indicates that Sam thinks it will be more comfortable if Charlie talks to Patrick about what happened to him and herself. In short, it is because both of them—Charlie and Patrick—are boys. Therefore, it will be easy if Patrick gives some advices to Charlie.

"She just looked at me and shook her head. Then, she put her arm around my shoulder and walked me down the hallway. We met Patrick outside because they didn't like to go to class sometimes. They preferred to smoke.

"Charlie has a Charlie-esque crush on me, Patrick."

"He does, huh?"

"I'm trying not to," I offered, which just made them laugh.

Patrick then asked Sam to leave, which she did, and he explained some things to me, so I would know how to be around other girls and not waste my time thinking about Sam that way" (p.30).

The above quotation describes when Sam tells Patrick that Charlie has crush on her while Charlie answers that he tries not to. Patrick and Sam just laugh, not a mean laugh. It is more like laugh because it is cute moment like what Sam said before to Charlie. This not-a-mean laugh is also proven by Patrick's explanations to Charlie, not leave Charlie alone or says something bad about Charlie's feeling. It makes Charlie understand how to act toward girls and not to waste time thinking about Sam like he was.

The warm condition between Charlie and Sam continues in many activities they do together. One of the activities is the homecoming dance party. Not only in love point, but also in something really new for Charlie, drugs, Sam shows her warm act to Charlie. At the party, Charlie eats a brownie cake containing drug. Yet, Charlie does not know about it. Bob is the one who gives Charlie the brownie intentionally.

"How do you feel, Charlie?"

"Light."

"You see?" Bob actually looked a little nervous, which I was later told was paranoia.

Sam sat down next to me and held my hand, which felt cool.

"Are you seeing anything, Charlie?"

"Light."

"Does it feel good?"

"Uh-huh."

"Are you thirsty?"

"Uh-huh."

"What would you like to drink?"

"A milkshake."

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

"He's stoned."

"Are you hungry, Charlie?"

"Uh-huh."

"What would you like to eat?"

"A milkshake."

I don't think they would have laughed any harder even if what

I said was at all funny. Then, Sam took my hand and stood me up on the dizzy floor.  
"Can't mon. We'll get you a milkshake."  
As we were leaving, Sam turned to Bob.  
"I still think you're an asshole." (p.45).

At the party Charlie consumes drugs that he does not know before. What Charlie knows is he is eating a brownie cake causes him feeling like fly that he cannot look at his surrounding clearly. Sam knows that and gets angry at Bob. She tries to ask an explanation from Bob, a boy who gives Charlie a brownie cake which containing drug. Although everyone in the room laughs at Charlie, Sam keeps silent and sits down next to Charlie. She tries to comfort Charlie by holding his hands. Sam helps Charlie to get milkshake like what he wants when getting drunk. Sam laughs at Charlie, and it makes Charlie feels more comfortable with her.

From those warm situations, Charlie starts to enter to the new condition in which his personality slowly shifts. These are parts of the change:

### **1. Opening to experience**

In Charlie's case, the process begins when at the first time Charlie feels that Patrick is a nice person whom he can talk with although he is an unpopular student. Charlie tries to avoid his shyness of going to the football game, but when he meets Patrick and Sam, he considers that he can build a good friendship with those seniors.

With Patrick and Sam, Charlie enters the new environment which makes him open to experience friendship, love, and relationship. Before meeting Patrick and Sam, Charlie thinks that it is unusual for boys and girls merely have a

friendship without having a crush. Although it happened when he was in junior high school, there were Susan and Michael who have the kind of relationship. He thinks that best-friend-relationship is like his relationship with Aunt Helen since he is very close to Aunt Helen.

“It's funny, too, because boys and girls normally weren't best friends around my school. But Michael and Susan were. Kind of like my Aunt Helen and me” (p.13).

The quotation above shows that Charlie has never had a close girl friend. When he knows Michael, his close friend when he was in junior high school and another female close friend, Susan, he considers it as a weird friendship. It occurs because at the time, it is unusual for boys and girls in his school having a friendship like Michael and Susan. In addition, based on his own experience, he just knows the best-friend-relationship with Aunt Helen.

Unlike the previous best-friend-relationship, Charlie feels the other thing after meeting Sam, the feeling of love toward opposite sex. This situation is the first time for Charlie to love another person beside Aunt Helen.

“That's when Sam explained that they were actually stepsister and stepbrother since Patrick's dad married Sam's mom. I was very happy to know that because I would really like to ask Sam on a date someday. I really would. She is so nice” (p.29).

The quotation above shows that Charlie would like to ask Sam on a date. His feeling starts to makes Charlie have a fantasy about them at the night.

“I feel ashamed, though, because that night, I had a weird

dream. I was with Sam. And we were both naked. And her legs were spread over the sides of the couch. And I woke up. And I had never felt that good in my life. But I also felt bad because I saw her naked without her permission. I think that I should tell Sam about this, and I really hope it does not prevent us from maybe making up inside jokes of our own. It would be very nice to have a friend again. I would like that even more than a date” (p.29-30).

From the quote, it indicates that the traumatic experience of losing friend when Charlie was in junior high school—Michael’s suicide—makes Charlie think seriously about his feeling to Sam, and about their friendship. The condition when Charlie starts to be more open on friendship is caused by her sad experience of losing a best friend. Nevertheless, he tells Sam about his dream and feels so bad and cries.

“I told Sam that I dreamt that she and I were naked on the sofa, and I started crying because I felt bad, and do you know what she did? She laughed. Not a mean laugh, either. A really nice, warm laugh. She said that she thought I was being cute. And she said it was okay that I had a dream about her. And I stopped crying” (p.29).

Yet, the warm environment which Charlie gets from his friendship with Sam makes him stronger. Although Charlie tells Sam about his dream, Sam does not angry at him. Even, Sam tries to understand his condition and gives Charlie suggestion that he is too young for her and makes Charlie sure to not waste his time to think about her that way. Sam knows that she and Charlie cannot be together as a couple, but she feels comfortable with Charlie. Therefore she laughs when Charlie tells her about the dream honestly. In addition, her laugh is not the mean laugh, for it is intended to appreciate Charlie’s honesty.



## 2. Managing distress emotion

The second process is managing distress emotion. At the moment of Charlie's dream, it is true that at the beginning Charlie feels happy because he thinks he likes Sam till he dreams of her that way. However, Charlie thinks it is bad because of the simple reason, "But I also felt bad because I saw her naked without her permission." (p.29). This reason makes him to be brave to tell Sam about his dream. After telling her, Sam says a point which Charlie always remembers. Therefore, Charlie is trying not to think about Sam at that way again.

"I guess I forgot to mention in my last letter that it was Patrick who told me about masturbation. I guess I also forgot to tell you how often I do it now, which is a lot. I don't like to look at pictures. I just close my eyes and dream about a lady I do not know. And I try not to feel ashamed. I never think about Sam when I do it. Never. That's very important to me because I was so happy when she said "Charlie-esque" since it felt like an inside joke of sorts" (p.35).

The quote above shows the process of Charlie in managing his emotion about Sam. Managing distress emotion is a part of growth process where the individual tries to be strong after having traumatic experience (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). Here, managing emotion is dealing with Charlie's traumatic experience when he was a kid.

At the end of this novel, there is data that showing that actually Charlie was sexually abused by his Aunt Helen when he was a child. However, due to his immature age, Charlie never realizes that sexual abuse. The reason why this case is strongly related to Charlie's experience with his aunt is because Charlie always



thinks that Sam is like his aunt. For example, when Sam gave Charlie hug, Charlie compares the hug with Aunt Helen's hug. "Sam then gave me a hug, and it was strange because my family doesn't hug a lot except my Aunt Helen" (p.30). The other example is Charlie never thinks that he will have a friendship or best friend relationship like he had with Aunt Helen. However, after meeting with Patrick and Sam, Charlie feels comfortable with their act, especially when Charlie tells Sam about his dream and Sam tells Patrick that Charlie crush on her, neither Patrick nor Sam laugh at the case. Even, both of them understand Charlie's condition and try to give some advices about the case.

According to Tedeschi and Calhoun (2004), managing distress emotion might be taken long time for many people. They are in stuck point after trying to be strong again. In other words, people who survive from traumatic events reported that they loss their belief. This occurs because managing distress emotion is the process which involves "grief-work" in traumatic events.

This is still related to Charlie's traumatic experience with Aunt Helen. Although he loves Sam very much, yet he still compares Sam with Aunt Helen. The warm condition between him and Sam, keeps Charlie thinks that he is fine indirectly. However, Charlie in fact cannot build a good relationship with others like when he is with Patrick and Sam or when he is with Aunt Helen.

In addition about the good relationship with others, Bill, his teacher, suggests Charlie to be active participating with the society—the society this case means senior high school society—even though at the beginning Charlie still thinks he is just all right not being active like what Bill suggests. However, since

having a good relationship with Patrick, Sam, and Bill, Charlie tries to do what Bill said.

“I'm sorry I haven't written to you in a couple of weeks, but I have been trying to "participate" like Bill said. It's strange because sometimes, I read a book, and I think I am the people in the book. Also, when I write letters, I spend the next two days thinking about what I figured out in my letters. I do not know if this is good or bad. Nevertheless, I am trying to participate” (p.36-37).

At the description above, it shows that Charlie tries to participate or be active again, and not correspond with “the friend” again. It is not an easy thing for Charlie who used to be alone or not have a good relationship with others since he is in senior high school. He merely has a good relationship with others. At the beginning of senior high school life of Charlie, he knows a boy named Sean. However, their friendship was not for longer time, because Sean got mad at Charlie till hitting him. Charlie hit him back like his brother had taught him. After the accident, Charlie never has a good relationship with others, and other students look at Charlie like he is a weird student. Therefore, it is not easy for Charlie to be active or participate in any activities like Bill said. However, he keeps trying to involve in some activities although it is too late to join any clubs in his school. When he meets Patrick and Sam again after being busy with his new activity, he starts to join other thing that Charlie never does before, a party.

### **3. Getting closer to others**

Traumatic experiences that Charlie has ever had affected much on him. Charlie cannot be easy to talk to others or make a friend before he meets Patrick and Sam, and also Bill, his teacher. Losing Aunt Helen, a person who Charlie

spent most of the time with when he was a kid, is not easy for him. Even, Charlie blames himself about the accident which Aunt Helen got at Christmas' night. Losing Michael when he was in junior high school also scares him to go to senior high school at the first day. Although, he meets Sean and becomes a friend, it was not for long time. His problem with Sean causes him be alone again.

Those traumatic experiences bring Charlie to the situation where he cannot trust anyone. In other words, he gets difficulties to talk with others. However, after meeting Patrick and Sam, Charlie can make friend with them. Before that condition, the story shows that Bill is the first person who gives attention to Charlie, yet Charlie never notices it before. The teacher always gives him some books, and asks him to make an essay for each book. Bill knows about the skill of Charlie during his class of Advanced English. Therefore, he keeps giving Charlie writing training for exploring Charlie's skill.

At the condition, Charlie does not realize that Bill and he are close enough to make Charlie feels comfortable to tell him some of his problems. The first person who knows that Charlie is not really taking part in his school life is Bill. He tries to make a comfortable condition in order to make Charlie tells his problems.

“Bill looked at me looking at people, and after class, he asked me what I was thinking about, and I told him. He listened, and he nodded and made "affirmation" sounds. When I had finished, his face changed into a "serious talk" face” (p.32).

Bill starts to know about Charlie by asking some questions about being active or participating in some events. From that moment, Bill knows that there is

something wrong about Charlie. The next step what Bill does is he tries to know Charlie's home problem.

"Bill smiled and continued asking me questions. Slowly, he got to "problems at home." And I told him about the boy who makes mix tapes hitting my sister because my sister only told me not to tell mom or dad about it, so I figured I could tell Bill. He got this very serious look on his face after I told him, and he said something to me I don't think I will forget this semester or ever. "Charlie, we accept the love we think we deserve." I just stood there, quiet. Bill patted my shoulder and gave me a new book to read. He told me everything was going to be okay" (p.32-33).

Based on the above description, it indicates that the traumatic experiences and also the problems at home make Charlie hard to believe others. What happened to his sister is the problem at his home, and he is the only one who knows about his sister problem with her boyfriend. However, because of Bill's attention to him, Charlie feels easier to tell about that problem. Moreover, before telling his problem, Charlie implicitly tells him about his loneliness.

"Do you always think this much, Charlie?"  
"Is that bad?" I just wanted someone to tell me the truth.  
"Not necessarily. It's just that sometimes people use thought to not participate in life."  
"Is that bad?"  
"Yes."  
"I think I participate, though. Don't you think I am?"  
"Well, are you dancing at these dances?"  
"I'm not a very good dancer."  
"Are you going on dates?"  
"Well, I don't have a car, and even if I did, I can't drive because I'm fifteen, and anyway, I haven't met a girl I like except for Sam, but I am too young for her, and she would always have to drive, which I don't think is fair." (p.32)

The quote above shows that Bill is the first person who makes Charlie comfortable to tell his problems. Bill supports Charlie although Charlie does not

really realize about that. The importance of this part is telling the problems to others who “have been there”. After doing what Bill suggests to participate in any activities, Charlie meets Patrick and Sam, which makes Charlie’s story of senior high school is more interesting. With Patrick and Sam, Charlie joins a party for the first time.

“Sam told me during the game that they were going over to their friend's house later for a party. Then, she asked me if I wanted to go, and I said yes because I had never been to a party before. I had seen one at my house, though” (p.38).

“Everyone was very friendly to me and asked me a lot of questions about myself. I guess because I was the youngest, and they didn't want me to feel out of place, especially after I said no to having a beer. I once had a beer with my brother when I was twelve, and I just didn't like it. It's really that simple for me” (p.43).

The quote above shows the intimate relation with others helps the survivors believe that they can continue their life after having traumatic experience. At this part of process, Charlie starts to be a brave person than before. At the party, Charlie starts to have a conversation with others, and it makes him happy.

#### **4. Considering to be part of social environment**

Similar to the previous part, the key of this part is “support by others”. The explanation here is based on the data about Charlie’s skill. At his English class, Bill keeps asking Charlie to write an essay for each book which Bill gives to him. Bill does that because he knows Charlie will be able to write well someday.

“Bill gave me my first B in advanced English class for my paper

on *Peter Pan*! To tell you the truth, I don't know what I did differently from the other papers. He told me that my sense of language is improving along with my sentence structure. I think it's great that I could be improving on these things without noticing. By the way, Bill gives me A's on my report cards and letters to my parents. The grades on these papers are just between us" (p.53).

Based on the above quotation, it indicates that Bill's work to help Charlie improve his writing skill is successful, even though Charlie does not realize that he can write well, and makes Bill give him the good mark on Charlie's report card. This condition makes Charlie think about his job in the future. He thinks he might be a writer, although he is still confused what kind of writer he wants to be.

"I have decided that maybe I want to write when I grow up. I just don't know what I would write. I thought about maybe writing for magazines just so I could see an article that didn't say things like I mentioned before. "As ---- wiped the honey mustard off of her lips, she spoke to me about her third husband and the healing power of crystals." But honestly, I think I would be a very bad reporter because I can't imagine sitting across the table from a politician or a movie star and asking them questions. I think I would probably just ask for their autograph for my mom or something. I would probably get fired for doing this. So, I thought about maybe writing for a newspaper instead because I could ask regular people questions, but my sister says that newspapers always lie. I do not know if this is true, so I'll just have to see when I get older" (p.53-54).

From the quote above, the data shows that Charlie starts to think about his role or become a part in the society someday by working in a newspaper company as a writer.

## **5. Developing narrative and wisdom**

The last part of Post-traumatic Growth Process is wisdom development. Individuals who have experienced the crises in their lives are often conceptualized about “after-before” events in their lives. This condition is assisting them to be more careful not only about themselves but also about the others (Tedeschi&Calhoun, 2004). The “after-before” term is developed because the change of personality. In this case, Charlie used to be alone and not talking to others. However, after he opens his sight about the new environment and start to the new beginning by learning some lessons from past life, he can manage his distress emotion although it is not an easy process to be more calm than emotionally unstable. He can start to be more open with others by participating with many activities with Patrick and Sam, as the result he knows and is known by more friends not only Patrick and Sam. Finally, he can also think more carefully before doing something.

This case is seen by Charlie’s act to Sam at his first date with Mary Elizabeth. At the time, Sam looks sad. Charlie actually does want to comfort her but he thinks that Sam just wants to be alone. Charlie truly loves Sam, yet he prefers to think about Sam’s feeling than his ego to be closer with her. This is the result after he gets some suggestions from Patrick when Sam tells him that Charlie crush on her. Moreover, it is because Sam does think in the same way like Charlie. Sam also explains that he is too young for her. Therefore, Charlie tries not to bother Sam although he wants to make Sam feels better at the time she is sad like when at Charlie’s first date with Mary Elizabeth.



“With that, Sam left. She really did look sad, and I wished I could have made her feel better, but sometimes, I guess you just can't. So, I stood alone by the wall and watched the dance for a while. I would describe it to you, but I think it's the kind of thing where you have to be there or at least know the people. But then again, maybe you knew the same people when you went to your high school dances, if you know what I mean” (p.125).

Not only toward Sam, Charlie is also wiser when he faces his sister. After the date, Charlie goes home and finds his sister in the basement looking like she cries a lot. Charlie wants to know what happens to her and try to talk with her, yet his sister does not allow Charlie even just to close to her. She asks him to just shut up and not do anything for her. The similar case is like when Charlie wants to comfort Sam, Charlie just keeps silent and does what his sister wants. Charlie does not want to make his sister feel worse. However, his sister suddenly hugs him tight, and Charlie hugs her back although he never hugs his sister before. Yet, he knows that by just doing that he can comfort his sister.

By this condition, his sister finally tells Charlie about what actually happened to her. She is pregnant, and his boyfriend does not want that baby. It is not the first time his sister tells something to Charlie, yet at this time Charlie really does not want to do something that makes his sister sadder like after what Charlie did at the past moment when he told his brother that his sister's boyfriend hit her.

“I would tell you about the rest of the night, but I honestly don't remember much about it. It's all a very sad daze. I do know that her boyfriend said it wasn't his baby, but my sister knew that it was. And I do know that he broke up with her right there at the dance. My sister hasn't told anybody else about it because she doesn't want it to get around. The only people who know are me, her, and him. I'm not allowed to tell anyone we know. Not anyone. Not ever” (p.126).



The quote above indicates that Charlie does not want to repeat what he did at the past by telling his sister's secret about her boyfriend's harsh act toward her. Charlie thinks that his sister only tells him because his sister does not want the others know about the problem. It makes Charlie consider that he has to keep the secret by not telling to others.

The changes of the individual who have struggled in their traumatic events are ongoing. This condition makes them able to develop into general wisdom of life and the general framework, the narrative, people have for thinking about their lives (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). At this part, Charlie truly turns into the new person who is calmer, not easily cry like before, being braver, and always learn from what happened before doing something.

### **3.3 Charlie's New Personalities following Posttraumatic Growth**

After facing the processes of changing, Charlie becomes the new person. These are the new personalities of Charlie as shows in the novel:

1. Forgiving

Charlie is an emotionally unstable character before meeting Patrick and Sam. He cannot easily control his emotion. For example when Sean hits him, he hits him back, and Charlie is the one who cried a lot after the accident. For his traumatic experience about his aunt, Charlie cannot forgive himself and keeps blaming himself. He thought that Aunt Helen got a car accident because she went to buy his Christmas's gift.

However, at the end of the novel, after Charlie realizes what actually Aunt Helen did to him, he forgives his aunt, and still loves her as much as before he knows that.

“It's like if I blamed my aunt Helen, I would have to blame her dad for hitting her and the friend of the family that fooled around with her when she was little. And the person that fooled around with him. And God for not stopping all this and things that are much worse. And I did do that for a while, but then I just couldn't anymore. Because it wasn't going anywhere. Because it wasn't the point” (p.227).

The quotation above indicates that Charlie realizes that it is not important to blame someone because he thinks if he blames his Aunt Helen he should blame Aunt Helen's father and the friend of her family. Charlie thinks it is bad to blame people, and it is not the point. Therefore, Charlie chooses to forgive Aunt Helen, not blame her for what happened to him.

## 2. Wise

This point is the last part of the Post-traumatic Growth process. As explained earlier, Charlie becomes more careful with what he does. He thinks twice before choosing what he should do. However, this point is not an easy thing which Charlie gets, for it takes a long time for him to shift to be wise after the traumatic experiences.

“So, I guess we are who we are for a lot of reasons.  
And maybe we'll never  
know most of them. But even if we don't have the power to  
choose where we come from, we can still choose where we go  
from there. We can still do things. And we can try to feel okay  
about them” (p.227-228).

The quote above describes that Charlie starts to accept his past experience with his Aunt Helen. Moreover, Charlie thinks that he just needs to accept the

experience and tries the best to continue his life better. Charlie thinks that there are many things which he can do, although he experienced a trauma.

### 3. Perseverance

This point is about how Charlie struggle to be more sociable person.

Although he is afraid of making a friend after the accident with Sean, he still tries to go to a football game. From that moment, he knows Patrick and Sam, two seniors who lead Charlie into entering the new environment. As the result, he knows and is known by other students. Moreover, after Patrick and Sam graduate from senior high school, Charlie keeps participating with others and leaves his “old activity”, writes some letter to the anonymous friend. In other words, he can make a friend in a real situation.

“Tomorrow, I start my sophomore year of high school. And believe it or not, I'm really not that afraid of going. I'm not sure if I will have the time to write any more letters because I might be too busy trying to "participate."  
So, if this does end up being my last letter, please believe that things are good with me, and even when they're not, they will be soon enough.  
And I will believe the same about you” (p.230).

The quote describes Charlie becomes more brave to face his school life and decides to be active to participate in his school life. In addition, he believes that everything will be fine even though something bad will happen, he will keep trying the best to make it better.

Those are the result of the changing process of Charlie's personality after experiencing traumas. Meet his two seniors gives him the warm condition to support him to be better, although he has to take a long time to recover his psychological condition after his Aunt Helen's death and Michael's suicide.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

#### 4.1. Conclusion

In this study, the data is collected from Chbosky's novel, *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*. Then, those data are analyzed based on Posttraumatic Growth concepts. There are three parts of result after analyzing the data. They are Charlie's personalities before experiencing a trauma, the development of Charlie's personalities due to the traumatic experiences, and Charlie's new personalities following Posttraumatic Growth.

First result is Charlie's personalities before experiencing a trauma. Those are having a high curiosity, active and caring boy, humorous, and talkative. Second result is the development of Charlie's personalities due to the traumatic experiences. In this part, there is the support point for Charlie develops his personality. The support point is a warm environment with his two seniors and his teacher. The environment makes Charlie faces five process of growth. The process are opening to experience, managing distress emotion, getting closer to others, considering to be part of social environment, and developing and wisdom. Then the last result is Charlie's new personalities following Posttraumatic Growth. They are forgiving, wise, and perseverance.

#### **4.2. Suggestion**

This study only focuses on the relationship between Charlie and his seniors and his teacher, not with his family. The role of his friends and teacher are explained in this study. How they support and comfort Charlie to change his personality, and help him to realize that interaction with others is important point in his life. The analysis about Charlie and his family probably can be done by other study by using other theory, and it probably has different process or result from this study. For example, the theory which can be used in analyzing this novel is Deconstruction. By finding the binary oppositions based on the story, it might be the other study will get another causes why actually Charlie changes his personality.

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