

# THE STRUGGLE OF CATH AVERY AGAINST HER INTROVERT PERSONALITY ON FANGIRL BY RAINBOW ROWELL

Hersi Intan Tarsila – 13020112140011

Diponegoro University

## Abstract

This thesis will analyze the main character of *Fangirl* by Rainbow Rowell, Cath Avery. The main purpose of this thesis is to analyze the intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of the story. In this thesis, the intrinsic aspects will use characters, characterizations, conflicts and settings and the extrinsic aspect will use Carl Gustav Jung's Analytical Psychology Theory. The methods that are used in this thesis are the library research and psychological approach. The result of the analysis shows that Cath Avery's personality is the form of introvert personality type. The cause of Cath Avery's introvert personality can be seen from the external element. The introvert personality also influences Cath Avery having inferior feeling, feeling uncomfortable toward her surrounding and having trouble with her social life.

Keywords: Analytical Psychology. Introvert. Personality Types.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Literature is part of an art, people can enjoy this kind of art by reading and writing it. It is implied by Wellek and Warren that literature cannot be studied at all, as literature can only be read, enjoyed and appreciated (1949: 3). In order to earn people's appreciation, a literary work has to have a good and interesting story line (prose and drama) and a good sense of words (poetry). Prose, as one of the forms of literary art, has to have an appealing conflict between its characters to make a good plot. Hence, the author has to be clever to develop his or her characters and plot. Through characters in the story, the author can show a character's personality.

As the psychological trait is shown in the characters, the reader will be able to understand more about the character's personality. Each character will have

different personality according to his or her environment or social life. Therefore, the characters' personalities will be distinct with one another; and it will be shown through the characters' thoughts, behaviors, or emotions toward themselves or their social environment.

One of the literary works that represents a distinct personality is a novel by Rainbow Rowell, *Fangirl*. This novel tells about the main character's introvert personality. Cath Avery, the main character, is having some difficulties against her life in the university because of her introvert personality. As an introvert, she experiences some conflicts within herself. The way Cath struggles those difficulties shows her introvert personality. From this point, the introvert personality of Cath Avery will be the main focus in analyzing the novel in this thesis.

Cath Avery, the main character of the *Fangirl*, will be analyzed using psychological theory, specifically Analytical Psychology theory by Carl Gustav Jung. This thesis is compiled with the title "The Struggle Against Being An Introvert Reflected in Cath Avery's Personality in *Fangirl* by Rainbow Rowell".

## **1.2 Research Problems**

1. How is the form of introvert personality that can be seen on Cath Avery's characteristic?
2. What are the struggles against being an introvert on Cath Avery?
3. How the introvert personality influences Cath Avery?

## **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

1. To analyze Cath Avery's personality in *Fangirl*.
2. To identify Cath Avery's struggles against being an introvert.
3. To explain the influence of Cath Avery's introvert personality to herself.

## 1.4 Methods of the Study

Library research method and psychological approach are used in this study to analyze the main character of Rainbow Rowell's *Fangirl*. According to Mary W. George, library research method's characteristic involves "identifying and locating sources that provide factual information or personal/expert opinion on a research question" (2008: 6). The data that has been collected with this method is coming from all of the possible sources. The sources were taken from the library and the internet in the forms of books or journals. These data consist of the information, opinions and theories that support this thesis.

## 2 AUTHOR AND HER WORK

### 2.1 Rainbow Rowell

Rainbow Rowell is an American author who writes young adult and adult contemporary novels. According to LitLovers website, she was born on 1973 in Nebraska, USA. Rowell got her journalism degree from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 1995. She worked as a columnist and ad copywriter at the Omaha World-Herald on 1995-2012, and became the youngest and first female columnist there. In 2011, she published her first novel after leaving Omaha World-Herald, titled *Attachments*.

Rowell is well-known because of her young adult novels: *Eleanor & Park* and *Fangirl*. Both novels were chosen as the best young adult fiction of the year (2013) by The New York Times. Rowell released another novel in 2014 titled *Landline*. *Carry On*, a spin-off novel of her previous novel *Fangirl*, had been released in October 2015. Now she lives in Omaha, Nebraska, with her husband and two sons (2015).

## 2.2 Synopsis of *Fangirl*

Cath Avery really liked Simon Snow novel series. She bought merchandises that related to Simon Snow like posters and clothes. She even wrote fanfiction about Simon Snow. When the first time Cath and her twin sister (Wren Avery) went to college, she wanted Wren as her roommate in the dorm, but Wren refused because she wanted to have new atmosphere and new friends. At the beginning, Cath also refused when Wren suggested a 'separate room', because she has already felt more comfortable when she is with Wren. She thought that it would be easier to talk about Simon Snow with her twin sister. Unfortunately, Wren already found her new roommate. In the end, Cath had to accept Reagan as her roommate that looked really mean and sarcastic almost all the time.

Cath liked to be alone. When other students spent most of their time by having a party, Cath chose to write fanfiction about Simon Snow. Surprisingly, her fanfiction got thousands of fans. Because of her interest in writing, Cath decided to join the Fiction-Writing class. She met Nick, her writing partner, in this class. Unbeknownst her, Nick was using her ability to help him in writing his writing assignment.

Cath preferred on writing her fanfiction than her writing assignment. She felt that she was incapable of writing her own fiction. Professor Piper, Cath's teacher on Fiction-Writing class, saw her great writing potential. She kept assure Cath that she could write her Short Story assignment. Cath refused her professor's words, because she did not have any confidence in herself and kept postponing her assignment.

Levi, her senior in college that had a crush on her, kept motivating her to write her writing assignment and facing the trouble she had with Wren. Cath,

who worried about Levi's personality that was totally the opposite of her personality, finally could accept Levi's good intention and his feelings. She wrote her writing assignment and even won the competition when the college sent her fiction.

### **3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **3.1 Intrinsic Aspects**

Intrinsic aspect is the aspect coming from the inside of the literary work, and this aspect is used to support the story. According to Wellek and Warren about the intrinsic aspect, "the natural and sensible starting point for work in literary scholarship is the interpretation and analysis of the works of literature themselves." (1949: 139). The analysis will focus on character, conflict and setting.

##### **3.1.1 Character**

Character is an important part in a literary work. According to Potter, "character is an actor who describes the event of fiction in order to make the line of story." (1967: 1). He also states that "character is a basic element in much imaginative literature and therefore, they merit the considerable attention paid to them." (1967: 7).

##### **3.1.2 Conflict**

Conflict, according to Perrine, is "a clash of actions, ideas, desires, or wills." (1998: 42). Perrine explains the types of conflict. There are three types of conflicts: Conflict of person against himself or herself (some element in their own nature), Conflict of person against person (when characters are pitted against some other person or group of persons), Conflict of person against environment (some external force—physical nature, society, "fate"). In any of these cases, the conflict may be physical, mental, emotional or moral (1998:

42).

Another opinion coming from Meyer, “External conflict may place the protagonist in opposition to another individual, nature or society. ... Conflict may also be internal, such a case some moral or psychological issue must be resolved within the protagonist.” (1990: 45).

### **3.1.3 Setting**

Setting is needed in a literary work because it will help the reader to understand the description of the place, the time and even the surroundings in a story. It is stated by Meyer that setting is “the context in which action of a story occurs.” (1990: 107). The types of setting are: Setting of Place: it is the physical environment like house, room, street, etc. which an event of a story takes place; Setting of Time: it is time or period in which the action takes place and can tell the reader when the story happens; Setting of Social Environment: It describes the social condition issues related to the social life of the character within the novel. It tells the reader about the situation around the character like tradition, point of view, and a way of thinking.

### **3.2 Extrinsic Aspects**

Extrinsic aspect is the aspect that coming from outside of the literary work to support the content of the story. According to Wellek and Warren, “the most widespread and flourishing methods of studying literature concern themselves with its setting, its environment, its external causes.” (1949: 65). They also add that there are four extrinsic approaches in literature: Literature and Biography, Literature and Psychology, Literature and Society, and Literature and Ideas. This thesis uses Literature and Psychology as the basis of its extrinsic aspect.

The Analytical Psychology theory by Carl Gustav Jung is used in this thesis, to analyze the main character of *Fangirl*'s psychological trait. In the Analytical Psychology theory, there are two types of personality: Extrovert and Introvert. Sommers-Flanagan explains these personality types on the book *Counseling and Psychotherapy Theories in Context and Practice (2nd ed.)*, "Extraversion, an orientation to the outer world of people, things, and activities; Introversion, an orientation to the inner world of concepts, ideas, and internal experience." (2012: Ch. 3A, 1).

## **4 ANALYSIS**

### **4.1 Intrinsic Aspects**

Intrinsic aspects in the story can be used to help the analysis of the thesis and the analysis for the intrinsic aspects will be focus on Character, Conflict and Setting.

#### **4.1.1 Character**

1. Cather (Cath) Avery: The main character of the novel.

She is smarter and the introvert one compared to her twin sister, Wren. Different from Wren who is the 'social one', Cath spends her time at home writing Simon Snow fanfiction almost every day. Cath really likes Simon Snow novel series and she enjoys writing its fanfiction. Besides, she refuses to meet new people because she is afraid having socialization with them and she seems to depend on her twin sister so much.

2. Wren: Cath's twin sister.

She is more popular and prettier than Cath. As twin sisters, they are so close to each other. However, because of Wren's easy-going personality,

it makes Cath lack of confidence. Before they go to college, Wren always spends her time with Cath. So, she suggests that they should have a separate dormitory to get a new atmosphere. Wren also attends frat parties every weekend or just goes to a night club with her friend. She feels carefree about her life so much, unlike Cath who seems worried about everything and dislikes the idea of party.

- .3. Reagan: She is a senior and Cath's roommate.

Cath sees her as an intimidating person and sometimes a cynical person, too. At the beginning, Cath never tries to make a conversation with her, but in the end, Reagan becomes her friend.

4. Levi: A senior and Reagan's ex-boyfriend.

He always shows up in Cath and Reagan's room. When the first time Cath sees Levi, she thinks that Levi is Reagan's boyfriend. But after some times, Reagan tells Cath that Levi is not her boyfriend anymore. Then, Cath finally realizes Levi definitely has a crush on her and Cath also interested in him. However, Cath always denies her own feelings because Levi is too 'good' for her.

5. Laura: Cath's mother.

She left Cath when she was young. She left because she thought that she was not ready to have children and since then, Cath hates her mother.

#### **4.1.2 Conflict**

The conflict that resides in the novel is both the Internal and External Conflict. Internal conflict is related to the main character's psychology; meanwhile the external conflict is related to the main character's opposition with other characters or society. Those conflicts also considered



in the three types of conflicts.

#### **4.1.2.1 Internal Conflicts**

This conflict is considered as an internal conflict because Cath has to deal with the problems within herself. It also considers as a ‘conflict of person against herself’ type.

Cath always feels anxious about everything. She worries a lot and even cries on the first time she goes to the dormitory, especially when she is greeted by people she does not know. She meets Levi and Reagan on the first time she moves in to the dorm’s room and Levi asks her out to eat lunch with them. Feeling nervous and anxious as usual when she meets new people, she refuses Levi’s kind invitation. After they leave the room, Cath tries to calm herself in the room. Because of this, she has to deal with her apprehensive feelings and tries to assure herself that college is not a bad thing.

Cath also worries if she disgraces herself in front of other people. She is too afraid to ask other people because she thinks they will think of her as a stupid person to ask a weird question. She already imagines that she will ridicule herself. Another internal conflict is Cath’s feelings towards Wren that shows how Cath considers Wren as a ‘rival’.

#### **4.1.2.2 External Conflicts**

This kind of conflict is happening between the main character and the other characters or the environment.

1. The first conflict happens between Cath and Reagan, and this conflict considers as ‘conflict of person against other person’ type. Cath sees Reagan as ‘the normal and popular’ girl. In the other hand, Reagan’s ignorant attitude toward Cath makes Reagan seems unapproachable.

2. The other conflict happens to Cath and Wren. Cath thinks that her relationship with Wren is growing distant. Cath assumes that Wren is starting to forget her. Wren already has new friends and she also enjoys her freedom at the new environment like she always wanted. Wren prefer being with her friends rather than with Cath. Wren also starts to make fun of Simon and Baz, and this makes Cath feel offended.
3. Next conflict is the conflict of Cath's relationship with Levi. This conflict shows how Cath is unwilling to act friendly toward Levi because his personality is totally the opposite of hers.
4. Cath conflict with her Fiction-Writing class teacher, Professor Piper is the other external conflict. Her interest in writing fanfiction makes her writing assignment gets an F. Because of this, she loses her confidence on writing fiction since she cannot write a story without 'the trigger'.
5. The last conflict of person against person is between Cath and her mother, Laura. Cath really hates her mother since the day her mother left Cath when she was young. Cath disagrees when Laura wants to meet her, but when Wren gets hospitalized and the hospital calls Laura because she is the mother, they finally meet each other.
6. The idea of college for Cath is different with her twin sister. Cath sees college as a new horrifying place which she has to meet new people, socializes with them, and separates with her sister. Meanwhile Wren thinks a college will be more like an 'adventure'.
7. The other conflict that Cath sees at her environment, is the dormitory. Cath feels paranoid about the dormitory since it is a place that basically has a lot of people and she has to socialize with them.

8. Cath is difficult to go to some places with lots people in it, one of them is dining hall. She willingly starves herself rather than goes to the dining hall.

### **4.1.3 Setting**

As stated before, setting is “the context in which action of a story occurs.” (Meyer, 1990: 107). Therefore the setting in this novel can illustrate the situation around the main character.

#### **4.1.3.1 Setting of Place**

The setting of place for *Fangirl* is mostly in the University of Lincoln, Cath’s college, and her dorm. The book mentions Cath’s activities in her classes, the library when she works on her writing assignment with her partner, or her house in Omaha.

Cath always spends her spare time in her dormitory room to write her fanfiction besides going to classes in weekdays. The description of the dorm can be seen from the quotation: “Cath looked up at the number painted on the door, then down at the room assignment in her hand. Pound Hall, 913. This was definitely room 913, ...” (Rowell, 2013: 4). Cath’s room is described as a small room for two persons. Even though the room is for two persons, the room appears to be narrow for her and her roommate.

As the introverts value their privacies and enjoy being alone so much, if they have a room to be shared with other people, they will feel uncomfortable. This occurs to Cath, too. She tends to be worried if she cannot write her fanfiction peacefully. She worries if Reagan and Levi coming into the room at any time and find out that she is actually writing gay fanfictions. She is afraid they will think she is a weird and abnormal person.

#### **4.1.3.2 Setting of Time**

The story of the novel occurs at the Fall Semester year 2011 to Spring Semester year 2012. Cath is a freshman in the University of Lincoln, Nebraska and she starts her study at fall year 2011.

Like the other freshmen, she moves out from her home to her dormitory's campus. When she arrives at the dormitory, her dad helps her to move her things to the room. After they finish moving her things, Wren comes and says that she will spend her dinner time with the other freshmen and she tells Cath to do the same, too. However, Cath decides to spend her first time as a freshman with her dad instead of hanging out with the other freshmen student. Cath's timid personality makes her afraid to socialize with the other freshmen, therefore she chooses to spend her dinner time with her Dad.

Winter is the coldest season of the year, but Cath likes it because she has a reason to wear her favorite warm clothes. Her fondness of winter season can be implied as a form of her closed personality. Winter is usually a time where everyone is seldom to go outside because the air will be too cold, therefore people will choose to stay at their home. Since Cath usually prefers being in her house than being at the outside, in winter she can be at her room without feeling afraid that everyone will judge her for that. This also happens when she is at her college. Cath is never interested to go outside her dormitory, including in winter, unless it is necessary. Her choice of warm and closed clothes also implies her private personality. Cath has low self-esteem about herself and wearing such closed clothes like cardigans or leg warmers to make her feels more secured.

Meanwhile, spring in Nebraska is apparently as cold as the winter. As spring in Nebraska is as cold as the winter, it can be implied how Cath can get the advantage from the cold spring. Cath does not have to worry about changing her warm and closed outfits. Therefore, she can enjoy wearing them longer than usual.

#### **4.1.3.3 Setting of Social Environment**

The environment in Cath's college is surrounded by the youngsters who enjoy their college's life with having parties and drinking. Unlike the other students who go partying, Cath already feels discomfort about the idea of partying and drinking. She even feels under siege only by hearing the loud noises.

As an example, Cath is invited by Levi to his party. She refuses it at the beginning, but because Reagan also keeps inviting her, both of them finally go to Levi's party. After she arrives at Levi's party, Cath does not like the situation, therefore her anxiety makes her uneasy.

#### **4.2 Extrinsic Aspects**

Introvert is one of the two types of personality and this type of personality is having four functions. Introvert, as explained before, is usually having a shy individuality and less sociable than the extrovert.

##### **4.2.1 Cath Avery's Background of Being an Introvert**

Cath's introvert personality has a relation with her psychological trait and there is a reason for it. When Cath was really young, her mother Laura left her family because Laura was not ready to be a parent.

Unlike her sister, Wren, who does some rebellion things after their mother left them, Cath decides to solitude herself from her surroundings

and it causes her closed personality now. Cath also blames her mother as Cath becomes insecure to her surroundings. When Laura left the family, it was not only affected Cath and Wren, but also their dad who became a manic depressive.

After that, Cath always holds her grudges toward her mother. She thinks her mother is responsible for her being 'not normal' because she does not have a mother who takes a good care of her since she was a child.

#### **4.2.2 Analysis on Cath Avery's Introvert Personality**

On the character of Cath Avery, the introvert characteristic is noticeable. Sommers-Flanagan states Introvert as: "they have a smaller circle of friends, enjoy spending time alone, and may feel some unease in social interactions. They rejuvenate with alone time, rather than by hanging out with their buddies." (2012: Ch. 3A, 12).

The general attitudes on Cath Avery's personality, will be clarified below.

1. Since Introverts tend to have a smaller circle of friends, Cath's introvert characteristic shows how she prefers not having a lot of friends; unless she feels comfortable with them or when she does not have any choice. Cath's social life does not develop a lot. Since the beginning, Cath does not try to make friends with a lot of people.
2. As an introvert Cath enjoys spending time alone. She also feels uneasy when she has to do some social interactions. Cath hesitates when she has to spend her time by hanging out with her friends and sometimes gets the anxiety-attack and even cries because she feels stupid when she is too afraid to face people.

As Cath has an introversion as her general attitude of psychological type, the introversion's four functions will be clarified below.

1. Introverted thinking type

This kind of type will show how a character may seem odd. Cath does not really care about how her relation to the society. Unlike many people, Cath has her own opinion about particular things.

2. Introverted feeling type

Introverted people use their feeling to deal with their problems. In this kind of type, the introverts have sympathy toward their friends, family or people who need their help. As they only have a smaller circle of friends than the extroverts, the introverts usually act devoted to their close friends or family.

Cath, in this case, shows how she really cares about her family. She immediately goes to a place that she knows she does not like, just to save her sister, Wren. Wren sends her a message which Cath thinks as an emergency. Cath goes to a club and meets Wren there, but Wren says that the message is only a mistake. The message is actually for Wren's friend.

Cath also cares about her dad. Her dad lives alone at their home in Omaha. He is psychologically disturbed and sometimes he does unexpected things. Because of his condition, it is difficult for Cath to leave her Dad alone.

3. Introverted sensing type

Daniels stated before about the introverted sensing type that the introverts "may have trouble expressing themselves." (2011: 7) According to this

statement, the introverts will be difficult to show their intention because they are too shy about themselves or think that socializing is unnecessary.

#### 4. Introverted intuiting type

Intuition of the introverts usually about how they unconsciously observe about something. In Cath's case, she observes Reagan and Levi's personalities.

At first, Cath sees Reagan as a scary roommate and Cath's intuition makes her think Reagan is a mean person. In addition, Cath thinks that Levi is a too-kind person because he always smiles, even to the people he does not know.

#### **4.2.3 The Influence As An Introvert to Cath Avery**

Cath Avery's introvert personality influences her university life the most. It is shown when she finally feels uncomfortable on her own surroundings. Cath also feels uncomfortable if she leaves the campus alone. She worries a lot for being lost or robbed when she goes out from campus. She thinks that there is no reason for her to go outside, if it is not necessary. Cath's love life also affected because of her introvert personality influences her self-esteem.

#### **4.2.4 Cath Avery's Solutions Against Her Introvert Personality**

Cath cannot find the solution for her introvert personality alone. Usually Reagan and Levi help her to solve her 'social' problems.

Cath's ego to solve everything by herself often becomes the problem of her social life, too. Although she knows that sometimes she gets a hard time because of that, she is still being stubborn about it.

She is actually having a problem with her professor in one of her classes. Her professor tells the class to make a fiction assignment. But, Cath



cannot finish it because she writes a Simon/Baz fiction and her professor thinks that Cath's fiction is not original.

Cath believes that she cannot write her own fiction because she really loves Simon and Baz characters. Professor Piper who knows this keep motivating Cath to write her own fiction. She also knows that Cath actually has such a good potential in writing fictions. Professor Piper then gives Cath a second chance to finish her story. However, Cath insists that she will not write anything besides Simon and Baz's story.

As Cath is being stubborn to not finish her writing assignment, Levi who finds out about it, encourages her to finish her Fiction-Writing assignment. Cath is already consider to give up on making the assignment, but Levi's encouragement makes her try to finish her assignment. Besides Levi, no one knows about Cath's problem about her assignment, even her sister Wren.

Commonly, Cath takes her feelings too seriously. If she thinks that she is not capable of doing something, then she will not do it. This kind of consideration sometimes makes Reagan annoyed. Even Levi is confused about her attitude. Hence, Reagan and Levi always help her to make some decisions.

## **5 CONCLUSION**

People who have the introvert personality tend to enjoy being alone, only have a few close friends, and feel uncomfortable socializing with other people. People with this personality are also paying little attention to the environment, only having sympathy to their family or close friends, not easily adaptable and having trouble in expressing themselves.

The main character of *Fangirl* by Rainbow Rowell, Cath Avery, has these traits of being an introvert. This personality can be found from her attitudes and activities in her daily life. Cath likes to spend her time alone in her dorm room than having party with the others. She only has her family, her roommate Reagan and her boyfriend Levi to trust and she always shows her care to her family a lot.

Cath's shy and closed personalities influence her social life, especially in her college. In the college, Cath is really difficult to adapt in the new environment. Cath is also difficult to communicate with other people and sometimes worries not to hurt other people's feeling if she wants to decline something. She is afraid to talk to the other people because she thinks she will ridicule herself, too.

Introvert personality can also caused by the leaving of someone important. In Cath's case, she was left by her mother when she was still so young. After Cath's mother left her, Cath became not only more insecure about everything, but also became shy and felt anxious almost all the time. Thus, her introvert personality causes by the lack of attention from a mother figure.

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