

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

Literature is a mirror that reflects the complexities of human life and society. Through literature, authors can convey various emotions, ideas, aspirations, and observations. It captures the essence of human experience, including conflicts, issues, and social problems that occur in society. Humans can create narratives that reflect the complexity of life through literature. Therefore, literature becomes a tool to develop a deeper understanding of ourselves and the world around us. Since human beings are the basis of literary works, literature and humans are connected. Therefore, literature is a constant representation of society through the relationship between artistic creativity and human life.

In literature, the characters are usually depicted realistically as a reflection of existing human characters. The author depicts the characteristics and behaviors of the characters, to reflect the variety of humans characters that exist in society. Through depicting realistic characters and society, the author can also voice issues that exist in society. Certain characters are depicted imperfectly; they have weaknesses and struggle with their own personal problems. Therefore, literature and psychology are closely connected because the writer of literary works create characters with unique characteristics. This means that the study of characters in literary works needs to start with psychological theories of human behavior.

Anxiety is one of the psychological problems that is often found in literary works. According to Sigmund Freud, in his book entitled *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*, anxiety is a response to a dangerous situation. It is obviated by the ego's doing something to avoid that situation or to withdraw from it (1926:57). Anxiety is a common issue experienced by every individual, which is often reflected in literary works. It is not uncommon for literary works to depict characters who have anxiety. As a feeling, anxiety is usually characterized by an intense feeling of unpleasure. Therefore, characters who have anxiety are usually depicted with feelings of insecurity and unpleasure, which are shown in their behavior.

Before I Fall is a Young Adult novel with the genre Contemporary, Romance, Fantasy, Paranormal, Fiction written by American writer, Lauren Oliver. *Before I Fall* is Lauren Oliver's first novel, published in 2010 by HarperCollins in the United States, and by Hodder & Stoughton in the United Kingdom. *Before I Fall* is a novel with the themes of friendship, bullying, loyalty, kindness, repentance and self-discovery. Lauren Oliver was born in Queens and raised in Westchester, New York, a small town as she depicted in *Before I Fall*. This novel reflects social concerns related to high school students, such as bullying and self-discovery. In this novel, Oliver depicts characters that are relatable to high school children in general.

This novel tells the story of Samantha Kingston, a popular high school girl who died in a car accident, but after her death, Sam is trapped in time loop and keeps waking up on the same day she dies. Samantha continues to wake up in a

time loop for seven days. As she is trapped in the time loop, she feels she has to fix several mistakes she makes during her life, including saving Juliet Sykes, who is a victim of bullying by her and her best friends. One of the characters in this novel is Lindsay Edgecombe. Lindsay is Samantha Kingston's best friend. She is a popular girl who is liked by many boys and respected by her friends. She is the leader of Sam's friend group. Lindsay is the first person to bully Juliet, she causes everyone, especially her friend group, to bully Juliet without even knowing why they hate her. Lindsay is described as having a brave and confident personality. On the other hand, the author also shows her feelings of insecurity and unpleasantness through the fear she has about her secret, which only Juliet knows. She feels afraid that Juliet will spread her secret which will damage the image she has built so far. This feeling of insecurity and unpleasantness is in contrast with the perfect personality that Lindsay creates in front of her friends, and she copes with her feelings by bullying Juliet Sykes.

Considering all the points above, I believe there is anxiety in the character of Lindsay Edgecombe in Lauren Oliver's *Before I Fall*. The character Lindsay Edgecombe shows anxiety, which is indicated by her behavior, which might depict her insecure and unpleasant traits. I assume, through this novel, Oliver is trying to expose the anxiety faced by Lindsay, one of the characters in the novel. Therefore, I entitle this research "**Anxiety and Defense Mechanism in Lindsay Edgecombe's Character in Lauren Oliver's Novel *Before I Fall***".

1.2 Identification of the Problem

Through the novel, Lauren Oliver brings up topics that are relevant to teenagers, such as bullying and self-discovery. Lindsay is a character who is described to be what high school teenagers generally want. She is popular and respected by many of her friends at school. However, there are several traits that contrast with the perfect personality that Lindsay has built in front of her friends. Some of her attitudes depict her feelings of insecurity and displeasure towards her school friend, Juliet Sykes. This is because Juliet is the only person who knows Lindsay's secret. Juliet Sykes used to be Lindsay's best friend when they were younger. She often accompanied Lindsay, who often felt depressed because of her parents' fought. In high school, however, Lindsay is no longer friends with Juliet. Even worse, she bullies her. This drastic change is very interesting to analyze.

1.3 The Scope of The Research

This research focuses on intrinsic elements to find out the anxiety and defense mechanisms found in the character Lindsay Edgecombe, as portrayed by Lauren Oliver in the novel *Before I Fall*. Therefore, this research examines the characterization of Lindsay Edgecombe, including some of her traits that show her feelings of anxiety and the actions she took towards her former friend, Juliet Sykes, which is believed to be her defense mechanism for her anxiety.

1.4 Research Questions

This research aims to answer these following questions:

1. What is the unconscious motive that causes Lindsay Edgecombe's anxiety?
2. What are the symptoms of anxiety shown by Lindsay Edgecombe?
3. What defense mechanisms does Lindsay use to cope with her anxiety?

1.5 Objective of the Research

This research aims to discover the anxiety and defense mechanisms in Lindsay's character through analyzing the character of Lindsay Edgecomb in *Before I Fall*. To be more specific, this research examines the causes of anxiety in Lindsay's character and the behaviors Lindsay has shown that depict the symptoms of her anxiety. This research also analyzes several behaviors of Lindsay, which portray how she copes with her anxiety.

1.6 Review of Related Literature

In conducting this research, the author uses *Before I Fall* novel by Lauren Oliver as the object of the research. To analyze this novel, the author uses some supporting sources related to the topic of the research. Some research discussing the anxiety and defense mechanism with the same theory has been conducted before to enrich the analysis.

First, an article entitled "Defense Mechanism of the Main Character in Laurie Halse Anderson's *Speak* Novel" by Ritsnaini Zulfaisya and Hasnini Hasra. This article was published in *BAHTERA: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra* in 2020. This article found that Melinda, the main character in

Laurie Halse Anderson's *Speak* Novel, has repression, rationalization, regression, and reaction-formation as dominant strategies to overcome conflict. She also applies projection, displacement, isolation, identification, and sublimation as defense mechanism strategies to overcome her anxiety and psychological problems. This article is very helpful for this research because it provides a framework for understanding the psychological responses of characters in young adult literature, which can be related to the character of Lindsay Edgecombe in the novel *Before I Fall*. Both Melinda and Lindsay have intense emotional challenges, which set off the various defense mechanisms they employ to cope with the problems they face. This article does not highlight the anxiety issues in character, but utilizing the findings from this article enhances the depictions of mental health in young adult fiction novels.

Second, an article entitled "Self Defense Mechanism as an Overcoming Tool of Anxiety in the Novel *Me Before You* by Jojo Moyes" by Tery Angela Monica, Jepri, and Ulum Jannah. This article was published in *Prologue: Journal on Language and Literature* in 2020. This article seeks to determine the types of anxiety experienced by the character in the novel *Me Before You* by Jojo Moyes and explains how self-defense mechanisms work to overcome anxiety using Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory of anxiety and self-defense mechanisms. Which is related to this research in analyzing Lindsay Edgecombe's character, which can be analyzed through the same lens to explore the anxiety she experiences and how she copes with it with defense

mechanisms. The findings of this article are three types of anxiety experienced by characters in the novel *Me Before You* by Jojo Moyes: neurotic, moral, and realistic anxiety. To overcome this anxiety, the characters use four types of defense mechanisms: displacement, reaction formation, rationalization, and sublimation. This article highlights how William navigates feelings of guilt, helplessness, and internal conflict related to his physical limitations and the burden he feels he places on others in a similar way to Lindsay Edgecombe, who deals with anxiety rooted in social pressures, guilt over past actions, and fear of facing the consequences of her choices. This article aims to advance our understanding of how anxiety manifests in literature by connecting the emotional struggles of individuals to the broader human experience. Therefore, this article is very helpful in writing this research, which can enhance the understanding of how characters cope with their internal conflicts and anxieties and their demonstration of how Freudian psychoanalysis can be applied to contemporary literature. By drawing parallels between anxiety and defense mechanisms in both novels, we can provide a more comprehensive analysis of how characters explore their emotions, thus contributing to our understanding of anxiety and defense mechanisms in literature.

Third, an article entitled “The Analysis of the Characters in “Before I Fall” and its Relevance in Today’s Society” by Asifa Inggit Pratiwi, Gebrilia Indra Parasanti, Nadya Firdaus, and Umniyah Juman Rosyidah. This article was published in *NEELLS Proceedings National English Education, Language, and Literature Seminar* in 2020. This article discusses the

characters, personalities, and relationship dynamics of the characters in the novel *Before I Fall* and their relevance to today's society. Through analyzing the depiction of teenagers and bullying in the novel, this article reveals the complex drive and psychological impacts associated with the characters' behavior, which can be related to this research. Furthermore, this article emphasizes how crucial the understanding of teenagers's attitudes that exist in today's society is, which establishes comparisons between bullying conduct in real life and the behaviors of the characters in the novel. Therefore, this article is so helpful since we can gain meaningful parallels between the novel and real-life situations by applying the findings from this article to the analysis of Lindsay Edgecombe's anxiety and defense mechanisms, highlighting how literature reflects and reinforces complex human behavior.

Fourth, a thesis entitled "Analysis of Teenager's Lifestyle in Lauren Oliver's Novel *Before I Fall* (2010) Sociological Approach" by Rizaqotul Adilla. This thesis was published in 2019. This study uses a sociological approach with three approaches presented by Swingewood and Laurenson and three principles of literary sociology presented by Wellek and Warren. This study provides valuable insights that can be correlated with this research. By examining themes such as friendship, romantic relationships, and bullying, this study provides a sociological context that enhances the understanding of the psychological condition and emotion of the characters. This study helps in identifying various forms of friendship and relationship in the novel *Before I Fall*, which are also important in analyzing Lindsay Edgecombe's relationship and behavior. This

study is not focused on anxiety and the defense mechanism, but the analysis of teenage relationships and problems provides a wider perspective for understanding the behavior of characters in the novel, from which we could gain the relevance of societal pressures to psychological conditions.

Last, an article entitled “The Main Character’s Neurotic Anxiety in The Novel *Terminal Cinta Terbaru* by Ashadi Siregar Analysis: Psychological Literature-Sударso Manulang” (2020) by Sudарso Manulang. This article was published in *L'Geneus: Jurnal Bahasa Generasi Masyarakat Intelektual* in 2020. This article explores the psychological aspects of the main character and the quality values found in popular novels, especially the TCT novel. This article discusses the concept of neurotic anxiety and its forms, as well as the influence of parental behavior on child development. This article offers valuable insights that can be applied to this research. By analyzing the main character’s experience of neurotic anxiety through the psychoanalytic framework, this article provides a useful perspective to understand how similar psychological conflicts can manifest in Lindsay's character. For example, just as Jockey’s aggressive anxiety reflects an inner struggle with the harsh realities of life and Widuri’s exploration of guilt and inferiority, which is dominated by the superego. The discussion of this article is quite similar to Lindsay’s insecurity, which triggers the anxious behavior and coping mechanisms. Although this article does not discuss defense mechanisms, this article can enrich the research by providing a deeper understanding of the psychological conflicts that drive the characters’ actions. The psychoanalytic approach used

in this article also helps to illustrate how internal conflicts and anxieties affect the characters' behavior.

