

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Background of the Research

Realism in the middle of nineteenth century is a genre of *Olive Kitteridge*. The story is almost real because it is retold from real people's history in Crosby, which consists of the story of marriage couple and single person. Elizabeth Strout herself interviewed and investigated her neighbors with different method especially Olive Kitteridge, the main character. Because it mostly talks about the relationship of the Kitteridges couple, Strout even stalked Olive Kitteridge to see how Olive lived.

Olive Kitteridge is a collection of thirteen short stories about daily life of people at Crosby, Maine. All of characters are actually Elizabeth Strout's real neighbors and their stories contain despair, loneliness, and emptiness either they are married or single. Strout herself met all of characters and listened to their sad stories, as seen in a conversation which Random House Reader's Circle held with Elizabeth Strout and Olive Kitteridge. Strout says, "his [Harmon] quiet sadness helped me see him, made me feel for his situation" (276). The stories are collected in "Pharmacy", "Incoming Tide", "The Piano Player", "A Little Burst", "Starving", "A Different Road", "Winter Concert", "Tulips", "Basket of Trips", "Ship in a Bottle", "Security", "Criminal", and "River". This book won a Pulitzer Prize a year after it was published in 2008. The short stories look real because Elizabeth Strout usually goes back home along the coast of Maine and the woods of New Hampshire. She also usually spends her time in library and writes

quotidian in her notebooks. Strout looks and writes every interesting moment that happens in her town and *Olive Kitteridge* is the representation of it.

Elizabeth Strout presents the interesting Olive in an unpredictable family which contains the good and bad husband-wife relationship. Relationship between husband and wife is not always good and stable; sometimes problem comes up and may lead to a quarrel between them. The problem may be caused by misunderstanding in communication, carelessness with each other, unsatisfying sex activity, and perhaps dissatisfaction in every way of life. This phenomenon may lead married couple to several situation such as divorce and affair, while good couple is still trying to be loyal but live in pressure.

Most of American couple usually get divorced as the solution as recorded by National Vital Statistics System. According to data in 2008 there are 844,000 divorces and annulments in 2,157,000 marriages. But people in Maine choose to have an affair or being loyal in marriage. Several people in Crosby, Maine, are described by Elizabeth Strout in her book entitled *Olive Kitteridge*, to be cheating behind their partners, like Henry Kitteridge and Harmon. There are people who are also loyal to their partners like Olive Kitteridge and Bonnie.

Olive Kitteridge is a retired math teacher in Maine who lives under mental pressure with her husband and son. Complaint by complaint flows from her mouth, try to balance her unconscious desires which shows that she wants to be freed from a prison called marriage. She actually already acts as a good wife and mother even if she is forced to do it because from the beginning she did not want to marry Henry Kitteridge. She does what her husband told her and she raises her son

patiently although her son is not grateful. But all that she gets is far from her expectation, such as not being loved and wanted by her own husband. She does not get love but an affair from Henry, her husband. Meanwhile, her son Christopher Kitteridge, never wants to live in that home and always wants to go further and leaves no care to family. It is so sad that she must live that kind of life while she finally realizes that she does not want to be slaved in her own house.

Olive Kitteridge experiences the tension of womanhood in two periods. The first one is when she lives as a wife and a mother for Kitteridges. This period describes Olive's depressing marriage as the writer mention before. She gets inappropriate acknowledgement from her husband and son while she tries her best for being a good wife and a good mother. The second period is when Olive meets a new man named Jack Kennison two years after her husband died. She is struggling to face her new problem, whether to admit that she falls in love with this man or not. Some traumatic pasts in having depressing marriage and family cause this hesitation.

The interesting point is that Olive Kitteridge plays a good role as a wife and mother instead of following her desire. The way Olive Kitteridge represses her desire when it continuously comes up is interesting and need to be analyzed. She is obviously struggling to balance her desire and loyalty to the point where she cannot longer stand it. And that is the problem the writer would analyze in the first three stories which entitled "Pharmacy", "A Different Road", "Tulips", and "River", which is the last story of the collection.

1.2. The Identification of the Problem

The tension of womanhood are not always about becoming a good wife or mother. Olive Kitteridge is struggling in her marriage. She tries to be loyal in the first place, but her desire to be free unconsciously keeps coming up and making her loyalty distracted. Complaints toward Henry, her husband, represent the image of underpressure marriage. Olive's *ego* is threatening the whole time and self-defense mechanism takes its role to balance her *id* and *superego*. She puts so much expectation on her husband that Henry will be a proper husband as she wishes. But she is disappointed by her own expectation then she unconsciously finds the figure of a husband she wants in Jim O'Cassey, her neighbor. In addition, her intuition as a woman about her husband's affair becomes another problem and proof that she has failed as a wife. All of these problems, lead her to the state of fear and hesitation to catch up a new relationship after her husband died. The writer assumes that Olive is living underpressure. She is depressed as a wife since she cannot get what she expects from her husband (to be loved and poured with attention); she is haunted by the fear of being failed mother; she is scared of new relationship after her husband's death.

1.3. The Scope of the Research

To limit the research, the writer only concentrates on Olive Kitteridge, the major character, with her complex personality and the self-defense mechanism she conducts. The points that the writer wants to examine are:

1. Olive Kitteridge's desire in a depressing marriage.
2. Olive Kitteridge's fear of failure as a mother.

3. Olive Kitteridge's anxiety and hesitation of getting involved in a new relationship.

1.4. The Objectives of the Research

The goal of this study is to discover the major character's behavior which shapes her personality when she herself is unconsciously struggling to repress her *id* because of the *superego* and to find out the form of self-defense mechanism as a tool to repress her desires through psychoanalytic point of view. All of these operations are conducted to examine her role as wife, mother, and single woman. Furthermore, this research will be hopefully beneficial to enrich the study of human behaviors through fictional character.

1. 5. The Review of Previous Studies

There are four researches that are useful for the writer in conducting the following research. The first and the second research discuss about the whole book which help the writer a lot by seeing how Olive Kitteridge behaves in all the interlinked stories. The third and the last research discuss major character and the minor characters from another novel are usefull at supporting the writer's study by its theory.

The Local is written by Louisa Thomas which is published in The New York Times in 2008 describing the main story of all characters from Olive Kitteridge. The presence of Olive Kitteridge in these stories with her moody character, unpredictable, anger, and sometimes brings humor made this book interesting. Thomas also said that it is a complex stories which full of powerful

emotion. This research leads the writer to see Olive Kitteridge's complex behaviors in communicate with different people in her life. It also conducts to the several analysis of her personality.

The second article is written by Mary Laga discussing the good sides of Olive Kitteridge in her article in 2011 which was published in Peace College site entitled "Older Women and their Fall from Grace: Ageism in Elizabeth Strout's *Olive Kitteridge*". Laga mentions two characteristics of ageism toward Olive Kitteridge in her analysis. The first one is sympathetic which is showed in *The Piano Player* between Kitteridge and Angie O' Meara. In her opinion, Kitteridge's symphatic feeling to Angie is kind of ageism although she is weak inside. Aging woman also describes Kitteridge's status as a mother. Laga finds the second evidence that motherhood belongs to Kitteridge although Strout describes her failure in parenting her child, Christopher. The good thing from Olive Kitteridge makes the writer realizes that her personality is representing how she is struggling in marriage.

Third article is written by Yamin Liang who is discussing about the operation of *id*, *ego*, and *superego* which is entitled "The Id, Ego and Super-ego in *Pride and Prejudice*". This article was published in 2011 at International Education Studies, an online website. The theory that the author used to analyze Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* is related to this research. It is surprising that major character of the novel, Elizabeth, has complex *id*, *ego*, and *superego* in her. Liang proves that in order to covers the need of the survival regarding her poverty, Elizabeth is unconsciously following her desire to fulfill her needs in material and love from Mr. Darcy. Her father's *id* in this case is the needs to be

rich with his wish that perhaps one of his daughters will be picked as Mr. Bingly's wife. It is suppressed by Elizabeth to the point where she gets frustrated and depressed. *Superego* of her which in this case is her father's *id* leads her to frustration while she herself has her own desire with Mr. Darcy. Other case is the lies and perspectives that Wickham gives to her about Mr. Darcy. This *superego* makes her misidentified Mr. Darcy's true feeling towards her, and her *ego* formed a bad judgement to Mr. Darcy. The last, happy marriage is finally achieved by Elizabeth after Mr. Darcy proposed for the second time and she is becoming the *superego* for Lady Catherine, Mr. Darcy's aunt. She is showing that her *self-esteem's* needs has been fulfilled. The explanation of *id*, *ego*, and *superego's* role in several characters conducts the writer to elaborate her research in analyzing Olive Kitteridge's complex personality.

Last research is discussing about self defenses in some characters of Emily Bronte's work. Ala'a Abdulkareem has published his graduate thesis in 2011 at Dalarna University's website which is entitled as *A Psychoanalytical Reading of Emily Bronte's Wuthering Heights: An Analysis of the Defense Mechanisms of Some Characters*. Abdulkareem in his thesis found that *denial* is identified in three characters. For example, Catherine chooses to follow her ambitions in marrying Edgar than to follow her heart which loves Heathcliff. She is still saying that she is fine with this condition but not her reaction. Second defense is *repression*, the most common defense that human always do. In this case Heathcliff is doing it in order not to get himself in a state of *low-esteem*. The inferiority he feels because he thinks that Edgar, the man that Catherine has chosen is superior, becomes repressed and then he finally complains it to her

love and ambition, Catherine. The third defense is *sublimation* which is also found in Heathcliff where at the first time he feels so inferior then he comes back as a rich gentleman after three years being rejected by Catherine. He has experienced the sublimation which is here his noticeable in financial standing and appearance. The last defense is *projection* that Catherine shows in the end of the story. She blames both Edgar and Heathcliff for making herself free from guilty, illness, and sadness that she has been through. She does not admit the consequences by marrying Edgar, that her decision makes her feel guilty towards herself and Heathcliff. And when she is meeting the new Heathcliff, she is blaming him while she should have known that this is her fault to marrying Edgar. The use of self defense mechanisms in several characters explains more than the writer expects. The writer also analyzes major character's defense mechanism in her research.

1. 6. Theoretical Framework

People and psychoanalytical concepts are inseparable as Tyson said in her book *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide*, "...whether we realize it or not, psychoanalytic concepts have become part of our everyday life..." (2006:11). Some psychoanalytic terms might be identified in our daily life, such as *repression*, the unwillingness to allow people to have natural feelings and desires. People repress desires or feelings which are perhaps restricted by norm or environment. In this case, desires or feelings are all we have in the *Id* and the norm or environment play a role as *superego*. And by that chance, people unconsciously get used to act against their wills which here regarded as normal.

Freud's closest friend in his old days, Alfred Ernest Jones, one of psychoanalysis pioneers before Tyson had already remarking Freud's work. The basic of Freud's work applied in his psychoanalysis theory which is discussing about fictional character. Guerin, et al stated in *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature* that, "...the psychoanalyst Ernest Jones, provide the first full-scale psychoanalytic treatment of a major literary work" (2005:161). Jones' *Hamlet and Oedipus* is one of the evidence that Freud's theory of psychoanalysis can be applied in fictional character. In addition, Tyson stated that psychoanalysis is, "...to outline those areas of classical psychoanalytic theory that are particularly useful to literary criticism and to show how this view of human behavior is relevant to our experience of literature" (2006:12). Freud's work is so much useful for both Jones and Tyson in analyzing fictional character which is also reflected in daily real life.

Unconsciousness

Unconsciousness is the part of people's mind that contains feelings and ideas that they do not know about or cannot control. Even though they are not aware that they have them, but they show in the way people behave. In other words, it is reflected on people's behavior. Tyson has already stated it in her book,

I say patterns of behavior because our repetition of destructive behavior reveals the existence of some significant psychological difficulty that has probably been influencing us for some time without our knowing it. In fact, it is our not knowing about problem- or, if we do know we have a problem, not realizing when it is influencing our behavior- that gives it so much control over us. (2006:12)

The existence of the unconscious has driving people to the point where their desires, fears, emotions, and unresolved problems reflected to their own behaviors. In this research, the writer analyzes unconscious motive of Olive Kitteridge regarding her complex personality and behaviors. The unconsciousness is the zone where the writer begins to find Olive's unresolved problem.

Id, Ego, and Superego

Since the writer focuses to analyze the unconscious desire of major characters, Freud's major psychic zone; *id* is the zone where the writer can get started. According to Freud, *id* is the animal side of human which only cares about pleasure and desire without considering moral values. In conclusion, human is still normal human if their *superego* is running through their brain to suppress the *id* so it will not come up. But when the *ego* is threatened and people can not suppress it anymore, then people unconsciously build up their self-defense mechanism to cover it up.

Ego in *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature* composed by Guerin et al, is "...the rational governing agent of the psyche" (2005:157). The *ego* zone is a place where *id* had already been filtered and repressed by using self-defense mechanism and influenced by *superego*. While the role of *superego* is as a moral value which is accepted and regarded in society. As Guerin, et al stated, "...the *superego* serves to repress or inhibit the drives of the *id*, to block off and thrust back into unconscious those impulses toward pleasure that society regards as unacceptable..." (2005:158). So *id* which had already been repressed and showed up as *ego* is mostly influenced by the role of *superego*.

The three psychic zones above are the places where unconscious desire, reality, and the external influences struggling in a human. These all are reforming human behaviors whether they are in real life or in a literary works which can be studied by psychoanalysis, as Tyson said, "...psychoanalysis can help us better understand human behavior, then it must certainly be able to help us understand literary texts, which are about human behaviour" (2006:11). To analyze the character's *id*, the writer put two kinds of core issue, *fear of betrayal* and *fear of abandonment*. Tyson said, "*fear of betrayal* is the nagging feeling that our friends and loved ones can't be trusted" (2006:16). This fear belongs to people who are afraid of being cheated. While "*fear of abandonment* is the unshakeable belief that our friends and loved ones are going to desert us (physical abandonment) or don't really care about us (emotional abandonment)" (2006:16). Example of the fear is someone who is afraid being left behind physically or emotionally.

Self-Defense Mechanism

The self-defense mechanism is basically a process of unconscious desires, anxieties, emotions, and fears repressed so that those all stay put in the unconscious. Tyson stated, "...they are the processes by which we keep they repressed in order to avoid knowing what we feel we can't handle knowing" (2006:15). There are several types of self-defense mechanism according to Freud, such as, *repression*, *rationalization*, *reaction formation*, *displacement*, *sublimation*, *identification*, *undoing*, *intellectualization*, *isolation*, *regression*, *reversal*, *splitting*, *turning against the self*, *projection*, and *denial*. Several defenses which build up major character behavior will be analyzed here.

➤ *Projection*

The state of denying fears, guilty, or problem but then accusing someone else to have it is called projection. That person might be overwhelmed by those desires and in order to recover it, they are condemning it to another person. Tyson stated, “*projection* is ascribing our fear, problem, or guilty desire to someone else and then condemning him or her for it, in order to deny that we have it ourselves” (2006:15).

➤ *Displacement*

The process of transferring someone’s emotion toward an object to another object that represents the former is named as displacement. Displacement is more like distributing someone’s emotion to the safer object because he or she is unable to directly do it to the actual object. Tyson claims in her book, “*displacement* is ‘taking it out’ on someone or something less threatening than the person who caused our fear, hurt, frustration, or anger” (2006:15).

➤ *Denial*

The success of id’s repression regarding the unacceptable ideas or feelings in someone’s mind called denial. When those ideas and feelings are denied unconsciously by a person, it means that person unwilling to receive it in order to avoid the fears, pains, or anxieties that might be felt. In simple words as Tyson said, “*denial* is believing that the problem doesn’t exist or the unpleasant incident never happened” (2006:15).

➤ *Reversal*

Reaction formation is almost the same as this defense, turning the opposite feeling like love to hate or hate to love. It is regarding as defensive purposes when

someone is doing it. The writer found a simple theory from Torquato Tasso in Hazard Adam and Leroy Searly's book entitled *Critical Theory Since Plato*, "the reversal, which the Greeks called peripeteia is a change from good to bad fortune or from bad to good" (1971:232).

1. 7. The Methods of the Research

In this research, the writer follows three steps. The first step is collecting data which is conducted by library research method. There are two kinds of data, they are primary data and secondary data. The primary data are from literary work by Elizabeth Strout which is entitled *Olive Kitteridge*, and the secondary data are taken from literary theory books, essay, thesis, and article which are related to this study. The data are collected by reading the book, and searching in the internet and library.

Analyzing the data is the second step of this research's method. The writer identifies issues and problems from primary data and then elaborates it to the secondary data which act as the base parallel to analyze. After comparing the data, elaborating it and criticizing it will be last part from the second step. The third step is presenting the result of analysis by using narrative to get the qualitative.