

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the introduction of this research. It consists of the background of the research, identification of the problems, scope of the research, research questions, objective of the study, review of the related studies, theoretical framework, and method of the research which is divided into three: collecting data, analyzing the data, and presenting the result of analysis.

#### 1.1 Background of the Research

Anxiety and defense mechanisms are two human behaviors depicted in literary works. These behaviors are drawn in the story and thus affect the storyline itself. They describe thoroughly of how people interact with each other, deal with the problems surrounding them, and react towards the issues revolving around their lives.

Boree in *Personality Theory* (2006) implies that anxiety is the clash between the superego as the delegate of society and the id as the delegation of biology which is controlled by the ego as representative of reality (7). The clash causes chaos and creates fear as the effects of anxiety. Emanuel in his book entitled *Ideas in Psychoanalysis: Anxiety* (2000) also writes that anxiety is a feeling of dread that makes people experience a pounding heart and an unpleasant situation (6). In dealing with all the inconveniences, the person's ego (self) tries to activate its defense mechanism.

According to Tyson in *Critical Theory Today* (2006) phrases that ego

defense mechanisms as the process of repressing unwanted feelings (15). When someone suffers from anxiety, ego defense mechanisms do its function as a safeguard of the mind against the feelings and thoughts that are difficult to cover by the conscious mind. In other words, a defense mechanism prevents inappropriate or unwanted desires from entering the conscious mind. The processes of defense mechanisms are usually unconscious.

In order to expose the issues of anxiety and defense mechanisms, the researcher selects a play entitled *Equus*. It is a psychodrama written by an English playwright named Peter Shaffer which raises the psychological issues of the human being including anxiety and defense mechanisms. The way Shaffer represents the people in his play is interrelated with one another on revealing the issues of anxiety containing the causes of anxiety. Shaffer also implies how defense mechanisms can give positive and negative effects on people who apply the defenses. The drama itself focuses on a child, Alan Strang, who suffers from anxiety which makes him commit a criminal act, blinding six horses. Seventeen years old Alan is then sent to a psychiatrist, Martin Dysart, by a court magistrate named Hester Solomon. Dysart, described by Shaffer as a psychiatrist, reveals various issues related to anxiety not only in one character but also in the other characters as well. The play also implies that some of the characters in the play apply defense mechanisms that affect them in positive and negative ways. Through a deep understanding of reading the *Equus* drama, the researcher wants to reveal how the causes of anxiety and the effects of defense mechanisms are depicted in Shaffer's *Equus*.

The researcher chooses the topic of anxiety and defense mechanisms in

Shaffer's *Equus* because of some reason. Firstly, *Equus* is a unique play that can be seen through the plot of this play. Shaffer presents a crucial element in a family's life on how caring parents can frustrate their child who ends up suffering anxiety. Secondly, the researcher believes that this drama is a form of criticism from Shaffer to people who see crime as a single mistake from a criminal. In fact, psychological growth that affects a person's behavior is influenced by many factors such as parenting styles, social environments, and religious beliefs. Lastly, *Equus* was one of the best play published in 1973 which received *Tony Award* for the *Best Play* in 1975 and nominated for a *Best Adapted Screenplay Oscar* in 1978.

In revealing the psychological issues above, the researcher applies psychoanalysis by Sigmund Freud. "The Critics of psychology literature focus on helping us to understand literature, especially about human behavior" (Tyson 11). The researcher chooses *Equus* as the object of research with the help of critics of psychology, especially psychoanalysis with anxiety and defense mechanisms as specific theories. Through the chosen theories, the researcher wants to reveal how anxiety and defense mechanisms are depicted in *Equus*. The researcher also wants to reveal how defense mechanisms can affect people in positive and negative ways. Furthermore, the researcher finds the same topic in some related researches in different works but, the researcher has not found any research about this topic in *Equus*. Therefore, the researcher wants to discuss this topic in *Equus*.

## 1.2 Identification of the Problem

*Equus* depicts psychological issues such as depression, stress, anxiety, and defense mechanisms. Generally, the story revolves around the depictions of anxiety

and how people try to get out of it. Somehow, anxiety triggers by some causes which come within human beings and surroundings.

The other issue is about how people try to reduce their anxiety by applying ego defense mechanisms. In operating ego defense mechanisms, the ego plays its role to minimize anxiety by compromising human desires, society, and the reality. Besides reducing anxiety, ego defense mechanisms can also lead people to do negative behaviors such as lies, violence, and commit a criminal act.

### 1.3 Scope of the Research

The researcher limits the discussion on anxiety and defense mechanisms as presented in *Equus*. The researcher restricts the analysis which focuses only on Strang's family. The analysis explores the causes of the anxiety of the family members.

This study wants to reveal the way Shaffer represents the defense mechanisms in *Equus*. The researcher focuses on how defense mechanisms can affect people both in positive and negative ways. By analyzing Strang's family, the researcher uncovers the causes of anxiety and how defense mechanisms give positive and negative effects on people by examining action and reaction towards particular situations.

### 1.4 Research Questions

Related to the background of the research, identification of the problem, and scope of the research, the research questions are formulated as follow:

1. What are the causes of anxiety in Strang's family as represented in *Equus*?

2. How do ego defense mechanisms affect people in positive and negative ways as depicted in *Equus*?

### 1.5 The objective of the Study

The purpose of this research is to reveal all the issues related to the causes of anxiety described by Shaffer in *Equus*. Besides, the researcher also wants to explore how people can be affected positively and negatively in applying defense mechanisms as presented in the play.

### 1.6 Review of Related Studies

Researches on anxiety and defense mechanisms have been carried out by previous researchers. The researchers are Setianto, Wibisana, Simma, Sarjono, Nugroho & Viladinia, and Farokhah on different works. From all the studies that the researcher takes as references, they can be categorized into three groups based on the specific focus of the research itself. The first group is a research study that only focuses on discussing anxiety that has been discussed by Sarjono. The second group is the research studies that only examines defense mechanisms, which have been discussed by Nugroho & Viladinia and Simma. The final group is the research studies that focus on anxiety and defense mechanisms, which have been conducted by Setianto, Wibisana, and Farokhah. Besides, the researcher also puts a study of *Equus* on a different topic as one of the references for this research. The researcher takes a study written by Zafer Safak who applies psychoanalysis in his study.

An article by Adrian Setianto from Senata Dharma University entitled *Okonkwo's Anxieties and Defense Mechanisms in Chinua Achebe's Things Fall*



*Apart* (2017) is relevant to the writer's idea. Setianto exposes the conflicts between African people and colonialism. He claims that Okonkwo as the main character suffered anxiety that he was afraid to become a man like his father who was considered to be weak and poor. Moreover, Setianto's article is interesting because he is not only exploring the way Okonkwo struggled to get rid of his anxiety, but also his struggle to become stronger than his father's portrait as a result of colonialism. Setianto uses defense mechanisms and anxiety analysis to analyze what Okonkwo has suffered in his life which is similar to the writer's idea. Other than that, Setianto manages to explore the character and characterization and defense mechanisms theory.

Wibisana's article entitled *Voldemort's Anxiety and Defense Mechanisms in Rowling's Harry Potter and The Half-Blood Prince and Harry Potter and The Deathly Hollow: Psychology Study* is aimed at identifying the anxiety and defense mechanisms experienced by Voldemort. Not only does Brigitta explain the anxiety, but she also explores the impacts of Voldemort's anxiety on himself and the society that people live in fear, vigilance, and terror. She concludes that Voldemort's anxiety is caused by his childhood trauma and life instinct (human's drive). The weakness of Brigitta's article lies in how she explains the methodology that is mostly useless to be in an article.

The other related study is written by Watcharapipat Simma from Srinakharinwirot University entitled *An Analysis of Defense Mechanisms used by The Main Characters in Mark Twain's The Adventures of The Huckleberry Finn and The Prince and The Pauper* (2009). This study explores the defense mechanism

used by two main characters in the novel. They are Huckleberry Finn and Edward Tudor who experienced defense mechanisms to live peacefully. This impacts their self-adjustment caused by their family and society background. Simma concludes that defense mechanisms give positive impacts on these two characters. They became better and discovered new things and new people as well as reach out to their maturity. The strength of this study lies in how she explores the anxiety suffered by Huckleberry Finn and Edward Tudor that is implemented in the storytelling.

The next related study is from Maulana Malik Ibrahim States Islamic University Malang written by Fendy Yugo Sarjono entitled *DR. Leidner's Anxiety Reflected in Agatha Christie's Murdered in Mesopotamia* (2016). This study is aimed at finding out the Dr.Leidner's anxiety and how he deals with his ego and superego. The weakness of this study lies in how Sarjono writes his analysis. He only presents the causes of anxiety and explains the types of anxiety that are suffered by *DR. Leidner*. He does not explain the effects of defense mechanisms and only classifies kinds of defense mechanisms that are used by the character.

A study entitled *Audrey Turner's Conflicts and Defense Mechanisms in Kinsella's Finding Audrey* (2018) written by M. BudieNugroho and SelyViladinia from Kuningan University has two basic topics to explore that are conflicts and defense mechanisms trough psychology perspective of Islam's theory and defense mechanisms by Cramer. Nugroho and Viladina use quantitative research to find out the kinds of defense mechanisms used by the character Audrey Turner. The strength of their study is that they explain the analysis through the frequency table and its

description which makes it clearer to discuss. They conclude that the most frequent conflict found in the novel is the internal conflict which is person vs him/herself and denial is the most frequent defense mechanism shown by Audrey.

A study from the Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University of Malang written by Fiqih Aisyatul Farokhah entitled *Anxiety Suffered by Elizabeth Holland in Anna Godbersen's Splendor* (2015). Aisyatul explains the kinds and reasons for anxiety that suffered by Elizabeth Holland and the kind of defense mechanisms that are used by the character. She also explores the psychological condition of Elizabeth Holland using some experts' psychological theories such as Anna Freud, Adler, Melanie Klein, and Sullivan. Despite, this study shows some weaknesses like typos, repetition words, and terms and unrelated paragraphs in the abstract.

The last study is entitled as *The Relationship Between Martin Dysart and Alan Strang in Peter Shaffer's "Equus" in the Light of Psychoanalysis* written by Zafer Safak. In his study, Safak claims that Martin Dysart as the psychiatrist uncovers that Alan is emotionally distressed adolescent. He mentions that Alan is torn between religious passion, his awakening sexuality and a quest for transcendental unity because of his parent's conflicting values. This study is useful for this research since the discussion focuses to expose the Strang's family through psychoanalysis. However, this research also concentrates on Strang's family specifically anxiety and defense mechanisms used by Strang's family.

Judging from all the studies above, the topics are not only about the anxiety and defense mechanism suffered and used by the characters of each novel but also



how anxiety impacts the characters' life and society and how they try to get rid of their anxiety by using self-defense. Besides, the researcher also put a study from the same work to make a better understanding of this research. However, even though the topics might be similar to the researcher's idea, the analysis that the researcher wants to explore will be different and has not yet been submitted and explored before. All the studies above are used for references in writing this study. While some researchers of those studies use one character to explore the anxiety suffered, the writer tries to dig deeper and explore more all the *Equus* as the depiction of the causes of anxiety and how defense mechanisms can affect people in positive and negative ways.

### 1.7 Theoretical Framework

“Psychoanalysis is a theory of psyche which is used as a tool in understanding human behavior” (Tyson 12). Psychoanalysis is a theory found by Sigmund Freud which has three main premisses. Its concepts such as sibling rivalry, inferiority complexes, and defense mechanisms are common in daily life which helps to see through human personality. According to Freud in *The Essential Pocket: Freud & Psychoanalysis* (2001) written by Rennison states that most actions and feelings expressed by people are impossible from their unconscious, but it comes from the subconscious (31). It means that all of the behaviors come from a combination of conscious (presence, memories, and places) and unconscious (food, sex, and fear).

From the description above, Freud divides the human psyche into three psychic zones: the id, ego, and superego. In connection with the discussion, the

researcher chooses two theories that are focused on the theory of anxiety and the defense mechanism by Freud. The theoretical framework is divided into three important discussions such as; id, ego, and superego; anxiety; and defense mechanisms.

### **1.7.1 Id, Ego, and Superego**

“The id consists of unconscious sexual desires and aggressive instincts” (Ryckman 40). It is usually amoral and somehow uncontrolled. The id applies "pleasure principles" which focus to maximize pleasure and minimize pain. The ego is described as a control system of the id. Ego can be considered as a sign of whether a person is mature or not. It leads all the desires that are made by the id in a realistic direction. So, the ego is said as the most logic zone among the id and the superego. The superego is constructed from values that are given to someone in her/his lifetime. It would come from parents, friends, or her/his surroundings. It determines how someone should respond to a particular situation. If a man has strong values that grow in his self, it would take him into a positive vibe, like arrange his career or even start any business for his future.

### **1.7.2 Anxiety**

According to the book written by Duane P. Schultz and Sidney Ellen Schultz entitled *Theories of Personality* (2009) mentions that anxiety is an objectless fear that cannot be pictured or specified into something (59). According to Freud, there are kinds of anxieties:

1. *Realistic anxiety* deals with reality. It refers to something bad that has happened or something bad that might happen. It can be a disaster, bad weather forecasts,

and bad experiences related to reality.

2. *Moral anxiety* appears within ourselves as the result of contention between the id and the superego. The triggers of moral anxiety do not originate from the physical world, but from the values that we believe. Moral anxiety is usually a form of shame and punishment from us.

3. *Neurotic anxiety* comes from the conflict between the id and the ego. When someone wants to pleasure himself he tends to follow his instinct. But then, he will be in trouble when he looks up to reality. This anxiety is caused by the sexual desire of someone that cannot be realized. When someone suffers from this anxiety, he can lose control and rationality which is driven by the id.

### **1.7.3 The Ego Defense Mechanisms**

The ego as the logic aspect among the three aspects (the ego, the id, and the superego) have to control the id and the superego. "The ego must reduce the conflict between the demands of the id and the strictures of society or the superego" (Schultz, Schultz 61). It protects humans from feeling anxiety by repressing unwanted desires. In other words, this is the process when a human being presses their unconscious without actually know it. They repress the repressed feeling, so it seems like they never exist in theirs.

Ryckman in *Theories of Personality* (2009) argues about the primary defenses (42-45). They are as follows:

1. *Denial* happens when a person thinks that there is too much to handle, so the person refuses to handle it. It refers to a person's refusal to perceive an unpleasant event in external reality. It is like when someone you love just died, but you act like

it never happen. This thing happens unconsciously to reduce pain.

2. *Repression* is an attempt made by the Id so that unwanted desires do not reach consciousness. In the course of analyzing dreams, Freud discovered that certain thoughts are blocked from consciousness or repressed because they are just too much to be acknowledged. Boeree in *Personality Theory* (2006) states that repression as "motivated forgetting," is just that: not being able to recall a threatening situation, person, or event (6). Repression is done by humans to suppress everything that does not want to be shown in the real world so that it appears in the form of dreams.

3. *Suppression* is simply not thinking about "unwanted thoughts" by doing something else. It is kind of an effort made by the id to just stop-provoked anxiety. For example, a student thinks about having a sexual relationship with her teacher. The student can just stop to think about it by simple control it using the superego which keeps the values alive.

4. *Displacement* is an act of unconsciousness to please the id by substituting the objects if the objects that would directly satisfy the impulses are not available. In other words, displacement is about redirecting an impulse to someone or something else. For instance, someone who is not able to love someone else transfers all the love and attention to a pet like a cat or a dog.

5. *Sublimation* is an effort to keep the impulse pleased by turning it into something positive. Example, someone who suffers from anxiety in a confusing world may become a businessman, or a scientist. Someone who has a powerful sex desire can turn into a great novelist, artist, or even a painter.

6. *Regression* is a form of self-defense by showing changes in attitude from maturity



to immature. A husband who is experiencing a conflict with his wife prefers to go home to his parents' house, rather than go home to the house he has lived with his wife.

7. *Projection* is linking certain characteristics to others, when in fact these characteristics are themselves. For example, if a student accused his classmates of cheating to get higher grades, it could be that he cheated to get the highest score.

8. *Reaction formation* is oppositely modifying unacceptable things. In other words, reaction formation can be meant as an opposite reaction to something. For instance, there is a husband who does not like his wife, but he still treats his wife well.

9. *Rationalization* is a self-defense system by giving reasons that seem reasonable, following logic, and measured even though it is false logic. For instance, a child who gets a lower score for examination, tells his parents that he has not learned about the subject yet. So, he cannot get a better grade.

10. *Intellectualization* is a process that allows an individual to suffer less pain by searching for scientific reasons. It is like when a child lost her mother. She would say the medical reason about her mother died. It would cure a bit of her pain.

11. *Undoing* can be interpreted as a ritual. By doing an undoing act or ritual, someone believes that his mistake has been forgiven. This seems very unreasonable, but it helps a person to feel better after making a mistake.

12. *Compromise formation* involves the use of contradictory behaviors to gain some satisfaction for an undesirable impulse. This can be exemplified by someone who gives a compliment with the intention of insulting or demeaning. For example, Jimmy is the winner in the class. Thomas said: "I had expected you could do this".

In conclusion, defense mechanisms are used to reduce the pain, run away from anxiety, and make self feels more comfortable. In the theory of anxiety and defense mechanisms above, there are three kinds of anxiety and twelve kinds of defense mechanisms in total. The researcher only uses some of the theories mentioned above, because some of them are not available in the work.

## 1.8 Method of the Research

In conducting this research, the researcher will apply library research. “Library research involves the step-by-step process used to gather information to write a paper, create a presentation, or complete a project” (Library Research Process). Therefore, the researcher will follow three steps, which are collecting the data, analyzing the data, and presenting the result of the analysis.

### 1.8.1 Collecting Data

The researcher will use two kinds of data: primary and secondary data. The primary data is a play by Peter Shaffer entitled *Equus*, which contains two acts. The secondary data consists mainly of other books and articles related to this study and Psychoanalysis theories.

### 1.8.2 Analyzing the Data

The researcher begins the analysis by understanding the storyline of *Equus*. Then, the researcher identifies the signs of anxiety and defense mechanisms through the characters in the play. In analyzing the data, the researcher makes sure that the

references for the study are suitable for the analysis. After that, the researcher applies psychoanalysis theory by Sigmund Freud, which includes the discussion about anxiety and defense mechanisms.

### **1.8.3 Presenting the Result of Analysis**

In presenting the processed data, the researcher uses descriptive method due to the qualitative result gained as the output of the research. “Qualitative research is especially important in the behavioral sciences where the aim is to discover the underlying motives of human behavior” (Kothari 3). The researcher divides this research into four major sections. Chapter I consists of the background of the research, identification of the problem, scope of the research, research questions, objective of the study, review related studies, theoretical framework, and method of the research. Chapter II displays a preliminary analysis of the research. It represents the analysis of important characters related to the topic of the research, the setting which is related to certain incidents of the work, and a specific theme about the topic of the research. Chapter III reveals the crucial content of the research because it represents the main analysis of the research. The main analysis is divided into two major discussions that are the cause of anxiety and how certain defense mechanisms can lead people to negative acts. Chapter IV will be the last part of the research. It encloses the whole chapters of the research which comes up with a brief conclusion.