

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Research

Most literary works study human life. People often call literature as the depiction of human behavior in real life. Also, some literary authors, whether they realize it or not, often portray psychological issues in their works. It happens because psychological problems are a close topic to human life. Then, some issues in the literary works are anxiety and defense mechanism. Anxiety and defense mechanisms are part of psychoanalysis. It once notes that anxiety is related to human fear. It is like humans feel threatened or overwhelmed, fear of collapse over something unknown because anxiety is a sign to tell the ego that the danger is coming. It is the call out of human defense to survive (Asch 93).

Nowadays, the issue of psychology has become a threat to our society. As we know it, psychological issues can lead someone into depression, and depression can lead someone into suicide. However, most people only know about the effect of the psychological problem without acknowledging why those conditions can happen. Sometimes, whether they realize it or not, they experience those conditions, anxiety, and defense mechanisms. Moreover, society does not really know about the anxiety and defense mechanism as a part of psychological issues and does not really understand it. Also, young people are known as the ones who vulnerable to suffer psychological issues such as anxiety and defense mechanism. It happens because youth is one phase in life where people try to find their identity, and the problems easily come and go. Therefore, this condition is related to my topic and object of my research.

A novel by John Maxwell Coetzee entitled *Youth* discusses the issue of psychological problems of young people. According to *Encyclopedia Britannica* (2020), *Youth* is part of the semi-autobiographical trilogy of novels published in 2002, The first is *Boyhood* (1997), and the last of the trilogy is *Summertime* (2009) because the author presents some of his life experiences. *Youth* tells about some specific parts of the author's youth life. The story uses the third point of view using the "He" pronoun to portray all of John's youth life. Then, in discussing these psychoanalysis issues, I will only focus on the novel's intrinsic element of the novel.

Youth is one of the best works from J.M. Coetzee, the winner of the Nobel Prize for literature in 2003. He also wins the Booker Prize twice. At that time, he was the first author who won the Booker Prize twice. According to *Encyclopedia Britanica* (2020), John Maxwell Coetzee is a South African author, critic, and translator born in Cape Town on February 9, 1940. He has a degree in English and Mathematics. He published his first novel, *Dusklands*, in 1975. His works, *Life&Times of Michael K* (1983) and *Disgrace* (1999), lift him to be the Booker Prize winner two times. Most of J.M. Coetzee's works are beautiful and tell about life in Africa. It shows that being a South African leads him to have many wonderful ideas and themes because he directly lives and faces the history of apartheid in his life. Coetzee's father is descended from early Dutch immigrants to South Africa, and his mother has descent from Dutch, German, and Polish. Therefore, Coetzee becomes white people in South Africa. His family speaks English for communication between them, and he speaks African in his environment.

J.M. Coetzee became an Australian resident in 2006. As one of the most outstanding figures in literature, he gets so many praises for his works. Ceridwen Dovey in *The Paris Review* (2018) says reading Coetzee's works make the reader know how to face uncertainty and how to live in complexity and deal with ambivalence. Based on Jason Cowley in *The Guardian* (2002), *Youth* is one of J.M Coetzee's masterpieces. In this novel, once again, after *Disgrace*, he brings a young man's side as the main character. The main character gets questions, such as "why is life so cruel?", "why must I suffer?" because this novel delivers a kind of great sorrow story of a young man. In short, because this story brings the issues about a young man and psychological problems, it is such an interesting topic. Then, I want to examine how the author portrays a white African young man's psychological problem.

J. M. Coetzee depicts John as a miserable character who suffers from anxiety. John is a college student in South Africa who tries to live on his own without his family. John has a big dream of becoming a poet. In John's mind, he has arranged many goals to make his life perfect once it all comes true, but he never prepares himself to fail. Then, John is never satisfied with everything, which leads him into his miserable life. He is a lonely person and gets hurt because of the way of life that he has built. In the last year of his college, there is also political unrest/PAC (drive white into the sea in South Africa), which forces him to move to England. It makes him more anxious.

John, as the main character in *Youth*, shows that his psychological condition creates uneasiness for him. Since he lives by himself in South Africa until he

moves to England and cannot adapt well, it shows that his psychological condition tortures him. Then, to cope with that, John develops a defense mechanism to make him feel less threatened by his anxiety. Therefore, I would like to analyze anxiety as the psychological issue that John suffers in *Youth* and the defense mechanism he uses to deal with it.

One of the reasons I want to study this novel is that the novel is the work from the winner of the Nobel Prize of Literature in 2003, J.M. Coetzee, a year after *Youth* was published in 2002. It can be said that with the unique story about youth life, the interesting psychological issues in it, and remarkable depiction, this novel has become one of the reasons for his Noble Prize title. The second reason is that this novel brings some psychological issues, which I am interested in these issues. The last reason is, I want to find messages from the author about anxiety and defense mechanisms.

Based on the reasons above, this research is worth doing because it will give positive insights for Coetzee's readers about anxiety and defense mechanism of a young man. Therefore, I would like to analyze the novel entitled "**J.M. Coetzee's *Youth: The Study Of Anxiety And Defense Mechanism***".

1.2 Identification of the Problem

Youth is known for the topic of a young man who struggle in his youth. The novel portrays some psychological issues: John's depression, Oedipus complex, anxiety, and defense mechanism. The focus of this research is his anxiety and defense mechanism. In this novel, the main character, John, is presented as the one who suffers from anxiety. His anxiety emerges because of two bases problem.

The first basis is his belief in pursuing his dreams. John wants to live on his own without his family. It is like a way of proving something. As life goes on, it seems the reality is out of his expectation and creates anxiety for him. Another basis of John's problem is his life environment, the social condition/living in apartheid in South Africa and England that makes more anxiety for him. That condition really tortures him and affects his life.

This study reveals how John's conflicts create anxieties for him and how John's experience of his anxiety causes the defense effort to make him less pain. Then, to overcome his anxiety, his ego tries to develop a defense mechanism. His defense mechanism plays a role in making him feel less threatened by his anxiety.

1.3 Review of Related Studies

The writer reviews some researches related to this research to guide and avoid similar research objectives. The first one is "Anxiety and Defense Mechanism As Seen in Peter Shaffer's *Equus*" (2019) by Nurfajri Ayu. The main idea of research is the man who fights for his anxiety about his strange desire toward horses. He is not the only character who suffers from anxiety in this play because most of the characters in this play also suffer from anxiety. The writer of this research mentions the causes of each characters' anxiety. The interesting point from this research is that the writer also mentions the positive and negative effects of each character's defense mechanism as a way to overcome their anxiety. It tells the reader that even though the defense mechanism will help us cope with the anxiety, it also gives us a negative impact. This research tries to tell the social environment takes responsibility for the anxiety issues that characters suffer in this play. While

in my study, the main character's anxiety is caused by his belief and social condition. Overall, this research is interesting, but this study's weakness lies in how the researcher writes her analysis. She does not explain it in detail.

The next related study is “Bella's Anxiety in Stephanie Meyer's *New Moon*” (2014) by Dennis Alamanda Agustya Oksawa. This research tells the psychological problem of Bella Swan as the main character in this novel. Bella suffers from anxiety after Edward leaves her because he is a vampire while Bella is human. The writer uses the theory of anxiety and defense mechanism to help his research. Then, the writer finds out the cause of Bella's anxiety and explains it clearly. He also adds the explanation of Bella's way to cope with her anxiety. The different thing about this research is that the writer also adds how Bella responds toward her anxiety, that is, Bella tries to repress and deny her anxiety. The result of the research is that Bella tries to forget all of her problems as her defense mechanism. It happens because of Jacob's help, her friend, who always keeps her in hard times. Therefore, the writer has done proper research and makes it clear. Unfortunately, the writer of this research much retells the plot of the novel. Sometimes, it is unnecessary for the analysis of research.

The next related study is "Anxiety and Defense Mechanism of Anne Frank As Depicted in *Diary of A Young Girl*" (2018) by One Ivonda Riawandono. This research shows the psychoanalysis issue of Anne Frank as the main character who lives in a hideout under the Nazi occupation in the Netherlands. She also gets terrible treatment from her family. In this research, the writer finds that the cause of the main character's anxiety is her bad life condition. This research has quite

the same topic as my study. However, the result of this research shows that the root of her psychoanalysis issues comes from her bad life condition. As for my research, I discuss the basis of the main character's problem come from the main character's inner issues. Therefore, the writer draws a clear explanation of each analysis in this research. Unfortunately, this research does not give more description of the intrinsic elements of the novel.

The next related research is "J.M Coetzee's *Youth: Anxiety in England*" (2003) by Donald Vanouse. This study tells about the anxiety that John suffers in *Youth*. The researcher explains why John feels anxious, which is political unrest in South Africa and childhood's emotional struggle. According to Donald Vanouse, the finding of this research is anxiety and alienation are the main themes in *Youth*. He also draws the anxiety and alienation situation of John from the novel's excerpts. Therefore, this research discusses quite a similar topic to my research, and the writer draws a clear explanation about the issue. This research's weakness is that the writer only examines John's anxiety in a general way, such as the main character's life parts that suffer from anxiety. At the same time, my research will try to dig out deeply about John's anxiety and the causes and also mention how John copes with his anxiety.

The next related research is "'No More Mothers and Fathers': The Family Sub-Text in *J.M. Coetzee's Novels*" (2003) by Paola Splendore. This research tries to tell that there is always conflict in a family. However, they are still a family. What happens in these selected novels is that there is no romance in the families. The works represent children in *In the Heart of the Country* (1977) and

Life & Times of Michael K (1983). The representation of parents in *Age of Iron* (1990) and *The Master of Petersburg* (1994). Indirectly, it all happens because of apartheid conditions and also the colonial system. The writer draws a situation where the children's figures hate their parents because of their bad life condition and the parents' figures who fail for their parental responsibilities. Then, this research's finding shows that the family no longer has a function in Coetzee's works. This topic is quite similar to my research that discusses family in Coetzee's works. Coetzee still portrays there is no romance in *Youth*. Unfortunately, this research did not explain more about the effect of family figures' loss. In contrast, my research tries to connect it with *Youth*'s main character's psychological condition, which is this anxiety and defense mechanism.

1.4 Research Questions

There are some topics that the writer could analyze in this research, but I will only focus on these questions:

1. What kinds of anxiety does John suffer from based on Freud theory?
2. What types of defense mechanisms does John use to overcome his anxieties?

1.5 Scope of the Research

There are some other issues discuss in *Youth*. In order to make the analysis clear, compact, and does not out the topic, the writer sets several limitations for this research. In doing the research, I will only focus on the intrinsic elements of the novel. This research only focuses on examining anxiety and defense mechanisms in *Youth* as the dominant issues in the novel. I concentrate solely on

the types of John's anxiety, the cause of John's anxiety, such as family, environment, and society. This research also wants to reveal how the author depicts defense mechanisms in *Youth* to reduce the main character's anxiety.

1.6 Objectives of the Study

This research aims to examine the types of anxiety of the main character, John in *Youth* by J.M. Coetzee, the causes of his anxiety, and the defense mechanism he uses to protect himself. Anxiety and defense mechanism are part of psychoanalysis that people need to know more. Also, it will help people understand more about psychoanalysis theory. In order to understand the types of John's anxiety, I analyze the symptom of his anxiety. The writer would also examine all of the factors that cause anxiety for John, his two bases problem. Besides, I want to determine the types of defense mechanisms that the main character used to overcome his anxiety.

