

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Human must do everything to stay alive. This effort forms a human's instinct called life instinct. Based on Sigmund Freud's life instinct theory, Saraswati (2011) states that human's life instinct is divided into two kinds: life of the individual and species. Boeree (2006) defines life instinct of the individual as basic needs for water and food for human to stay alive. Whereas, life instinct of the species is where human tend to have urgent instinct to have sex, in order to create more of their species. Boeree calls it libido.

The writer finds that theory of life instinct by Sigmund Freud is related to Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, where life instinct of the individual is the very basic or the lowest position in the hierarchy of needs. On Maslow's theory, Allaire et al., (2013) states that human will not be able to reach the higher position on the hierarchy of needs before the lower needs are fulfilled. The writer concludes that human has to comply with their needs for food and water before reaching the higher position in hierarchy of needs which is needs for safety or security. Safety or security needs is an effort by human to protect and survive in the chaotic situation and from the physical danger in the society (Aruma & Hanachor, 2017). Therefore, the point of safety or security needs is keeping human away from harm.

Based on the explanation of safety needs, the writer argues that defense mechanism is one of the human's ways to reach their safety or security needs. Boeree (2006) explains that "defense mechanism is a technique that helps human to overcome their anxieties by unconsciously blocking frightening impulses of anxiety into something more acceptable and less threatening" (p. 7). In short, human's defense mechanism is an effort to fulfill their safety or security needs, in order to avoid any chaotic situation and physical danger from their society.

Defense mechanism theory is initialized by Sigmund Freud and Anna Freud, his daughter. The theory is further developed by other scholars like S. H. Cooper, 1989; Gero, 1951; Schafer, 1968, 1976; Wallerstein, 1983 (Delroy L. Paulhus, Bram Fridhandler, 1997) The most popular kinds of defense mechanism are repression, reaction formation, regression, projection, sublimation, displacement, denial, and rationalization. Apart from those eight, there are other kinds of defense mechanism such as asceticism, isolation, introjection, and undoing.

To find an interesting object for this study, the writer searched for famous movies which have Golden Globe nominations or awards and/or Academy nominations or awards 2018. The writer found that *Three Billboards outside Ebbing, Missouri* by Martin McDonagh is an interesting movie because the movie shows how a person deals with anxiety, which is the main focus of this study.

This movie is about a mother, Mildred Hayes, whose daughter, Angela is the victim of a murder seven months earlier. One day when she is on her way home, she sees three old billboards along Ebbing roads. She decides to rent those billboards

from Red Welby and displays unsolved case of her daughter. Each of the billboards is written 'Raped while dying', 'And still no arrest', and 'How come Chief Willoughby?'. The questions in the billboards imply her appeal to Chief Willoughby, the chief police who is in charge to solve the mystery of her daughter's murder.

Mildred and her billboards become famous in the city. Surprisingly, she gets huge rejection from people in Ebbing. It is because people in Ebbing believe and love Willoughby, their police chief. As a result, Mildred has to deal with her anxiety in solving every problem that comes to her like when she is interrogated for drilling a dentist's tumb and is confronted by a priest in the city who disagrees with her billboards.

Mildred's problem is getting more serious when Willoughby is found taking his own life. Will is known for suffering from cancer which worsen his condition and made him get depressed.. Then, she is blamed for Will's death by her ex-husband, Charlie, who later burns her billboards because of his anger toward Mildred. The anxious feeling felt by Mildred as a result of the accusation and the billboard burning triggers her to take revenge by burning the police station. Mildred thinks that the police is the one who burns her billboards.

Mildred's final anxiety is when Dixon tells her that a guys he caught in the bar and suspected as Angela's murderer is released by the police because his DNA is not match with Angela's murderer. Instead of feeling hopeless, Mildred turns all her anxieties into new spirit and strength. At the end of the movie, Mildred and Dixon are driving together to Idaho, the place where the guy lives.

The writer thought that this movie is a perfect object for this study, because the main character, Mildred Hayes has many anxieties in her life. However, she uses defense mechanism to protect herself from deep depression. Previous studies using defense mechanism as theory is written by Eldyaniko Turmudi who wrote a thesis titled 'Defense Mechanism on The Main Character Depicted in The Babadook Movie'. That study is about Amelia, the main woman character who struggles to teach her disobedient son. Amelia uses defense mechanism to turn her anger into positive behavior (Turmudi, 2017).

This study is different from the previous study because Turmudi's study only focuses on defense mechanism theory by Sigmund Freud and only uses three defense mechanisms which are displacement, sublimation, and denial. While in this study, the writer is applying defense mechanism theory by Sigmund Freud and Anna Freud. Their theory contains fourteen kinds of defense mechanism which are repression, reaction formation, projection, displacement, denial, razionalitation, sublimation, regression, asceticism and restriction of the ego, isolation, turning against the self, introjection, identification with aggressor, and undoing.

1.2 Field of the Study

The field of this study is literature, especially movie.

1.3 Scope of the Study

This research focuses on defense mechanism used by the main character, Mildred Hayes, in the *Three Billboards outside Ebbing, Missouri*. Mildred's behavior

and gesture in the movie will be analyzed using defense mechanism theory by Sigmund and Anna Freud.

1.4 Problem Formulation

The writer formulates problems of the study of this research as follows:

1. What kinds of defense mechanism are used by the main character, Mildred Hayes, in *Three Billboards outside Ebbing, Missouri* movie?
2. How does Mildred Hayes make use of the defense mechanism to deal with her anxieties in the movie?

1.5 Objectives of the Study

With regards to the problems mentioned, this research is conducted to achieve these following objectives:

1. To find the kinds of defense mechanism used by the main character, Mildred Hayes, in the *Three Billboards outside Ebbing, Missouri* movie.
2. To know how Mildred Hayes uses the defense mechanism, in order to overcome her anxieties in the movie.

1.6 Significance of the Study

In this study, the writer hopes that the readers can learn different kinds of defense mechanism in the psychoanalysis theory. Later, the readers can find out kinds and processes of defense mechanism employed by the main character, Mildred Hayes, in the *Three Billboards outside Ebbing, Missouri*.

1.7 Definition of Term

1 Defense :

A security of oneself from the negative result of disappointment, including the disappointment of empathic harm happened during childhood. (Cramer, 2006).

2 Mechanism :

A structure that enforces functions based on its operation and organization components (Bechtel & Abrahamsen, 2005).

3 Anxiety :

Uncomfortable feeling which oneself is hard to bear the burden (Boeree, 2006).

