

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of sub-chapters, namely, background of the study, statement of the problems, objective of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitations of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Anxiety often occurs in humans due to the conflict between internal desires and external pressures. It can be the fear or struggle of facing a problem, resulting in the conflict between the id, ego, and superego (Freud, 1936). As human grow old, they experience many emotional ups and downs that shape their psychological development. Psychological issues can cause both normal and abnormal behavior, resulting from the interaction between the id, ego, and superego. Freud posits that the psyche is composed of three components: the id, the ego, and the superego. These structures interact to shape an individual's personality, thoughts, and actions (Freud, 1928). However, psychological problems are natural and somehow unavoidable because they develop from unconsciousness.

Freud states that deeper connections between psychological and physical states come from the relationship between conscious impulses and emotions, such as pleasure and unpleasure (Freud, 1920). Pleasure is often related to a sense of stability, where the mind and body experience stability, while unpleasure develops from instability or conflict. This idea matches with psychoanalytic theory, which asserts that mental disorder or unresolved tensions lead to both emotional and physical discomfort. When individuals search for pleasure, they are essentially struggling for a state of stability, while unpleasure indicates a fundamental imbalance that disrupts this stability. Therefore, the experience of pleasure and unpleasure is not just a matter of emotional response but also a reflection of the mind's attempt to maintain internal balance.

According to Freud (1936), when the ego senses a danger, whether from internal desires or external pressures, anxiety arises as a vital psychological signal.

Anxiety is a result of the impulses of the id and the resistance of the ego and superego, which create conflict in the subconscious mind. The feeling of anxiety is unpleasant, as the condition is created by threat, fear, or another distressing emotion. However, the feeling of anxiety can be relieved unconsciously by a defense mechanism.

Defense mechanisms are unconscious strategies employed by the ego to manage stress caused by conflict between the id, ego, and superego. The defense mechanism is an individual psychological strategy to cope with anxiety and internal conflicts (Freud, 1966). Individual defense mechanisms can be identified in the protagonist's behavior as she investigates the case, frequently suppressing emotions or fears to keep in control. In Freudian psychoanalysis, the response to distressing or overwhelming experiences is relevant to the protagonist's subconscious handling of fear and trauma. Freud defines a mental process where bad thoughts are pushed into the unconscious to avoid unpleasant emotions as repression.

Lois Tyson stated in *Using Critical Theory* (2006) that during childhood development, individuals naturally experience an Oedipal attachment, in which they form a deep emotional bond with the parent of the opposite sex. This attachment is a normal stage in psychological growth and is rooted in unconscious desires and dependencies. However, this phase will gradually pass as individuals mature emotionally, changing their affection toward external relationships and developing stable familial bonds. Freud's psychoanalytic theory suggests that if this stage is unresolved, it may lead to psychological conflicts in adulthood.

A character, much like real people, has unconscious desires and fears that influence their behaviors. So, psychoanalytic theory is essential for literary criticism. Psychoanalytic literary analysis explores how characters' internal conflicts reflect deeper psychological struggles (Tyson, 2020). This study seeks to reveal the protagonist's anxiety and defense mechanisms she employed in her actions during the investigation of a closed murder case as her capstone project.

A Good Girl's Guide to Murder by Holly Jackson is a No. 1 New York Times bestseller when it was published. This novel is the first part of a young adult mystery trilogy, also known as her debut novel. The novel talks about a close murder case investigation conducted by a high school student named Pippa Fitz-Amobi. As the investigation continued, Pip's psychological state experienced significant changes, revealing hidden fears, unresolved trauma, and her subconscious motivations. The emotional weight of the investigation, combined with Pip's moral conflicts and fear for personal safety, triggers anxiety that manifests in various psychological forms. On top of that, her subconscious motivations manage the psychological stress, revealing her ego of defense.

The novel is an interesting study of the effects of obsession, trauma, and moral dilemmas on the human psyche. Pip's persistent search for the truth is driven by more than just curiosity; it reflects deeper psychological needs, such as a desire for control, a sense of justice, and perhaps even self-validation. Her investigation journey can be shown as an external manifestation of her inner conflicts and defense mechanisms.

In addition, *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder* examines more general societal concerns like media influence, police bias, and the perils of presumptions. Pip's research exposes the detailed human perception and questions the idea of truth. Furthermore, Pip's character arc exposes the psychological consequences of obsession. As she digs deeper into the case, she starts to show signs of paranoia, anxiety, and moral ambiguity. Her development reflects the cost of her non-stop investigation, making her appear as a character who possesses both strength and vulnerability. Highlights of her journey include the defense mechanism she employs to handle her psychological stresses.

This novel has been researched before, but no research discusses anxiety and defense mechanisms or any psychoanalytic approach. From the six previous studies, the writer aims to classify and identify the protagonist's anxiety and defense mechanisms in order to overcome her anxiety in the novel *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder* by Holly Jackson. There is a study with a similar source of data, but a different

theory, entitled Feminism Perspective in *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder* by Holly Jackson. Putri & Arini (2024), in this research, focus on the type of feminism portrayed by Pippa Fitz-Amobi in the novel. This study uses the theory of Rosemarie Tong, which categorizes feminism into different categories, including liberal and radical feminism. The other five previous studies have similarities regarding the theories and differences in the source of data. For instance, the study from Sarjono (2016) examined the type of anxiety, the cause of anxiety, and the defense mechanism used by Dr. Leidner in Agatha Christie's *Murder in Mesopotamia*. The next study from Kirana (2021) studies the anxiety of the characters in Han Kang's *Human Acts* novel, which examines the type of anxiety and how the anxiety occurs in the characters using Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory. Both of the studies have the same theory as this research, but differ in the source of data.

Based on the data above, the novel illustrates how Pippa's investigations into a close murder case lead to both normal and abnormal behavior that affects her and others. The writer chooses this novel as a source of data because it presents clear evidence of anxiety and psychological stress, as evident in the protagonist's behavior, which aligns with the novel's investigative theme. This study aimed to find the anxiety and uncover the defense mechanisms of the protagonist, Pippa Fitz-Amobi. This analysis will reveal the protagonist's anxieties in *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder* and how she employs a defense mechanism to overcome her anxiety due to her non-stop investigation into the closed murder case.

1.2 Research Question

Based on the background of the study, the research question can be inferred as follows:

1. What kind of anxiety occurs in the protagonist of the novel *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder*?

2. How does Pippa Fitz-Amobi use the defense mechanisms in Holly Jackson's *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder* to overcome her anxieties during the close murder case investigation?

1.3 Objective of the Study

To examine the anxiety and the defense mechanism Pippa Fitz-Amobi employs during her investigation. In this part of the analysis, the writer will examine:

1. The kind of anxiety that happens to Pippa Fitz-Amobi during her investigation.
2. The defense mechanisms she employed throughout the novel as her responses to anxiety.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to give benefits as follows:

1. Theoretical Benefit

The writer hopes that this study will provide new insights and contribute to future research, particularly in the literary analysis of Holly Jackson's *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder* novel and the field of psychoanalytic theory.

2. Practical Benefit

This study aims to provide a reference for students, researchers, and readers at the Universitas Trunojoyo Madura, particularly for those in the English Literature Department, who are interested in literary criticism studies. It provides a clear explanation and examples of how psychoanalytic theories, especially anxiety and defense mechanisms, intersect with literary studies.

1.5 Scope and Limitations of the Study

To avoid unrelated discussion, this research focuses solely on the protagonist of the novel *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder* by Holly Jackson. The protagonist, named

Pippa Fitz-Amobi, starts an investigation into a closed murder case. In the process of investigation, she experiences anxiety and employs a defense mechanism. This research specifically examines the anxiety that occurs to her and the defense mechanisms that she unconsciously employs as coping strategies throughout her investigation within the context of Pip's emotional and psychological responses to anxiety. The analysis is based on psychoanalytic theory, particularly the psychoanalytic theory by Sigmund Freud and the defense mechanisms approach by Anna Freud, with Sigmund Freud's foundational theory.

This research is limited to the analysis of anxiety and the defense mechanisms in the protagonist, Pippa Fitz-Amobi, and does not extend to other characters in the novel. The source of data in this research is only *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder* novel by Holly Jackson including the narratives and the dialogues. This research not cover the other novel in the trilogy or the series adaptation.