

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the author outlines the background of the study, research questions, significance of the study, and the objectives of the study. The theoretical framework used, particularly Freud's concepts of anxiety and defense mechanisms, is also introduced. Furthermore, this chapter explains the scope and limitations of the study to clarify its focus and direction.

1.1 Background of the Study

Literature has long been regarded as a mirror that reflects the complexity of human psychology. When psychological elements are explored through literary works, readers gain a deeper insight into the emotions, conflicts, and human behavior represented by the characters. As stated by Schwering et al. (2021) In their research, reading fiction enables readers to simulate the emotions of characters, thereby strengthening their own emotional awareness and empathy. The relationship between these two fields is intertwined and can enrich each other's understanding. Literature explores human behavior and the reasons behind it, while psychology studies human behavior and its causes. These two social sciences are interconnected and complement each other in understanding human behavior. Literary works play a crucial role in the relationship between literature and psychology. Literature studies humans and examines their inner lives in various aspects. The reason is that literary works are also the result of certain psychological conditions. In depicting human psychological conditions, literature provides additional insights that psychology lacks (Bishwas, 2018). Building on this relationship, psychological issues in literature frequently emerge through characters' internal conflict.

Literary texts, such as novels, are diverse and often represent human experiences. In terms of human conflicts, literary works can depict disputes, such as psychological issues, as shown through the characters' internal struggles (Hasra & Zulfaisya, 2020). Another research says that psychological novels are

a literary method in which a fiction focuses on the psychological processes, interior motives, and characters' mental narratives instead of simply telling a story (Psupito, 2020). This shows that literature serves as a productive site for examining complex psychological phenomena.

In this current era, there is much discussion about psychological issues, both in academic and popular contexts. This has encouraged many writers to take it up as a theme in their literary works. Writers employ various psychological techniques to make their characters seem more realistic. This can certainly evoke a range of emotions in readers, including sympathy, sadness, happiness, and fear. Readers will experience the living conditions, feelings, and mental states of the characters in the literary work. The strong emotions felt by readers can make them interested in the storyline created by the author (Dar, 2022)

The close relationship between literature and psychology supports the use of psychoanalytic criticism, particularly Freud's theory of anxiety and defense mechanisms, as a useful approach to analyzing the unconscious conflicts and psychological struggles depicted in literary characters. Within Freud's psychoanalytic framework, anxiety plays a central role as a signal of internal conflict between the id, ego, and superego. When anxiety arises, the ego unconsciously activates defense mechanisms to protect itself from being overwhelmed by these inner tensions. According to Freud (1926, p. 25), "Anxiety is a reaction to a situation of danger. It is obviated by the ego's doing something to avoid that situation or to withdraw from it." Other studies also suggest that if the ego has no way to deal with defensive behavior, anxiety will be very intense. Therefore, defensive behavior is useful because it can protect the ego from the pain caused by anxiety (Feist, 2018). Thus, combining the concepts of anxiety and defense mechanisms provides a more comprehensive understanding of how characters respond to internal psychological pressures.

In literary studies, Freud's psychoanalytic theory, particularly the concepts of anxiety and defense mechanisms, is highly relevant to this research. The use of these theories is considered highly relevant because it allows readers and

researchers to interpret not only the external actions of characters but also the inner struggles that influence those actions. Anxiety serves as an early signal of internal tension, while defense mechanisms function as the ego's unconscious strategies to reduce or manage that anxiety. Singh (2023) defines Defense mechanisms are unconscious mental processes that protect individuals from anxiety. Anxiety itself can appear in various forms, such as realistic anxiety, neurotic anxiety, and moral anxiety. When this tension arises, the ego unconsciously activates defense mechanisms to manage or reduce the pressure. These mechanisms consist of repression, denial, projection, displacement, regression, and sublimation. The ego's purpose in forming these mechanisms is to avoid directly confronting sexual and aggressive impulses and to protect itself from the accompanying anxiety (Freud in Feist et al., 2018). In literary analysis, these concepts help uncover the hidden psychological processes that shape characters' emotions, decisions, and behavior. Therefore, this study applies both concepts to examine how Adeline in *Haunting Adeline* experiences anxiety and uses defense mechanisms when facing her anxiety.

These psychological concepts are particularly relevant when examining literary works that depict deep emotional conflict and psychological tension. One such work is *Haunting Adeline* (2021) by H. D. Carlton, a dark contemporary romance novel that blends themes of love, obsession, and anxiety. The story follows Adeline Reilly, a successful writer who moves into her grandmother's old house in the woods and finds herself watched by a mysterious stalker, Zade Meadows. Although Zade is initially portrayed as a frightening figure, his character turns out to have positive aspects, such as his underground organization that protects kidnapped and abused women and children, complicating the narrative between protector and predator. As the novel progresses, Adeline experiences conflicting emotions: fearing the loss of her autonomy and sense of security, yet captivated by the obsessive Zade. This duality forms the novel's central conflict, placing Adeline's inner struggle at the heart of the story.

Several previous studies have applied Freud's psychoanalytic theory to analyze anxiety and defense mechanisms in literary and film narratives. Andini (2023) examined the characters in *Maleficent* and found that both heroic and antagonistic figures experience anxiety and unconsciously employ defense mechanisms such as displacement, sublimation, reaction formation, and projection. Similarly, Siregar et al. (2022) analyzed *Happy Gilmore* and revealed that the protagonist experiences realistic, neurotic, and moral anxiety, accompanied by various defense mechanisms, including sublimation, displacement, projection, denial, and regression. Other studies also highlight the role of trauma and inner conflict in triggering defensive responses, such as Setyo & Nugroho (2024) analysis of *No Longer Human*, Warkey et al. (2020) study on *Exodus: Gods and Kings*, and Putra et al. (2023) research on *Room*, all of which demonstrate that anxiety activates unconscious ego defenses as coping strategies. However, these studies primarily focus on films or narratives involving external trauma, violence, or moral conflict and do not explore psychological dynamics within the dark romance genre, particularly those centered on obsessive relationships and female protagonists. Furthermore, based on the researcher's review of previous studies, *Haunting Adeline* has not been examined using Freud's theories of anxiety and defense mechanisms. Therefore, this study addresses this gap by analyzing the anxiety and defense mechanisms experienced by Adeline in *Haunting Adeline* through Freud's psychoanalytic framework.

Based on the gaps identified in previous studies, this research focuses on Adeline as the central character, whose psychological experiences provide a compelling case for examining anxiety within the dark romance genre. Unlike many female characters in typical romantic stories, Adeline is portrayed as a weak yet powerful figure, demonstrating how anxiety can have an impact. Still, she does not entirely determine a person's identity. The study of coping with anxiety and its mechanisms offers an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of how female characters in dark romance stories navigate anxiety and how they can protect themselves.

The relevance of analyzing Adeline as the main character in the novel *Haunting Adeline* also lies in the benefits this study can provide for the field of literary psychology. By applying Freud's theories of anxiety and defense mechanisms, this study aims to provide a deeper understanding of how unconscious psychological strategies emerge in dark romance literature. However, although this research tends to focus on novels for young-adults, research on anxiety and defense mechanisms in dark romance narratives has received little attention from academics. Therefore, this study makes an important contribution by exploring this controversial yet popular genre among readers. The authors place this novel within the framework of psychoanalytic criticism, expanding the scope of literary psychology to the dark romance genre, and providing significant benefits to the fields of literature and psychology. Ultimately, this study emphasizes that anxiety and defense mechanisms are not simply abstract concepts from psychoanalysis but also important narrative tools that reveal hidden dimensions of human experience.

1.2 Research Questions

This study focuses on Adeline's psychological conflict in *Haunting Adeline*, focusing on Freud's psychoanalytic theory, which includes anxiety and defense mechanism theory. Based on this focus, the study raises two questions:

1. What type of anxieties are experienced by the main character in the novel *Haunting Adeline*?
2. How does Adeline manage the anxiety she experiences in *Haunting Adeline*?

1.3 Objectives of The Study

Based on the research questions above, the objectives of this study are:

1. To identify and analyze the types of anxiety experienced by Adeline as the main character in H.D. Carlton's *Haunting Adeline*.
2. To examine how Adeline manages the anxiety she experiences throughout the novel *Haunting Adeline*.

1.4 Significance of The Study

1. Theoretical Significance

This study is expected to contribute to the field of literary psychology, particularly in the application of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory regarding anxiety and defence mechanisms found in contemporary dark romantic novels. By analysing the character of Adeline, this study helps to enrich academic discussions on how anxiety and the subconscious process are depicted in modern literature.

2. Practical Significance

Practically, this research can serve as a guide for students, researchers, and literature enthusiasts interested in exploring the relationship between literature and psychology. Additionally, this research can also help readers understand the psychological aspects of characters more deeply, thereby enhancing their ability to appreciate literature and analyse it critically.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

This study focuses on the analysis of anxiety and defense mechanisms experienced by Adeline as the main character in the novel *Haunting Adeline* by H.D. Carlton. (2021) The analysis was conducted using Sigmund Freud's anxiety theory and defense mechanism theory. The limitation of this research was that the data analyzed only came from the text of the novel *Haunting Adeline* in the form of the author's narrative, both the main character's and other characters' utterances, which reflect how anxiety is experienced and how defense mechanisms are used by the main character only.