

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background of the Research**

Everyone wants to lead a pleasant life in general, but not all of them can live up to their expectation. Some people feel troubled with the anxiety, fear, and unpleasant memories that arise in themselves. Therefore, people would easily show some unpleasant or undesirable emotion by little matters. To cover up those unpleasant emotion or feelings, people might conceal it with some behaviour that could protect them. The behaviour that people showed when they are facing the fear, anxiety, and unpleasant thoughts is called defense mechanism. Defense mechanism is a system which people showed when they feel threatened by a fear of unknown danger or situation. Sometimes, those behaviours are appeared unconsciously, even the one who showed this system do not aware of it. The defense mechanism that people usually shown may seem common, but actually what they act and behave is done under some circumstances that they do not aware.

Defense mechanism related to id, ego, and superego that control the whole system in people's mind. Id is the components of personality of people which they inherited from birth. Id is considered as pleasure principle, which means the need of id should be satisfied immediately. Ego is the part of id that has been influenced by external factors. The function of ego is to work out something to fulfil the need of id. Meanwhile, superego related to the moral principle which

affects people's feelings of guilt when they did something wrong. These three components related to each other to show the personality of someone.

Based on Freud theory in (Hall, 2019), the defense mechanism deals with the human's ego. Defense mechanism appears when human have some conflict, and they could not cope of it. In other words, some human behave in other way to conceal themselves from the anxiety, fear, and any kinds of negative minds. People would unconsciously protect themselves from the unacceptable feelings. The defense mechanism can be seen in the literary works besides in the real life. In the whispering skull novel, the main character reflected some behaviour when he faces some unpleasant feelings or emotions.

**Lockwood uttered an oath. "No! No, I don't! You dislodged the net, George—that was how the Visitor was able to escape and ghost-lock you. You could have died! The problem is that, as always, you're too easily distracted. You need to get your priorities straight! Look at this mess in here—" (Stroud, 2014, p.96)**

In the novel, the main character reflected one of the mechanisms, which is displacement. The main character showed the displacement by take his anger out on his friend. The reason he vented out his anger on his friend is to lessen the frustrations. The main character has reflected the mechanism through his utterances.

There are some other types of defense mechanism that the main character showed. When frustrated by the situation, the main character sometimes would also behave in a more mature way. Freud in (Hall, 2019) stated, sublimation is type of mechanism which changing the negative impulses into a more acceptable way or a mature way.

“As I descended the spiral stairs, I could hear the shuffling of shoes on a polished floor, and the whip, whip, whipping of a blade through air. Soft, crisp impacts told me the sword was finding its target. **Lockwood, as was his habit after an unsatisfactory job, was ridding himself of his frustrations.**” (Stroud, 2014, p.32)

As the quotation above, the main character showed how he usually released the frustrations after an unsatisfactory job. Through his behaviour, the main character reflected how the sublimation works in his daily life whenever he feels down. Similar to the real life, sometimes people would find a more mature way to release the frustrations and unpleasant feelings.

The whispering skull was written by a British writer of fantasy fiction, Jonathan Stroud. Stroud began to write stories at his young age. The one of the best-selling of his work is *Bartimaeus* trilogy. In 2013, the first book of Lockwood & co. which entitled *The Screaming Staircase* was released, and followed by the sequel, *The Whispering Skull* in 2014. The story was achieved a highly critical acclaim from Rick Riordan. *The Whispering Skull* novel is a mystery thriller novel that surrounds three teenagers. The three teenagers work as psychic operator who hunts the ghost. In the story, they experienced some events that they never seen before. They have to get through every circumstance to prove that they are capable in this field.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher uses the psychological approach which proposed by Sigmund Freud. *The Whispering Skull* novel is data source which the researcher will analyse. The data will be taken from one of the main character, Lockwood. No matter facing hauntings or social matters between the other characters in the novel, Lockwood showed some behaviour which called

as defense mechanism. The researcher later will make a list of data that has been found in the novel. Lastly, the researcher will discuss one by one the types of defense mechanism that Lockwood has shown in the novel.

## **1.2 Identification of the Problem**

Identification of the problem is how to identify the all problem that appears from the background (Creswell as cited in Nugroho & Viladinia, 2018). According to the background of the research above, the researcher found some problems could be identified such as;

1. The anxiety and fear which caused the defense mechanism appeared in *The Whispering Skull* novel
2. Types of defense mechanism that showed in the novel
3. Through what the defense mechanisms are reflected by the main character.
4. The ego which arisen in the character itself
5. Id, ego, and superego which caused the conflicts of the characters

## **1.3 Limitation of the Problem**

Based on problems that showed in the identification of the problems, the researcher limits this research into:

1. The types of defense mechanism that found in *The Whispering Skull* novel
2. Through what the defense mechanisms are reflected by the main character.

## **1.4 Formulation of the Problem**

The researcher formulates the main problems to be answered as stated in the research question below:

1. What are the types of defense mechanism that showed by the main character?

2. Through what are the defense mechanisms reflected by the main character?

### **1.5 Objectives of the Research**

In this research, the researcher found two objectives why the researcher does this research below:

1. To find out what types of defense mechanism that the main character showed.
2. To find out through what the defense mechanisms are reflected by the main character.

### **1.6 Significance of the Research**

#### **1.6.1 Theoretically**

This research has some purposes in theoretically. First, this research is expected to give some useful further information for the readers about the theory of defense mechanism of a character. Second, this research also expected to enrich reader's knowledge, experience, perception as well in the using of materials science research, especially about the knowledge of human's ego. The last, this research would become a comparison for the future research.

#### **1.6.2 Practically**

Practically, this research is expected to be useful for the following sides. First, this research aims to enrich the students' English language's knowledge in literature field especially in defense mechanism theory. This research also gives some references to the readers who are trying to extend their insight about the defense mechanism of a character in the novel.

## 1.7 Definition of Key Terms

**Defense Mechanism** : human's ways to behave in order to protect themselves from anxiety, fear, and traumatic experiences.

**Anxiety** : A feeling of fear about something would happen.

**Denial** : A state when people could not face and deny the truth or fact that happened.

**Displacement** : A state when a person changing threatening impulses from one object into another object.

**Sublimation** : A defense mechanism of how humans behave in an acceptable way instead of in unacceptable behaviour when they have a conflict.