

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

A case of child sexual abuse has become a common cause in the community, particularly in Indonesia. According to the Child Protection Commission Indonesia i.e KPAI (2011), there were 2,275 cases of violence against children, 887 cases, including child sexual abuse. In 2013, out of 2,637 violence against children, 48 percent or around 1,266 that is classified as child sexual abuse (Noviana 2015). Moreover, in 2020, cases of violence against children, which are dominated by sexual violence in Indonesia, have not decreased. Cases of violence against children reported in 2019 were recorded at 1,975 and increased to 6,820 in 2020. Sexual abuse is not only occurred in adults of women and men but children as well. Regarding these, 88.24 percent of women and 70.68% of men in Indonesia aged 13-17 have experienced physical violence. Meanwhile, in the category of emotional violence, 96.22% of women and 86.65% of men in Indonesia have experienced it

The report “Global Report 2020: Ending Violence in Childhood” noted that 73.7% of Indonesian children aged 1-14 years experienced physical violence and psychological aggression. Sexual violence is any dehumanizing, insulting, attacking, or other actions against the body, a person’s sexual desire, or reproductive function. Sexual harassment at children is generally determined by contact between children and parents, usually used to stimulate sexuality with her children (David 2011). Cases of sexual violence occur at elementary, junior

high, and high school levels and up to higher levels. Perpetrators of sexual violence do not only come from strangers, but they can come from close relatives or friends. Based on several cases that occurred, the perpetrators of violence could have been committed by family, friends, or somebody else (Beitchman 1992).

The impact of sexual abuse suffered by children is prolonged trauma, depression, insomnia, a significant risk of contracting illness, pregnancy, sexual inclination even to carry out such actions to other adults. Sexual abuse in childhood can involve many psychological sequels, including low self-esteem, anxiety, and depression. Childhood is a crucial period in shaping a person's personality. Children who receive attention and affection from parents will experience emotional stability (Carducci, 2009). On the other hand, children who suffer from painful childhood memories will experience emotional instability. All their recent experiences will affect their future behavior and psychological condition (Emir, 2016).

Historically, a broad conception in analytic literature is that trauma in childhood disrupts its development into adulthood, making the person more anxious. The overflow of the ego caused by trauma is thought to leave the memories of the naturally indelible trauma (conscious or unconscious) which causes continuous flashbacks, repetition of affective experiences, reactivation of behavior driven by trauma, trauma-determined fears, and traumatic (Frued, 1920).

Traumatic situations can cause psychological trauma. That happens because of the difficulty of a person's ability to overcome their trauma too. Also, it leads to people who are afraid of death, mutilation, and also psychosis. Traumatic infidelity leads people to bad feelings about unpleasant thoughts (Edward, 2002). The person tends to feel physically and emotionally affected by the trauma itself. The situation can be worst when the traumatic event happens continuously. People may also feel healing, pain, betrayal of trust, and such disorientation. (Giller 1999).

In the journey of life, everyone went through various moments and experiences, some of them are pleasant or unpleasant which might leave deep impressions in one's mind and makes them never forget about it. Over time, the unpleasant memories became part of one's semi- and unconscious natures later remembering the moments because the unpleasant are often a bit harder to fix it. Some people might think they are "followed" by their unpleasant memories (Michel, 1981). The trauma deals with the scary feeling that is caused by the unpleasant memories faced by someone. Psychologically, it could be stated that the person is experiencing 'trauma'. Along with depression, victims of sexual harassment already have impaired social functions within their environment (Ellis 1981).

Most individuals who have experienced trauma tend to feel anxious because of the bad experiences faced in their lives. Childhood can be a crucial stage in someone's life (Freud, 1905). That's because, during their childhood, people usually have several experiences, including traumatic ones, which might affect

their lives at an older age. When children have a terrible experience, such as painful trauma in the past, they will feel anxious when remembering the trauma. Anxiety not only occurs in childhood but also in all ages. From all ages, the anxiety that occurs in childhood is the most important, because the anxiety in childhood can influence the children's personality in the future. One way to understand the development of psychology in humans is by reconstructing the events in the past. When the children grow, it is possible if they meet the same condition. They feel anxious again since they have a terrible experience in the same condition. Furthermore, when they feel anxious, they unconsciously develop a sense of self-defense mechanism, while self-defense mechanism means some individuals reduce feelings of anxiety.

The writer is eager to investigate deeply about anxiety and self-defense in *The Night Child* which is the study object was written by Anna Quinn published in 2018. Anna Quinn is an author, teacher, and the owner of The writer's workshop and imprint books in port Townsend, WA. She wrote poetry several times before publishing the novel, *The Night Child*. Her writing has appeared in various literary journals and texts, including Literature circles and response instructor Washington 129 anthology, and more. The novel, *The Night Child*, is a powerful transformative novel with excellent writing. Furthermore, the novel was selected as Ingram's 2018 Best Book Club Book A and listed as the best book of literary fiction in Amazon. Hence, there is no doubt how this book is liked by many people. Many readers say that this novel has deep emotions and a

strong storyline. This book is extraordinary in describing the damage that child abuse can do to youth.

The Night Child is told about Nora Brown's life. Nora is a high school English teacher who was living in Seattle with her husband and six years old daughter, Fiona. When Nora was six years old on Valentine's Day, she was sexually abused by her father. One day when Valentine Day's nears, Fiona shows her the candy hearts that she received from their neighbor. With joy, Fiona show Nora the "kiss me" candy heart and chants "kiss me kiss me, mommy, kiss me", Nora snaps and smacks the candy heart to the ground, frightening Fiona. This incident is what happened to Nora when she was celebrating Valentine's Day with her family. She got a candy heart that contained the word "kiss me" from her father. After this incident, Nora buried her past until finally, she married Paul and had a child named Fiona. At present, when there is something that triggered her mind about her past, Nora feels anxious and unconsciously creates a self-defense mechanism.

Several reasons why the child's family relationships can affect outcomes (Sgroi, 1982). Sexual harassment is a form of incest committed by family members and can result in more severe consequences and long-term psychological trauma, especially in the elderly (Levitan RD, 2003). Therefore, she tries to escape from her unpleasant memories by pushing her experience out of herself. She suffers from what is called anxiety. Anxiety is a painfully emotional experience that has a meaningful role in the personality progress and the function of dynamical personalities. Nora tries to protect and defend her

injured *ego* to escape from the pressure of her painfully emotional experiences and is marked by her guilty feeling, known as a defense-mechanism (Freud, 1961).

According to Freud, Psychoanalysis' aspect has a meaning as the understanding that each individual has a dissimilar character that can construct their personalities. Several factors have a place outside the recognition of the person. Those factors are a feeling, an unconscious thought, and an experience that can give an impact on his or her actions and thoughts. The three elements of human personality are divided by Freud, and it is usually understood as the *Id*, the *ego*, and the *superego*. Those personalities always have controlled the individual's inner nature (Freud, 1923). Between the various aspects of the conflict that happened in the *id*, *ego*, and *superego*, it can give influence the individual's feeling into the appearance of anxiety. Under the pressing anxiety, sometimes the *ego* is obligated to take an ultimate measure to decrease the pressure. This measure is called a defense-mechanism.

Generally, a defense-mechanism serves a functional purpose to defend the *ego*, which can resist the pain of anxiety (Freud, 1961). This research focuses on the self-defense mechanism of Nora Brown, who has a bad experience after the incident when Valentine's Day arrived. She feels anxious when something might happen. This anxiety later leads her to develop a specific defense mechanism likes denial, displacement, and repression, to keep the anxiety unconscious. Freud argued that denial is a conflict between a person's unconscious reason to keep up pleasure, and the idealistic reason is to conserve

the truth, and it will do that relates to what is in the right of others' eyes. Meanwhile, a displacement is taking it out on someone or something which gets a less threat than the person who caused a fear, hurt frustration, or anger. Repression is removing distressing thoughts from the mind in a way not to remember them again (Frued, 1920).

Furthermore, the writer was interested in analyzing this novel because of the main character itself. She became a woman who did not believe in her husband, and she became a mother who was not right for her child. The effect of her childhood trauma has made Nora become a very fragile woman. She struggled to be a good wife for her husband and a good mother for her child. The abusive experience has effects which can be persisted into adult life with a higher incidence of the mental health problem (Mullen 1988).

The writer also found this study is quite intriguing to be conducted since there has not been any research found on *The Night Child* novel by Anna Quinn, as the object of journal articles or further research using Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis theory. However, there are some related studies found that discussed and analyzed defense mechanism. The first related studies: The Defense Mechanisms in E. A. Poe's Selected Short Stories *The Black Cat & The Tell-Tale Heart* by Rasynal Tenrisanna (2018) found in ELS Journal on interdisciplinary studies on humanities. This article discusses the self-defense mechanism of the main character in the stories, which is related to Freud's theory. This article aims to describe the kinds of defense mechanisms and expose the characters' mechanism in solving the conflicts.

In this research, the writer decided to explore how the main character was coping with her trauma through the defense mechanism that the main character unconsciously used. The writer used Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis theory to examine anxiety and self-defense mechanisms because the trauma that occurs due to anxiety needs to be identified in-depth to find out more about how to deal with it. The writer uses denial, displacement, and repression as Nora's defense. Thus, three types of defense mechanisms are related to the psychological problem inside the characters. It is common knowledge that when sexual abuse occurs in children, it can affect their future personality. In dealing with this trauma, a person usually does some self-defense to prevent ongoing trauma.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The writer has two statements of the problem to elaborate this analysis.

1. What are the causes of Nora's childhood trauma?
2. How does the trauma lead to Nora's defense mechanism?

1.3 Objectives of the study

Based on the statement of the problems above, the analysis of this study aims:

1. To find out the cause of Nora Brown's trauma that makes her anxious.
2. To explain briefly the defense mechanism which is used by Nora Brown to protect herself from her anxieties.

1.4 Significance of the Study

In general, trauma is an event that can be experienced by everyone. Both women and men can experience trauma in childhood. However, not all traumas can affect their lives in the future, and not all trauma requires self-defense mechanisms to protect their ego. However, this study also conducts works on defense mechanisms in reducing trauma. Thus, this study is expected to help another student of English department who wants to take the same topic regarding the issue of self-defense mechanism. Also, this research is expected in helping society understand a self-defense mechanism and provide new insights for people interested in the same field of study.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

Childhood Abuse	: Sexual acts which are through physical or non-physical touch targeting the sexual organs or sexuality of the victim. The incidents occurred where children were harmed or intimidated by those who have a position of power over them.
Childhood Trauma	: Bad events in childhood that left psychological and emotional scars can give an effect on the person's personality.
Defense mechanism	: The psychological strategies that aim to protect a person from anxiety unconsciously which are arising from unacceptable feelings or thoughts.