

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, the writer explains more about Psychoanalysis theory that the writer uses in analyzing the novel *Fangirl* by Rainbow Rowell. The discussion focuses on the defense mechanism done by Cather Avery as the main character in the novel.

Psychoanalysis Criticism is a form of literary criticism which uses some of the techniques of psychoanalysis in interpretation of literature, established by Sigmund Freud. His book *Studies on Hysteria* marks the beginning of the Psychoanalysis, although the term was not used by Freud until a year later (1896). The book is written by Freud and his colleagues, Josef Breuer (Strupp 7). According to Freud, the theory of psychoanalysis proposes that problems arise from unconscious desires and unresolved conflicts (qtd. in Heller).

Freud noted that Psychoanalysis theory is a study about human's behavior that begins in childhood experiences in family and each with patterns of adolescent and adult behavior that are the direct result of the bad experience (Tyson 12). Freud asserted that the origin of the bad experienced that may cause trauma or called as neurotic conflict is always to be sought in the person's early childhood. A neurotic conflict, according to Freud is essentially an unconscious intrapsychic struggle between ego and the id. It takes its origin from the childhood situation in which the ego was weak and vulnerable to strong

instinctual striving from the id, which for the most part is sexual and aggressive in nature (Strupp 58). The trauma human felt came from the unconscious mind. According to Freud, the unconscious is the storehouse of those painful experiences and emotions, those wounds, fears, guilty, desires, and unresolved conflicts we do not want to know about because we feel we will be overwhelmed by them (Tyson 12). There are many ways to deal with trauma. The ways to protect people from the bad experiences is called defense mechanism. There are many kinds of defense mechanism, one of them is sublimation.

This thesis analyzes sublimation as the defense mechanism done by Cather Avery to overcome her trauma and anxiety in her childhood. Before analyzing sublimation as defense mechanism, the writer explains trauma and anxiety separately.

2.2 Trauma

The term psychological trauma has been applied in many contexts; it has lost its origin meaning. Often, trauma is used to refer both the negative events that produce distress and the distress itself. As Briere stated in his journal article, technically the term psychological trauma refers only to the event, not the reaction, and should be reserved for major events that are psychologically overwhelming for an individual (3). Briere specifically defines a trauma as:

Direct personal experience of an event that involves actual or threatened death or serious injury, or other threat to one's physical integrity; or witnessing an event that involves death, injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of another person; or learning about

unexpected or violent death, serious harm, or threat of death or injury experienced by a family member or other close associate.

(460)

The person's response to the event must be involved intense fear, helplessness, or horror (or in children, the response must be involved disorganized or agitated behavior). (463)

In conclusion, a person can be called as having trauma if it is extremely upsetting and overwhelming individual's internal resources. There are many major types of accidents that caused people having trauma in their life, such as: natural disasters, mass interpersonal violence, large - scale transportation accident, motor vehicle accidents, house or other domestic fires, war, sexual assault, and child abuse are some of the common cause of traumatic events that people face.

2.3 Anxiety

Normally, when a person has some problems, one would automatically find a proper way to deal with them. However, some problems are more troublesome for some people than for other people. Those troubles lead to the anxiety state. Anxiety is probably the most common symptom of neurosis. Anxiety is extremely unpleasant and painful. At times, anxiety becomes attached to an object in the external world, manifesting itself as an irrational fear, and commonly called phobia; at other times it may be vague (Free-floating) (Strupp 36).

Freud originally proposed that anxiety results from repression of libido or psychic energy (qtd. in Heller, 21). This theory gradually proved unsatisfactory and was replaced in 1926 (Strupp 36). According to new theory, anxiety serves the function of a signal to inform the person that repressed feelings or impulses threaten to come to awareness (Strupp 36). Anxiety came into being in childhood when the ego was weak and felt threatened by erotic or aggressive impulses arising from the id.

Anxiety can be overcome by forcing the ego to come, as it were, with the threatening impulses and to demonstrate that they are not as dangerous as the id had originally believed, and that the adult ego had the strength to control them. Obviously, anxiety comes in many forms, but the cause of anxiety may be unknown or mysterious.

The causes of anxiety can be categorized into four groups. Firstly it happens because of the loss of loved objects - a person or things. For example a child loses a mother or a father. Secondly, it happens because of the loss of object's love. For example a child who is being abandoned by his/her mother or father. Thirdly, it happens because of the castration or genital injury. For example, a broken home child feels uncomfortable in daily life. The last is from disapproval and punishment by the superego. This anxiety related to the social circumstances.

Furthermore, there are some core issues that make people feel the anxiety. Those core issues led them to find some defenses to reduce their anxiety. Those core issues are:

2.3.1 Core Issues of Anxiety

In defining anxiety, Freud emphasized that it is a felt, affective, unpleasant state accompanied by a physical sensation that warns the person against impending danger (qtd. in Feist, 33). The unpleasantness is often vague and hard to pinpoint, but the anxiety itself is always felt. Below are some core issues of anxiety that people usually feel.

Fear of intimacy is an often subconscious fear of closeness that frequently affects people's personal relationship. This fear of physical and or emotional intimacy tends to show up in people's closest and most meaningful relationships. The sufferer tends to have difficulties in having a very close relationship with someone.

Fear of betrayal is a condition where people afraid to be betrayed by someone. This condition makes people are afraid to have relationship with other people. Most sufferers have difficulties and fears in believing someone. The sufferer might tend to have over awareness about what people see and think about them, and over analyze behavior or situation before they want to do something or go to some places. There are many causes that make people face this fear, they might be abused or betrayed by someone who is very close to them, especially parents.

Fear of being in a new environment, agoraphobia, is a condition where people feel aware and uncomfortable in a new place. This fear usually appears when the sufferer is in a wide open space and crowded environment. In a new environment, the sufferer feels panic, and disconnected from his or her

surrounding, and many more. There are many causes that make people face this fear, one of them is facing embarrassment in a public place.

Fear of Abandonment is a fear when someone feels afraid to be abandoned. Someone with fear of abandonment will face difficulty when she has relationship with other. She/he will protect her/his couple or someone who is close to his/her possessively.

Low Self Esteem is a condition when someone feels that he or she is not good enough. Person who has low self esteem think negatively about his/her self. There are many causes that make people having low self esteem. Those causes are: bullied by friends, punished by teacher or parents, embarrassed by someone, etc. Someone who has low self esteem has many negative characteristics like being shy, underachieving, having a negative attitude, socially inept, depressed, poor self image, pessimistic, conspicuous, and so forth.

Further, Freud asserted that anxiety is self regulating because it precipitates repression, which in turn reduces the pain of anxiety (qtd. in Feist, 34). The ego needs defensive behavior or defense mechanism to serve a useful function by protecting the ego against the pain of anxiety. If there is no defensive behavior in the ego, then, the anxiety would become intolerable.

2.4 Defense Mechanism

Defense mechanisms appear to be common phenomena in everyday life. When a person faces some undesirable feelings in life such as anxiety, frustration, conflict, and threat, one will automatically employ defense mechanisms to cope with such feelings. By the definition, defenses always are mechanisms of the ego by which unwelcome instinctual impulses are rendered less threatening (Strupp 52). In other words, defense mechanism is a way where the ego defends itself against unwanted impulses. It appears due to the conflict between id and superego, insists that the ego activate defense mechanism to protect against anxiety.

Freud first elaborated on the idea of defense mechanism in 1926, and his daughter further refined and organized the concept of the defense mechanism (Feist 34). Later, in her book *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense* 1936, Anna Freud expanded and systemized the defense mechanism. There are seven kinds of defense mechanism that Anna wrote in her book such as:

First, Repression is the most basic mechanism; its job is to repress a dangerous or unwanted impulse, idea or memory to come to people's mind. People tend to keep their dangerous or unwanted impulse, idea or memory into the unconscious mind (Heller 68).

Second, Projection is a defense mechanism where the ego tries to reduce the anxiety by attributing the unwanted impulse to an external object, or another person (Feist 37). In other words, projection is the misattribution of a person's undesired thoughts, feelings or impulses onto another person who does not have

those thoughts, feelings and impulses. This defense is used when the thoughts are considered unacceptable for the person to express.

Third, Reaction formation is a defense to convert the unwanted or dangerous thoughts, feelings or impulses into their opposites. For example, a man whose love denied by a woman, he like to tell other people that he actually hates her.

Fourth, Denial is a defense to blocks external events that perception threatens our ego (qtd. in Heller, 69). In other words, denial means refuse to accept reality or fact, acting as if a painful event, thought, or feeling did not exist.

Fifth, Rationalization is a defense when people try to devise extremely reasonable explanations of their behaviors to protect their self - esteem (69). For example, a woman who is on diet attending a birthday party, but eats a big slice of birthday cake, rationalizing that she does not want to be rude for not eating her friend's birthday cake.

Sixth, Displacement is a defense mechanism when people tend to shift or displace an impulse from a threatening to a non threatening object (70). For example, a husband who is angry at his boss displaces his anger at his wife, his pet, or other things.

Lastly, Introjection is a defense mechanism when people incorporate positive qualities of another person into their own ego (qtd. in Feist, 37). For example person who adopt the manner, values, or style of his/her idol star.

Each of defenses mechanism above serves the individual by protecting the ego from anxiety, but each is dubious from society's viewpoint. However,

sublimation helps both individual and social group. Sublimation is the repression of the genital aim of Eros by substituting a cultural or social aim (38). In other words, sublimation is the channeling of unacceptable impulses, thoughts, and emotions into more acceptable one. The sublimated aim is expressed most obviously in creative cultural accomplishments such as art, music, and literature, but more subtly, it is part of all human relationships and all social pursuits (38). Many human activities are on this type. For example, a surgeon may discharge through his professional activity because of his sadistic impulses; a painter may satisfy anal strivings by working with oils and paints. In most people, sublimation combines with direct expression of Eros and result in a kind of balance between social accomplishments and personal pleasures (38).

Defense mechanism protects the ego from the anxiety. Freud believed that both normal and abnormal behavior result from interactions among the id, ego, and super ego, among which the ego tends to distort or simply deny a reality that would arouse unbearable anxiety, which is called as defense mechanism (Kim 1).

2.5 Review of Related Studies

There are three related studies that are useful to help the writer in analyzing *Fangirl* by Rainbow Rowell, and to support the analysis. First, Setya Oktaviyani's thesis titled *Sublimation of Charlie in Stephen Chbosky's The Perks of Being a Wallflower*. Second, *The Complex Nature of Exposure to Early Childhood Trauma in the Psychoanalysis of a Child* by Judith M. Chertoff. Third, Orna Cohen and Ricky Finzi Dottan's Journal article about *Defense Mechanisms*

and Negotiation as Predictors of Co-Parenting among Divorcing Couples: A Dyadic Perspective.

The first thesis is Setya Oktaviyani's thesis on *Sublimation of Charlie in Stephen Chbosky's The Perks of Being a Wallflower* used same theory with the writer; sublimation. Oktaviyani's thesis tells about a boy named Charlie, who has trauma due to the sexual abused done by his aunt. His other traumas are the death of his aunt, and his best friend. Those traumas led him to create a defense mechanism to protect himself from the trauma and anxiety he experienced. Charlie writes letters addressed to a stranger he randomly picked from his phonebook. That kind of defense mechanism that Charlie used is called sublimation. Oktaviyani stated that Charlie did that defense mechanism because it is known that Charlie has difficulties in expressing his feeling and to share his problem, not only to her friend, but also to his family (Oktaviyani 44). Even Oktaviyani's defense mechanism is similar to the writer's defense mechanism, sublimation, but Oktaviyani's thesis is about trauma and anxiety of Charlie due to his abusive aunt, while the writer's thesis is about trauma and anxiety experienced by the main character caused by the abandonment of the her mother.

Second thesis is entitled *The Complex Nature of Exposure to Early Childhood Trauma in Psychoanalysis of a Child* by Judith M. Chertoff. This thesis is chosen since the thesis is about traumatic experience of Carlton in his childhood. His trauma happened due to parental conflicts that are often seen by Carlton at home. Just similar to the writer's thesis on the conflicts of Cather's parents that make Cather's mother left home and abandoned her children. Some

of Carlton's anxiety is similar to the writer's thesis about low self esteem, and trouble of controlling oneself at home. The difference is about the defense mechanism, while Chertoff's defense mechanism is about aggression, the writer's defense mechanism is about sublimation.

The third is Orna Cohen and Ricky Finzi Dottan's journal article about *Defense Mechanisms and Negotiation as Predictors of Co-Parenting among Divorcing Couples: A Dyadic Perspective*. This journal article is about how the divorce of the parents influenced their children, and how to manage their children so that they do not feel the trauma because of the divorce of their parents. The writer's thesis is also about trauma due to the abandonment of the main character of the novel. In the writer's novel, the parents of the main character failed to manage their children so that they faced deep trauma and anxiety due to the divorced parents and abandonment of the mother. By reading this journal article, the writer can understand how the divorced parents can make children face trauma and anxiety.

There are many kinds of defense mechanism. But, there are seven most famous defenses mechanism as mentioned before. One of the most famous defense mechanism is sublimation. Based on the definition, sublimation is categorized as positive defense mechanism. The writer uses sublimation as the defense mechanism to analyze *Fangirl* by Rainbow Rowell because the main character in the novel, Cather Avery, uses this defense mechanism to deal with her trauma and anxiety due to the abandonment of her mother.