

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

When people have a trauma on their life such as losing someone important, they will have a unique way to redeem their pain and trying to accept the fact (reach self-acceptance). Usually the most common reaction that happened to traumatized people is avoidance, they will avoid the fact that happened in the reality and created opposite fact in their unconscious mind then believed only on what fact they created which makes them less guilty. The term “guilty” derived from emotion of one person who does something which is wrong according to how the ones think that it is against their values which is automatically formed in one person’s mind and later this feeling confronted inside his or her heart. When one person experience guilt, it leads people to experience multi-emotion in a single time.

If we ask how a person comes to have a sense of guilt, we arrive at an answer which cannot be disputed: a person feels guilty (devout people would say “sinful”) when he has done something which he knows to be “bad.” But then we notice how little this answer tells us. . . .How is this judgment (of what is bad) arrived at? (Hughes 52)

In the common term, guilt considered comes when a person done something wrong. In fact, some stone-cold killers like what we saw on the media

did not experience guilt when they kill people. We actually experiences guilt only if we do something that wrong according to our values because there is no absolute wrong or right in this world.

Unconscious mind derived from unconscious motive. As an example of conscious motive; a person studying hard all night long to understand the lesson faster no matter how much times it takes. This kind of person consciously takes the consequence for doing it. However, unconscious motive work as an opposition of conscious motive that somebody is unaware for what he or she does. For example, a person who loses a flash disk before having an important presentation, the loss of the flash disk makes him or her fails in the presentation but losing the flash disk is not a part of that person's plan. According to Freudian's perspective about unconscious mind, "Although we are aware of our actions, Freud believed that the motivations underlying those actions are deeply embedded in our unconscious and are frequently quite different from what we believe to be" (Cramer 62). Guilty feelings formed indirectly inside a person's mind when the mistake are intentionally or unintentionally done. When a person feels guilty, system of defense mechanisms created automatically afterwards.

Death drive (Thanatos), also known as a Death Instinct, a congenital drive that repressed in one's unconscious mind and drag one's mind into destructive ways. In common term, this drive is called death wish. The energy created by Thanatos expressed as self – destructive behavior (Stress, Irritated). If Thanatos related to all negative drive, Eros oppositely relates with all positive drive. The energy created by Eros known as Libido. Libido produces love, affection, life-

sustaining activity while Thanatos's energy expressed in aggressiveness toward oneself or other person. Thanatos's energy strengthened the superego in the view of psychoanalysis. "The person feels more guilty as a result of not acting in an aggressive and angry way because the aggression is turned on the self by the criticism of superego" (Bocock 81). Since our world is bordered with social restrictions due to human rights, the process of releasing energy usually substituted from person to objects. Substitution cannot completely satisfy the death drives, some of the tension will remain. This residue of tension can be repressed by defense mechanism, but it will not vanish at all, someday it will come up again to the surface.

*The Goldfinch* is the third book of Donna Tartt published on September 2013. Donna Tartt has been a writer since 1992 and this book is long-awaited by her fans. Donna Tartt is like a once-a-decade writer since each of her novels always had a decade time-skip (*The Secret History* in 1992, *The Little Friend* in 2002, and *The Goldfinch* in 2013).

*The Goldfinch*'s main character, Theo, born in an unstable relationship of family and he has an exclusive background which is important for his life (Antiques). Unfortunately, drugs and alcohol are used by Theo as the way to release his tension and to escape from the reality. Theo adores a beautiful but unobtainable woman which is ended in unrequited love named Pippa. He also has to settle with a woman named Kitsey whom the one that Theo consider will bring him out from the unrequited love. Theo's friend, Boris, settled as a wild quality of friendship. Boris is a friend of Theo who followed by a bit of destructive forces

and Theo had a substitute father named Hobie, Theo's biological father is an incapable and unreliable father meanwhile Hobie is a wise and sexless father figure for Theo who taught him exclusive ability.

*The Goldfinch* won Pulitzer Prize for Fiction category and Andrew Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Fiction in 2014. Story plot served in the retrospective way. Theodore "Theo" Decker is the main character of the novel and also the narrator of the story. The novel starts in a room where Theo is in the state of introspection and remembering the journey of his life started from 13 years old. Theo's personality portrayed as a descriptive, selfish-but-kind, and the one who suffer complex psychological disorder due to the loss of the caregiver in his childhood. Despite of his characterization, he is covered by his good sense of decency which makes him precious. Klein, a Freudian psychoanalyst, said that child development is based on the experience those child had. "What come to our notice, among other things, as excessive educational difficulties in the child arise from the processes which have formed and still are forming its character and which underlie any later neurosis or defect of development from which it may suffer" (149). The loss of the main caregiver is described as a strong traumatic experience, especially if it is experienced by a child, the child's characters development indeed gone bad and in the worst case; destructive ways.

The writer primary focuses on the analysis of this novel is the process of how death drives (Thanatos) of Theo drag him to destructive behavior (drug, alcohol, and cigarette). The life instincts (Eros) of Theo unexpectedly grow stronger than his death instinct alongside with his maturity. Forced by the

insecurities and fears that caused by the painting he unintentionally stolen and fake antiques he has sold, Theo planned to stop running from his fears and set a counter force in the form of responsible attitude. Theo fights against person, objects, or event that could traumatize him.

Defense Mechanism which is used to reach responsible attitude is the secondary focus of this study. To form a responsible attitude, it needs a huge effort. This is followed by the appearance of Theo's anxiety and guilt feelings in the novel. These appearances will be analyzed furthermore using sexual development theory of Sigmund Freud which determine what defense mechanism used by Theo according the level of maturity he had. Based on Sigmund Freud's model of human psyche (Id, Ego and Superego), Feeling of guilty are formed by superego as a result if we betray our "Morality Principle". "...the superego serves as a filtering agent, suppressing the desires and instincts forbidden by society and thrusting them back into unconscious. Overall, the superego manifests itself through punishment. "The superego uses energy from the death instinct to turn the ego with its criticisms of the inadequacies of the person given the standards of the ego ideal, both the positive ones of what the ego should be, and negative ones about what the ego should not do" (Bocock 55). The Id is the place where human put their real desires, unspoken secrets, biggest fears, and superego acts like defenses to maintain the overcome from these unconscious to the real act in the environment. "Defenses are mental operations that remove components of unpleasurable affects from conscious awareness" (Blackman 1).

The feeling of guilty in Theo makes him suffering several psychological symptoms such as desperation, crowd fear and bad dream (nightmare). These psychological disorders considered as result of Theo's death drive. The writer argues that psychological problem is harder to be solved than physical problem. When people lose something precious like car, it can be substituted by motorcycle, or just save money to buy a new one. But if they lose a person, especially someone close to them; it cannot be changed, denied, or substituted. For those reason, losing someone indeed feared the most. In Theo's cases, someone closed to him died because his own mistake, though it was not proofed clearly. That is why Theo feels sinful, blaming himself, low self-esteem, and guilty. " 'Guilt' is a concept that forms part of a matrix to do with moral division and reunion: 'transgression', 'fault', 'accusation', 'blame', 'plea', 'shame', 'contrition', 'remorse', 'repentance', 'apology', 'punishment', 'revenge', 'forgiveness', 'reparation', 'reconciliation' " (Singh 5). Guilt also demands a responsibility over it and it is fascinating to analyze how people dealing with it including the denial and avoidance that illustrated of people nowadays if they are having a problem such as guilt.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problems**

Background of the study will lead some statements that are going to be analyzed. Following statement are formulated to make a clear focus on the analysis.

1. How does Theo save himself using his Life Instinct (Eros) to struggle against his Death Instinct (Thanatos)?

2. How is Theo's sense of responsibility created as the impact of his struggle?

### **1.3 Objective of the Study**

In organizing the analysis, there are several objectives that the writer wants to reach. Those objectives will be used to answer the statement of the problem mentioned above. The writer wants to answer those questions in order

1. To reveal Theo's struggle against his death instinct
2. To find out the impact of Theo's struggle that creates sense of responsibility

### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

By analyzing the novel "*The Goldfinch*" by Donna Tartt, the writer hopes that the readers or literature students will get a new knowledge about applying psychoanalysis in a literature works. This study expected to give deeper knowledge and understanding of how Eros and Thanatos applied to analyze the mental changing of *The Goldfinch*'s main character, Theo. Eros and Thanatos are balancing against each other in Theo's unconscious mind. Theo's sense to form a responsible attitude succeeded toward his level of maturity. Theo uses multi defense mechanism to protect his ego against his guilt feeling in this story. This writer hopes that this thesis can help other students from any English Department especially for those who analyze the same topic.

### **1.5 Theoretical Background**

Psychoanalysis contains a perfect understanding about conscious and unconscious mind. This theory developed by Sigmund Freud. "In the interaction of the conscious and unconscious, we shape both ourselves and our world" (Bressler 143). Human mind divided into two parts which is conscious mind that the place for anything we aware of like and think rationally and unconscious mind where our biggest fears, unspoken secret, darkest desires and fantasy are lies, it also contained by some memories that outside of what we can rationally remember. Anxiety is also a part of psychoanalytic theory. According to psychoanalysis theory, anxiety is a psychological appearance, a reaction that followed by nervousness when a person faces a distressing situation. It is not the same like fear because anxiety happened in unavoidable and uncontrollable situations. Anxiety can reveal our "Core Issues" (issues that define our being in fundamental ways and that we carry through lifes, such as fear of intimacy, fear of abandonment, low self-esteem, fear of betrayal, an insecure or unstable sense of self, confusion about one's sexuality, and the (like) because we are anxious in situations in which those issues are in play" (Tyson 19).

Defense mechanism is used to avoid our anxiety to come up to the surface, there are many kinds of defense mechanism such as regression, sublimation, projection, etc. but it all come up by one meaning that defense mechanism used to limit our unconscious mind and kept it unconscious. When anxiety comes into one's mind, repression is taken as the first step to avoid anxiety. When repression fail to cope the anxiety, that is the moment where defense mechanism used. "The executive apparatus of the mind (the ego) rejects any unconscious drives (the id)



that might prompt behavior that would be incompatible with our civilized conception of us” (Solms 84). Eros and Thanatos are the psychoanalytical terms founded by Sigmund Freud. These terms appear firstly in Freud books *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* in 1920 which is called death instinct; it is the same like death wish, and Eros as life instinct. Bases of this term are traumatic events. Soon after World War I, Freud finds that several soldiers who had a strong traumatic experience hold an unconscious desire to die but tempered by their life instinct. Energy created by Eros called Libido, positive energy that moves based on the primitive pleasure principal (food, sex) while Energy created by Thanatos is called aggression. This energy can irritate one’s mind and considered violence if directed to external objects (person). Committing suicide considered as a state when a person has a lack of Libido and unconsciously allows death drive to advance. The common causal factors are usually the feeling of guilt and shame. “Guilt is destructive aggressiveness turned on the ego of a person instead of being discharged on external objects in the world” (Bocock 56). The relation portrayed in the novel that Thanatos led Theo to be aggressive in the moment when his guilt feeling cannot be repressed anymore by superego and defense mechanism.

### **1.6 Method of the Study**

The writer uses qualitative research method on this analysis. The first step done by collecting data from a lot of sources of data such as novel, various books, reviews and other sources. After collecting the data, the writer analyzes it using close reading method as the step to relate the data with the Eros and Thanatos issue in the novel. Close reading is needed to make deep and clear understanding

of the text itself especially to find the relation between Freudian's defense mechanism, Eros and Thanatos and the guilt feelings to the main character of the novel. "Close Reading, the scrupulous examination of the complex relationship between text's formal elements and its theme, is how the text's organic unity was established ..." (Tyson 141).

The writer analyzes the main point of the novel that happened in main character's plot. Analysis is based on psychoanalysis theory to support the defense mechanism and Eros Thanatos terms, including how Theo coping with the loss and then succeeded to reach his self-acceptance. There are two parts of the analysis of this study. First, the writer will explain how Eros saves Theo from Thanatos by describing the events that bring Theo to Thanatos and Eros. The events that bring Theo to Thanatos will be divided into two parts. The first is Thanatos based on Theo's anxiety and guilt feeling, second is Thanatos based on *Beyond the Pleasure Principle's* backgrounds of Thanatos. For events that bring Theo to Eros, the writer uses Theo's pleasurable activity and the consolation between love, art, and friendship.

The second part of analysis explains how Theo reaches his sense of responsibility. The writer will explain the turning point of Theo when he starts to realize that he have to be responsible. Blackman's book *101 defenses* will explain the kinds of defense mechanism based on the maturity of Theo's have. Defense mechanism is used by Theo to repress his anxiety in order to reach his awareness and sense of responsibility.

### **1.7 Scope and Limitation**

This study uses several branches of psychoanalysis theory such as Eros and Thanatos with addition of some defenses mechanism that used by Theo to cope with her anxiety to his guilt feeling. The writer limits the analysis of defense mechanism of Sigmund Freud since not all of the defense mechanisms are applied in the character of this novel. Some defenses which used are Denial, and Projection, and Counterphobia Behavior. The causal of Thanatos is also limited by considering only on the anxiety that fail to be repressed by Theo using defense mechanism. For the aspect inside the novel, the writer applies the psychoanalysis approach throughout the analysis. For the outside aspects, there are several explanations of “*The Goldfinch*” painting by Carel Fabritius that explained inside the novel along with the story, but the writer will not use this explanation even though this explanation in some ways are how Theo’s character portrayed in the story because to analyze the explanation, the writer need a comparative literature method to do so and it is forbidden to have two theories on one literature research.

### **1.8 Definition of Key Terms**

Anxiety: a felt, affective, unpleasant state accompanied by a physical sensation that warns the person against impending danger. (Feist 33)

Death: a state where the living thing back to inanimate thing.

Defense mechanism: a theory of Sigmund Freud that used to protects the ego from anxiety.

Eros: the word used to express sexual love or the feelings of arousal that are shared between people who are physically attracted to one another. Greek God of Love

Guilt: punishment from superego for the Id moves according to the basic pleasure principle and superego consider it as wrongdoing.

Psychoanalysis: a critical theory for reviewing a literature text using psychological approach.

Responsible: a burden, an act for doing something to fix the wrongdoing that has been done.

Thanatos: is a natural desire to re-establish a state of things that was disturbed by the emergence of life whereas one part of human psyche seek for a gravitation, another part seek the path to return into inanimate object, quiet and non-existence.

Traumatic Experience: a distressing experience that occurs repeatedly either in the state of conscious and unconscious