

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A.1 Background of Research

The phenomenon of mental health awareness has been growing globally in recent years, gaining increasing recognition and attention from various sectors of society. There is a growing acknowledgment of the importance of mental health and its impact on individuals, communities, and societies. More people are recognizing that mental health is as crucial as physical health for overall well-being. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines mental health as a condition where individuals are able to realize their potential, overcome stress in life, can work productively, and can contribute to society (Fakhriyani, 2019).

Many countries have started prioritizing mental health in policy agendas and enacting legislation to improve access to mental health services, reduce stigma, and promote mental well-being. Events like World Mental Health Day on October 10th and Mental Health Awareness Month raise global awareness and mobilize action on mental health issues.

Mental health disorders can affect anyone, old or young, male or female, children, or even adults. The forms of mental health disorders vary depending on their respective causes, but the most common ones are depression and anxiety disorders. In 2019, one in every eight individuals, or 970 million people

worldwide, suffered from a mental disorder, with anxiety and depression being the most frequent (Khune et al, 2023).

The phenomenon of depression is a significant global concern, depression is one of the leading causes of disability worldwide, with millions of people affected by this mental health condition. It transcends cultural, social, and economic boundaries. Depression can have profound effects on an individual's overall health and functioning. It can impair cognitive abilities, disrupt sleep patterns, diminish self-esteem, and interfere with daily activities or relationships. Severe cases of depression may lead to suicidal thoughts.

Apart from depression, a mental disorder that is no less phenomenal is anxiety disorders. This conditions such as generalized anxiety disorder, panic disorder, social anxiety disorder, and specific phobias are widespread (Zinbarg et al, 2015). Anxiety can interfere with daily functioning, relationships, work productivity, and quality of life. Chronic anxiety can also contribute to the development of other physical and mental health problems if left untreated. Trauma, financial difficulties, work pressures, relationship problems, and major life changes, can trigger or worsen anxiety symptoms.

Anxiety and depression can arise due to grief. Grief can stem from the loss of a loved one, loss of a job, or even a major life change such as divorce or moving to a new place. This intense sadness can disrupt a person's daily life, making them feel trapped in a cycle of negative feelings that is difficult to overcome. When someone experiences grief, they may feel that no one can

understand their feelings, so they tend to withdraw from social environments and experience isolation.

According to Sangidu, literature is a reflection of human thought, often shaped by the author's environment and may even encapsulate the author's way of life. Many believe that literary works serve as a mirror of human existence. In essence, authors use literature to express their feelings, observations, and experiences within the social realm of human activities. People recognize literary works in written forms such as novels, poetry, and plays (Silvie, 2020).

Several researchers have conducted research on anxiety depicted in literary works. The first research by Haryanti and Murtiningrum (2022), entitled *Nina's Neurotic and Realistic Anxiety Represent in the Black Swan Movie (2010)*. Researchers revealed that this anxiety began when Nina was chosen to be the main dancer in a performance. Nina trains to perform at her best every day. But on the other hand, Leroy as a coach places Lily as a backup dancer when Nina is unable to attend practice. Nina views Lily not only as a backup dancer, but more than that. Lily wants the role of Nina. Therefore, neurotic anxiety and realistic anxiety arise in Nina if one day her role will be replaced by Lily. The second research is written by Khoiriyah (2019) entitled *Unconscious Mind and Anxiety in the Main Character of Face in the Crowd Movie Script by Julian Magnad*. In this study, researchers revealed that Anna experienced realistic anxiety and moral anxiety. The anxiety that Anna experience makes Anna fantasize about possibilities that do not actually happen. This fantasy appeared without realizing

it, not only when Anna was asleep but also appeared when she was conscious. This fantasy made Anna feel satisfied with her husband's existence.

A feeling of anxiety can activate the self defense mechanism (Andini, 2023). This is the body's natural response to situations perceived as threatening or stressful. When someone feels anxious, the sympathetic nervous system of the body will activate the "fight or flight" response. This is an instinctive response that prepares the body to confront or flee from perceived dangerous situations. (Milosevic, 2015).

One form of the fight or flight response is the emergence of defense mechanisms as a natural reaction when someone experiences excessive anxiety. Self-defense mechanisms can help a person cope with their anxiety in the short term. However, if used continuously, they can have negative impacts, especially if the defense mechanisms employed are negative in nature.

One of the most common types of defense mechanisms is denial. Denial occurs when a grieving person cannot accept the reality that will inevitably change their life. By denying the reality, a person may feel more at ease and safer. Often, the presence of this defense mechanism is not recognized, which can hinder a person from accepting and coming to terms with the existing reality. An example of denial in everyday life is when someone who has recently lost a loved one continues to act as if that person is still alive, refusing to accept the reality of the death.

By the phenomenon of denial as a self-defense mechanism and literature as a medium that reflects existing phenomena and concerns, the researcher is interested in studying the phenomenon of denial as depicted in a movie. Literature does not only describe creative imagination built from the author's ideas. However, it is also a reflection of a society (Laurenson and Swingewood, 1972). In *A Man Called Otto* movie, Marc Forster presents various intriguing psychological issues worthy of examination. In this study, researchers will focus on the denial as a defense mechanism in coping with grief in *A Man Called Otto* movie.

The novelty in my research is an in-depth analysis of how self-defense mechanisms, especially denial, are used by the character Otto in *A Man Called Otto* movie. This research fills the gaps in previous studies by combining the psychological theory of denial with an analysis of the behavior and interactions of the main characters in the context of loss and grief. This research provides new insight into the way denial can influence everyday actions and interpersonal relationships, which has not been widely explored in previous studies.

A.2 Problems of Research

1. What are the psychological motives that makes Otto employ denial as a self-defense mechanism?
2. How does denial appear from Otto's behavior and interactions with others?

A.3 Objectives of Research

1. This research aims to determine the psychological motivation that drives Otto to use denial as a self-defense mechanism.
2. This research aims to determine the form of denial that Otto uses in his behavior and interactions with others.

A.4 Significance of Research

a) Theoretically

It is hoped that this research will provide readers with knowledge regarding the forms of self-defense mechanisms that are reflected in the behavior of the main character in the film.

b) Practical

Practically, it is hoped that this research will be useful for several things. First, this research aims to enrich knowledge in the field of literature, especially regarding self-defense mechanisms in responding to anxiety. This research also provides several references for readers who are trying to broaden their insight into the self-defense mechanisms experienced by characters in films.

A.5 Limitation of Research

Based on the problems seen in problem identification, the researcher limited this research to the denial as a self-defense mechanism found in *A Man Called Otto* movie.

A.6 Definition of Key Terms

1. Grief

Grief is a complex and deep emotional reaction that a person experiences after losing something or someone very meaningful in their life.

2. Anxiety

Anxiety is a natural response to stress or perceived threats and is characterized by feelings of worry, nervousness, or fear.

3. Self-Defense Mechanism

Self-defense mechanism is a psychological strategy used by individuals to deal with conflict, stress, or threats experienced in everyday life.

4. Denial

Denial is a refusal to accept the reality of the loss. People may feel shocked, numb, or in disbelief.