

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A.1 Background of the Research

Sublimation is a type of defense mechanism popularized by Sigmund Freud. Sublimation is a part of Sigmund Freud's framework of psychoanalysis (Freud A., 1966). As early as 1894, Sigmund Freud wrote about his patients' unconscious attempts to repress painful thoughts and described many of his patients' neurotic symptoms as manifestations of defense mechanisms. His study, "*The Neuro-Psychoses of Defense*," captures the writing. Freud identified repression defense mechanisms as the basis of psychoanalysis. Later, specifically by Anna, Freud's daughter, she identified types of defense mechanisms described directly and vaguely in her father's writings. The defense mechanisms are repression, reaction formation, regression, displacement, projection, denial, rationalization, and sublimation (Burger, 2008).

Sublimation is a way of converting unacceptable impulses into more acceptable outlets. Sublimation involves altering or displacing id impulses by diverting instinctual energy into socially acceptable behaviors. Freud believed that various human activities, especially those of an artistic nature, manifest id impulses that have been transferred into an outlet. Sublimation is a compromise. As such, sublimation does not bring total satisfaction but creates composure (Schultz & Ellen Schultz, 2017).

The study of defense mechanisms is one of many to be conducted. In the past ten years, there have been many studies on the topic of defense mechanisms; three of them are the study conducted by Tarigan, Chitra, & Hidayati (2022) discussed the topic of defense mechanisms with the title *Representation of Self-Defense Mechanism of The Main Character in The Blind Side Movie*. This study aims to analyze the self-defense mechanism found in the main character of *The Blind Side* movie, Big Mike. This research used the defense mechanism theory popularized by Sigmund Freud in his most famous theory, Psychoanalysis. The data used in this research are scenes and dialogues in the film that contain elements of defense mechanisms. The results of this study show that Big Mike, as the main character, in several actions has built self-defense mechanisms, such as repression, reaction formation, displacement, rationalization, sublimation, aggression, fantasy, and denial.

Another theme that discussed the same topic were Ramalakshmi & Sagaya (2022), conducted research with the title *Sublimation - A Study of Defense Mechanism Through Amulya Malladi's Serving Crazy with Curry*. This study aims to discuss Devi, the main character in the novel *Serving Crazy with Curry*, who has obsessive thoughts about suicide. This research focuses on how Devi can get out of these thoughts by applying Sigmund Freud's sublimation mechanism. This study concluded that Devi did cooking activities as a form of defense mechanism to distract her from suicidal thoughts and turn those thoughts into her success as a reliable cook.

While Siregar, Astuti, & Fatimah M. (2022), focuses on the type of anxiety and defense mechanism experienced by Gilmore, the main character in the film *Happy Gilmore*. This research aims to determine the type of anxiety experienced by Gilmore based on his experiences. In addition, this study aims to determine the type of defense mechanism used by Gilmore to overcome his anxiety. The results of this study conclude that the anxiety suffered by Gilmore is in the form of neurotic anxiety, moral anxiety, and realistic anxiety. In addition, to overcome this anxiety, Gilmore defends in the form of displacement, projection, rationalization, reaction formation, regression, denial, and compensation.

Among the studies that use the defense mechanism, the use of Taylor Swift's song lyrics as research objects in defense mechanism research has never been discussed in depth even though there have been many studies that use Taylor Swift songs as research objects. The researches which use Taylor Swift as the research object often only focus on figurative language, feminism, and linguistic studies. Based on the facts above, this research will discuss and analyze further of Taylor Swift's song lyrics using defense mechanisms, precisely the sublimation in her songs in order to provide new scholarly insights about someone's disappointment, sadness, and anger or harmful feelings that may be transformed into something constructive feelings or acts.

Taylor Swift is well-known as a famous singer from the United States. She has received many awards in the music industry, one of them being 12 times winning the GRAMMY Awards nomination, the most prestigious award event among world musicians (Grammy, 2023). With her success, Taylor Swift often gets

unpleasant attitudes, even humiliating her. To deal with unpleasant attitudes, Taylor Swift often expressed her feelings through the songs she created. Thus, the treatment that Taylor Swift gets, she responded more creatively through her musical works.

Taylor Swift created a defense mechanism by expressing it in her musical works. What Taylor Swift does is a form of sublimation. Taylor Swift sublimates in songs such as “Mean”, “Innocent”, “Look What You Made Me Do”, and “Vigilante Shit”. The song “Mean” for example, compiled from an article released by CheatSeet that Taylor Swift wrote as a kind of defense in response to the criticism she received after her performance with Stevie Nicks at the 2010 Grammy Awards (Turney, 2022). This kind of response made by Taylor Swift in dealing with unpleasant treatments can be said to be a form of defense mechanism.

Therefore, the researcher analyzed the signs of sublimation in Taylor Swift's songs and analyze it through the lyrics of the songs: “Mean”, “Innocent”, “Look What You Made Me Do”, and “Vigilante Shit”. The researcher took Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory of defense mechanisms to analyze the sublimation type in Taylor Swift's songs and Michael Riffaterre's semiotic theory for poetry to analyze the signs of sublimation found in Taylor Swift's four songs through her songs' lyrics, because song lyrics are literary works in the form of poetry that contain expressions of the heart, as the composition of a song (Moeliono, 2007).

A.2 Problem of the Research

How are the forms of sublimation represented in Taylor Swift's four song lyrics, “Mean”, “Innocent”, “Look What You Made Me Do”, and “Vigilante Shit”?

A.3 Objective of the Research

The purpose of this research is to discover the forms of Taylor Swift's sublimation in four song lyrics, namely "Mean", "Innocent", "Look What You Made Me Do", and "Vigilante Shit".

A.4 Significance of the Research

1. Theoretical

This research helps us add to our knowledge of the defense mechanism theory by Sigmund Freud in four Taylor Swift song lyrics: "Mean", "Innocent", "Look What You Made Me Do", and "Vigilante Shit". It also adds to our knowledge of Michael Riffaterre's semiotic for poetry theory and how Taylor Swift's expressions or self-emotions are captured in the lyrics of her songs.

2. Practical

Practically, the research on Taylor Swift's sublimation "Mean", "Innocent", "Look What You Made Me Do", and "Vigilante Shit" song's lyrics help us to understand the kind of defense mechanism to cope with the anxiety and a help us learn to understand the meaning of a song lyric through Riffaterre's semiotic theory for poetry.

A.5 Limitation of the Research

This research focuses on Sigmund Freud's (1894) defense mechanism, which is sublimation, found in four song lyrics by Taylor Swift. The songs used as data sources are "Mean", "Innocent", "Look What You Made Me Do", and "Vigilante Shit" which will then be analyzed using Sigmund Freud's theory.

A.6 Definition of Key Terms

1. Defense Mechanism

Defense mechanism is a psychological response that derived from a person's subconscious, protecting the person from feelings of anxiety, threats, guilt, and things that are unexpected or painful.

2. Sublimation

Sublimation is one type of Sigmund Freud's defense mechanism theory that transforms one's emotions into something acceptable.

A.7 Organization of the Research

This research is composed of five chapters. The first chapter explained the background of the research problem—an explanation of the phenomena that occurred and why this research was conducted. As well as in this chapter formulated research problems, objectives, and benefits of research. This chapter conveys the purpose of what the researcher wants to achieve.

The second chapter is a review of the literature. In this chapter, the researcher explained the theory used. The researcher explained what theories that used in this study. It is intended that readers understand well the research process carried out. The researcher also explained some previous research that has been carried out. This chapter described ten previous studies that use the same topic and object of research as this research.

The third chapter is research methodology. This chapter explained the type of research, whether this research is qualitative or quantitative. It also explained the

data and data sources that used in this research. Also, it explained the methods and techniques used to collect data and the methods used to analyze the data.

The fourth chapter is analysis. In this chapter, researchers explained the data taken and how researchers analyze the data. The core of this research is in this chapter. This chapter explained the research process and answer the problem formulations in chapter one.

The last chapter is the conclusion. After a long process of research, the conclusion of this research is in chapter five. In this chapter, the researcher provided conclusions and suggestions. This suggestion contains the shortcomings of this research that can be used by other researchers interested in using the same topic or object as this research.

