

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A.1 Background of The Research

Mental health has become one of the most highlighted global issues in the past decade. According to World Health Organization one in eight people worldwide has suffered from mental health disorders, such as anxiety, depression, and chronic stress (<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-disorders>). This is especially exacerbated by modern pressures, such as rising social expectations, economic uncertainty, and overexposure to social media. Teenagers and adults are the most sensitive to these mental health issues. Not only do they face pressure to conform to social norms, but they are also in a phase of life that is full of significance. In this context, music is often one of the ways used to express emotions, deal with psychological challenges, and find inner peace, especially for those experiencing mental health challenges (Juslin, 2013).

Music has the power to be a cathartic medium, a space where listeners can understand without having to express themselves directly. This is also reflected in the K-pop phenomenon, which is known not only for its grandiose productions but also its lyrics and emotional messages that often touch on universal themes such as love, loss, and struggle. K-Pop is the abbreviation for Korean Pop. According to Zhang et al. (2022), as time passes, K-pop culture grows in popularity and becomes a global music trend. Started as a music genre that blends Western pop elements with traditional Korean influences, K-pop is now an important part of global

popular culture. K-pop's success lies not only in its music but also in its visual elements, intricate choreography, concept narratives, and intense engagement with its fans. This phenomenon has created the "*Hallyu*," or *Korean Wave*, bringing Korean culture to the world stage.

Since the beginning, Hallyu has been surrounded by entertainment, including musicals, dramas, and variety performances that are exquisitely presented with touches of regional culture (Oviani & Anggalih, 2023). One of the main attractions of K-pop is how the genre often touches on issues that are relevant to listeners, including themes of identity, emotional struggles, and mental health. Many musicians use their lyrics and melodies to convey deep emotional messages. One music group that has successfully touched on these emotional issues is NCT Dream. They are the third sub-unit of the K-pop group NCT (Neo Culture Technology) moving under the auspices of a major agency in South Korea, SM Entertainment. The unit first debuted on August 24, 2016 with the single "Chewing Gum." Initially, NCT Dream was introduced as a unit of seven teenage members all under the age of 20, with their concept focusing on youth and growth. NCT Dream itself is one that is known for delivering positive messages and cheerful energy through their music.

With songs that touch on various themes, ranging from friendship, dreams, to facing life's challenges, NCT Dream has become a symbol of the spirit of youth, making their music one of the sources of healing that is sought after by the current generation. The music performed is always easy to listen to by anyone who hears

it, it makes the music performance by NCT Dream manage to attract many fans around the world.

As one of the most successful units in NCT, NCT Dream continues to grow with works that provide encouragement and healing for the younger generation. Teenagers who have lost their zest for life are embraced by NCT Dream. Teenagers are motivated by NCT Dream's song (Tsabitah & Patriantoro, 2021). In November 2024, NCT Dream released an album entitled "Dreamscape." The album is one of the most important works of their journey, standing out with its deep thematic exploration, particularly on mental health issues. The album's three tracks, *No Escape*, *Rains In Heaven*, and *Heavenly* portray the complexity of emotional struggles often experienced by teenagers and young adults. For example, *No Escape* explores the theme of feeling trapped in the pressure of negative thoughts, while *Rains In Heaven* presents a narrative about empathy and support and the importance of emotional support in the healing process. The song *Heavenly* portrays the freedom and joy of going through a difficult time. These three songs, with lyrics rich in symbolism, reflect how music can be a medium for emotional reflection as well as a tool to raise awareness of the importance of mental health.

However, because the data to be researched is new, there is no research that specifically examines "Dreamscape" album, but there are several researches that examine other NCT Dream songs. Existing research on other NCT Dream songs with similar themes have more in-depth indications of how the emotions are conveyed in the lyrics. For example, the analysis conducted by Tsabitah &

Patriantoro (2021) conducted an analysis of the song "Life Is Still Going On" from NCT Dream. Their research found that the song's lyrics convey a motivational message about navigating life, encouraging listeners and fans to live peacefully, stay true to themselves, and pursue their dreams through Ferdinand De Saussure's semiotic analysis theory.

In contrast to Tsabitah & Patriantoro which examines how the signifiers and signs in the song "Life is Still Going On", Putri & Iskandar (2024) focused their analysis on the types of figurative language and semantic meaning in NCT Dream song "Fireflies". This research aims to achieve two main objectives: identifying the types of figurative language used and determining the meaning reflected by the figurative elements in the song. The researchers conducted a literature review, analyzing books and song lyrics to collect data for this study. They concluded that several types of figurative language are present in the song "Fireflies", including hyperbole, symbolism, and personification.

In addition, there are also Farahdila et al. (2023) who examined NCT Dream's song entitled "Hello Future", the purpose of this study is to analyze the markers and signs of optimism in the lyrics of the NCT Dream song "Hello Future" and to determine what optimism means. This research makes use of the optimism theory. This study employs a qualitative approach to Saussure's semiotic analysis methodology. Based on the study's findings, the lyrics to the song "Hello Future" express optimism for the future, the pursuit of dreams, and concern for trying times.

From previous studies, the researcher is interested in examining the song lyrics on the “Dreamscape” album because the researcher thinks that the lyrics on the songs *No Escape*, *Rains In Heaven*, and *Heavenly* can be explored to understand how the emotional and symbolic messages contained in them relate to human experience, especially in dealing with mental health. In relation to Sigmund Freud's theory of psychoanalysis, research into each song lyric can focus on the elements of the unconscious and the expression of deep emotions. In Sigmund Freud's theory of psychoanalysis, *hidden emotions* refer to certain emotions or experiences that are not realized by the individual due to psychological protection mechanisms. These emotions often come from inner conflicts, especially the past, or impulses that go against social norms.

Freud's psychoanalytic theory states that the human psyche is divided into three parts: Id, Ego, and Superego (B. Dobie, 2011). The Id represents instinctive desires and drives, such as the desire for pleasure or survival, which are often unconscious and primitive in nature. The Superego, on the other hand, is the internalized moral standards and rules of society, which act as a counterweight to the Id's desires. The Ego mediates between these two forces, negotiating between the demands of the Id and the constraints of the Superego, trying to maintain balance in one's actions and behavior.

In artistic expression, including song lyrics, these psychological forces can manifest symbolically. A symbol is anything that represents something other than itself. Stated differently, it indicates that A represents B. Symbolism is frequently

employed in literature to give a narrative a deeper, more ethereal meaning. Freud believed that the arts were systematized, objectified, and represented daydreams that revealed the unconscious wishes of the creator. Symbols are frequently employed in the arts as a means of fusing the conscious and unconscious, the outside and the inside (Mengyue, 2016). For example, repressed desires of the id, such as deep sadness or unresolved inner conflicts, may appear through metaphors or emotional language, reflecting the upheaval of the unconscious mind. The ego may appear in the form of rationalizations or attempts to cope with such emotions, while the superego may be represented through themes of guilt, conscience, or moral conflict. By analyzing song lyrics through the lens of Freud's theory, we can discover the dynamic interplay between these forces-how repressed emotions are articulated, how they are balanced by conscious reflection, and how moral or societal influences shape the expression of grief.

A.2 Problems of The Research

Based on the background above, this research focuses on:

1. How do the song lyrics in NCT Dream's "Dreamscape" album portray hidden emotions through Freud's Theory?
2. How is symbolism represented in the lyrics of the songs *No Escape*, *Rains In Heaven*, and *Heavenly*?

A.3 Objectives of The Research

Objectives of the research are set as the answer to the problem of the research. The objectives of this research are:

1. Identify how hidden emotions are portrayed in some of the song lyrics on the “Dreamscape” album.
2. Analyze how the symbolism used in the lyrics creates an implied meaning.

A.4 Significances of The Research

There are two significance in this research, namely theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, this research aims to find out more about the meaning of the lyrics of the songs *No Escape*, *Rains In Heaven*, and *Heavenly* in the album “Dreamscape” by NCT Dream by using the application of psychoanalytic theory, especially Freud's concept of repression in the study of music lyrics, and analyzing how the song lyrics can help listeners process their emotions. Practically, the researcher hopes that after completing this research, it can help fans and academics to further raise our awareness about the importance of mental health in accordance with the meaning contained in the lyrics of the songs *No Escape*, *Rains In Heaven*, and *Heavenly*.

A.5 Limitation of The Research

The limitation of this research is that it focuses on the depiction of hidden emotions in the album “Dreamscape” especially in the context of mental health using Freud's psychoanalytic theory of repression and the unconscious.

A.6 Definition of Key Terms

A.6.1 Psychoanalysis

Psychoanalysis, also known as depth psychology, is a field of psychology founded by the renowned Sigmund Freud. Over time, various theories within

psychoanalysis have been developed and refined in line with scientific advancements. This branch of psychology focuses on understanding human behavior through the lens of unconscious motivations and internal conflicts. Freud (1856-1939 AD) initially introduced this theory as part of his work in treating patients with hysteria, a mental disorder (Arroisi et al., 2022).

A.6.2 Freudian Theory

The primacy of the unconscious is often regarded as the most significant aspect of Freudian theory. It is likened to the submerged mass of an iceberg, largely hidden from the conscious mind, which Freud compared to the small, visible portion above the water. Because the unconscious is obscured, the conscious mind—driven by the ego—may misinterpret the actual causes of behavior, influenced by the unseen forces of the id and the moral constraints of the superego. This can result in an individual being unable to distinguish between reality and perception. In essence, actions are shaped by forces beyond conscious awareness and control (Rucks, 2012).

A.6.3 Hidden Emotion

Hidden emotions are feelings that are not explicitly expressed or conveyed by a person, either consciously or unconsciously. In the context of Freudian psychology, hidden emotions are often related to defense mechanisms such as repression, where individuals suppress certain emotions because they are considered too painful or unacceptable by social norms or the self.

A.6.4 Symbolism

A symbol is anything that represents something other than itself. Stated differently, it indicates that A represents B. Symbolism is frequently employed in literature to give a narrative a deeper, more ethereal meaning. Freud believed that the arts were systematized, objectified, and represented daydreams that revealed the unconscious wishes of the creator. Symbols are frequently employed in the arts as a means of fusing the conscious and unconscious, the outside and the inside (Mengyue, 2016).

A.6.5 Repressed Emotion

Repressed emotions are those feelings that are unconsciously avoided, as opposed to emotions that are actively set aside when they become overwhelming. Over time, these repressed emotions may contribute to various health issues (Bhandari, 2024).

A.7 Organization of the Research

The researcher divides this thesis into five chapters, which are listed below, to help readers better understand the concept and to make it easier for them to follow:

1. Chapter I is the Introduction. This chapter consists of Background of The Research, Problem of The Research, Object of The Research, Significance of The Research, Limitation of The Research and Organization of The Research.

2. Chapter II presents a review of relevant literature, such as Freudian psychoanalytic theory, previous studies, and theories on empathy and theories on mental health.
3. Chapter III outlines the methods used in the study, including the research design, data collection methods, and analytical framework based on the Freudian approach.
4. Chapter IV contains an in-depth analysis of the lyrics of No Escape, Rains In Heaven, and Heavenly on the album “Dreamscape”, especially regarding the hidden emotion contained in the song with the theme of mental health using Sigmund Freud's theory.
5. Chapter V presents the main conclusions of the research and provides suggestions for further research in similar areas.

