

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A.1 Background of the Research

Literature serves as a mirror of society's beliefs and viewpoints, reflecting the social, political, and cultural values of any given culture. It also creatively and imaginatively reflects people's beliefs, perspectives, and dreams in order to illustrate particular occurrences or provide a solution to a particular problem. In addition, literature consists of permanent verbal or written expressions that are arranged in aesthetically beautiful, conventional patterns or forms. Fouzia (2014). Thoughts, emotions, ideas, and other unique facets of human experiences are expressed in literature.

According to Endraswara (2008), the analysis of psychological literature is similar to examine real human beings from an internal perspective. This approach offers a valuable framework for understanding the intricacies of the human psyche. Through such literary exploration, scholars are able to access the profound dimensions of human emotion, thought, and behavior. Furthermore, the interpretive scope within psychological literary studies is extensive, allowing for a wide range of meanings and insights to emerge.

Psychoanalysis was first offered by Sigmund Freud in 1896 as a medical treatment for people with mental disorders. The idea of unconsciousness is central to psychoanalysis. Painful experiences, emotions, wounds, dread, guilt desires, and unsolved conflicts that we don't want to know about are all stored up in subconscious. Psychoanalysis uses language to introduce the idea of

unconsciousness in relation to literature. Whether conscious or unconscious, the author's mind is the source of all creative creations. A literary book can help people comprehend behavior, much as psychoanalysis does. This connection can be found in William Faulkner's *A Rose for Emily* and Edgar Allan Poe's short story *The Black Cat*.

The Black Cat and *A Rose for Emily* fall under psychoanalytic study because both stories portray protagonists who suffer from deep psychological conflict, trauma, and emotional repression. Using the theory of defense mechanisms, their irrational and extreme behaviors such as denial, repression, displacement, and isolation can be seen as unconscious attempts to cope with inner pain. The similarity between the two stories lies in their themes of isolation, inability to face reality, and psychological responses to loss. Both the narrator in *The Black Cat* and Emily in *A Rose for Emily* reflect how unresolved inner conflict and mental pressure can lead to destructive actions. These characters serve as clear representations of defense mechanisms operate in the human psyche under distress.

The Black Cat is a short horror story by Edgar Allan Poe, first published in 1843. Told from the perspective of an unreliable narrator, the story follows a man who descends into madness and violence due to alcoholism. After killing his beloved cat, Pluto, and later his wife, his guilt manifests through the appearance of a second black cat. Themes of guilt, madness, abuse, and supernatural justice are central to the tale. With dark symbolism and psychological depth, Poe explores the destructive nature of guilt and the human capacity for evil. (eNotes Editorial, 2025)

A Rose for Emily is a short story by American author William Faulkner, first published on April 30, 1930. The story follows Emily Grierson, a reclusive woman in a Southern town of Mississippi who becomes isolated after the death of her father. She briefly becomes involved with a man named Homer Barron, but when it seems he does not want to marry her, he mysteriously disappears. After Emily's own death many years later, townspeople discover Homer's decaying corpse in a locked room of her house, alongside a pillow with a strand of her gray hair. The story reveals Emily's refusal to accept death, change, and loss, demonstrating defense mechanisms such as denial, repression, and isolation. (SparkNotesLLC, 2025).

Previous studies on *The Black Cat* by Edgar Allan Poe and *A Rose for Emily* by William Faulkner have primarily focused on literary aspects such as gothic elements, narrative structure, symbolism, or feminist perspectives. While these analyses offer valuable insights, they often overlook a deeper psychological interpretation of the characters, particularly through the lens of Freudian psychoanalysis.

Specifically, studies that examine the defense mechanisms—such as denial, repression, projection, and displacement—used by the main characters in both stories are still limited. These psychological mechanisms play a significant role in shaping the characters' behavior and mental state, yet they have not been explored comprehensively. Moreover, there is a lack of comparative analysis that connects both stories through the concept of defense mechanisms, despite the fact that the protagonists in both works exhibit similar psychological conflicts,

emotional isolation, and repressed desires. This research seeks to fill that gap by offering a psychoanalytic reading of both stories, focusing on the defense mechanisms employed by the characters to cope with their inner turmoil.

According to Bowins (2010), psychological therapy and the treatment of personality disorders are closely linked to the application of defense mechanisms that are specifically aligned with an individual's personality structure. Defense mechanisms are conceptualized as psychological strategies employed to manage internal conflicts and emotional distress. These mechanisms include, but are not limited to, sublimation, rationalization, intellectualization, identification, displacement, projection, and isolation. From a Freudian perspective, as elaborated by Hall (2019), defense mechanisms function primarily to protect the ego from anxiety and psychological conflict. Individuals tend to develop these mechanisms when they are unable to directly confront or resolve threatening or distressing experiences, thereby allowing temporary psychological equilibrium. To put it another way, some people act in different ways to hide from fear, worry, and other bad thoughts. Unconsciously, people would defend themselves against the inappropriate emotions. In addition to actual life, the defense mechanism can be observed in literary works. When confronted with negative emotions or feelings, the protagonists of *The Black Cat* and *A Rose for Emily* exhibited certain behaviors.

Emotions, reasoning, human behavior, and feelings are all components of psychology. The researcher did this study for this reason: certain parts of psychology are significant and intimately tied to everyday life. The purpose of this

study was to help the reader comprehend the various facets of psychology and use it to evaluate the various traits of other people in daily life. Therefore, it is anticipated that this study will teach others how to comprehend, adjust, and engage with people who have various personalities.

A.2 Problem of the Research

Related to the background of the research that has been presented above, the formulation of the problem deals with what kind of Defense Mechanism used by the main character in *The Black Cat* and *A Rose for Emily*?

A.3 Objective of the Research

Based on the problem, the objective of this research is to describe what types of defense mechanism used by the main character in *The Black Cat* and *A Rose for Emily* short story.

A.4 Significance of the Research

The results of this study are expected to be beneficial both theoretically and practically, as elaborated in the following section.

1. Theoretically

This research is intended to provide valuable insights for readers regarding the theory of defense mechanisms in literary characters. It also aims to broaden the readers' understanding, perspective, and experience in the application of psychological theory within literary studies, particularly in relation to the exploration of human personality.

2. Practically

Practically, this research is expected to be useful for the following side.

This research aims to enrich the students' knowledge in literature field especially in defense mechanism theory.

A.5 Limitation of the Research

The researcher will only focus on analyzing the main character in *The Black Cat* and *A Rose for Emily* short story.

A.6 Organization of the Research Report

This research consists of five chapters which are arranged systematically below:

A.6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the background of the research, the problems of the research, the objectives of the research, the significance of the research and the limitations of the research. This chapter also provides a brief explanation about the definition of the research. In the end of this chapter, the researcher informs the organization of the research report.

A.6.2 Literature Reviews

This chapter presents the theoretical framework, concept of marriage, sociology of the literature, character's description and relevant research. It provides the result of the researcher's search on theories or related research studies in similar fields.

A.6.3 Research Method

In this session, the researcher provides the design of the research, data and source of the data, method of collecting data, technique of collecting data and method of analyzing data. Many data that is needed by the researcher are collected and analyzed in this part.

A.6.4 Data and Data Analysis

The data display all results of data analysis. The research questions meet the answers in this chapter. To make it clearer for the readers, the researcher conveys the discussion of the data.

A.6.5 Conclusion and Suggestions

This chapter provides conclusions and suggestions. The researcher provides the short description of concluding paragraph and provides some suggestions for other researchers and the readers.

A.7 Definition of Key Terms

Prior to proceeding with the analysis, it is essential to provide clear definitions of several key terms used throughout this study in order to prevent potential misunderstandings. The researcher has identified specific terms that require clarification within the context of this research.

1. Short Story

Short stories are one of the literary works favored by readers because they are shorter than novels with many problems. Short stories only have one storyline so they look short. It makes it easier for readers to read and understand.

2. Psychology

Psychology is the scientific study of the mind and behavior. Psychologists are actively involved in understanding mental processes, brain functions, and behavior.

3. Defense Mechanism

Defense mechanism refers to an unconscious psychological strategy employed by an individual to shield oneself from anxiety that emerges due to thoughts or emotions deemed unacceptable or distressing.

4. Denial

Denial is a defense mechanism where a person refuses to accept reality or facts, blocking external events from awareness.

5. Displacement

A state when a person changing threatening impulses from one object into another object.

6. Projection

Projection is blaming others for your own unwanted thoughts or feelings.

7. Rationalization

Rationalization is making excuses to justify unacceptable behavior or feelings.

8. Repression

Repression is unconsciously blocking unpleasant thoughts or memories from awareness.

9. Regression

Regression is a defense mechanism where a person reverts to behaviors typical of an earlier stage of development when faced with stress, anxiety, or conflict.

10. Isolation

Isolation is a defense mechanism where a person separates painful or distressing emotions from thoughts or memories.

