

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents an overview of the research. This chapter contains the Research Background, Statements of the Problem, Research Objectives, Significance of Research, Previous Studies, and Definition of Key Terms.

1.1 Research Background

Every human seeks peace and tranquility in life, free from problems and pressures. However, humans are continually faced with various issues. These problems can arise from multiple sources, including the community, family, friendships, workplaces, romantic relationships, and even within oneself. Such challenges often lead to psychological conflicts, which can manifest as trauma, anxiety, depression, and more. Harahap and Hasibuan (2020) state psychological conflicts as inner conflicts stemming from struggles within the human soul and mind. Many humans experience these conflicts due to unpleasant childhood experiences. Being traumatized by negative events can lead to significant adverse effects, such as excessive anxiety, stress, and depression.

Violence is one of the key factors contributing to human psychological conflict. According to Fakhri in Amalia et al. (2021), violence is defined as an attack that affects an individual's physical, mental, or psychological state. Reza (2012) further explains that violence encompasses acts of persecution that are based on the power one person holds to inflict physical or psychological violence on others, often resulting in psychological disorders, trauma, or even death. Moreover, Galtung in Eriyanti (2017), categorizes violence into three types: structural, cultural, and direct. In everyday life, humans frequently encounter direct violence, which is clear and visible, along with the individuals who perpetrate it. Direct violence manifests in various forms; traditionally, it includes physical acts such as torture, persecution, and rape. Additionally, verbal abuse, such as insults, represents emotional violence that can significantly impact a person's psychological well-being. Galtung in Eriyanti (2017), states that violence encompasses any physical, verbal, emotional,

structural, institutional, or spiritual state, as well as the behaviors, attitudes, policies, or conditions that dominate, weaken, or destroy individuals and others. Therefore, it is evident that the violence experienced by a person can be a significant factor leading to psychological conflict.

The psychological conflicts that humans experience can result in negative energies or emotional turmoil that are difficult to manage, especially after a tragic event. In response, humans often employ defense mechanisms such as denial, suppression, or even pretending that the tragedy never occurred. To shield themselves from pain or the harsh reality they would rather avoid, humans tend to develop self-defensive attitudes. These defense mechanisms are unconscious strategies aimed at protecting themselves from discomfort or anxiety related to their thoughts and feelings. The concept of defense mechanisms is rooted in psychoanalytic theory, where they are understood as unconscious methods that humans use to defend against anxiety. The theory of personality structure by Sigmund Freud divides human concentration into three elements: the id, the ego, and the superego. Anxiety arises from the ego's struggle to reconcile the conflicting demands of the id and the superego (Spielman et al. in Agustiyani, 2016). Freud also argues in Hall (Shelah & Marsih, 2022) how defense mechanisms are closely tied to the ego inherent in every individual. Working below the conscious level, these mechanisms help to alleviate unpleasant emotions (McLeod, 2020). For instance, if someone experiences mistreatment, such as torture or verbal violence, their defense mechanisms may automatically activate to help them avoid the discomfort or pain associated with that experience.

Defense mechanisms develop when humans struggle to resolve conflicts arising from various factors in their lives. To protect themselves from uncomfortable feelings that they cannot accept, individuals often build a mental wall and hide from negative emotions. According to Freud in Setiawan (2018), there are eight defense mechanisms: denial, reaction formation, rationalization, displacement, projection, repression, regression, and sublimation. These mechanisms represent human responses to anxiety or unpleasant feelings and

illustrate how the conscious and subconscious mind manages surrounding situations (Freud, 1936). Humans use defense mechanisms to protect themselves from painful feelings, excessive anxiety, or guilt that may emerge when they feel threatened, often due to the conflicting demands of the id and superego, which the ego struggles to mediate. This process typically occurs below the level of conscious awareness, as the ego works subconsciously. When humans experience unpleasant emotions, such as pain or anxiety, they quickly activate defense mechanisms to either mitigate or eliminate these negative feelings, allowing them to feel better.

The human conditions that utilize this defense mechanism can be found in nonfiction literary works, especially in a person's memoir. In this context, nonfiction literary works outpour the author's feelings based on their personal experiences. When someone has had a negative experience, it can be vividly expressed through the words and language they choose. Tara Westover is an American author who explicitly reflects her psychological condition in her literary work. Her memoir, *Educated*, recounts her life story. Tara Westover grew up in Idaho's Buck's Peak area, where she was the youngest of seven children: Tony, Shawn, Tyler, Luke, Audrey, and Richard. Born into a family that followed strictly the Mormon religion, Tara's father believed that the government was only intent on brainwashing them, which led him to forbid his children from attending school. As a result, Tara never experienced formal education during her childhood. Tara's father also deeply disbelieved the government and banned anything related to it, including doctors and hospital treatments. Instead, the family has chosen to rely on herbal medicines, as Tara's mother was an herbalist. Tara's father's unbending beliefs led him to adopt a singular perspective on life, inspecting everything through divine will. He believed that all events, whether positive or negative, were a pleasure or a gift from God. This mindset demonstrates how Tara's father's convictions despoiled his interpretation of the world, resulting in a family that followed to a singular truth.

Tara's experiences reflect her psychological condition, which is closely associated with her id, ego, and superego. The id represents actions motivated by uncontrollable instincts; for example, Tara believed that her father's doctrines would shape her into someone who discards change. In dissimilarity, the superego prompts individuals to act according to moral standards and rules. Tara must obey to all the regulations compulsory on her campus. The ego, which includes defense mechanisms, serves to address reality. In Tara's case, she employs various defense mechanisms to deny and eliminate unpleasant and uncomfortable feelings. This specifies that her ego plays a crucial role in guiding her actions.

In *Educated*, the writer explores how Tara represents the id, ego, and superego in expressing her feelings and experiences. The search reveals that Tara experiences psychological conflict, influenced by some factors, with violence being a significant one. Furthermore, Tara's encounters with violence are closely tied to the defense mechanisms she employs. This analysis utilizes Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic literary criticism approach to understand Tara's psychological condition better. This perspective is supported by Minderop's assertion in Pratiwi et al. (2019) that the psychological portrayal of a character is shaped by the author through the literary works they create.

The writer examines how the ego develops in Tara Westover and how she employs defense mechanisms. Tara grows up in a family environment that views change as threatening, leading her to isolate herself from anyone who encourages her to embrace new experiences. How Tara dealt with physical, verbal, emotional, or psychological violence perpetrated by her older brother. The physical violence committed by her older brother, Shawn, grabbed Tara's hair, dragged her to the bathroom, and dropped Tara's head into the toilet until it touched the porcelain. Furthermore, the verbal violence committed by Shawn by insulting and yelling 'SLUT' and 'WHORE' to Tara. Then, Shawn's tendency to always apologize to Tara afterward and manipulate her into believing that his actions were just a joke constitutes emotional or psychological violence.

Tara's situation was intensified by her father's negligence when he allowed her to work in the junkyard, which ultimately led to her getting hurt. This incident constituted emotional and psychological violence, as her father showed little concern for Tara's safety and remained indifferent after she suffered an injury from an iron rod that was lodged in her leg. Additionally, Tara's father required his beliefs on her, preventing her from joining school by demanding that the government was part of the Illuminati, a notion that she should avoid. This distorted belief system instilled misconceptions in Tara about impending fate, which negatively impacted her mental well-being and led her to accept her father's beliefs without question. Tara also faced abandonment and betrayal from her mother, who failed to intervene when Shawn began to harm Tara. Instead, she manipulated situations to depict Shawn as non-violent, dismissing Tara's experiences as untrue. This betrayal also extended to Tara's older sister, who insisted that Tara's exposes were a significant mistake. Both her mother and sister perpetrated emotional and psychological violence on Tara, profoundly affecting her mental condition and contributing to her feelings of isolation and confusion.

This research aims to explore the types of violence that Tara experienced, including physical, verbal, and emotional/psychological violence, as well as to identify how Tara utilized defense mechanisms in response to this violence. Understanding these aspects can increase our awareness of the violence that often occurs in daily life and its impact on mental health. By explaining Tara's defense mechanisms, humans may become more self-aware of their own coping strategies that have allowed them to navigate various life challenges. The research also contributes to the academic discourse on the relationship between literature and psychology, mainly through Tara's experiences as depicted in her literary work. The findings highlight the importance of recognizing and avoiding violence in emotional expression and raising awareness of defense mechanisms. This understanding can make humans more mindful of their words, behaviors, and actions. In conclusion, the nonfiction work *Educated* illustrates how violence is depicted and how defense mechanisms are employed in response to it. Analyzing

Tara Westover's experiences sheds light on how violence influenced her use of defense mechanisms to eliminate the psychological conflicts arising from her difficult childhood.

1.2 Statements of Problem

In light of the research background, several issues are relevant to the central theme of this research. Previous writers tend to use internal factors that make a person use defense mechanisms. However, this research aims to explore the connection between external factors, specifically violence, which makes a person use defense mechanisms in the memoir *Educated*. Accordingly, the following research questions have been formulated:

1. What were Tara Westover's experiences of violence in her memoir *Educated*?
2. How did Tara Westover use her defense mechanism related to the violence she experienced in her memoir *Educated*?

1.3 Research Objectives

The attraction of analyzing these literary works lies in Tara's experience, which addresses violence and her form of self-defense. Based on the problem statement above, the following are the objectives of this research:

1. To identify Tara Westover's experiences of violence in her memoir.
2. To discover how Tara Westover used her defense mechanism related to the violence she experienced.

1.4 Research Significances

This section of the research illustrates the violence that individuals experience and the defense mechanisms they use. This research aims to enhance our understanding of both violence and these defense mechanisms. It emphasizes the relevance and significance of conducting this research. The writer hopes that the findings will be helpful both theoretically and practically.

1. Theoretically

The writer aims to contribute an in-depth understanding, particularly for English Literature students, of how Tara Westover describes her experiences with violence and uses defense mechanisms in her literary work. Additionally, the writer hopes that the general public can utilize this research as a source of information and gain new insights into Tara Westover's nonfiction book *Educated*.

2. Practically

This research aims to make a valuable contribution to the academic field, especially English literature. The writer hopes many individuals will raise awareness about mental disorders that often go concealed. By identifying the relationship between violence and defense mechanisms through Tara's experience, this research pursues to encourage understanding and self-awareness. The findings in this research are anticipated to emphasize the importance of maintaining mental health. Additionally, this research is expected to support other writers in gaining a deeper understanding of violence and defense mechanisms, as well as in analyzing Tara's experiences in literary works through the lens of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory.

1.5 Previous Studies

Previous research involves the writers comparing the current research with earlier research they have conducted. This process involves explaining the similarities and differences between the topics or objects being researched and the theories used, allowing the writers to identify what aligns with or differs from their previous research. Understanding previous research is important as it relates directly to the object, topic, and theory the writer plans to analyze. By reviewing previous research, the writers can gain new insights and inspiration for further

research. This examination also assists in demonstrating the originality of their research. To support their research, the writers provide an overview of the main topic, object, and theory relevant to the research. The writers begin by exploring previous studies that are pertinent to the hypothesis proposed in their new research.

In this research, the writer uses the object of Tara Westover's *Educated*. The writer has previously researched the object, but no studies have addressed violence as a factor in a person's use of defense mechanisms. From previous studies, the writer aims to identify types of violence and find defense mechanisms in the nonfiction *Educated*. Previous studies have significantly contributed to this research. By analyzing earlier findings, the writer gains new perspectives to enhance this research's outcomes. Below are previous studies that employ similar theories but utilize different subjects.

The first research comes from Salsabilla's research from Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang entitled *The Main Character's Anxiety and Defense Mechanism in The Midnight Library by Matt Haig* in 2023. The novel describes the anxiety experienced by the main character, Nora Seed, when she feels guilty for disappointing the people around her. This research analyzes the psychological conflict of Nora Seed, who has difficulties with her mental health, namely anxiety, and then how the main character overcomes the anxiety she experiences with defense mechanisms. The data taken in this research is based on the narrative text in the nonfiction work by highlighting dialog that reflects issues related to the research problem. This research also concludes that Nora, as the main character, is described as experiencing realistic anxiety, which can be analyzed as a form of stress, anxiety, and fear for her life. Then there is neurotic anxiety, where Nora is depressed because she thinks too much about her future. Finally, there is moral anxiety, which depicts Nora often feeling restless. From this anxiety, Nora forms defense mechanisms within herself to overcome anxiety. The types of defense mechanisms used by Nora include repression, reaction formation, projection, regression, rationalization, diversion, and sublimation. This research has similarities with the research that will be researched by the writer, namely from the

application of the theory and the topic to be analyzed. This research uses a theory similar to the one the writer uses, namely psychoanalysis from Sigmund Freud and Anna Freud. The topic in this research is also similar to the topic that the writer proposes, namely identifying defense mechanisms. How Nora Seed and Tara Westover are portrayed as characters, who have psychological conflicts and then use defense mechanisms to avoid something that makes them hurt. After further analysis, there are differences between the two, this research attentions on the anxiety experienced by the characters in *The Midnight Library*. In contrast, the writer here emphasizes the violence experienced by Tara, the main character in *Educated*.

The second research was written by Khendy from Universitas Putera Batam, titled *Defense Mechanism System of the Main Character in the Whispering Skull Novel: Psychological Approach* in 2020. The novel tells the story of three teenagers, with Anthony Lockwood as the main character. He and his friends work as paranormal operators who hunt ghosts. They are described as having experienced stressful events that they have never experienced before. With this, they must be able to overcome every situation and obstacle to prove that they are capable of this job. This research analyzes what types of defense mechanisms are used by Anthony Lockwood and what defense mechanisms are reflected by Anthony Lockwood. The data taken is based on the storyline or narrative, highlighting dialogue and behavior that describes Anthony Lockwood's condition related to the research problem. The conclusion obtained from this research is that there are five categories of self-defense mechanisms shown by Anthony Lockwood's character in the novel: denial, displacement, repression, sublimation, and projection. The self-defense mechanisms are clearly illustrated through Lockwood's behavior and words in the novel *The Whispering Skull*. There are similarities between this research and the research analyzed by the writer, where this research uses Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory as a theoretical basis that emphasizes on the main character, Lockwood, in the novel, who reflects on the use of defense mechanisms in dealing with adrenaline-filled events that have never been experienced before. The topic in

this research is also similar to the topic proposed by the writer, which is about defense mechanisms, the difference between the two lies in the object. The previous writer discusses Anthony Lockwood as the main character who uses defense mechanisms closely related to his stressful experiences as a paranormal operator. In contrast, the writer here focuses more on how the defense mechanisms used by Tara Westover are closely related to her violent experiences.

The writer took the third research entitled *Lily's Defense Mechanism As Seen in The After You Novel* in 2018, written by M. Beni Setiawan from Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga. The novel *After You* describes the teenage rebellion shown by the character Lily. In the story, Lily is described as a character who experiences many conflicts, such as conflicts with herself and domestic and social conflicts. These conflicts affect Lily's nature and behavior which results in anxiety within her. This research analyzes the changes in characterization caused by the anxiety experienced by Lily and how Lily overcomes the anxiety by using defense mechanism. This research uses storyline and narration by highlighting the dialogue and behavior shown by Lily that relates to the research problem. This research also concludes that the anxiety experienced by Lily can be the cause of her using defense mechanisms that result in changes in her nature and behavior. This research proves that the anxiety experienced by a person causes a person to form self-defense and can affect changes in a person's nature and behavior. This research has similarities with the research that the writer will research. The equation is to use Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory and use the topic of defense mechanisms in research. Then, there are differences between this research and the research proposed by the writer. The difference lies in the object, and also, this research focuses on anxiety factors that are closely related to the formation of defense mechanisms in Lily. The writer here makes an update by making violence as one of the factors Tara Westover uses as a defense mechanism.

The fourth research came from Anas Nadya Difanda Arminata, an alumna of Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang with the research title *Defense Mechanism of the Main Character in Jostein Gaarder's An Unreliable Man*

in 2022. The novel tells about the psychological condition of the main character, Jakop Jacobson, in living his daily life. This research analyzes the defense mechanism portrayed by Jacobson in stabilizing his psychological condition, which often experiences anxiety. This research uses storyline and narrative text by highlighting the words and behaviors shown by Jacobson that have a relationship with the problems in the research. The conclusion obtained from this research is that Jacobson uses eight kinds of defense mechanisms, namely displacement, denial, reaction formation, projection, rationalization, rationalization, repression, and isolation, to protect Jacobson from anxiety ascending from thoughts or feelings that he cannot accept. There are similarities between this research and the research analyzed by the writer, which lies in the topic of discussion, which discusses defense mechanisms and the application of the theoretical basis, namely Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic concept. There are also differences between the two, namely in terms of using objects. Another difference is that this research concentrates on the use of defense mechanisms in the main character, Jakop Jacobson. Meanwhile, the writer here takes the violence factor as the cause of Tara Westover forming a defense mechanism in herself.

The fifth research was taken from Rofa Rosyidah's research from Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga with the title *Anxiety and Defense Mechanism of Amirah in the Novel She Wore Red Trainers by Na'Ima B. Robert* in 2023. This novel tells about the life of the main character, Amirah, who grew up in a Muslim environment amid the hustle and bustle of London. Amirah shows a complex development where there is always conflict in her family environment, which affects her perspective on relationships until Amirah vows never to marry. This home situation traps Amirah in anxiety. This research analyzes the anxiety experienced by Amirah by identifying the root causes and how Amirah overcomes the anxiety by revealing the defense mechanisms she uses. This research uses storyline and narration by highlighting the dialogue and behavior shown by Amirah related to the research problem. The research also concludes that Amirah's anxiety is caused by three main factors: an unstable home environment, traumatic

experiences, and complicated feelings of affection. To overcome this anxiety, Amirah uses various defense mechanisms: displacement, denial, rationalization, reaction formation, repression, regression, and sublimation. The writer finds similarities in this research and the writer's reasearch. The similarity lies in the theory and research topic where the theory used is psychoanalysis from Sigmund Freud, and the topic used is defense mechanism. The difference lies in the object and focus of this research focuses on anxiety factors related to the use of defense mechanisms in Amirah. In contrast, the writer makes violence as one of the external factors that make Tara Westover use defense mechanisms.

The sixth research, entitled *The Main Characters Defense Mechanism in Cormac Mccarty's Novel the Road* in 2019, was written by Husni Mubarok from Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel Surabaya. This novel tells the story of a journey to the South after a natural disaster occurs on Earth. A father and his son carry out this journey, and the main character is described as a father. He is a brave father who fights to protect his son and tries to survive after all plants and animals die from being attacked by something unknown. This research uses storyline and narrative to analyze one main character and how defense mechanisms are used. The research also concluded that the character traits are stable and the same, whereas the father's characterization is kind, smart, brave, wise, and generous. In covering up the anxiety caused by the disaster, the main character's father uses repression, regression, denial, projection, rationalization, introjection, and displacement. There are similarities between this research and the research conducted by the writer, where both research uses Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory on the topic of defense mechanisms. Then the difference lies in the object and focus of research, where this research focuses on characterizing the main character to show the use of defense mechanisms while the writer uses violence as one of the external factors of the main character using defense mechanisms.

Furthermore, the seventh research as supporting data was written by Linda Dwi Eriyanti from Universitas Jember with the title of the research journal "Pemikiran Johan Galtung tentang Kekerasan dalam Perspektif Feminisme" in

2017, published in the *Jurnal Hubungan Internasional*. This research analyzes violence based on Johan Galtung's theory. How Galtung's efforts want peace with equality between the sexes. Where there is collaboration and balance between the roles of men and women, which leads to the peace process. This journal concludes that using a feminist approach does not make gender differences the only factor in determining the formation of violence. Galtung argues that it is the patriarchal culture itself, and not men, that should be despised. Galtung seeks to realize equality and justice for women and men. With the hope that direct violence, structural violence, and cultural violence can be eliminated and create peace. This research has similarities with the research proposed by the writer, namely the topic of the problem. The difference is that this research focuses on violence from a feminist perspective in the social conditions of society. In contrast, the writer here focuses on the direct experience of violence experienced by Tara Westover in a nonfiction work.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

Several key terms are core concepts in defining the scope of the research. The following definitions summarize the topic of this research.

1. Violence: An unpleasant action carried out by someone, either directly or indirectly. Direct violence manifests in various forms, including physical, verbal, emotional, structural, institutional, and spiritual violence. It encompasses any attitude, behavior, condition, or policy that dominates, weakens, or harms oneself or others (Galtung in Eriyanti, 2017). Direct physical violence has apparent negative effects, often resulting in injury, disability, or even death. Examples of physical violence include acts of hitting, kicking, or using weapons to inflict harm, as well as verbal assaults or threats that cause immediate emotional distress. Even when individuals do not experience direct physical violence, verbal and emotional/psychological violence can have long-lasting negative effects on their lives (Shinta & Bramanti in Putri, 2012).

2. Defense mechanisms: An act processes within the ego that help protect a person from psychological conflict or intense anxiety. According to Freud's psychoanalytic perspective, the ego mediates between our internal desires (id), moral constraints (superego), and external reality. These defense mechanisms assist individuals in coping with unpleasant, threatening, or mentally suppressive thoughts and feelings. The ego makes these overwhelming experiences more manageable by distorting or altering reality. Essentially, defense mechanisms serve as a way for the ego to divert or suppress unpleasant feelings and anxiety from conscious awareness (McLeod, 2020).

