

## ANXIETY POTRAYED BY THE MAIN CHARACTER CHARLIE IN *THE PERKS OF BEING WALLFLOWER* FILM (2012)

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*This study analyzes the Perks of Being a Wallflower film produced in 2012 using Sigmund Freud Psychoanalysis theory that shows the struggles of main character toward Anxiety and also Defense Mechanism. This study uses qualitative method. There are two types of data. Those are primary and secondary data. The primary data is taken from The Perks of Being a Wallflower film. The secondary data is taken from journals, e-books, documents, articles, and websites which related to the study. The result of this study showed that there are two point of anxiety, which are neurotic anxiety and realistic anxiety. The main character's Charlie have a sexual harrasment for his childhood that make the anxiety arise.*

**Keywords:** *Anxiety, Defense Mechanism, Psychoanalysis Theory.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Human may have bad experiences. People will not be able to escape from the bad thing, but they can avoid it in a certain way. According to Sigmund Freud “Anxiety as the symptomatic expression of the inner emotional conflict caused when a person suppresses from conscious awareness experience” (Adler 117). Prince said, “Anxiety is the opposite of pleasure in psychoanalysis. If pleasure is ‘happy and good thing’ while anxiety is ‘sad and bad thing’s” (George 2). The anxiety usually represses into unconscious experiences in humans, people will never be aware of that got a basic of anxiety. “human have basic desires which press for gratification. If these desires are not fulfilled their driving energy will continue to rever be rate in the mental apparatus” (Chapman 1). The words tell that anxiety is raised when Id continuously encourages Ego to fulfill the desire.

According to Sigmund Freud, “Psychoanalysis is one of those rare intellectual achievements that had the effect of radically transforming human self-understanding” (Stey 20). According to the Freud “the human mind is like an iceberg. It is mostly hidden in the unconscious. He believed that the conscious level of the mind was similar to the tip of iceberg which could be seen, but the unconscious was mysterious and was hidden” (Patel 11). Both of them have a common similarity, because the experience cannot be separated from psychology. This psychology will make people’s subconscious to be thinking something people want to achieve, and something that makes us feel disturbed.

This paper takes the theory from Sigmund Freud. Freud was the inventor of the theory of psychoanalysis in the field of psychology. The concept of Freud’s most famous theory is about the existence of an unconscious that controls most of the behavior of id, ego, and superego. There are also defense mechanisms which are psychological strategies carried out by a person, group of people, or even a nation to deal with reality and maintain a self-image. People usually use various defense mechanisms throughout their lives, some people unknown that they use the defense mechanism, Dr. C. George Boeree said:

“The ego deals with the demands of reality, the id, and the superego as best as it can. But when the anxiety becomes overwhelming, the ego must defend itself. It does so by unconsciously blocking the impulses or distorting them into a more acceptable, less threatening form” (Boeree 2).

The Anxiety and the defense mechanism can be found in the main character in Charlie in *The Perks of being wallflower*. It is a film that tells about the life of a teenager who has traumatic with his childhood. He is a person who is difficult to get along with his friend and his love. He can experience the anxiety if he meets with many people and when he wants to date with a girl that he loves . This is because of his traumatic childhood when he get a sexual harassment by his aunty. His name is Charlie. He did some defense mechanisms to reduce his anxiety. *The Perks of being a wallflower* film is one of the literary work that can be analyzed by psychoanalysis approach of Sigmud Freud’s theory. Thus, this study analyzes anxiety in the main character of *The Perks of being a wallflower* film.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is using qualitative research method. It is a method which analyzes the data using words rather than numbers. It takes from sources of words, sentences, utterance, and dialogues. “Qualitative research is a form of social action that stresses on the way of people interpret, and make sense of their experiences to understand the social reality of individuals. It make the use of interviews, diaries, journals, classroom observations and immersions; and open-ended

questionnaires to obtain, analyze, and interpret the data content analysis of visual and textual materials, and oral history”. (Zohrabi 2).

The use of qualitative method is to describe the Anxiety in the main character in *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* film. The purpose is to discover the answer of the problem formulation and to complete the analysis.

In organizing the data, this study will use four steps, those are: 1) watching the film, 2) Identifying the data, 3) Classifying the data, 4) Reducing the data. The first step of collecting the data is watching the film. It was done in order to find data to be identified in next stage. Another method used to collect the data is reading the film script. This method will support data collection because it is easier to acquire the message of the film. The second is identifying the data. Identifying the data is the way to find some parts of the object that will be analyzed. There are some forms of the data that can be analyzed. The selected data can be in form of description, narration, and prologue, monologue, or dialogue which found from reading the script. There will be several processes such as, giving codes, underlining the data, highlighting, and noting. The third step of the study is classifying the data. Classifying data is grouping the data according to the problem formulation. There will be a table in classifying the data. It is called as appendix. It consists of columns of number, data, form of data, minutes, type, comment, and reference. This step will have help to answer the problem formulations of the study. The last method to collect the data is reducing the data. Reducing the data is the process of selecting from a big number of the data to the smaller number. Therefore, reducing the data will help and make easy to analyze the problems in the study. In this study, the data were analyzed with descriptive method, theories, references and approaches. This step needs collected data that is taken from the previous steps.

### **3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

#### **A. PSYCHOANALYSIS SIGMUND FREUD**

Psychoanalysis is a branch of science developed by Sigmund Freud, Sigmund Freud himself was born in Moravia on may 1856 and died in London on September 1939. The terms psychoanalysis also refers to research methods on child development. Freud developed psychoanalysis as a theoretical framework and method for understanding the world in the human soul and described it as a general psychological theory, which became a framework for explaining behavior. Psychoanalysis is considered one of the revolutionary movements in the field of psychology that start from a method of healing people with mental illness until it is transformed into a new conception of humans behavior. The main hypothesis psychoanalysis states that human behavior is largely determined by the unconscious. So Freud was familiar as the father of explorer and map maker of the human unconscious. “The aim of Freud’s psychoanalysis was to support expression of the affect associated with a traumatic memory, a process later termed catharsis, and to bring the repressed trauma into conscious memory, a process called abreaction” (Kenny 3).

The psychoanalysis theory by Freud tells that personality consist of three elements. In his work, Freud moved away from the idea that mind was structure by conscious, unconscious, and preconscious by a new controlling structure there is Id, Ego, and Superego which work together to create complex human behavior. According to Siegfried William “The Id is the only part of the psyche that is present at birth and it is the source of our bodily needs, wants, desires, and impulses; particularly our sexual and aggressive drives” (Siegfried 1). It means Id only able to imagine something without being able to distinguish the delusion from truly satisfying the needs.

According to Stey, Daniel K. Lapsley, and Paul C.

“The Ego is a modification of the Id that emerges as a result of the direct influence of the external world, it is the “executive” of the personality in the sense that it regulates libidinal drive energies so that satisfaction accords with the demands of reality” (Stey 1).

Stey, Daniel K. Lapsley and Paul C statement argued that Ego develops from the Id so that people can recognize reality, so Ego operates following the principle reality. According to Sigmund Freud,

“the superego, or above-I, represents the moral and ideal aspects of personality and is guided by the moralistic and idealistic principles as opposed to the pleasure principle of the id and the realistic principle of the ego. The superego grows out of the ego, and like the ego, it has no energy of its own” (Feist 30).

Actually, Ego and Superego work together to fulfill Id in the right ways based on moral society.

## **B. ANXIETY IN FREUD’S THEORY**

According to Sigmund Freud “Anxiety is emphasized that it is a felt, affective, unpleasant state accompanied by a physical sensation that warns the person against impending danger. The unpleasantness is often vague and hard to pinpoint, but the anxiety itself is always felt.” (Feist 33). “Each phase of mental development could be defined by its own set of anxieties: the trauma of birth, separation anxiety, castration anxiety, fear of the lost of love, and the fear of death” (Hinrichsen 46). He assumed that anxiety made us feel uncomfortable against all of the dangers that arised in our bodies.

It is mentioned that everyone has anxiety, but in different ways and types depending on how he responds to his fear and anxiety. In other perception “Anxiety is the total response of a human being to threat or danger. Each experience of anxiety involves a perception of danger , thoughts about harm, and a process of physiological alarm and activation” (Donald Moss 2). According to Diana T Kenny

“Freud distinguished between traumatic (primary) anxiety, which he defined as a state of psychological helplessness in the face of overwhelmingly painful affect, such as fear of abandonment or attack, and signal (secondary) anxiety, which is a form of anticipatory anxiety that alerts us to the danger of re-experiencing the original traumatic state by repeating it in a weakened form such that measures to protect against re-traumatization can be taken”. (Kenny 6).

Actually, Freud’s theory of anxiety is about the traumatic in childhood could make something uncomfortable, it is always remembering until they grow up. Meanwhile, G. Maina, M. Mauri, A. Rossi said,

“Anxiety disorders share the characteristics of excessive fear and anxiety and related behavioral alterations. In anxiety disorder, the stimulus, external or internal, produces a disproportionate anxiety that is source of intense distress or significant impairment of functioning. Another characteristic of anxiety disorder is anxious anticipation, or rising levels of concern and tension at the approach of a feared situation, and avoidance of stimuli or situations that trigger anxiety, with further limitations in functioning” (G. Maina 238).

Thus, the biggest problem of anxiety is fear of something that threatening.

Ralph Adolphs said, “ ‘Fear’ is a psychological construct rather than discoverable through scientific investigation” (Adolphs 1).

It means that Fear arises in someone due to defend from danger or just unpleasant feeling about something. Sigmund Freud sees anxiety as an important part of the personality system. According to Freud, there are three types of anxiety, the following:

### **B.1 REALISTIC ANXIETY**

According to Sigmund Freud realistic anxiety, is closely related to fear. It is defined as an unpleasant, nonspecific feeling involving a possible danger” (Feist 34). This anxiety usually comes from the fear of danger that threatens in the real world. Based on the film, the realistic anxiety described when Charlie feel afraid to acquaintance with people in Senior high school, after he gets traumatic of sexual harassment in childhood he very careful to make a friend with people, he can not believe with a person that recently known, he took a long time to get to know his friend personally.

Charlie: (Charlie tapes his book cover back together. He looks up as his dad comes home from a long day. Charlie’s mom hugs him)

“ If my Aunt Hellen were still here, I could talk to her. And I know she would understand how I am happy and sad, and I’m still trying to figure out how that could be. I just hope I make a friend soon. Love always, Charlie).

In this monologue Charlie writes in his book to Aunt Hellen, when his childhood Charlie friends just Aunt Hellen, so in monologue described how that charlie feels right now, charlie writes on the book, tells that just Aunt Hellen who knows his feelings. He feels afraid to meet a new person, but also in the other side he wants to get friends. Charlie fear is related to an unpleasant feeling a possible danger when he meets new people in Senior High School.

In addition, “Realistic anxiety basically refers to the fact that there are genuine danger or threats that actually exist in the external world, you are able to perceive it, you are apprehensive about the outcomes and this apprehension make you anxious” (Nptel 1). Based on the references tell that people who have realistic anxiety refers to the fact that there are danger or threats in the external world. Realistic Anxiety also happened in Charlie because he feels threats by people in Senior High School, he felt uncomfortable with the senior that bothered him. Charlie can not believe in new people, because when his childhood Aunt Hellen tells to be careful with the people, there are lots of bad people outside.

Senior Bully : (out of nowhere, the senior bully grabs Charlie’s book) “Hey, Freshman Toad.”

Charlie : “Well, I have 1,384 days to go. And just so I say it to someone, high school is even worse than middle school.”

Based on the dialogue, can be seen Charlie feel afraid of the situation in Senior High School, he feels afraid of people in his circle now. In Middle school, he just has one best friend that he believed, but in Senior high School, he can not find people which he believes. He feels afraid and uncomfortable, he just wan Senior High School was over soon.

“Realistic anxiety occurs due to the real situations likely to be encountered in the environment. For example, a dog attacks as a result of a certain situation. Reality anxiety occurs due to the ego in this type of anxiety, the most popular method for decreasing the tention is to

leave the environment which could lead to damage” (Gokdag 3). The Realistic anxiety in Charlie occur when his childhood, his Aunt Hellen always tells about a bad relationship, there is no a good relationship, if people take a relationship they will be left by their partners, so he thought that make a relationship it was anxiety in real life.

- Charlie : “I know. I just feel really bad about what I did. I just get so messed up inside like I’m – not there or something”.
- Mary Elizabeth : “Tell it to someone who cares”.
- Charlie : “I know. I’m sorry. I just. We’ve all become such good friends”.
- Mary Elizabeth : “Good friends ? You mean the people I’ve known since kindergarten that you’ve known for 6 months ? Those good friends?”.
- Charlie : “Oh. Yeah. I mean I don’t want to do anything to ruin our”.

Can be seen from the dialogue that Charlie can not take love with girls, he traumatic of childhood. Aunt Hellen always tells a bad story of the relationship. Aunt Hellen has a bad relationship with her husband, her husband live her, so Charlie’s mind has been carried away by what Aunt Hellen told in his childhood. Charlie afraid to make a relationship with a girl, because he thought it was would hurt her feelings only.

## **B.2 NEUROTIC ANXIETY**

The neurotic anxiety occurs by a perception of danger from instinct. The feeling is forms in the inside of Ego. But the source is from Id. In the childhood experiences, hostility feeling is often followed by a fear of punishment, and this fear developed as neurotic anxiety without unrealized (Chapman 13). Someone that has a bigger feeling about something that unknown, so, the person has anxiety neurotic. The neurotic anxiety of Charlie described when the traumatic at his childhood has come again in his mind.

- Prologue : (QUICK FLASH . . . Charlie remembers the night with Sam, We see her put her hand on his knee. The image moves up the arm. To the shoulder. To the face. And we reveal, we are not in Sam’s bedroom. And it is not Sam touching Charlie. But . . . . Aunt Hellen).

Based on the prologue show Charlie when Sam (his loved) put his hand on his shoulder, and immediately his thought turned to the past. The tragedy when he was a child, Charlie remembers how Aunt Hellen treated him. The memory returns when women hold his neck. And immediately Charlie ran to the street.

According to Sigmund Neurotic anxiety is a fear of an undetected danger (Feist 34). Neurotic anxiety occurs again when Charlie and Sam in a bedroom together. Sam put his hand on his knee and Charlie remembers in Aunt’s Hellen that was do a sexual harassment in charlie’s child. So, he can not want to have girlfriends because of the traumatic that happen in little Charlie of Aunt’s Hellen .

- Prologue : (Quick Flash . . . Charlie remembers the night with Sam. We see she put his hand on her knee. The image moves up the arm. To the shoulder. To the face. And we reveal, we are not in Sam’s

bedroom. And it is not Sam touching Charlie. But . . . Aunt Hellen.)

Aunt Hellen : “Don’t wake your Sister.”

Prologue : (Back to reality) the memory only register as a small blink of his eye. Charlie sees his freinds are crying. He’s not. He’s numb. Charlie walk down the street . his eyes far away. The images and memories are short, violet bursts. If you’ve never had an anxiety attack, this is how it feels.

According to the prologue Aunty Hellen also make Charlie silent about the situation at the time. Charlie afraid to talk in another about this and he buries all of a memoriy by herself then makes Charlie be an individual and closed person. He afraid when he has a girlfriend the memories of his childhood come again.

Besides that, sometimes Charlie feels unknown insting in her mind of Aunt Hellen always imagined of in the past that what she does to Charlie. If the images comes Charlie feels anxious and very stressed. Neurotic anxiety in psychoanalytic theory, anxiety that originates in unconscious conflict and is maladaptive in nature it has a disturbing effect on emotion and behavior and also intensifies resistance to treatment (Assosiation 1).

Prologue : (Kitchen. One room. Charlie doesn’t know where he is anymore. The past and present have bled together.

Quick Flash. We see little Charlie turn the corner into the kitchen. Back To Present as 16 years old Charlie stand in the same kitchen, breathing shallow.

Quick Flash . 7 years old Charlie walks up to Aunt Hellen sitting at the kitchen table. Back To Present as 16 years old Charlie begins to have a full blown attack anxiety.

Quick Flash. 7 years old Charlie takes Aunt Hellen’s hand and turns it over . . . to reveal her wrist scars.

Back To Present as Charlie looks from the table to the counter with the bread and the KNIVES. He stares at the knives for a moment. Just as . . .

The policemen break down the door.

In prolog can see Charlie feels anxious about the unknown an always happens with him. Id mind that Unfulfill also can make neurotic anxiety. Charlie’s mind always remembers how Aunt Hellen takes her on his childhood and how that situation not gone from her mind. So, he treats something so that he can be free from that thought, and in the prologue, it is explained that Charlie wants to kill himself with the knives that he holds on.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The conclusion is the result of the analysis in chapter four. The analysis of Anxiety and Defense Mechanism that suffered in the main character Charlie in *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* film by using Sigmund Freud’s theory of psychoanalysis. Sigmund Freud divided the mind into three, they are Id, Ego, and Superego. To get the health of mind, these three parts (Id, Ego, Superego) must be balanced and if Id not fulfilled here Anxiety will arise. According to Sigmund Freud anxiety is divided into three types, they are neurotic anxiety, reality anxiety, and moral anxiety.

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