

Analysis of Anxiety and Defense Mechanism on the Main Character Reflected in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland (1865)* Novel by Lewis Carroll

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Abstract

*This study analyzes the anxiety and defense mechanism of the main character, named Alice in the *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* novel written by Lewis Carroll. The goal of this research is to analyze the anxiety of the main female character and her defense mechanism according to psychoanalysis theory by Sigmund Freud.*

This study uses descriptive qualitative technique of research in analyzing the data. The data are collected from the novel in the form of dialogues, monologues, and prologues. There are some steps which are used to collect the necessary data such as reading the novel, identifying the data, classifying the data, and reducing the data.

*Through *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* novel which was published in 1865, this study find the anxieties of Alice based on Sigmund Freud's theory, they are reality anxiety, moral anxiety and neurotic anxiety. Those anxieties can be seen by Alice's feeling unpleasant and guilty because of her excessive imagination and her great expectations toward *Wonderland's* people and all of things at the peculiar world. Whereas the defense mechanism acted by Alice are repression, intellectualization, displacement, regression, reaction-formation, and introjection. In the analysis, the defense mechanism acted by Alice when she experience difficulties to escape from the peculiar world although she has great expectation toward *Wonderland* in the beginning.*

Keywords: *Psychoanalysis, Anxiety, Defense Mechanism.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Literature is an imaginative work well in the sense of fiction or factual. One researcher says that "literature expresses thought and feelings. Literature also deals with life experiences" (Eriyanti 14). It means that most of literary works written based on human life in society. Based on the statement, then many authors write several types of literary works which reveal any phenomenons in society. Unfortunately, the authors only write about common issues in their society. Moreover, they just focus on literary works for adult people. As a result, it makes children literary works almost untouchable in literary studies.

Having concerned on the explanation above, it is important to know that children literary works are very interesting. The children literary works are written based on children's life and their great imaginations so it will become great work. That is why most children literary work written in a book which completed with pictures because an

illustrated book is the most proper media to make children are interested to read the literary works. In addition, children also can understand the book's content.

Dealing with the statement above, people need to know that an illustrated novel is the best literary work for children. By an illustrated novel, children will get good comprehension about the novel's content because they can imagine clearly through the available pictures on the novel. As the result, nowadays some literary critics begin to analyze children literary works using many theories such as psychoanalysis theory by Sigmund Freud.

According to psychoanalysis theory by Freud, children sometimes get anxiety due to many reasons. Particularly, if children enters into adulthood. According to Freud, "anxiety is if you feel threatened, feel overwhelmed, feel as if it were about to collapse under the weight of it all" (Boeree 7). It means that children will get anxiety when they are feeling worries or fear due to several things which can appear threatened feeling. Besides, the anxiety feeling will block people to do anything, for instance when people do something and they find a problem or when children confront a line of new experiences.

When children feel anxious and uncomfortable, they will find a way to overcome their anxiety immediately. Based on psychoanalysis theory, it is called defense mechanism. One researcher says that "defense mechanism are unconsciously used by someone to cope their anxieties..." (Nuraeni 7). It assumes that defense mechanism surely will help when human gets mind disorder and they want to find the best way to go out from the confusion.

The anxiety and defense mechanism can be found in the major character of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* novel. It tells about a seven years old child named Alice who has excessive imagination. She experiences such time travel since she was slept. Here, Alice finds her own world created by her mind, the peculiar world is called Wonderland. Since Alice enters the world, Alice feels anxious because she finds several strange things. As a result, Alice experiences anxiety and she feels worry because of her own imaginary world.

After Alice suffers anxiety, she tries to find a way to overcome her anxiety. Alice is isolated then she is feeling lonely, that is why she wants to escape. Finally, she can cope her anxiety using some defense mechanism types then she can achieve her goal to find her real existence in the world and enjoy her childhood as normal as the other children.

In conclusion, there are several reasons about why *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* novel is very interesting to be analyzed. First of all, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* has amazing story because it tells about a kid's adventures in a strange world. Second, a main female character named Alice is a unique character. She is a kid who has excessive imagination which finally it will bring her in danger. As a result, she is suffering anxiety and she try to find escapes so it is wonderful novel. Moreover, by using psychoanalysis theory of Sigmund Freud in this study, then readers can understand better about this theory. It is the other reason why *Alice's Adventure in Wonderland* is a good literary work to be analyzed using psychoanalysis theory.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

It is divided into three points. They are types of research, data organizing, and analyzing the data. Qualitative research is a kind of research methodology which used to

report the study. All of the data of this study are explained by describing in sentences. According to Abrar, qualitative research is generally popular as a main research methodology focuses on the explanation, dechiperment, and interpretation of people's behavior, feelings, perspectives or life experiences (1). It closes with an argument from Ian Dey who says that qualitative method is used to develop comprehensive descriptions of the phenomenon under the study (32). He also states that qualitative data deals with meanings (11). By this kind of research methodology, people need to interpret the data then they have to present the data with descriptive way so the data are presented in the form of words, phrases or sentences, prologues, dialogues or monologues, not in statistical analysis form such as numbers.

The second point is data organizing which consists of data collecting method and types of data. In the data organizing, there are four types used in the study. They are reading the novel, identifying the data, classifying, and reducing the data. The primary data for this study is a novel. Since the object of this study is a novel, the first step in the data collecting method is reading the novel entitled *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* for several times to understand deeper about the stories. After reading the novel for several times, identification the data is needed. It is used to find parts of the novel which will be analyzed. In other words, it is such activity of separating data and non-data by underlying or marking the certain data in the novel then numbering the data. Then, classifying the data. The classifying data are grouping the data based on the problem formulation and listing them into a table. The table called appendix. It will be filled by all of the identified descriptions, prologues, and dialogues. The purpose of classifying the data are to make the problem of this study answered clearly. The last steps is reducing the data. Data reduction is the process of minimizing the amount of data from bigger into small number of data. It is needed to be stowed in a most efficient of data form by using relevant technique so the study can be presented well.

There are two kinds of data in this research. The primary data are taken from Lewis Caroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* novel (1865) which consists of 153 pages. In addition, the kinds of data from the novel are monologues, and dialogues and prologues. Whereas the secondary data are taken from from books, e-books, e-journals, articles, essays, and sites that correlate to the study.

The last point of the research method is analyzing the data. It is a technique which consists of analyzing and reporting the results of the analysis. The forms of data in this study are sentences that are found in descriptions, prologue, and dialogues. Then, the selected data is interpreted into understandable meaning by descriptive technique so this descriptive qualitative technique is expressed by statement, quotation, description with more clear explanation.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study discusses about Sigmund Freud's Anxiety and the defense mechanism as reflected in the main character of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865). the main character experiences several types of anxiety. They are reality anxiety, moral anxiety and neurotic anxiety. Those all anxieties are caused by very high imagination of Alice which brings her in danger. Alice begins to suffer anxiety for many times when she just fell in a new world which is called Wonderland. Here Alice confronts a line of challenges and she meets with many strange people. Then, Alice wants to get out from the world because she experiences the anxiety. Unfortunately, her

curiosity is more dominates then her anxiety so she always haunted by another anxiety. Yet, Alice thinks that she has to find anyways to overcome her anxiety so she tries to cope her anxiety use several types of defense mechanisms. They are six types of defense mechanisms used by Alice to overcome her anxieties.

The first defense mechanism which is used by the main character as her effort to cope her neurotic anxiety is repression. Anna Freud also called it as “motivated forgetting” (Boeree 8). It means that an individual here just “not being able to remember threatening situations, person, or certain bad events” (8). The individual thinks that the threatening situation which his has suffered is too painful to remember again. In the novel, Alice acts the repression defense mechanism after she experiences more neurotic anxiety, especially after she eats a small cake which changes her body size to be very big. It is reflected in the monologue of Alice:

...You must manage the best way you can;- but I must be kind to them,’ thought Alice,’or perhaps they won’t walk the way I want to go! Let me see: I’ll give them a new pair of boots every christmas.’

And she went on planning to herself how she would manage it. ‘They must go by the carrier’ she thought; ‘and how funny it’ll seem, sending presents to one’s own feet! And how odd the directions will look!

O dear, what nonsense I’m talking!’ (Caroll 22).

The monologue of Alice shows people that she does the repression defense mechanism after she experiences a neurotic anxiety when her body grows to very big Alice. Here Alice such tries to forget the negative event she has suffered by making a nonsense idea. She is motivated to forget the painful situation because the bad event makes Alice becomes a weak person.

The next type of defense mechanism which used by the main character Alice to overcome her reality anxiety is intellectualization defense mechanism. In intellectualization, “a person may, in a very cavalier manner, acknowledge that they had been abused as a child, or may show a purely intellectual curiosity in their newly discovered their deep desires” (Boeree 9). Sometimes a person who suffers anxiety will do this kind of defense mechanism. in other words, the person will show intellectual curiosity to overcome his or her reality anxiety.

In the *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* novel, the intellectualization defense mechanism of Alice is depicted since she experiences reality anxiety, especially when she just arrived in a very deep rabbit’s hole and the hole is very dark. It is stated in the novel:

“I wonder if I shall fall right through the earth! How funny it’ll seem to come out among the people that walk with their heads downwards! The anthipaties, I think...” (Caroll 14).

The monologue shows people a purely intellectual curiosity of Alice to overcome her reality anxiety. When Alice sees kinds of strange things in the rabbit’s dark hole, she gets some physical sensations such as nervousness and worry. Then, Alice tries to overcome her anxiety. She tries to think positive and creates such intellectual curiosity to reduce her anxiety.

Alice’s excessive curiosity and her high imagination brings herself to feel the uncomfortable of reality anxiety. She always become a hurry person especially when she decides to do something. It can be seen after the poor Alice’s body shrinks to very small Alice and it causes Alice cannot reach a key on the table. Then, she finds a small

cake which is marked "EAT ME". She hopes something good will happen after she eats the cake. It is represented in the monologue below:

'Well, I'll eat it,' said Alice, 'and if it makes me grow larger, I can reach the key; and if it makes me grow smaller, I can creep under the door; so either way I'll get into the garden, and I don't care which happens!' (Carroll 19).

The monologue depicts the defense mechanism of Alice which is called displacement. When Alice knows her body is too small to reach the golden key on the table, she tries to find another escapes. Alice feels scare, then she looks a very small cake into a small box and she decides to eat the cake. We can see here the form of the displacement defense mechanism. Alice displaces or redirects her anxiety by eats the small cake and she hopes it will change her to the right size.

Alice also takes regression defense mechanism as the way to overcome her anxiety. According to Ryckman, regression can be seen "when the ego is threatened, the person may return to an earlier, more infantile form of behavior as means of coping with the disorder" (43). Here the readers will see that regression is a childish behaviour which Alice uses to cope other reality anxiety that is experienced by her. As reflected in the prologue below:

Poor Alice! It was as so much as she could do, lying down on one side, to look through into the garden with one eye, but to get through was more hopeless than ever; she sat down and began to cry again (Carroll 22).

The prologue above shows people the form of regression defense mechanism by Alice. Here, we can see Alice shows her childish behavior to cope her reality anxiety because she feels unpleasant with her physical changes. If in the previous scenes she always use another types of defense mechanism which demands herself to be a mature person and be very creative one, in this moment Alice has to be back to the earlier stages to cope her anxiety. It can be seen when she sits and cries like a powerless child although her body is already grew to very big Alice.

The reaction-formation is another technique to protect Alice's ego from anxiety. According to Sigmund Freud, reaction-formation is "changing an unacceptable impulse into its opposite" (Boeree 10). In the *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* novel, the reaction-formation defense mechanism is acted by Alice after she gets a guilty feeling and almost gives up to face more confusing events in Wonderland. As reflected in the quotation below:

In a little while, however, she again heard a little pattering of footsteps in the distance, and she looked up eagerly, half hoping that the Mouse had changed his mind, and was coming back to finish his story (Carroll 40).

This is representation of reaction-formation defense mechanism by Alice. It is acted by the main character when she experiences more moral anxiety, especially when she cries again and she feels that she is lonely and the poor Alice gets very low spirit. Then, she tries to dry her tears when she hears something from far distance. Here Alice hopes that the Mouse will come and helps herself so she can stop her tears. Alice tries to think something in positive way. Moreover, she also try to comfort herself from a negative impulse of doubting that there is no one will help her from danger although all of her thinking is difficult to happen.

Alice not only experiences the reality and moral anxiety, but she also suffers neurotic anxiety since she just arrived in a rabbit-hole. The poor Alice experiences the neurotic anxiety because she gets out of her control, so she cries for more than once. Then, Alice overcomes her anxiety by doing the introjection defense mechanism.

Introjection “sometimes called as identification, involves taking into your own personality characteristics of someone else, because doing so solves some emotional difficulties” (Boeree 10). In other word, the introjection is same with “imitating someone’s personality into our personality as an effort to establish our identity” (10). It can be seen in the prologue below:

...Sometimes she scolded herself so serevely as to bring tears into her eyes; and once she remembered trying to box her own ears for having cheated herself in a game of croquet she was playing against herself, for this curious child was very fond of pretending to be to people (Caroll 19).

From the prologue readers can understand that the main character Alice also does introjection defense mechanism to cope her neurotic anxiety. As the readers know that in the story Alice always try to become a mature person although she is still a child. Yet, Alice pretends to be a mature person because she hopes it can help herself to get out from her anxieties which are suffered by her since she just arrived in Wonderland.

In short, the main character of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* experiences several types of anxiety since she arrives in Wonderland. The main character Alice finds strange people and events which makes herself worry. On the other hand, she has to againts many peculiar challenges in Wonderland in order that she can gets out from the land and go back to her real world. Therefore, Alice tries to find anyways as her effort to cope her anxiety. In this case, Alice uses six types of defense mechanisms to overcome her anxiety so finally she can escape from the Wonderland and goes back to her normal life again.

4. CONCLUSION

Conducted in result and discussion before, Alice experiences all types of anxieties. The anxieties of Alice can be seen by Alice’s feeling unpleasant and guilty because of her excessive imagination and her great expectations toward Wonderland’s people and all of things at the peculiar land. Whereas the defense mechanism done by the poor Alice are repression, intellectualization, displacement, regression, reaction-formation, and introjection. In the analysis, the defense mechanism acted by Alice when she just realized that a line of strange events which already happened in Wonderland actually are only representation of difficulties that hard to handle by herself.

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