

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Every human being has different forms and types of problems and has a different way of solving it, either using their thoughts, instincts, feelings, or desires. Adults usually have many experiences throughout their lives, which sometimes become complex due to their circumstances. In this sense, conflict, both psychological and physical, can arise that if this is not handled properly it can cause anxiety in a person and form a defense mechanism. Defense mechanisms are usually referred to as ego defense mechanisms that show signs of people developing their psychological issue. The ego defense mechanism of the suspected character will become the object of analysis with purpose to investigate how ego defense takes place and leads to assassination.

Anxiety is interesting to discuss because it examines how someone can experience and protect him or herself from this. Anxiety itself is a body's natural response to stress, feeling of fear all the time, even it may cause to stop doing things enjoy and if left untreated, the anxiety will keep getting worse. It is closely related to the ego defense mechanism that is unconsciously used to protect a person from anxiety arising from unacceptable thoughts or feelings. Healthy persons normally use different defenses throughout life. The aim is to protect ourselves from feelings of anxiety or guilt, which arise because we feel

threatened. Operate at an unconscious level and help ward off unpleasant feelings (i.e., anxiety) or make good things feel better for the individual.

In this study, there is a relationship between literary works and society which is a reflection of the society itself. One of them is "*Trifles*" that becomes groundbreaking in that day and is still pertinent today. "*Trifles*" related to human daily lives, like hiding all the things that make us uncomfortable and one day becoming a bomb that is ready to explode, because it was been buried for too long and is not taken out of it. The play also shows the whole world of the subtle but real interplay between one's prejudices and the blind spots that they produce.

As excerpted from One-Act-Plays.com, "*Trifles*" is a play written by Susan Glaspell in the year 1916. The play is about the murder investigation of John Wright, who is found dead, strangled by a rope, in the kitchen of his farmhouse. There are five characters in it. There are George Henderson as a county attorney, Henry Peters as a the middle-aged local sheriff and husband of Mrs. Peters, she is a relatively newcomer to the town who never known by Mrs. Wright before John Wright married her, and then Lewis Hale as a neighboring farmer, Mrs. Hale as the wife of the farmer Lewis Hale. They enter the Wrights' farmhouse the murder victim of this story to investigate it. John's wife, Minnie, is suspected of the murder. The choice to analyze the Ego Defense Mechanism of the suspected character in Susan Glaspell's "*Trifles*" is caused by the fact that a large number of individuals who have an anxiety attack or something cannot overcome the problems, thereby creating an unconscious defensive trait in the Ego Defense Mechanism. There are some common defense mechanisms, which the

researcher found in the play “*Trifles*”, such as how Mrs. Wright as an accused, keep her feeling about loneliness and dissatisfaction about her husband for a long time. In Freud’s theory of defense mechanism, keeping the anxiety of loneliness can be referred as a repression (Feist, Roberts, & Feist, 2020). However, It is not only that case shown, but also there are more evidences of defense mechanism addressed in this play.

Based on the explanation above, in this study the researcher wants to discover the ego defense mechanisms that are performed by the suspected characters shown in the play “*Trifles*”. Therefore, this study will be entitled “The ego defense mechanism of Mrs. Wright in Susan Glaspell’s *Trifles*: A Psychoanalysis study.”

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Referring to the background to the study, the problem of the study are formulated as follows:

1. What are the types of ego defense mechanism shown by Mrs. Wright as an accused in “*Trifles*”?
2. How does the ego of Mrs. Wright in “*Trifles*” deal with the anxiety?
3. What is the cause of the Mrs. Wright’s ego defense mechanisms in “*Trifles*”?

1.3 Objective of the Study

In accordance with the problem above, this study aims to:

1. To identify the types of ego defense mechanism shown by Mrs. Wright.
2. To analyze how Mrs. Wright in "*Trifles*" deals with the anxiety with their ego.
3. To reveal the cause of Mrs. Wright in "*Trifles*" does the ego defense mechanism.

1.4 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on discussing ego defense mechanisms of the accused murderer character, Minnie Foster or Mrs. Wright who is accused as a murderer of her own husband, in Susan Glaspell's "*Trifles*". By analyzing and elaborating psychoanalysis of her ego defense mechanism are analyzed and elaborated in a detail manner in order to identify and conclude types of ego defense mechanism shown by Mrs. Wright, how she deals with the anxiety with their ego, and revealing the cause she does the ego defense mechanism.

1.5 Significance of the Study

With respect to scientific contributions the current study may have, it is significant in four different ways as outlined below:

1. To the community, this research is expected to increase knowledge about how to control emotions to release anxiety that is in us. It hopes that someone could recover their unconscious defense mechanisms and find better, healthier ways of coping with anxiety and distress in order to avoid dealing with problems.

2. To readers, this research is expected to increase knowledge about the Ego Defense Mechanism.
3. To fellow students, this research is expected to increase references in learning English literature.
4. To future researchers. The researcher expected that this research could give them contribution to their research that related of this study.

1.6 Approach to the study

Focusing on the psychoanalysis approach in analyzing one of the literary works that is a one-act play, in this study, the researcher applied the psychoanalysis approach. Sigmund Freud psychoanalysis theory was employed to analyze kinds of ego defense mechanism in “Trifles”. Sigmund Freud (1856 to 1939) was the founding father of psychoanalysis, a method for treating mental illness and also a theory which explains human behavior. According to Freud, the main assumptions of the psychoanalysis theory entail the fact that personality is divided into three main elements, ID, Ego, and Superego, which belong to the key parts of the personality, how they work individually, and how they interact among one another.

To conduct the research, the researcher used the methodological procedures as outlined below:

1. **Reading** “*Trifles*”, for a full understand of the whole story;
2. **Identifying** the existence of anxiety in “Trifles” related to the types of ego defense mechanism experienced by the main character

3. **Analyzing** the data related to the ego defense mechanisms undertaken by the suspected character (*murderer) in the “*Trifles*”
4. **Interpreting** the analyzed data for comprehensive findings and discussion

1.7 Organization of the Paper

The study is written in five chapters. The first chapter is an introduction presenting the groundwork for this research. It gives an overview of the research which consists of the background of the study, statement of the problem, objective of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study, approach to the study and organization of the paper. The second chapter presents biography of directors and synopsis of the “*Trifles*”. The third chapter is review of related literature that contains the theoretical framework of the study. The fourth chapter is analysis and discussions, displaying all results of data analysis. Finally, the last chapter concludes the study and offers suggestions.