CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

*The Seagull* (Чайка or “Chayka”) is a four chapters Tragic-comedy play. It was written by one of the most famous Russian writer Anton Pavlovich Chekhov. He wrote the play in 1895 and published a year later a long with the first performance on October 17, 1896. The play was written originally in Russian with date of first publication not applicable (drama). The settings of time around 1890, summer; then, two years later and setting place is at Sorin's estate and farm. It dramatizes the romantic and artistic conflicts between four characters Nina, Irina, Constantine and Trigorin. *The Seagull* was first translated into English for a performance at the Royalty Theatre, Glasgow, in November 1909. Since that time, there have been numerous translations of the text—from 1998 to 2004 alone there were 25 published versions. In Indonesia it self *The Seagull* was also adapted by Asrul Sani entitled “Camar”. This research is using Anton Chekhov’s *The Seagull* from The Project Gutenberg EBook of The Sea-Gull by David Widger.

The play was performed for the first time at Alexandrinsky Theater in St. Petersburg on October 17, 1896. The play contains 13 characters. They are , Irina Abkadina, an actrees, Constantine Treplieft, her son, Peter Sorin, Her Brother, Nina Zarietchnaya, a young girl, Iilia Shamraeff, the
manager of Sorin’s estate, Paulina, his wife, Masha, their daughter, Boris Trigoni, an author, Eugene Dorn, a doctor, Simon Medviedenko, a schoolmaster, Jacob, a workman, a cook and a maid servant.

The first performance is a disaster for Chekhov. The play achieved negative responses from the audience. Vera Komissarzhevskaya, playing Nina, was intimidated by the hostility of the audience that she lost her voice. Chekhov left the audience and spent the last two acts behind the scenes. When Constantine Stanislavski, the seminal Russian theatre practitioner of the time, directed the play in 1898 for his Moscow Art Theatre, it was a triumph. Stanislavsky’s production of *The Seagull* became "one of the greatest events in the history of Russian theatre and one of the greatest new developments in the history of world drama". *The Seagull* is considered as the one of the most famous play from Chekhov besides *Cherry Orchard, The Three Sisters, and Uncle Vanya*. The play has a strong relationship with Shakespeare’s Hamlet. There are many allusions to Shakespearean plot details as well. For instance, Constantine seeks to win his mother back from the usurping older man Trigorin much as Hamlet tries to win Queen Gertrude back from his uncle Claudius.

*The Seagull* takes place at the estate of retired judge Peter Sorin. His sister, Irina Abkadina, a glamorous, selfish actress, is visiting with her lover, a successful writer, Boris Trigorin. Constantine Treplieff is Irina's twenty-five-year-old son, which also a writer, lives on the estate with Sorin, his uncle. There are Eugene Dorn, a middle-aged doctor, and Ilia
Shamraeff, Sorin's estate manager, along with his wife, Paulina, and his daughter, Masha. Simon Medviedenko, a schoolmaster, is in love with Masha, who is in love with Constantine. Constantine is in love Nina Zarietchnaya, a young actress. Constantine has written a play and stages it for his mother. Nina is featured in a major role. During the performance, Irina refuses to take her son's play seriously and keeps interrupting. Nina is impressed by Trigorin's reputation and falls in love with him. Constantine, depressed by his inability to inspire love in either his mother or Nina, shoots a seagull and brings it to Nina, claiming that he will soon take his own life as well. Overhearing this exchange, Trigorin sees in its material for a story; he tells Nina that the incident illustrates how human beings can be casually destructive, and that he sees her as a seagull endangered by callous men. Nina and Trigorin begin an affair, and she will eventually join him in Moscow. Constantine shoots himself but is only wounded.

The play's final act takes place several years later. Sorin is very ill, and Trigorin and Irina have come to visit him at the estate. Masha has married Medviedenko and born a child; she is still in love with Constantine, however, and neglects her family. Constantine has had some of his work published. Nina had become pregnant but lost the baby after being abandoned by Trigorin; she is now pursuing her acting career in various provincial towns. During this time Constantine has relentlessly followed Nina, hoping that she will eventually return to him. Through occasional letters to him she has revealed her emotional distress; she has
suffered a lot of disappointments in her career and in her one-sided relationship with Trigorin. Nina returns to the estate and speaks with Constantine, who still loves her. Nina leaves the estate to accept a position with a mediocre theatrical company in a small town. Constantine feels desolate and lonely, while the others are playing cards, then he kills himself. Everybody curious about the sound, then Dr. Dorn came in and said that it was a broken glass and the curtain fall.

As the researcher mentioned before, the play was written by a Russian, Anton Chekhov. Anton Pavlovich Chekhov was born January 29, 1860 in the old Black Sea port of Taganrog, Russia – death 14 or July 15, 1904 in Badenweiler, Germany. He is a major Russian playwright and master of the modern short story. He qualified as a doctor in 1884 although he rarely practiced. In his hundreds of stories and novellas, he wrote them while practicing medicine. After a successful production of The Seagull by the Moscow Art Theatre, he wrote three more plays for the same company: Uncle Vanya, The Three Sisters and The Cherry Orchard. In 1901, he married Olga Leonardovna Knipper (1870-1959), an actress who performed in his plays. The movement toward Naturalism in theatre that was sweeping Europe reached its highest artistic peak in Russia in 1898 with the formation of the Moscow Art Theatre (later called the Moscow Academy Art Theatre). Its name became synonymous with that of Chekhov, whose plays about the day-to-day life of the landed gentry achieved a delicate poetic realism that was years ahead of its time.
Constantine Stanislavsky, its director, became the 20th century’s most influential theorist on acting. Chekhov visited Western Europe in the company of A.S. Suvorin and the publisher of much of Chekhov’s own work. Chekhov died of tuberculosis and is buried in Novodevichy Cemetery.

In this play Anton Chekhov is able to describe the characters amazingly especially Constantine character. The characters shown in this play are very close with daily live. The characters are just very life. There is no misbehavior that makes the characters feel far from reality. The main characters in the play are, Constantine: a young writer lives behind the shadow of his mother popularity. He is in deep love with Nina even she does not love him. Nina is a beautiful young neighbor of Constantine. She is infatuated with famous people such as Constanine’s mother and the renowned novelist Boris Alexyvich Trigorin. She desires to become a famous actress in her own right. Irina: A famous actress of the Russian stage. She is also the unappreciative mother of Constantine. Trigorin: a famous writer has a relationship with Abkadina and later, has a relationship with Nina.

The play describes a lot of beautiful view. The set of the play is in Russia, about 1880, at the Sorin estate. It was told that there is a stage in that place and it was used on the Constantine’s play and Nina as the actress. But the beauty of the setting of place is shown in between act II and act III. Chekhov brings the readers to the lake near the house where lot
of seagulls flies and search for food there. Another beauty imaginary of the
play is in the garden where Irina, Masha and Sorin are having a sit and
corversation. The place is very comfortable as Sorin sleeps in the middle
of the conversation. Play will need an outstanding view inside and outside
the estate.

The plot of the play is complex. It does not focus on one character
only. Each character has his or her stories. The tragedy is not only for the
main characters. For example, Medviedenko loves Masha, but Masha
loves Constantine. They marry and have a son as written in act IV. Masha
accepts Medviedenko because she understands that she will never be able
to be with Constantine even her marriage is not happy also. Beside the
story between Masha and Medviedeko, there is another conflict on the
characters that is linked beautifully in one play.

Because of the reason above, the purpose of this study itself is to
analyze the characters of *The Seagull* play using a psychoanalytic
approach. The researcher will get advantages using psychoanalytic as the
approach because there is a lot of conflicts shown in the play, even in
minor characters. The other reason is the characterization of the play is
similar with people in daily life. It can be said that the characters are realist
characters. And the last reason is because the setting of place in this play is
very beautiful. It will need a huge and outstanding stage to perform this
play. Based on those reasons above, the researcher gave the title for this
research DEFENSE MECHANISM IN ANTON CHEKHOV’S THE SEAGULL: A PSYCHOANALYTIC APPROACH.

B. Literature Review

Based on the researcher’s observation there are several researchs on Anton Chekhov’s The Seagull. The first is from Haley J. Laurila’s HAMLET AND THE SEAGULL: THEATER FOR THE FUTURE April 15, 2010. The essay is focused on the connection between two plays, Hamlet: The Prince of Denmark by W. Shakespeare with The Seagull by Anton Plavlovich Chekhov. The conclusion of this study is that Chekhov accomplished in his pivotal play The Seagull as he used the innovation potential found in Hamlet to generate a theater genre that looked toward the Theater of The Absurd and even beyond.

The second comes from Geoffrey Borny INTERPRETING CHEKHOV, published by The Australian National University year 2006. In this research, Borny revealed the history of the writing of The Seagull play. He says there is tendency to over analyze the characters in The Seagull because they are so human, complex, real. However, the characters are simply pursuing, with each beat, simple objectives.

The differences between the researcher and the two previous studies are the theme and the perspective. From first previous study, Haley J. Laurila’s HAMLET AND THE SEAGULL: THEATER FOR THE FUTURE April 15, 2010 focused on the similarity from the play’s predecessor, Hamlet. The second is from Geoffrey Borny
INTERPRETING CHEKHOV, from The Australian National University year 2006. It sites that The Seagull is almost totally character driven: the play lacks a strong plot, so much so that people accuse it not having any "action."

In this research, the researcher will focus on analyzing the defense mechanism of the play using Psychoanalytic approach.

C. Problem Statement

The problem of the study is how the defense mechanism is reflected in the Constantine characters in Anton Chekhov’s The Seagull.

D. Limitation of the Study

In this study, the researcher will analyze the defense mechanism and the major character’s personality, which appears in The Seagull play by Anton Chekhov using a psychoanalytic approach.

E. Objectives of the Study

Dealing with the problem statement above, the objectives of the study are as follows:

1. Analyzing the structural elements of the The Seagull.

2. Analyzing the play based on the psychoanalytic approach.

F. Benefit of the Study

The benefits of the study are as follow:
1. Theoretical Benefit

This study will beneficial for contributing to the large body of knowledge, particularly literary study on *The Seagull* play by Anton Chekhov.

2. Practical Benefit

In this study, the researcher will get more understanding about Psychoanalytic and how to see character’s personality using a psychoanalytic Approach.

G. Research Method

These points are divided into four sub-points:

1. **Object of the Study**

This research takes *The Seagull* play by Anton Chekhov as the object of the study. To conduct this research, the researcher is using a psychoanalytic approach.

2. **Type of the Data and Data Source**

   a. Type of the Data

   The type of the data of this research is the dialog of *The Seagull* script. This research uses qualitative research to analyze the play.

   b. Source of the Data

   There are two types of the data sources namely:
1) Primary Data Source

The primary data source of this research is the play script of Anton Chekhov’s from The Project Gutenberg EBook of *The Seagull*.

2) Secondary Data Source

Secondary data sources are gained from the biography of the writer, and other relevant information that relates to the study and also website about Anton Chekhov’s *The Seagull*. The researcher takes the secondary data source, including reference and materials relating to the study whether picking up from books or internet.

3. Type of the study

In analyzing the play the researcher uses descriptive qualitative method that based on qualitative data.

4. Technique of the Data Collection

The researcher uses two techniques of data collection:

a. Note Taking

The researcher takes some notes on *The Seagull* script about information that are needed in this research.

b. Library research

There are some procedures in library research:

1) Reading the play several times and determining the characters that will be analyzed first.
2) Reading some related books to find out the theory, data and information required.

3) Making notes of important parts in both primary data and secondary data.

4) Classifying the data into categories.

5) Drawing conclusion to get the last result.

5. Technique of the Data Analysis

The researcher uses two techniques in analyzing the data:

a. Analyzing the structural elements of the play including the narrative elements and technical elements.

b. Analyzing the defense mechanism of the characters using descriptive qualitative analysis.

H. Paper Organization

This research paper is divided into five chapters. Chapter one is introduction including background of the study, literature review, problem statement, objective of the study, benefit of the study, theoretical approach, research method, and paper organization. Chapter two is underlying theory. It deals with the notion of psychoanalytic theory, the basic concepts of psychoanalysis and theoretical application. Chapter three is structural analysis of the play, including narrative and technical elements. Chapter Four is dealing with the analysis of the characters using psychoanalytic approach. And the last chapter is conclusion and suggestion of the research.