

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **A. Background of the Study**

When literature researchers read a literary work, such as novel, drama, poetry or short story, they basically intend to appreciate, enjoy, or evaluate the literary works they read. It means that they deal with the characters and characterization in those literary works. Just like human in real world, a fiction character has a lot of personalities and traits that is shown to the reader that is caused by psychological experience or conflicts in the story.

Something is, somehow, missing if a researcher read a literary work just the way it is. Thus, the researcher wanted to research more about what is happen inside or outside the story, including the characterization. The researcher wanted to know more about the reason of why the character has such personality, whether the character has psychological conflict, or whether the character's personality is caused by a trauma in the past, what the cause of it, and what it will cause. It is important for the researcher to study about the literary work deeply to understand the background story of the characters. This is the reason why literary researchers want to study about the connection between psychology and literature.

Freud's Psychoanalytic Theory gives a lot of contribution and inspiration for most researchers especially for the study of psychological literary criticism. Since a literary work deals with a lot of psychological aspects, a psychology of literature must be developed deeply.

A psychology of literature analysis has a lot of benefits in literature comprehension: first, psychology of literature is important to assess the characterization in literary works; second, the researcher can get some feedbacks about the characterization with this approach; third, this kind of study is so beneficial for a research dealing with psychological aspects (Minderop, 2016: 2).

Actually, both psychology and literature have mutual symbiosis for their role in life. Both of them deal with the connection between human and himself and human with the society. Both of them use human's experience as the background of the study (Endraswara in Minderop, 2016: 2). It makes literature as an interesting subject to be analyzed using psychoanalysis approach because literary study is not just a textual study but it is also a study about characterization/personality of a fictional character, the author, and the reader.

Almost all literary works have the character and characterization aspect in it. That means they can be analyzed from psychological point of view. The play that catches the researcher's attention to be analyzed using psychoanalysis approach is *Recklessness*.

*Recklessness* is a nearly-forgotten drama that was written in 1913 and never been produced in O'Neill's lifetime (Jaworowski, 2016: 2). It is about a woman named Mildred who wants to escape her hopeless marriage with Arthur Baldwin and lives happily ever after with her affair, Fred Burgess, the chauffeur.

O'Neill (1913: 1-2) described Mildred as a "tall, strikingly voluptuous-looking young woman of about twenty-eight. Her hair is reddish-gold, almost red, and her large eyes are of that dark greyish-blue color which is called violet. She is very pale—a clear transparent pallor that serves to accentuate the crimson of the full lips of her rather large mouth". She is the lady of the house where she lives together with her husband, Arthur Baldwin, alongside with some maids and a chauffeur. She is desperate to leave the house with her affair, since she hates her dominating husband.

Mildred always tries to convince Fred to take her away from the house before her husband goes back from doing his racing automobiles hobby. On the other side, Fred convinces her by saying that they need to prepare about it first, so he cannot take her away yet. Their affair is accidentally known by one of the maids, Gene. The jealous maid tells her master immediately after he comes home, which makes him angry. His anger drives him to kill Fred and makes his

death look like an accident. Mildred knows about it a while after, and decides to do a suicide by shooting herself.

The researcher interested to analyze the play because she wanted to see how Mildred overcomes her anxiety throughout the play. Mildred is a woman who rushes everything. It makes her appears reckless in everything she does. It can be seen from the way she asks Fred to take her away. Even though Fred says that they cannot go yet, which actually makes sense, Mildred keeps insisting him by telling that she is fine to live in starvation as long as they live together.

Furthermore, the fact that she hates her husband yet has to appear as if she loves him adds her anxiety. She needs to hide her true feeling toward her husband, alongside with her affair behind his back. Those things make everything around her appears threatening for her. Thus, she mostly uses her defense mechanism to defend herself and to overcome her anxiety.

The researcher wanted to learn deeper about the play, not only learning about what happened explicitly stated in the script, but also what happened implicitly, especially the character's psychology. Mildred is the center of the conflict in the story. She has a complicated internal conflict since she has a lot of secrets that have to be hidden which trigger her to defend herself using defense mechanism.

Because of the reason above, the writer will analyze the defense mechanism of Mildred Baldwin's using Psychoanalysis approach entitled: **The Defense Mechanism of Mildred Baldwin in Eugene O'Neill's *Recklessness* (1913): A Psychoanalytic Approach.**

## **B. Problem Statement**

Based on the background of the study above, the researcher focused the study on the defense mechanism of Mildred Baldwin. Then the focus is broken down into 3 research questions as follows:

1. How is the structural element of the *Recklessness* play?

2. How is the defense mechanism of Mildred Baldwin reflected in *Recklessness* play?

**C. Objectives of the Study**

Based on the problem statement above, the objectives of the study are as follows:

1. Analyzing the structural elements of Eugene O'Neill's *Recklessness*.
2. Analyzing the types of defense mechanism that are used by Mildred.

**D. Limitation of the Study**

The study analyzes on how the defense mechanism of Mildred Baldwin is viewed from the Psychoanalytic Approach.

**E. Benefits of the Study**

The benefits of the study are listed as follows:

**1. Theoretical Benefit**

This study will be beneficial for contributing on literary study of *Recklessness* by Eugene O'Neill.

**2. Practical Benefit**

The researcher hopes that this study will give a deeper understanding of the play, especially the character of Mildred Baldwin, from the aspects of psychoanalysis.