

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Study

During the last few decades, the trending issue about mental illness and anxiety has been raised through films. Freud (1920) asserts that anxiety is the ego's warning sign that danger is approaching. The act of anxiety might cause harm, pain, and threats to the people who suffer anxiety. In terms of this, anxiety is classified into three types, neurotic anxiety, moral anxiety, and reality anxiety. Neurotic anxiety as a fear of punishment. Although the emotion arises from the id, it is felt by the ego. The desire is being developed at this point. The egocentric, childish, and pleasure-obsessed aspect of the psyche is unable to put off satisfaction (Warkey et al., 2020). Moral anxiety manifests as shame or guilt. The fear of receiving a disapproving superego judgment is known as fear of violating a moral or social code. Guilt may lead to anxiety, which can lead to this distress. Reality anxiety comes from environmental dangers, both internal and external. The degree of fear reflects the threat that is currently in place or that is predicted. It can lead to anxiety by feeling pressured and distressed. Regarding anxiety, defense mechanisms are the typical behaviors people do to lessen or avoid anxiety. Defense mechanisms are conceptual techniques that the ego uses to prevent harmful behavior from happening situations while reducing anxiety. Freud (1993) classified defense mechanisms into eight types, repression, formation, isolation, projection, denial, identification, sublimation, and aggression.

In the context of diaspora anxiety can occur due to many factors. Hybridity is a term that refers to forms of interaction between different cultures, and the result

of this interaction is new cultures and identities. Identity is something created and is a process of becoming, identity is closely related to culture. Similar to the scientific concept, hybridisation refers to the emergence of new mixed identities as a result of the intermingling of different cultures. The process of hybridisation can occur when two or more cultures operate in close proximity (Bhabha & York, 1994).

The issue of identity among Asian-Americans living in the United States has recently experienced unrest and discrimination. Just like the experience of artist Lana Condor, she felt a drastic change in her life during the pandemic. The location of her residence in America made her feel pressured and distressed due to adjusting environmental incidents. This issue has become a social concern, especially within the Asian-American community. On May 15, 2020, Lana Condor, Eugene Lee Yang, Lea Salonga and Margaret Cho expressed their defense and spread resistance against this issue (NBC News, 2020)

Based on real cases experienced by the public, there is one film that represents this issue, namely the film *Turning Red*. This study will elaborate the social anxiety and defense mechanisms as an Asian-American based on the main character of the *Turning Red* film, directed by Domee Shi, produced by Walt Disney Pictures and Pixar Animation Studios in 2022. Domee Shi as the director made history as the first solo directed woman at Pixar feature film (Shi, 2022). The film is nominated in the Best Animated Feature category at the Oscar 2023. This film tells the story of a 13 year old girl named Meilin Lee who lives in Toronto, North America. She is a unique and confident teenager, besides that she also has

three close friends. But she is the successor of the red panda spirit of God Sun Yee. Every time she feels high emotions or anger, she will turn into a red panda monster.

Meilin has a good image, people recognize her as a very smart girl, a good daughter, and obedient to her parents. Unexpectedly because of the influence of her environment, she also has a 'break the rules' side. Meilin, with a background of being born in a family that is still strong with its Chinese cultures and traditions, has a slightly different understanding due to the environment where she lives, namely in Toronto. She creates a new identity as an emerging identity. One day she started rebelling against her mother because she didn't want to be controlled by her mother's expectations to be a good daughter and always make their ancestors proud. It was from here that the issue of social anxiety and defense mechanisms began to be pointed out by Meilin. How she began to experience anxiety and do various ways to defend herself so that she could be free from her mother's restraints.

Several previous studies of social anxiety and defense mechanisms have been conducted into various articles by analyzing the dialogues transcript. Warkey et al. (2020) examines the film Exodus: Gods and Kings using Sigmund Freud's theory of social anxiety and defense mechanisms. This research is to find the types of the main character's (Moses) anxiety arising from unacceptable thoughts of feelings. The results of this study shows that Moses experienced anxiety after he recognized the fact that he remained a Hebrew. He experienced neurotic anxiety, moral anxiety, and reality anxiety because of his expectations and guilt. He used repression, formation, isolation, denial, and aggression as called in the defense mechanisms.

Relatively to the previous article, Siregar et al. (2022) examines the film Happy Gilmore using Sigmund Freud's theory of social anxiety and defense mechanisms. However, this research not only provides the social anxiety and defense mechanisms, also the elaboration on movie, character and characterization, psychoanalysis, and psychology of literature. This research is to determine the type of anxiety experienced by Gilmore in the Happy Gilmore movie (1997) and to determine the type of defense mechanism Gilmore used to overcome his anxiety. The results of this study shows that Gilmore experienced neurotic anxiety, moral anxiety, and realistic anxiety. To overcome his anxiety, Gilmore used several types of defense mechanisms. These defense mechanisms were sublimation, displacement, projection, rationalization, reaction formation, regression, denial, and compensation.

Therefore, based on previous studies above, the writer will explore the Turning Red film dialogue transcript that contain the sign of social anxiety and defense mechanisms; thus the writer will investigate the portrayal of social anxiety and defense mechanisms of the main character using the theory by Sigmund Freud that relevant to the main character's as an Asian-American background culture in the film Turning Red in 2022 directed by Domee Shi. To differ, this study presents a unique perspective by combining psychological and cultural analysis in the film Turning Red transcript. Not only does it explore the relationship between social anxiety and the main character's defense mechanisms, but it also uses Homi K. Bhabha's concept of hybridity to explain that these anxieties and defense mechanisms arise due to the merging of Asian-American cultural identities. This

creates a “third space” where the main character reconciles her dual identities, providing a deeper understanding of the complex interactions between culture and mental health.

1.2 Research Question

Based on background of the study above, this study intend to identify these following questions:

1. How does the influence of the main character’s identity background give rise to social anxiety in the Turning Red film?
2. How does the main character in the Turning Red film reflect defense mechanisms in dealing with social anxiety?

1.3 Purpose of The Study

Related to the problem above, the purposes of this study are:

1. To identify the main character's act of social anxiety in relation to the challenges and conflicts associated with the Asian-American identity.
2. To analyze the portrayal of defense mechanisms used by the main character in the film Turning Red as a tool to overcome social anxiety.

1.4 Scope of The Study

This study will focus on dialogue transcripts of the main character in the Turning Red film that contain social anxiety and defense mechanisms using Sigmund Freud’s theory. On analyzing the social anxiety and defense mechanisms behavior portrayed by the main character as an Asian-American.

1.5 Significances of The Study

This study intends to develop theoretical models in the research area about social anxiety, defense mechanisms, and its relation to identity. This study can be useful as a reference for the students or the lecturers who would plan to make any related study precisely in terms of Sigmund Freud's theory of social anxiety and defense mechanisms. This study will benefit society considering that mental illness issues are a hot topic nowadays, along with the cultural identity background triggers anxiety and act defense mechanisms. Viewed from real case issues, this study can provide critical awareness of mental health which can be seen from the perspective of social identity.

