

CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND

1. INTRODUCTION

All humans are mortal. The emotions that come from having bereavement can be painful and hard to accept. Because it is inevitable, a person experiencing a bereavement can become dysfunctional in society. A loss interest of in the outside world (Freud 1917:153) is one response to grief. Grief passes over time and doesn't need any special treatment but sometimes humans can't endure this condition leading to melancholia, where a person developed more unconsciousness and loss of the love object (Freud 1917:155). Freud's (1917) theory, is called mourning and melancholia.

Freud (1894) believes that childhood experiences have a significant impact on adulthood, forming our personalities. For instance, Freud (1894) stated that anxiety that develops from painful experiences in a person's past but is unconscious may be problematic as an adult. Furthermore, this significant impact can create an imbalance in adult life, making them feel less desire to live their life. Additionally, Freud explains as cited in Armstrong (2016:115) that there are three main causes of mourning and melancholia. The first one is inflicted on the body, like a disease and aging, which makes one's person feel anxiety and pain. The second is the pain influenced by the external world and natural world. And the third comes from another relationship with another person. The first two, according to Freud, are firm and must be accepted. Meanwhile, the pain that

comes from a relationship with other human beings is a result of the state of civilization which put the restriction on our id, ego, and superego.

Id, ego, and superego are psychological techniques that can assist individuals in separating themselves from dangers or undesirable emotions such as guilt or shame. The technique is called a defense mechanism (Freud, 1894) to protect those dangers and undesirable emotions from rising to consciousness.

Freud (1917) explained that Mourning and Melancholia is a condition when someone has a deep feeling of loss from a loved object whether it's conscious or unconscious. The broad description of the two conditions seems to support the relationship between mourning and melancholia. Environmental factors are to blame for both of the causes. According to Freud (1917) "Mourning is frequently a response to the loss of a loved one or the loss of an abstraction that had been one's own, such as one's nation, freedom, ideal, etc." While melancholia (Freud, 1917) explained that the person couldn't actually grasp what they lost and maybe the person is aware of the loss object which may give rise to melancholia, they don't know exactly what is lost within them.

Many authors bring up depressive behavior in the character in their novels. One of them is Ottessa Mosfegh on *My Year Of Rest and Relaxation*. Mosfegh depicts the character suffering from a severe mental illness because of her early life. The peak is when both of her parents died within a year. Her family history is also one of the main reasons why she suffers from mourning and melancholia. Her mom

is an alcoholic and died because of accidental drugs when she was at junior college, in the same year her dad passed away because of cancer.

She's been abusing medication from the psychiatrists, becoming an alcoholic, and has no desire for the outside world. The character is feeling mourning and melancholic throughout the storyline, she constantly has a memory from her early life of being mistreated by her parents. Growing up she has not had compassion and emotional support from them, leaving her questioning her worth. She avoids meeting new people and facing the crowd, her life is fleeting only between her sofa bed, her psychiatrist, and the bodega where she does grocery errands. Her relationship with other people is horrible, she has a sometime-boyfriend who has commitment issues and she needs a person who is stable enough to lean on. Meanwhile, her only best friend is very self-critic towards herself. During her melancholic phase, she started losing weight and doesn't care about her appearance, and constantly abuses medications for longer sleep. She started to feel the psychical effects of the drugs and her daily consumption of alcohol. j

1. 2 Limitation Of The Problem

This research is limited to analyzing the main character's phase of mourning and melancholia through the description of the characterization in the novel My Year of Rest and Relaxation that reveals her true personality, therefore, the theory of mourning and melancholia by Sigmund Freud can be applied.

1.3. Research Question

1. How is the characterization of the main character?

2. What is the defense mechanism of the main character?
3. How is the mourning and melancholia of the main character revealed in the novel?

1.4. Objectives Of The Research

1. To analyze the characterization of the main character
2. To describe the defense mechanism of the main character
3. To reveal the mourning and melancholia of the main character

