

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Human beings encounter various challenges throughout their lives. These challenges can lead to considerable distress. To alleviate the negative thoughts they experience, individuals generally adopt defensive behaviors aimed at combating these feelings. These defensive behaviors are often termed defense mechanisms in the field of psychology. Defense mechanisms serve as unconscious strategies employed by individuals to alleviate anxiety and shield themselves from emotional turmoil. By utilizing these mechanisms, individuals strive to preserve psychological equilibrium when confronted with stressful or threatening circumstances.

As Freud's theories, in specific situations, individuals may experience feelings of anxiety or threat related to certain stimuli, which can stem from repressed issues or behaviors that ultimately manifest as measurable physical reactions. This can be both stressful and overwhelming, making it difficult to cope. When this happens, the defense mechanism, which functions on an unconscious level, will inhibit the impulses and transform them into a more manageable format (Boeree, 2006: 7). The situation will cause the ego to trigger what Sigmund Freud refers to as an ego defence mechanism (Freud, 1949:45). Therefore, analyzing the functioning of ego defense mechanisms in literary figures can yields a more

profound insight into the connection between anxiety and psychological coping strategies.

The study discusses ego defence mechanisms in novel *As Far As You'll Take Me* written by Phil Stamper, because it can be an excellent example to spot ego defense mechanisms. Marty Pierce, one of the main characters in the novel, is portrayed by using the ego defense mechanisms on some occasions to ease his anxiety, which later causes conflicts related to a person's inner self, fears and guilt. In this thesis, the study intends to examine the impact of anxiety that are carelessly resolved by ego defense mechanisms, as depicted in Marty Pierce.

As Far As You'll Take Me is a novel by Phil Stamper, released in 2021. The novel tells about Marty Pierce. Marty Pierce is a young gay man from Kentucky who decides to move to London to pursue his musical dreams. Marty Pierce lies to his parents about his destination in London, and he struggles to adapt to his new life in a strange city. He makes new friends and falls in love with a young man named Pierce, but their relationship is fraught with challenges. Marty Pierce also struggles with mental and physical health issues, including anxiety. He finds support from his friends and begins to build a new life in London. This novel as an serves effective illustration of how the improper use of ego defence mechanisms can lead to significant issues in individuals lives, prompting readers to be more cautious and conscious about the application of ego defense mechanisms as highlighted in this research thesis. Related to this research thesis, the study analyze Marty Pierce's anxiety and ego defense mechanisms in *As Far As You'll Take Me*.

1.2 Research Problems

This study has four questions for problem formulation as follows:

1. What is Marty Pierce's anxiety in *As Far As You'll Take Me*?
2. What are the ego defence mechanisms of Marty Pierce in *As Far As You'll Take Me*?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

To answer the research problems, the study decides on four objectives, as follows:

1. To analyze Marty Pierce's anxiety in *As Far As You'll Take Me*.
2. To analyze the ego defence mechanism of Marty Pierce in *As Far As You'll Take Me*.

1.4 Previous Studies

Previous Study in this study serves as the main source to build the theoretical basis, so that it can understand the framework of the concepts that have been tested and the main theoretical theories that are relevant to the topic in writing this study (Creswell, 2014:45). The study found 1 journal and 9 reviews of the novel *As Far As You'll Take*, and did not find academic writing.

The study discovers a publication in the *School Library Journal* entitled "As Far As You'll Take Me" written by Francisca Goldsmith 2020, which depicts 17-year-old Marty Pierce dealing with anxiety and managing difficult relationships. The novel focuses on Marty Pierce's social and psychological development over a summer in London, after leaving his Kentucky home. Marty Pierce is depicted as a realistic and sympathetic character, showcasing emotional growth through various

experiences. This Journal discusses the emotional and psychological journey of Marty Pierce, offering a nuanced exploration of his growth and experiences in London.

The second previous study is a review by Rory O'Sullivan published in *Paper Lanterns Lit*, 2021, titled "Review: As Far As You'll Take Me by Phil Stamper". The study analyzes the novel that tells the story of Marty Pierce, a gay teenager who moves to London to escape his family and explore his sexual identity. The review praised the realistic and sensitive portrayal of Marty Pierce's experiences, as well as the use of humour and a light writing style to balance the heavy themes. This review discussed the novel's exploration of self-discovery and relationships, acknowledging its sensitive portrayal of challenging themes balanced with humour and a light writing style.

Kinzie things in her review, "Review: As Far As You'll Take Me" in (2021) states that the novel as a moving story about self-discovery, the search for love, and overcoming anxiety and eating disorders. While it touches on some heavy elements, such as homophobia and toxic relationships. It appreciates the authentic and realistic portrayal of the characters, as well as the accurate details of life in London.

The other book review is entitled "Book review: As Far As You'll Take Me" in *Ammolloy* by A.M. Molloy, 2021. This review focuses on the novel's writing style and realistic portrayal of queer teenage mental health, particularly the issue of eating disorders. The novelist appreciates the inclusiveness of queer characters in the story. This review highlights the novel's merits in its authentic

depiction of mental health among queer teenage and the growth of its characters, which is further enriched by the travel backdrop and diverse representation.

Flavia the Bibliophile, 2021, in *Creative Writing*, presented a review entitled “As Far As You’ll Take Me by Phill Stamper (ARC Review)”. This review discusses of Marty Pierce, a teenager who moves to London to pursue sexual freedom and exploration after high school. The review highlights themes of self-discovery, mental health, and family relationships, while noting that, while the narrative is emotional, readers may not always connect deeply with the main character. This review discusses novel’s exploration of self-discovery, mental health, and family dynamics, while noting potential challenges in connecting with the protagonist.

Review by Wendy Waltrip, 2021, published in *Pine Reads Review* entitled “Perfect for those who enjoy contemporary stories about discovering oneself”. The novel, which tackles sensitive issues such as mental health (anxiety, eating disorders), homophobia, and non-consensual disclosure of sexual orientation, is considered successful in depicting a teenager's realistic struggle to find a place and self-acceptance. Waltrip praised Marty Pierce's relatable portrayal and emphasised the strength of LGBTQ+ representation in the novel. This which this review focuses on the effective representation of a teenager path to self-acceptance, underscoring its authentic portrayal of battles with mental health and the representation of individuals.

Published in *The Book Bratz*, review by Jessica in 2021 entitled “ARC Review: As Far As You’ll Take Me”. This review focuses on the novel’s that describes as a charming, and engaging coming of age tale set in Europe, with focus on Marty Pierce’s experiences. The review emphasize of Marty Pierce’s journey and self-discovery, as well as his character development, supported by a new circle of friends. While there are a few notes about the story’s resolution that feel too neat, overall, the novel is considered a sweet and entertaining read, especially for readers who enjoy coming-of-age stories with European settings and choice family themes.

In a review entitled “ARC Review - As Far As You’ll Take Me” from *Thoughts About Things* by Krista, 2021. This review focuses on the novel’s that follows the journey of Marty Pierce, a teenager who moves to London to find freedom and explore his identity. The review highlighted important themes such as self-discovery, toxic friendships, and the homophobic impact of his religious family. The review discussed the novel as a relatable exploration of self-discovery and toxic relationships.

Book review with the title “As Far As You’ll Take Me: YA Book Review” in *Reading, Writing, and Me*, by Lanie Brice, 2021. Offers an in-depth analysis of the character of Marty Pierce, a teenager who flees his homophobic family in Kentucky for London. The analysis emphasises the realism of Marty Pierce's anxious and vulnerable character portrayal, as well as her challenging relationship development, including her relationships with Megan (a toxic friend) and Pierce (a lover who influences her eating disorder). The review discussed relatable exploration of self-discovery and toxic relationships.

On March 5, by Kasey, 2021, *The Story Sanctuary* published a book review titled “Review: As Far As You’ll Take Me by Phil Stamper”. The review highlights the complexities of Marty Pierce’s character, particularly his struggles with anxiety, complicated friendships, and selfish decisions. While nothing Marty Pierce’s growth throughout the story, the review also critiques the delayed epiphanies until the final chapters. This review discusses themes such as self-acceptance, social pressures, and the impact of religion on LGBTQ+ identity.

Based on the previous studies above, this study chooses to analyze Marty Pierce through the lens of anxiety and ego defence mechanisms. This analysis significantly differs from the previous studies as it presents a comprehensive approach to the psychoanalysis study of Marty Pierce. Additionally, it focuses on his anxiety, which catalyzes multiple occurrences within the story. Furthermore, the study notes a lack of literature that specifically investigates the ego defense mechanisms of Marty Pierce.

1.5 Research Method

1.5.1 Method of Collecting the Data

The study employs library research as a means of gathering information about psychological occurrences Phill Stamper’s novel *As Far As You’ll Take Me*. Library research is a method to address the research topic by taking into account actual expert opinions through various sources (George, 2008:6). To gather the data for this study, three methods are employed: 1) The study reads the novel several times in order to learn more and comprehend the topic of the study. 2) Data

identification: after reading the novel, the study recognizes the information gleaned from dialogue and monologue, analyzes it, and makes notes about the key points.

3) Data classification: the study divided the data into tables, each of which has a distinct category. The data tables offer columns with information, pages, the sort of study problem solution, and references.

Primary and secondary data sources are the two categories into which the data sources are divided. The primary data sources are those that give the researcher information directly. It comes from *As Far As You'll Take Me* by Phill Stamper. The secondary data sources are those that offer data in the form of indirect information. Books, articles, undergraduate theses, journals, and other study related materials are used by the study. Researchers can obtain very specific and pertinent information by using primary data, whereas secondary data offers a wealth of information for comprehending the larger context (George, 2008:41).

1.5.2 Research Approach

Based on the background of the research that demonstrates the novel's psychoanalytic phenomena, the study uses the psychology of literature approach. The psychology of literature approach is the psychological approach to literature is the study of literary works that views them as a reflection of human mental processes, types, and conditions (Wellek and Werren, 1949:75-76). The study uses psychoanalysis theory by Sigmund Freud to analyze the psychological phenomena of the main character in Phil Stamper's *As Far As You'll Take Me*.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study narrows this research to a particular topic. limits this research to a specific topic. The limitation of the narrative elements is about character and characterization, setting, and conflict in Phil Stamper's *As Far As You'll Take Me*. Additionally, in this study narrows down focusing on a conflict related to psychoanalytical theory that results in anxiety and ego defense mechanisms as depicted by Marty Pierce in *As Far As You'll Take Me* by Phil Stamper.

1.7 Writing Organization

This thesis comprises four chapters, each of which will be segmented into sub-chapters. The four chapters are outlined as follows:

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains the background of the study, the research problems, the objectives, the previous study, the scope of the study, and the writing organisation of the thesis.

CHAPTER II THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHOD

This chapter consists of theories and methods that the study uses to analyse the novel.

CHAPTER III RESULTS & DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses intrinsic elements, including character, characterisation, conflict and setting. It also consists of extrinsic elements of the novel, that is,

psychoanalytical conflict, anxiety and ego defence mechanisms, to answer the research problems.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

This chapter concludes the analysis of the previous chapter.

REFERENCES