

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Every human being at one point must have experienced anxiety and it can affect people's lives of all ages and backgrounds. Anxiety is a common experience that occurs in humans in the form of an unease or unpleasant feeling that comes from within, caused by pressures and conflict. At some levels, anxiety is normal and not a big problem that can be handled without special treatment. For example, when individuals feel anxious about dealing with someone important, the solution is to calm down by taking a deep breath.

However, there is a level where anxiety becomes excessive to the point that it interferes with daily life and leads to the development of an anxiety disorder. At this point, anxiety reaches a point where it becomes unconquerable, thus triggering a Defense mechanism which is a psychological strategy that functions to help reduce pain or distress. Defense mechanisms are used as a form of self-protection against anxiety. Defense mechanisms function subconsciously and assist individuals in managing, distressing, or overpowering emotions or circumstances.

One of the movies that depict anxiety and Defense mechanisms in its protagonist character is Steven Knight's *Spencer*. The movie is released in 2021 directed by Pablo Larraín and written by Steven Knight. It tells the story of Princess Diana as Princess of Wales, played by Kristen Stewart. It highlights Princess Diana's struggle with her royal duties pressure, and her falling marriage

to Prince Charles. It portrays Princess Diana's anxiety and focuses on the three days of Christmas holidays: Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and Boxing Day.

These three days brought the audience to the emotions and anxiety of the Princess of Wales. The movie highlights Princess Diana's increasing dissatisfaction with her marriage, and her eventual choice to break free from the traditional constraints of the royal family and carve her independent path.

The writer thinks that the movie is interesting because it reveals the side of Princess Diana's emotional distress and her life's struggles. In this thesis, the writer analyzes the personality structure, anxiety, and Defense mechanisms in the movie.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the background of the study, the writer proposes three research questions as follow:

1. How is Princess Diana's personality structure depicted in Steven Knight's *Spencer* movie?
2. What are the types of anxiety experienced by Princess Diana in Steven Knight's *Spencer* movie?
3. What are the Defense mechanisms that Princess Diana uses to deal with her anxiety in Steven Knight's *Spencer* movie?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Based on the research questions, there are three objectives of the study as follow:

1. To describe Princess Diana's personality structure depicted in Steven Knight's *Spencer* movie.
2. To analyze the types of anxiety experienced by Princess Diana in Steven Knight's *Spencer* movie.
3. To explain the Defense mechanisms that Princess Diana uses to deal with her anxiety in Steven Knight's *Spencer* movie.

1.4 Previous Studies

The writer does not find any thesis or academic journal about Knight's *Spencer* movie since the movie is relatively new, but there are some articles which are reviews of the movie as follows:

The first review is written by Mark Kermode entitled, *Spencer review – portrait of a princess on the edge* which examines multiple aspects of the movie, such as Kristen Stewart's performance, cinematography, sound, music, script, and character development.

Another review entitled *Spencer review – Kristen Stewart's Diana impersonation is enjoyably strange* by Peter Bradshaw, talks about the complexity of Princess Diana's life and her mental state such as depression, hallucinations of self-harm, and bulimia. Bradshaw notes that while Kristen Stewart's performance is impressive, it falls short of Emma Corrin's portrayal in "*The Crown*."

The third review is *Kristen Stewart's 'Spencer' continues the Diana-ssance. But don't call it a biopic* by Justin Chang. Chang's review focuses on the depiction of Diana's inner turmoil, which he describes as disorienting. Chang argues that the

movie is more akin to a war movie than a biopic, citing scenes such as Princess Diana's reckless driving and the bird's-eye view of her car approaching the estate.

In the fourth review, same as Justin Chang's review, Jack King in *Kristen Stewart as Diana will surprise you, in a good way*, focusing on Diana's struggles in the movie. The review also examines how Kristen Stewart's portrayal of her pleasantly surprises the audience, especially when compared to Emma Corrin's portrayal of Diana in the show "*The Crown*".

The fifth review, '*Spencer*' movie review: *An engaging alternative reality* by Mini Anthikad Chhibber. The review emphasizes its themes, character performances, and visual style, which incorporates surreal imagery and dreamlike sequences to enhance the movie's emotional resonance and effectively convey the main character's inner turmoil.

The sixth review is written by Fred Mayson and entitled "*Spencer*" *spends dysfunctional Christmas with the British royal family*. The review discusses Princess Diana's anxiety and paranoia such as hallucinations of self-harm. The writer also observes the characters and Princess Diana's public and private life.

The seventh review by Marina Chen with title *Looking for Diana: Spencer (2021) Review*, discusses the costume design that incorporates a blend of fantasy and realism, and praises Kristen Stewart's performance for accurately capturing Princess Diana's characteristic breathy voice and emotional distress.

The next previous study is an article entitled *Why are we endlessly fascinated with Princess Di? Here's what 'Spencer' gets right and wrong* written by Meredith Blake & Mary McNamara. The article examines the controversy

surrounding the portrayal of Princess Diana in the movie "*Spencer*", and the different viewpoints on how her story is presented. It contains positive and negative evaluations of the movie and an exploration of the debate about its portrayal of the royal family and its effect on Princess Diana's legacy.

The ninth is the review written by Stephanie Zacharek entitled *Kristen Stewart and Steven Knight Do Princess Diana Wrong in Spencer*, the author of the article criticizes the way Princess Diana is depicted in the movie, stating that it portrays her as excessively focused on herself. The article further argues that the *Spencer* movie is a parody of a parody and that it does not accurately convey Diana's delicate and charming nature.

The last previous study is from an article entitled *Spencer' Turns Diana into a High-Camp Cliché* written by Philippa Snow. The article offers a negative evaluation of the way Kristen Stewart played the princess in the movie, arguing that it heavily relies on the overused trope of the "troubled princess" and fails to offer any meaningful understanding of Princess Diana's personality or the challenges she faced. Therefore, the article criticizes the movie's depiction of Princess Diana.

The studies mentioned earlier all focus on the movie *Spencer* directed by Steven Knight. However, this research thesis differs from those previous studies in two ways. Firstly, none of the earlier studies employs any literary theory, while this thesis uses Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis theory to analyze the movie. Secondly, the earlier studies are non-academic reviews based solely on the opinions of the writers, whereas this thesis is an academic thesis research.

1.5 Scope of the Study

The scope of the study is to examine both intrinsic and extrinsic elements depicted in the movie *Spencer* directed by Steven Knight. The intrinsic elements discussed in this study are character & characterization and conflict, while the extrinsic elements are personality structure, anxiety, and Defense mechanisms. The analysis is limited to the transcript of the movie that does not include cinematography as one of the main elements of analysis.

1.6 Writing Organization

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of the Background of the Study, Research Problems, Objectives of the Study, Previous Study, the Scope of the Study, and Writing Organization.

CHAPTER II THEORY AND METHOD

This chapter includes the theories used throughout the study to reach conclusions. The theories are Characters & Characterization, Conflict, Personality Structure, Anxiety, and Defense Mechanisms.

CHAPTER III ANALYSIS

This chapter contains an analysis that utilizes the theories mentioned earlier. The discussion explores Intrinsic Elements and Extrinsic Elements of the movie. Intrinsic Elements include Characters & Characterization, and Conflict which consists of Internal and External Conflicts of Princess Diana. Meanwhile, Extrinsic Elements of the movie include Freud's Theories. There are Personality Structures, Anxiety, and Defense Mechanism. The Personality Structure includes

Id, Ego, and Superego, The Types of Anxiety consist of Neurotic Anxiety, Moral Anxiety, and Reality Anxiety, and Defense Mechanisms are divided into Rationalization, Sublimation, Displacement, and Reaction Formation.

CHAPTER IV CONCLUSION

This chapter consists of the conclusion of the study. The summary of all parts of the study is compiled in this chapter.

