

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background of the Study

Literature is one of the human products which can provide and portray human life with other humans and their environment. All aspects of human existence are represented in literature, which may be shared with others and expresses a vast array of sentiments, emotional states, ideas, and perspective on life and reality. Simply put, literature is a means for people to use their imaginations to express and experience the world (Wellek and Warren, 1956: 282). There are a lot of literature, for example books, novel, movie, drama, short story and et cetera. And in this thesis the writer uses short story to be analyzed.

Short stories are a story with 5-20 pages, as one of the literary products, express ideas, emotions, or even experiences of the author in a compelling narrative. In his book *The Philosophy of Composition*, Edgar Allan Poe states that a short story should be written with a single effect in mind, which means that each plot point, character, setting, and aspect should all work together to create a cohesive emotional impact on the reader (1846: 60). Poe also emphasizes that a short story should be brief enough to be read in on sitting, ensuring that its intensity remains undiluted. This coherence among the elements of a short story is what creates space for the exploration and one of the explorations is psychological themes.

Among various themes in literature, psychological aspects play a significant role in shaping characters and their development. Literature often serves as a reflection of human psychology, revealing the complexities of internal conflicts, anxiety, and the mechanisms individuals use to cope with distress. One of the most prominent literary figures in Gothic fiction, Edgar Allan Poe, often delves into psychological themes, portraying characters who struggle with guilt, fear, and madness (Peeples, 2004).

In this research thesis, the writer will analyze two short stories titled *The Black Cat* and *Berenice* by Edgar Allan Poe. The main types of the short story is psychological. This short story, like most psychological short stories, contains several conflicts, like psychoanalytical conflict, anxiety, and ego defence mechanisms. According to M.H. Abrams in his book *The Mirror and The Lamp*, literature can reflect reality (mirror) or illuminate human emotions and imagination (lamp) (1953: 8). From that, *The Black Cat* and *Berenice* can be seen as a literary representation of psychological conflict, reflecting the complexities of the human mind while also shedding light on destructive nature of unresolved anxiety.

To analyze the main character's psychological conflict, this thesis applies Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytical theory. Freud's theory examines the role of the unconscious mind in shaping human actions. The id, ego, and superego are three parts of the human psyche, according to Sigmund Freud (1923: 22). Conflict among these three elements can lead to anxiety, which the mind attempts to manage through ego defence mechanism (Freud, 1936: 45).

The writer will focus on the main character because the problems and conflicts of the story revolve around that character. In detail, the writer chooses to analyze the ego-defence mechanism of the main character. The writer is expected to contribute to the broader discussion on the intersection of psychology and literature.

### **1.2. Research Problems**

1. How are the main character's defence mechanisms reflected in Edgar Allan Poe's *The Black Cat*?
2. How are the main character's defence mechanisms reflected in Edgar Allan Poe's *Berenice*?
3. What is the similarity of defence mechanisms in the main character in Edgar Allan Poe's *The Black Cat* and *Berenice*?
4. What is the contrast of defence mechanisms in the main character in Edgar Allan Poe's *The Black Cat* and *Berenice*?

### **1.3. Objectives of the Study**

1. To understand how the main character's psychological defence mechanisms are portrayed in Edgar Allan Poe's *The Black Cat*.
2. To understand how the main character's psychological defence mechanisms are portrayed in Edgar Allan Poe's *Berenice*.

3. To determine the similarities in the defense mechanisms used by the two main characters in Edgar Allan Poe's *The Black Cat* and *Berenice*.
4. To examine how the contrasting defence mechanisms contribute in Edgar Allan Poe's *The Black Cat* and *Berenice*.

#### **1.4. Previous Studies**

There are five articles and two journal articles that discuss the short story entitled *The Black Cat* by Edgar Allan Poe. There are two articles and one journals that discuss the short story entitled *Berenice* by Edgar Allan Poe. The first is a review of an essay titled *Psychoanalyzing "The Black Cat": The Journey from Emotional Transference to Display of Psychopathy* by Maros Buday (2014). Maros claims that *The Black Cat* is the foundation of the psychoanalytic approach which combines the psychological phenomenon of emotional transference with the fous's anti-social behavior. The article emphasizes how the narrator's unreliability affects the transparency of the events that take place throughout the narrative.

The second review is a journal written by Mehruz (2016) entitled *Psychological Analysis of Edgar Allan Poe's 'The Black Cat'*. Based on the review, Mehruz highlights how the main character's repressed emotions and desires, particularly aggression and guilt, manifest in his cruel treatment of the cat and his wife.

The third is an article written by Anderson (2017) entitled *The Black Cat and the Reflection of the Unconscious*. According to Anderson, *The Black Cat*

serves as a literary reflection of the unconscious mind's power over human behavior, demonstrating how suppressed desires can lead to madness and self-destruction when left unresolved.

The fourth review is a journal article written by Anamarija Pezer (2020) entitled *Madness and Psychology in Edgar Allan Poe's Short Stories*. Based on the review, *The Black Cat* represents the theme of madness and psychological instability.

The fifth is an article written by Hussain (2020) entitled *Freud's Psychoanalytic Take on Edgar Allan Poe's 'The Black Cat'*. Hussain's article emphasizes that *The Black Cat* serves as a literary exploration of the destructive power of unconscious forces when the ego cannot maintain control, leading to madness and self-destructiveness.

The sixth is an article written by Yefi QWS (2020) entitled *The Black Cat: A Psychoanalysis of The Narrator's Losing Touch with Reality*. This review highlights how his irrational violence, especially toward his pets and his wife, stems from repressed aggression, which surfaces due to a weakening ego.

The seventh review is an article written by Bartleby (2020) entitled *Psychoanalytic Analysis on The Black Cat*. Based on the review, the main character's erratic behavior is a result of unconscious conflict and repressed desires.

The eight review is a journal written by Chad Luck (2019) entitled *Poe's 'Berenice' and the Aesthetic of the Interesting*. The journal explores how *Berenice*

reflects the aesthetics of “the interesting” rather than “the beautiful”, focusing on the main character’s obsessive perception.

The ninth is an article written by Hal Blythe and Charlie Sweet (1981) entitled *Poe’s Satirical Use of Vampirism in “Berenice”*. This essay argues that Poe employs vampiric imagery, not straightforward horror.

The tenth review is an article by Enrico Terrone (2023) entitled *The Functioning and Malfunctioning of Fictional Characters*. This piece delves into how Berenice’s physical appearance, and particularly the teeth, serve as both obsessions and hallucinatory projections of Egaeus’s disturbed psyche.

The writer chooses defence mechanisms as the focus of this research because *The Black Cat* and *Berenice* present intense psychological struggles experienced by the main character. In addition, the gap in the study can be seen in the main topic the writer chooses, as there is a lack of discussion specifically addressing the main character’s defence mechanisms in the short story. And there’s no that used Sigmund Freud for both short story of Edgar Allan Poe’s *The Black Cat* and *Berenice*.

### **1.5. Scope of the Study**

The scope of this study is to examine the intrinsic (character, conflicts and setting) and extrinsic (psychoanalytic conflict, anxiety, and ego defense mechanisms) components of Edgar Allan Poe’s two short stories, *The Black Cat* and *Berenice*. The writer will concentrate on the many forms of psychoanalytic

conflict, anxiety, and the defense mechanism in Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory while discussing extrinsic components.

## **1.6. Writing Organization**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The background of the study, research problems, the objectives of the study, the previous study, the scope of the study, and writing organization are all included in the first chapter.

### **II. THEORY AND METHOD**

The writer's theories, both intrinsic and extrinsic elements, as well as the research method to examine the short story are covered in the second chapter in this thesis.

### **III. DISCUSSION**

This thesis's third chapter discusses the short story's intrinsic and extrinsic elements.

### **IV. CONCLUSION**

An analysis of the short story is presented in the final chapter of this thesis.

## **REFERENCES**