

# **The Worst Human Soul Sickness (Denial) As Described In A Story By Esther Claes “THE STAR”**

Muhammad Arief Budiman  
Fakultas Bahasa dan Sastra Universitas AKI

## ***Abstract***

*Sickness is not only physic but also soul. The study that concerns on soul is psychology. In psychology, the practitioners try to find how to cure a sick soul. In medical world, psychology is used to analyze the soul of real people. Psychology is not only used in medical world. Psychology is also used in literature world. In literature, psychology is used to analyze man-made character.*

*By using psychology we can understand the characters in fiction world. By understanding the characters in fiction, we can comprehend the society which surrounds the fiction concerned. This is because fiction is reflection of the society.*

*In this paper the writer uses psychoanalysis to analyze the main character in the story. Psychoanalysis is part of psychology which is created by Freud. By using psychoanalysis we can understand the personality structure, ego defense mechanism, and the dynamic of the soul of the main character.*

*By using psychoanalysis, the writer finds that the main character suffers denial of what happen in the real world. By denying the reality, the main character wants to live comfortably in the fiction world which she creates in her mind. By applying this ego defense mechanism, the main character tries to cope the shattered world.*

**Key words** : psychoanalysis, fiction, main character

## **I. Introduction**

Literature is individual human instinct to express idea, experience, feeling, belief, and spirit in a concrete illustration form. Some form of literary works which created from artistic and creative elements are

novel, drama, short story, prose, poem etc.

And some of them are fiction but occasionally they may nonfiction. Example short story contains people character and their problem in life, and maybe it's hard to find for the reader.

Literature presents life and most of life consists of social reality, although work of literature also imitates subjective world and nature of human. Author is a citizen who has special status, thus he gets society's acknowledgment and recognition and has mass although only theoretically. Discussion on relationship between literature and society usually based on De Bonald's statement "literature is an expression of society."

The important part of the story is the characters which exist in the plot. The characters are considered important because it is through characters the story tellers can delivered the messages that they want to get through to the readers. In other words, the existence of the characters in the story is as intermediary or messenger from the story tellers to the readers.

Regarding the importance of the characters' existence in the story, the writer focuses this paper to analyze the main character in the short story 'The Star' by Esther Claes. In analyzing the main character, the writer uses Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis. By using psychoanalysis, the writer gets the personality structure of the main character in the form of id, ego, and superego. Besides personality structure, the writer also gets ego defense mechanisms

which are applied by the main character in facing many kind of problem in her life.

Besides using psychoanalysis, the writer also applies sociology of Marxism. The using of Marxism is based on the existence of society in the fiction story as those the existence of society in the real world. In other words the existence of society in real world is reflected by the existence of society in the fiction story. This is happened because the story tellers are the member of society. Consciously or unconsciously, the story tellers insert the elements of society which exist around them into the fiction they create.

Thus the use of Marxism is considered appropriate to analyze the existence of society in the fiction. By using Marxism, the writer wants to highlight the problem which the story teller wants to deliver to the readers. Indirectly, the problem in the story reflects the real problem exist in the society in general, and especially in the society where the story teller lives.

## **II. Discussion**

### **2.1 Personality structure**

Psychology is a science that studies human behavior in its relationship with its environment. Base on its root, the word psychology comes from old Greek: Psyche means soul and logia mean science) thus

etymologically psychology means study that learns about soul.

In this story, to analyze *The Star* the writer uses some Sigmund Freud's theory. Some of his theory that the writer think could help to analyze this short story such as id, ego and superego as a branch of Mind Area, aggression as a branch of Impulses, regression as a branch of defense mechanism, moral and realistic anxiety as a branch of The Anxiety level itself.

#### 2.1.1 Id

The id applies to the instinctual drives that relate to the needs of the body, the id is primitive and needy, incapable of denying itself. Id is an emotion that control your mind to do what you want not other man ask to you. It can be say that a person who is following his emotion, his mind to do everything that she or he wants without receive any command from outside to consider them and decide the best thing that she or he has to do, she or he is following his or her id.

This kind of psychological appearance can be seen when the main character of *The Star*, "You", just follow her willing, to keep herself in his room, refusing to answer the door which is knocked by her

assistance, maid, manager even her parents. She just lay in bed with the blankets pulled up to her nose, crying in her panic feeling.

All of her doing is to fulfill her id that does not want to admit about the bad condition of the world. If she admits what is really happen, her soul will collapse. She wants to maintain her confidence as an actress that the world is fine and that her career will go much further.

Being actress means good life. With the 'actress card', she can get luxury facilities which the ordinary people cannot get it. Such as being prioritized in the line (whatever line it might be: in restaurant, movie, bank, airport etc). With 'actress card', she also can order people as she wants. She considers actress as respectable position, and people around her should oblige all her wishes. This is happened mainly when the actress is in shooting location. She can govern all the crews as she wishes as if she is a queen or mean dictator.

This is not only happened in the shooting location. Her id (read: self center) is also applied in her own house. She acts arbitrarily toward her parents. She assumes that as an actress she get a lot of money to support her parents. She believes her parents

owe her. With this thought, she acts haphazardly toward her parents.

This does not stop there. Arbitrarily acts are also expressed towards her maids. She considers her maids not as human. Their existence is considered as complement and tool to satisfy all her needs.

### 2.1.2 Ego

The ego develops out of the id and it pacifies the drives, by offering itself as a substitute for what must be denied the id. Ego is the one aspect which always tries to control the irrationality of the id and representative of external, social influences that come from the superego. When the ego get a big pressure from the id and superego, a man who that stay in this kind of situation will feel stress and panic.

The main character of this short story also feels panic in many conditions. For example when she saw The President is crying and begging on TV, the end of the world is coming. Her id drives her to reject this kind of information, but the superego is she saw with her eyes that The President is crying and begging because the condition of the country becomes worst. When the world end it means that her career will also end. He does not want to hear this but it is the

fact. This kind of situation makes her get a big panic.

When she sees the world around her collapse, her ego does not want to accept it. On one side both of her eyes see the truth that the world really collapses. But on the other side she wants maintain the world's situation in a perfect condition as before when she has a position as an actress. By doing this, she tries to control the situation around her. She does not realize that she has limited power where her being make it impossible for her to control one hundred percent the world as she wants.

As a result, she reduces the want to control the whole world. Reducing does not mean erasing the want of her ego to be the ruler of situation. The want to be the ruler of situation still exists in her being. This is showed by her desire to be the ruler of the house. She enslaves the people around her including her parents and her maids. By doing this, she actualizes the want of her ego to be the ruler of situation.

### 2.1.3 Superego

The superego is representative of external, social influences upon the drives. This kind of Superego- external influence which appears in *The Star* short story

appears as the willing of assistant, manager, maid and parents of the main character when they try to knock the main character's door. Try to make the main character come out from her room.

With the state of superego, the main character should have the ability to differentiate which one is correct and which one is incorrect. In other words she should control her id which wants something incorrect and defeat her ego which supports the state of her id. But the reality shows that she is incapable of doing so.

The condition of her superego is defeated by the state of her id and her ego which is very strong. Her id denies the condition of the world which is in the state of disaster. Her ego wants her becomes the ruler of situation which can control the world in order not to collapse and maintain her comfortable position as an actress. By this we can see that her superego cannot work smoothly. Thus what happen is superego surrenders toward the want of id and ego. This is personified by her action in isolating herself in her own room. Her being admits that she is incapable to control the world out there. Her id and her ego try to find a solution. The solution is isolating herself in her own room. Her ego states that

her own room is her territory. Her ego states that she will be able to be the ruler of situation in her own room.

The people around her work to interfere in controlling her being when her superego cannot conduct her responsibility as individual which should act according to the norm which exists in her surroundings. This is showed when all people around her (her parents, her maids, her assistant, her manager) try to break the door of her room. They try to make her realize that what she does is wrong. As individual who lives in the society, she should act according to the existing norm. When there is a disaster, she is suggested to act as the others do, that is saving herself instead of denying the disaster itself.

## 2.2 Ego Defense Mechanism

### 2.2.1 Aggression

Aggression as one of human's impulses is a willing to destroy another person. It can be done by tempting, gossiping, talking with sarcasm, joking and enjoying the suffering of someone else. This aggression, actually, shows to us that we have a need to build a "wall" to control the aggression.

This kind of Aggression – talking sarcasm appears in this story. This aggression comes from the main character for several times. The first is showed when “you” or the main character does not want to answer any knock from everyone even from her parents who have begged to her to come out from her room. But waiting for twenty-four hours and still do not want to come out, her father took the door off its hinges and dragged her down the stairs into her sunken living room with the white carpet and leather couches. She kicks and screams until he has to pick her up and carry her over his shoulder. She called him a motherfucker and threatened to take back the Mercedes she'd purchased for him last Christmas.

Calling her father ‘motherfucker’ shows two things. The first is showing her authority which in turn she feels superior compare to her own father. She wants to show her father that she is a tough woman. Instead her doing shows her weakness. The second is that her action shows her insecurity. Her insecurity is personified by mocking her own father. By doing this she does not want to admit that the state of her being is vulnerable. By doing denial, her being becomes aggressive. When there is no respond from her father, the main character

tries another way to show her authority. That is by threatening. Once again, this threatening also shows that she wants to stay in the same position as the ruler. She does not want to be the victim. She does not want to be threatened.

The second is when the main character thinks so much about her latest album but her mother says that the album is not going to happen. The main character cannot believe what her mother saying. How can her mother say that? For the main character thinks that there will always be an album, and there will always be television. She tells her parents they're idiots.

When her mother says that there will be no album, at a glance she predicts what will happen in her future. If there is no album, it means she is not an actress anymore. If she is not an actress, she realizes that she is no one. After getting this enlightenment, her being does not want to accept it. Her denial is personified through her aggressiveness by mocking her own mother. She blames her own mother for what will happen to her. Although the prediction only exists in her imagination, her being considers that it already happened.

### 2.2.2 Regression

Regression appears when a person who gets a traumatic experience goes back to the previous development stage. Regression is an example of common way when a person – adult to face some trouble which could make he or she get an anxiety for this kind of act will make she or he feel better. For example, in a big stress condition an adult could sleep bend over like a little baby in his or her mother's womb or lay on the bed all day long, cover his or her body with a blanket looks like hide behind his or her blanket from the despicable of the world.

This kind of defense mechanism can be seen when the main character cannot accept the reality about the end of world that she has to face and when she do not want to respond her father's calling with his sick sound for she does not want him to throw up on the carpet in the hall she always prefers to pull the blankets up to her chin and close her eyes. Lay in bed with the blankets pulled up to her nose, crying, refusing to answer.

In the current time, the main character is the breadwinner for her family. Her family does not mean her husband and her children, instead it means her parents. This shows that she is an adult and can act as a protector for her parents. But when the disaster comes, her being cannot be mature.

Her being is in the state of regression where she goes back to her childhood when she is very dependent towards her parents. Thus when her father asks for her help, she just stays put and cries. Her being which goes back to her childhood assumes that it is her father who should help her not the other way around.

### 2.2.3 Moral Anxiety

Moral anxiety always caused by the conflict between ego and superego. This kind of anxiety also appears when a man feels fail to do something that he or she thinks well or proper in moral.

This kind of anxiety appears when father of the main character say to her that her mother is very sick, and he does not feel so well himself but she cannot do her best. The main character rolls her eyes and tells them to take some pepto, but on the inside, she cannot deal with the possibility of them dying and leaving her alone. This statement reflect that the main character feels worry for she cannot do the best thing to make her mother and father getting well. She only just tell them to take some pepto, she cannot do something that more proper to help her parents bad condition.

Her two parents are dying because of natural disaster in the form of poisonous gas. Her parents ask her help. Her ego says that her parents are adults and can save themselves. Her superego says that as a good daughter she should save her parents. The contradiction of these two things in her being makes her uncomfortable. Finally she recklessly suggests her parents to take pepto which is a medicine for light disease. Her superego cannot work properly. Her mind cannot find the right solution because in the other side her ego tries to deny the condition of her dying parents. She considers her parents only suffer from light disease which needs ordinary medicine to get well. By this thinking she considers her solution is right. With this solution she hopes her two parents will be alright and stay in her side. This shows her other ego which wants comfortable situation in the form of protection from her two parents.

#### 2.2.4 Realistic Anxiety

Realistic anxiety is explained as an unspecific unhappy feeling which cover the possibility of the danger or risky itself.

This kind of anxiety can be seen when father of the main character say to her that her mother is very sick, and he does not

feel so well himself. She rolls her eyes and tells them to take some pepto, but on the inside, she cannot deal with the possibility of them dying and leaving you alone.

In here, the main character just think about the worst possibility but this kind of possibility can give her a big stress about the anxiety to stand alone in this world.

What is unrealistic from this scene is her worry to be left alone. Whereas there is a threat which is much worst than that in front of her eyes. That is the natural disaster. But her being chooses to think the unrealistic thing. She does not want to be alone. She wants her two parents are always beside her. She does not want to worry about natural disaster. She does not want to worry about her two parents dying. She only worries about herself who does not want to be left alone.

### **2.3 Study of literature with Sociology approach in The Beggar**

Sociology is the study of society. It is a social science a term with which it is sometimes synonymous which uses various methods of empirical investigation and critical analysis to develop and refine a body of knowledge about human social activity,

often with the goal of applying such knowledge to the pursuit of social welfare. Subject matter ranges from the micro level of agency and interaction to the macro level of systems and social structures.

From the above statement, it can be concluded that sociology is the study about society, how people interacts each other. The main purpose of the existence of sociology is to study about the society in the sake to objectify the people's prosperity. Regarding this main purpose, thus sociology can be applied into other discipline as long as it does not deviate from the main purpose. One of the applications which can be done is applying sociology to analyze the work of art.

The existence of literature work cannot be separated from the existence of the society which surrounds it. The author is also the member of society. With this position, the author (consciously or unconsciously) inserts the elements of society around him into the work he creates. In other words there is society in the work of art (explicitly or implicitly). Regarding this, thus it is not wrong to employ sociology to analyze the work of art.

Besides, the society in the literature work can be a tool to know what really

happen out there. It means that the real world is mirrored in the plot which is created by the author in his story. Thus we will know whether our society is alright or is in trouble through literature works circulating in the society. Considering the situation the writer employs sociology to analyze this story.

In this story, to analysis the story the writer uses the theory of Social Stratification which is created by Aristotle. There are 6 concepts to study about Social Stratifications. They are :

1. Classifying
2. Social System
3. Hierarchical Stratum
4. Authority
5. Privileges
6. Prestige

To analyze *The Star* short story from the sociology point of view the writer use some of those concepts such subjective process in classifying, hierarchical stratum, authority and about decrease social mobility which give negative impact for the main character's privilege.

### 2.3.1 Social Stratification

In the *The Star* short story, the main character describes as a star, a Hollywood star who has a maid, a manager and an assistant. She has some people that impossible have by an ordinary people or people who belong to the lower class and middle class based on the social stratum.

By knowing the class where the main character belongs to, we will know the nature of the main character. This can be gained through generalization. It means that we get the characters from the stereotype that exists in the society. The main character is categorized in the upper class. The upper class belongs to rich people because they have numerous modal. People in this class feel superior compare to people in other classes. Their superiority is gained from their assumption that their money can make them get whatever they want which cannot be gotten by people in middle class or lower class. Realizing that they have a lot of money, they assume their money can buy anything and everything. With this thought, they believe they can do whatever they want. Even we can categorize their action as execrable. One of the examples is when they regard people who work for them as

machine. The workers are no longer respected as humans.

As so what happen in this story. The main character does not regard her maids as persons. The main character assumes the maids as machine which should always be ready to be used to manage the house. Thus when the maids want to save themselves because of the natural disaster, the main character does not want to accept it. Her thought assumes that as machine they do not need to rescue themselves. They should stay in her house and still conduct their daily routines.

### 2.3.2 Authority

Max Weber said the authority is an opportunity which is had by a person even a group of people to do his or her willing although this willing might get a rejection from another people who also participate on that measure.

There is a concept that has correlation with this authority. This concept called as assets. For example: money, valuable goods, strength of body, knowledge.

Amitai Elziona, a sociologist, says that there is a difference characteristic

between asset and authority. The characteristic of asset is stable but the characteristic of authority is dynamic. There are 3 kind of authority. They are utilitarian authority, coercive authority and persuasive authority. In this story, kind of authority that appears is the coercive ones.

Coercive authority shows the asset as a weapon. Human or body strength is one of the example of coercive authority. This kind of authority is showed by the father of the main character. Her father uses his coercive authority to ask the main character to come out from her room by dragged her down, make she kicked and screamed until he has to pick her up and carry her over his shoulder for the main character as his child did not follow his asking—to come out from her room after 24 hours waiting.

The coercive authority which come from a father, objectively and subjectively, in a family, can be reflect that this father has a right to control his family, his child.

Other coercive authority in this story is when the main character shows her authority towards her own mother. The main character assumes that her being has control over her mother's life. It is because she is the breadwinner. Thus her mother should

always obedience towards her wants. The mother also should smooth all her efforts to maintain her position. She is the breadwinner as an actress. She will get a lot of money when her new album being released. But her mother says that her new album will not be launched because of the natural disaster. The main character gets very angry. She uses her authority to force her own mother to still launch her new album for whatever happens for the sake to maintain her position as an actress.

### 2.3.3 Subjective Process in Classifying

Subjective Process in Classifying means that an individual classifies himself in a certain stratum. For example when there is a student meets his professor. This student will have perception or feeling that he is nothing than his professor but when this student meets his 'junior' he may think that he is smarter than his junior although his junior maybe smarter than him without he knows it.

This kind of subjectivity appears when the main character as child yelled to her father. In here she feels more superior, feels greater than his father for she thought that she ever bought his father a Mercedes. The main character classified herself

subjectively stronger, has a strong authority to control everything that she wants to do without any interruption from his father just because she thinks that she ever gave an expensive things to her father. That is why she feels she can yell and angry to her father for her father have annoyed her.

A rude behavior which came from the subjectivity classifying of the main character – feels that she is higher than her parents because she thinks they could has a proper live as an upper citizen because her status, her job as a star, Hollywood star. Subjectively people always consider themselves superior in some sense than others. This is natural. By doing this the concerned person creates a comfortable situation for the state of his being. With the comfortable zone, people can conduct whatever the jobs being given to them. The smoothness of the job execution depends on the condition of the soul. The restless soul will make the execution disarray. The calm soul will make the execution run smoothly. Thus for conduction their jobs, people try as best as they can to make their being calm. One of the ways is to assume that they are superior compare to the others.

#### 2.3.4 Hierarchical Stratum

Hierarchical itself means that the higher or upper stratum is more valuable or greater than the stratum which lay before the upper ones. In study of social there are 3 stratums. They are upper, middle and lower class. Upper class is a class which represents big authority, privilege and prestige which is had by the people who belong to this stratum and so on with the middle and lower of course the authority, privilege and prestige of the people who belongs to this class is lower than the upper ones.

In this story the Hierarchical stratum that belongs to the main character changes because of the end of the world. She and her family that for the first belongs to the upper class change into lower class. It can be seen when her comfortable live change into hard live. She does not have maid anymore for she and her family do not have money to pay them. They do not have money anymore for the world is end. The world does not need an entertainment, does not need a star, does not need Hollywood star, that is means there is no income anymore. The entire thing that always did by their maid now has to be done by themselves. For example when the main character saw her mother is filling jugs with water from the tap by herself.

People position in the social stratum is not a fix price. It means people can find themselves belongs to different class in different times. The change in position can be caused by many factors. But the main reason is caused by the difference in the wealth. Rich people belong to upper class. But when their wealth is decreasing, these people step down and belong to middle class. And so on.

As is like in this story, the main character and her family used to be in the high class stratum. This is because they have much money. The main character is a Hollywood star. Her income can support her family and herself. Her income also makes her possible to have many maids. By having many maids, her parents and she never do chores. But when the disaster comes, the maids run away to save their lives. There is no one to do the chores anymore. The mother takes care of it. One of the chores is watering the plants. When the main character sees her mother waters the plants, she feels strange. She considers her mother is not appropriate to do that kind of task. That kind of job is only appropriate for the maids.

### 2.3.5 Social Mobility

Social mobility is a replacement of a person from one stratum to another stratum. There are two kinds of social mobility. The first is horizontal and second is vertical.

In this story the social mobility that can be seen is the vertical ones. Especially the vertical decrease social mobility for there is a changing in the main character live, stratum social. She and her family who the first belongs to the upper class become belong to the lower class for she does not has a job anymore, does not has a manger, assistant and maid as we know that manager, assistant and maid is like a sign the she belongs to the upper class. The main character and her family, who the first belong to the upper class, change into the lower class. This condition gives bad impact for their privilege, especially economic privilege. Privilege is a special right, right to be the first, right to get special treatment. Money and authority are goods to get a special treatment.

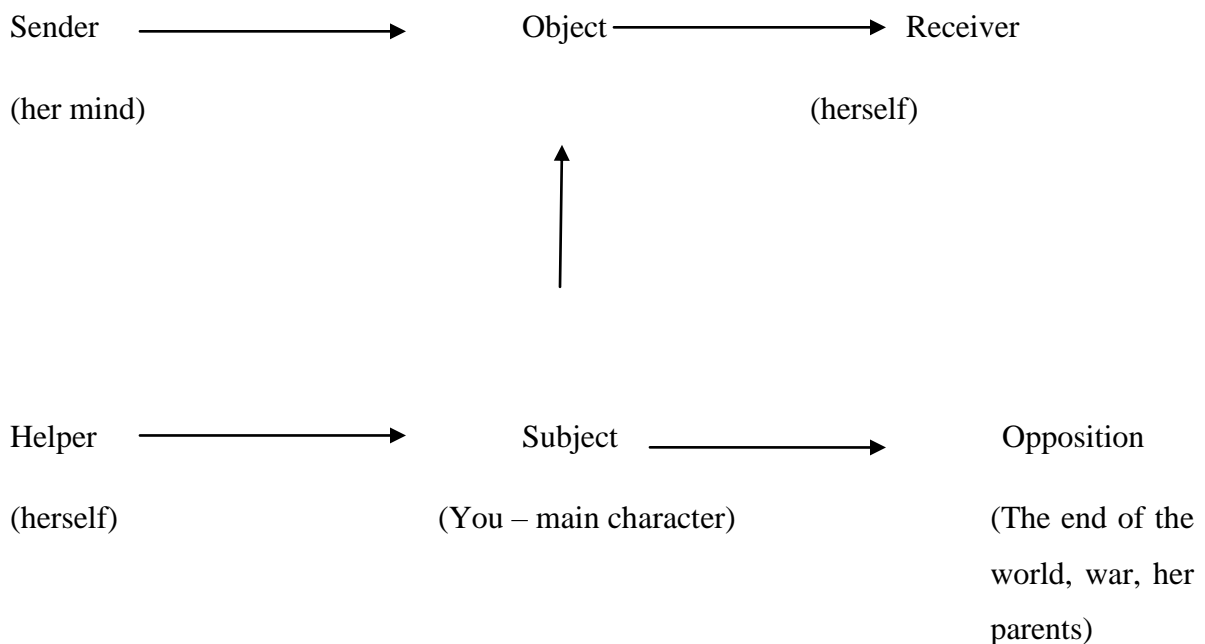
In this story, economic privilege that the main character and her family get when they belong to the upper class (when they are rich) are having a lot of money to

hire servants or maids. The maids will prepare everything that they need. They will be served by their maids for they had paid them. But when the decrease vertical social mobility gives negative impact for their hierarchical stratum, they also get a bad impact to their economic privilege. They do not have money; they cannot pay their maids so that their maids do not serve them anymore.

#### 2.4 Greimas' Structuralism of The Star

Besides using two theories above, the writer also uses Greimas' Structuralism

(The next best career – release latest album, talk show, new fragrance)



By putting the story into the diagram above, the story will be understood

to analyze this story. By using Greimas' structuralism, the writer arranges the story into the diagram. The diagram was made so that the readers can understand the story easily. Through diagram, the readers can quickly recognize which one is the protagonist and which one is the antagonist. They will also understand why the character conducts all her actions. Besides they will also understand the real purpose of the main character of elaborating her doings.

clearer. The story tells that the main character is having a difficult time coping

with reality. She does not want to admit that the world is in war. She wants to admit herself that the world is fine and that her life will continue to flourish around her. She hates her parents that constantly remind her about the condition of the outside. Using her mind, she convinces herself that as a star her career will continue to blossom in the future. She will release a new album, she will attend a talk show, and she will launch a new fragrance.

Subject is the main character. Here the main character is you. As the main character 'you' appears throughout the story from beginning till the end. All troughs the plot 'you' conducts many kinds of things which is influenced by the condition around her. One of the influences comes from the opposition.

Opposition is the adversary parties. These parties oppose the subject or the main character or the protagonist. In other word the opposition is the antagonist. As the antagonist party, all their actions are always in the contradictory toward what is done by the subject or main character or protagonist. Although the opposition had tried to hamper and confront all the subject's actions, the protagonist can always continue her doings

as she wants. This is because there is a helper.

Helper is the party which helps the main character to get her purpose. In this story the helper is the main character herself. It means that the protagonist can defeat all obstacles and problems which come from outside because of herself. Her strong character and being can handle many kinds of obstructions. Her stubbornness and rigidity bring her to the place or situation which she wants. Besides helper, there is sender who also helps her.

Sender is the second party beside helper who also help the main character in the process of gaining the final goal. In the story, sender is the mind of the main character. The main character uses her mind to make all things around her becomes positive. Positive means comfortable situation where the main character can conduct all actions for the sake of the final purpose. The final purpose is object.

Object is the final goal of the main character. The appearance of the main character from the beginning till the end had gone through many processes. All those processes have been executed step by step for gaining this final purpose. The final

purpose of the main character in this story is to maintain her position as a Hollywood actress. This final purpose is for the receiver.

Receiver is the party which gets the final purpose. in this story the receiver is the main character herself. The main character wants the status of Hollywood actress for herself. She wants to have a comfortable life and get all the privileges as a Hollywood actress.

### **III. Conclusion**

After analyzing the short story with psychology and sociology and make an greimas' structuralism it can be concluded that both of the psychological and sociological approach can be used to analyze this story. Some of theory that is used to analyze this short story from the psychological approach such the theory of id, ego and superego as a branch of Mind Area, aggression as a branch of Impulses, regression as a branch of defense mechanism, moral and realistic anxiety as a branch of the anxiety level it self. Some of theory that come from Sigmund Freud. For the sociology point of view the writer analyze this story by using theory of Social

Stratification which is created by Aristotle. Some of theory that the writer use to analyze the Social Stratification of this story such as subjective process in classifying, hierarchical stratum, authority and about decrease social mobility which give negative impact for the main character's privilege.

For the Greimas' Structuralism, the writer does not mention the sender, the helper and the receiver because of actually till the end of the story the main character "you" as the subject cannot get the object for everything and all situation around her belongs to the opposition. She just could hope that everything can be fine.

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