CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the writer finds that the main character has the problem with her age and wants to avoid it. The writer uses the mechanism of defenses theory to analyze the main character's problem. Before analyzing the problem that happens to the main character, the writer defines about the character first to see the main character's background. In this case, the problem is ageing. It occurs from the conflict between the main character and her or the main character and others.

4.1 Valerie in Personal

Happy Birthday is a novel about the main character, Valerie who is a famous and successful public figure; she is a presenter in her own TV show and a writer for a decorating magazine. Many people are inspired by her; she has a great influence to them. It shows that she success in doing her job.

> *"People wanted to live the way she told them to, women wanted to look the way she did, and young girls wanted a wedding just the way Valerie would have done it, or as she instructed them to do on her show and her books. Valerie Wyatt was a household name. She was a beautiful woman, had a fabulous career, and lived a golden life. The only thing missing in her life was a man, and she hadn't been involved with anyone in three years. The thought of that depressed her that morning too. (HB: 13)"*

The data above explains about Valerie from people's point of view. Valerie lives in New York. She has a great career as a presenter for her own TV

show and a writer for decorating magazine. Valerie is a beautiful woman who has a good taste in everything, so it makes Valerie's writing in the decorating magazine and her passion in fashion influences many people. She writes about how to make a perfect beautiful wedding party, by preparing the wedding dress until the decoration. Valerie knows it so well because she knows every woman has a dream for the wedding. From Valerie's writing, it seems like her life is so perfect and many people agree with that statement.

Valerie has a great career, she is beautiful, has a healthy life and lives the way she preached in her writing so that many people adore her and they want to live as well to look the way she does. It shows that Valerie becomes a role model for many people especially woman. Therefore, Valerie always wants to shows that she always in the good condition. She wants people to see her fantastic her life but not her problems such as ageing which makes her anxious. In order to reduce the anxiety, Valerie does the mechanism of defense. She denies the reality that she gets the effect of ageing by doing surgery and botox shot. Despite all the efforts she made, she gives up many things such as time, money and even her family.

Valerie puts her career in the first place and her family in the second place. It is the reason she gets divorced. After the divorce, Valerie still spends lots of her time for her career only. Until her sixty birthdays, she realizes that she is not young anymore. Valerie has to pay more attention on her physical changes such as a wrinkle on her face or the changes of her body shape. Valerie is too busy with her career and she even does not have a time for her own life as a woman. Knowing the reality makes her feels so alone and she cannot deny that she is sixty

and lonely. The only thing she desires and does many efforts is to have a relationship with a man for the second time to complete her life as a woman. However every time Valerie remember her age, it depressed her. She becomes anxious and unconsciously she does the mechanism of defense which called repression. She represses her desire in order to reduce the anxiety.

It is ironic because when everybody wants to be like her, in the other hand she depresses with the thought of her desire in having a relationship with a man. The more she gets old, the more she gets scared because there may be no guys who like a woman in sixty. This is the reason why she gets depressed. For Valerie, everything she has is nothing if she is not young anymore.

> *"No matter how good she looked, the age on her driver's license was what it was, and who would want a woman of sixty? Even men in their eighties wanted girls in their twenties now. With this birthday, Valerie felt she had become obsolete. It wasn't a pleasant thought, and she wasn't happy today.*
> *…*
> *And the only thing keeping her from a major panic attack was that at least no one knew her right age. But she was depresses anyway." (HB: 14)*

The data above shows that Valerie always uses the mechanism of defense in facing her problem. From the data, Valerie does the denial since cannot accept the reality of her right age which written on her driver's license. Valerie perhaps successfully fools many people by her appearance because of the shape of her body, her good skin, and the way she dressed up. However, the age on her driver's license will never lie and that is the truth. Thinking about it makes Valerie lose her confidence. She thinks that every man always wants a woman who is younger than them. Even though she already has every woman's dream, it does not make

her satisfied because she still has the unfulfilled desire. Then the denial is the only way Valerie could do while she tries to fulfill her desire.

Age is the main problem for Valerie because she thinks that her age could limit her desire in getting a relationship with a man. Thinking about the desire makes her feel anxious because the fact that she will get older each time. In order to reduce her anxiety, Valerie represses her desire and hopes that she can cover up her age from people. Though it does not solve the problem but it helps her to make her feeling better.

> *"She looked in the mirror intently as she prepared to leave her apartment that morning. She didn't have to be in the studio until noon for taping, and she had two appointments before that. She was hoping the first one would cheer her up. And the only thing keeping her from major panic attack was that at least no one knew her right age. But she was depressed anyway." (HB: 14)*

There are many ways to cover her age from others, first she never publishes her age to public and let them guess it. The second one is keep her physical appearance such as her skin and body so that people will never think that she is sixty years old. However, she realizes that every time she gets older so she needs to do something more with her appearance. It indicates that she becomes someone who only concerns about her performance and does not want to accept the reality.

Valerie can only deny her age with her physical appearance so she decides to do the surgery on her face. She takes away wrinkle and puts good cosmetics on her face so that no one will believe her actual age. Actually the surgery is not the way out of her problem, deep inside she still a woman in sixty. This is why she

gets depressed. Valerie knows well that her right age is something she cannot avoid so the more she depressed the more she tries so hard to be more beautiful. She believes that her beauty will help her. In order to fulfill her desire, Valerie does many efforts to get that.

> *"She had had her eyes done for the first time when she turned forty and then again fifteen years later. The results were excellent. She looked rested and fresh, as though she had been on a terrific vacation. She had had the surgery done in L.A. during a summer hiatus. She had also had her neck done when she was fifty, giving her a smooth, youthful neckline with no sag anywhere, and her plastic surgeon agreed that she didn't need a full-face lift. She had great bones, good skin, and the eye and neck work had given her the effect she wanted. Botox shots four times a year added to her youthful looks." (HB: 12)*

The data above shows Valerie's effort in keeping her appearance to make her looks younger. She does the surgery from her eyes to neck and Botox shots to get the perfect result. The perfect result for Valerie is a youthful looks. As a public figure, she really needs to look excellent because she works in front of camera every day. She also needs to get public's attention as a proof that she does her job well as a presenter on her own TV show. Her appearance is one of the best from her besides her skill as a presenter.

For every woman, appearance is an important thing. Every woman wants to look attractive and beautiful whether it is for showing to others or for her own satisfaction. In this case, Valerie as a woman wants to look beautiful not only to keep her job but also to attract man. Basically, Valerie is a beautiful woman but her age makes her scare if she is not beautiful anymore. In this case, it tends to show that Valerie really loves herself who is beautiful and success.

In order to keep her beauty, Valerie does the surgery and botox shot. For some people, surgery or Botox is still uncommon things to do. Someone who will do the surgery needs a strong wills when make a decision to do it, since it is the decision that has an effect for a lifetime. Besides it takes lots of money, it also takes a time to see the perfect result. When someone does the surgery or Botox, it must be there are some pressures which make him or her do it. It could come from friends, families, or even himself. From the data above, it is said that Valerie gives a lot efforts to get herself look younger and beautiful and it is the shape of her defense which called denial.

Valerie does surgery and Botox; this is not an easy decision because she must have a great reason and courage. In this case, the ageing is something that pushes her so that she can take a decision to do surgery. For Valerie, her beauty helps to fulfill her desire in being involved with a man. Valerie wants to have another relationship with a new man because she needs someone to complete her life as a woman. It is not only because she is lonely but she wants to find something that she cannot get from her earlier husband.

> *"She had divorced for twenty-three years, and had devoted more time and energy to her career than romance. But she missed being involved with someone, and was disappointed that no one had turned up in years. She was beginning to think that no one ever would again. Maybe she was too old. She certainly felt it now." (HB: 19)*

Valerie's romance does not run well as her career. She divorces from her earlier husband because she is too busy with her career. She gives up a lot for her career but not for her relationship. Valerie's ex-husband, Pat expects her to put

their relationship on the top of everything but Valerie does not do that. She does not have the same way of thinking with her husband. In the end of their relationship is only divorce. Even after divorce, Valerie is still busy with her career. It shows that Valerie only concerns about herself and less attention to others. The behavior which only concern about herself indicates that she has a symptom of a narcissi person.

After twenty-three years living alone and busy with her career, Valerie starts to think about her own life. As a woman, she misses being in love and be loved with someone. Valerie wants to find something that she cannot get before from her earlier husband. However, the thought of her age always makes her depressed. She thinks that she is too old to have a new relationship with a man.

Valerie sees herself as an old woman and does not have a chance to have new relationship with someone. Her age is a problem because she is in sixty and there is still something she wants to fulfill. Then she tries to solve the problem by doing a surgery and Botox shot though it is not the solution for her problem. It only reduces her anxiety of becoming old. When she does a lot effort, it takes her into another problem. If she can accept that every human must through the process of ageing, perhaps she will not make the ageing as a problem. The fact now is Valerie cannot accept that she must through the ageing, it depressed her.

The effect of the ageing that Valerie gets is a depression. Then it makes her does mechanism of defense, repression. Since the surgery is successfully done and already helps to reduce her anxiety, it changes her whether changes her physically and her mentally.

There will always be an effect of everything she does. After the surgery, Valerie's mental also has changed. Valerie becomes more depressed whenever she thinks about her right age.

> *"So what, if it makes us look good? I don't usually advertise that, but shit, we both make a living on screen, and with high definition video now, you need all the help you can get." (HB: 222)*

The data above is a conversation between Valerie and her friend. They talk about her age and the surgery she had done. Valerie as a public figure thinks that it does not matter if someone who works in entertainment field like her do a surgery. She wants to give her best for the audience so it does not matter with the surgery.

This is also a shape of her self-defense in facing the reality about her age, it is denial. Valerie denies the reality of her age by doing the surgery then she uses her job as the reason when she decides to do the surgery. Actually she has her own reason; she has desire in having a new relationship. She also wants to look young and beauty in her age to attract man. Beside Valerie in her personal life, social life also gives the influence to her.

4.2 Valerie in Social Life

Valerie is a public figure, she has a huge number of people who love and adore her. People see her as a woman who has a great career, famous and good looking. Her life makes many people envy since she has almost everything. Valerie is surrounded by lots of friend and family who always support and care

about her. They give a great influence for Valerie especially when she has to face some problem. In this situation, Valerie's problem is ageing.

Every people must be through the ageing process because it comes naturally and they cannot avoid it. There will be a difference way in facing it. Some people perhaps think that ageing is a part of life so that they have to accept it. In other hand, there are also some people who cannot accept the reality and try many things to avoid the ageing. For example, a woman applies anti-ageing cream in order to look younger or prettier. Valerie's friends and family also have a different point of view about ageing. It shows from the responses from them about Valerie who is in a process of ageing.

Valerie's family and friends take a big part of every step that she takes. The way of they see her, think about her or talk about her give an influence to Valerie especially in facing the ageing. Pat is Valerie's ex-husband, he is one of person who gives an influence for Valerie. Pat still worries about his ex-wife who is still live alone in her sixty.

> *"Pat was always startled that there was no man in his ex-wife's life. She was such a beautiful woman, but her career had been her first priority for so long that he thought she had given up a lot for success and fame. At sixty, she was alone." (HB: 88)*

The data above shows that Pat sees Valerie as an independent and beautiful woman but she is still alone in her sixty. As an ex-husband and friend, Pat still worries about Valerie's life. Pat who already has a new happy family wants Valerie gets a new family just like him. However, Pat's action makes

Valerie feel more uncomfortable. She becomes envy with Pat since she still alone and cannot have a new relationship.

From this data, it shows implicitly that Valerie does the mechanism of defense by repressing her desire in having a new relationship because she makes her earlier husband thinks that she still focus only at her career. Actually, Valerie represses her desire and distracts herself by keeping busy with her career. Valerie becomes obsesses with her career and try to do anything in order to keep her job as a public figure This is the shape of her defense from the reality which does not go the way she wants. In this situation, Pat's attention to Valerie gives her more pressure and even makes her more depressed.

Valerie loves her job a lot. It makes Valerie cannot accept the reality about her age because she still has the unfulfilled desire. When she realizes that she is not young anymore, it seems hard to fulfill her desire to woman in her age. A woman in sixty has some physical changes such as from her hair, skin, or body. So that she try to avoid the reality by making her appearance look younger. It brings her into the situation where she keeps her career with beauty not only by her skill. In this situation, it explains why Valerie concerns a lot about her appearance because she wants to keep her job as a public figure and to attract a man.

Valerie successfully covers up her age by doing a surgery and botox shot. So that people who see Valerie will never think that she is in sixty. She covers her age very well. Until one day, her birthday is being announced on the radio and the announcer also tells about her age live on the radio.

> *"My, my, my, I never would have believed it, and I'll bet you won't either. She looks terrific for her age! Guess who's turning sixty today? Valerie Wyatt! Now that is a surprise! Good work, Valerie, you don't look a day over forty-five." (HB: 15)*

The data above comes from the announcer; he does not believe that Valerie is turning sixty. On the radio, he says that Valerie looks terrific for her age. It shows how Valerie looks like, the announcer sees her like a woman in about forty-five. The announcer's opinion about her birthday makes Valerie sad and happy at the same time. She feels sad when he announces it on the radio, it seems like all her efforts in covering her right age become useless. However, Valerie feels happy because she successfully fools everyone about her age but then somehow it makes her frustrating. Now everybody will know how old she is. She scares that the fact about her right age will limit her effort in chasing her desire.

> *"It was humiliating words, she fumed to herself. Was nothing private anymore? Not when you were a famous as Valerie Wyatt and had your own TV show, and had for years. She wanted to cry as she sat in the backseat wondering how many other radio shows it would be on, how many TV shows, what newspaper it would be in, or celebrity roundsup announcing whose birthday it was and how old they were. Why didn't they just sky-write it over New York?" (HB: 16)*

From the data above, Valerie is very disappointed and seems like angry when the announcer tells how old she is. As a public figure, she needs privacy and she thinks that it is too much to announce her age to public. It is so frustrating because she cannot do anything since no one is guilty in this situation. Valerie's birthday has been announced in every media such as TV, radio, or newspaper.

She wants to have a life where she can do something privately. Valerie gives lot efforts to cover her age from public but now she feels that all her efforts are useless.

The data above also tells that she wants to cry after she hears the announcement of her birthday on the radio. Crying is a shape of her emotion at that time and a proof how she wants to deny her right age. After listen the radio, there are many questions in her mind about the effect of that announcement. It shows that she becomes more anxiety than before. Before she is only anxiety about how a woman in sixty gets a man who wants to be her someone special, but now she also thinks about what people think about her life. She is not ready to hear any judgment or opinion from people. She gets depressed of what is on her mind and people's opinion. At first, the problem is about the ageing which she tries to avoid. Now it brings her into a situation where she as a public figure has to face the pressure from others. Actually in this case, she gets not only a pressure but also the support from her family.

> *'I know. I figured you'd be upset. I'm sorry, Mom. It doesn't matter. No one would believe it. You hardly look older than I do.'*
> *'Thank you for saying that,' Valerie said ruefully, 'but now everyone knows the truth.'*
> *'You can say they made a mistake.' April tried to console her, but she was too shaken up herself to be very reassuring.*
> *'I can't believe I'm sixty,' Valerie said, as April smiled at her. (HB: 54-55)*

The data above is a conversation between Valerie and her daughter, April. April has many similarities with her mom. She has famous restaurant in New York, she is a hard worker like her mom and still lives alone. She is thirty years

old and still has no boyfriend because she spends a lot of her time for working. So that April could really understand how her mom's feeling after the radio announces her age. April knows that Valerie must be really upset so she tries to make Valerie feels better by saying a good thing about her looks. April does not lie about it; she really meant that her mother is not as old as Valerie feels. April helps her mother to repress all the things which makes Valerie sad. April wants to give her mom a support by always reminding Valerie that ageing is really not a matter.

There is a guy who will agree with April's statement about her mom, he is Jack. Jack is Valerie's friend, he is an ex-athlete football player and now he is a sport newscaster. He works in entertainment field like Valerie. Jack finds something in Valerie that others may not see, it is Valerie's personality.

> *"He had heard how old she was on the news, so he knew she was older, but she didn't look it. He thought she looked great, and not nearly her age, and old enough to have a daughter as grownup April. Even after the events of the day before, and very little makeup on, he thought Valerie looked terrific." (HB: 166)*

From the data above, Jack already knows her age but he cannot believe that she is sixty. He thinks that Valerie's looks does not determine her age and actually it really does not matter for him. From Jack's point of view, Valerie's age is not a reason to make her depressed because she still looks youthful and terrific. However as a woman, Valerie still does not satisfy. Jack's opinion about her age and her appearance does not make her satisfy. Her desire brings her to do more in order to deny her age.

The reality of her age has already a problem for Valerie but her desire in covering her right age from public is her priority. This is only way to defense herself from others opinion about her age. After the radio announce her right age, hearing people's opinion about her age is not really important for her. She does not want to hear that because it is only makes her become more anxiety. The mechanism of defense that she uses in this case is denial.

Anxiety indicates that she depression. The more she remembers her age and the more she become anxious and also the more she depressed. So in order to reduce her anxiety, Valerie tries to repress her desire and tries to accept it. Then she turns to replace her desire by keeping her beauty. Somehow she realizes that she wants to be beauty and looks youthful in order to fulfill her dissatisfaction. Unconsciously, it makes her become someone who is obsessive with the beauty.