

REPRESSION AND SURVIVAL: FREUD'S DEFENSE MECHANISMS IN *THE HUNGER GAME*

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Abstract

This study explores the psychological coping mechanisms employed by Katniss Everdeen in *The Hunger Games* using Sigmund Freud's defense mechanism theory. This research uses a qualitative descriptive method by analyzing key scenes, dialogues, and character expressions from *The Hunger Games* movie. Selected scenes were chosen based on their psychological significance, and data were supported by visual cues, quotes, and narrative context. Additional references from secondary sources such as books, articles, and reviews were used to enrich the analysis and interpretation. The research identifies various defense mechanisms, including repression, denial, displacement, projection, regression, rationalization, sublimation, reaction formation, and intellectualization. These mechanisms serve as crucial survival strategies, enabling Katniss to navigate the extreme psychological and physical challenges imposed by the oppressive society of Panem. The findings reveal that Katniss unconsciously employs defense mechanisms to cope with trauma, anxiety, and fear. Repression allows her to suppress painful memories, while denial helps her manage the reality of the deadly Hunger Games. Displacement manifests in her redirected frustration, while projection highlights her insecurities. Regression appears in moments of emotional vulnerability, whereas rationalization helps justify her actions. Sublimation channels her distress into strategic survival, reaction formation masks her fears, and intellectualization allows her to detach emotionally and focus on survival tactics. By applying Freud's psychoanalytic framework, this study emphasizes the role of psychological resilience in literature and movie, demonstrating how defense mechanisms function as both coping strategies and narrative tools. The research contributes to the intersection of literary and psychological studies by offering insight into how characters reflect real-world psychological responses to oppression and adversity. *The Hunger Games* not only portrays a dystopian struggle for survival but also serves as a commentary on human resilience, trauma, and resistance. This study underscores the significance of psychoanalysis in understanding character development and thematic depth in dystopian fiction. By analyzing Katniss' psychological responses, the research provides a broader understanding of how defense mechanisms shape individual behavior under extreme circumstances, making *The Hunger Games* a compelling study of human psychology in literature and cinema.

Keywords: The Hunger Games; defense mechanisms; Sigmund Freud; psychoanalysis; Katniss Everdeen; survival

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi mekanisme koping psikologis yang digunakan oleh Katniss Everdeen dalam film *The Hunger Games* dengan menggunakan teori mekanisme pertahanan Sigmund Freud. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dengan menganalisis adegan-adegan kunci, dialog, dan ekspresi karakter dalam film *The Hunger Games*. Adegan-adegan yang dipilih berdasarkan signifikansi psikologisnya, dan data didukung oleh petunjuk visual, kutipan, serta konteks naratif. Referensi tambahan dari sumber sekunder seperti buku, artikel, dan ulasan juga digunakan untuk memperkaya analisis dan interpretasi. Penelitian ini mengidentifikasi berbagai mekanisme pertahanan, termasuk represi, penyangkalan, pemindahan, proyeksi, regresi, rasionalisasi, sublimasi, pembentukan reaksi, dan intelektualisasi. Mekanisme-mekanisme ini berfungsi sebagai strategi bertahan hidup yang sangat penting, yang memungkinkan Katniss untuk menavigasi tantangan psikologis dan fisik yang ekstrem yang dipaksakan oleh masyarakat Panem yang menindas. Temuan-temuan tersebut mengungkapkan bahwa Katniss secara tidak

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sadar menggunakan mekanisme pertahanan untuk mengatasi trauma, kecemasan, dan ketakutan. Penindasan memungkinkannya untuk menekan kenangan yang menyakitkan, sementara penyangkalan membantunya mengelola realitas *Hunger Games* yang mematikan. Pemindahan bermanifestasi dalam frustrasi yang dialihkan, sementara proyeksi menyoroti rasa tidak amannya. Regresi muncul pada saat-saat kerentanan emosional, sedangkan rasionalisasi membantu membenarkan tindakannya. Sublimasi menyalurkan kesusahannya ke dalam strategi bertahan hidup, pembentukan reaksi menutupi ketakutannya, dan intelektualisasi memungkinkannya untuk melepaskan diri secara emosional dan fokus pada taktik bertahan hidup. Dengan menerapkan kerangka psikoanalisis Freud, penelitian ini menekankan peran ketahanan psikologis dalam sastra dan film, yang menunjukkan bagaimana mekanisme pertahanan berfungsi baik sebagai strategi koping maupun alat naratif. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada persimpangan studi sastra dan psikologi dengan menawarkan wawasan tentang bagaimana tokoh mencerminkan respons psikologis dunia nyata terhadap penindasan dan kesulitan. *The Hunger Games* tidak hanya menggambarkan perjuangan distopia untuk bertahan hidup, tetapi juga berfungsi sebagai komentar tentang ketahanan, trauma, dan perlawanan manusia. Penelitian ini menggarisbawahi pentingnya psikoanalisis dalam memahami perkembangan tokoh dan kedalaman tematik dalam fiksi distopia. Dengan menganalisis respons psikologis Katniss, penelitian ini memberikan pemahaman yang lebih luas tentang bagaimana mekanisme pertahanan membentuk perilaku individu dalam keadaan yang ekstrem, menjadikan *The Hunger Games* sebagai studi yang menarik tentang psikologi manusia dalam sastra dan sinema.

Kata Kunci: *The Hunger Games*, mekanisme pertahanan, Sigmund Freud, psikoanalisis, Katniss Everdeen, bertahan hidup

INTRODUCTION

Movies are a form of media where videos are made using real-world ideas, but they also have to have ambiguous entertainment and meaning components. Understanding a movie entails understanding the human culture that created it since it is a cultural product and a form of artistic expression. Like poetry, movies communicate through imagery, metaphor, and symbolism. Similar to drama, it conveys information both orally and visually through discourse as well as through gesture and motion. As a result, a movie can be the subject of literary and cultural studies examination, which is what many scholars are currently doing with the evolution of literary criticism (Fussalam et al., 2019; Mufidah et al., 2023; Yarno et al., 2023).

A literary work is characterized as an artistic creation with aesthetic value and a unique world that, in the writer's opinion, is the pinnacle of existence. It is a work that translates skills and knowledge into unique and satisfying passions that permeate one's outlook on life (Al-Ma'ruf & Nugrahani, 2017; Tarigan et al., 2022; Wellek, 2017). According to Fouzia (2016), literature serves as a mirror of society's beliefs and viewpoints, reflecting the social, political, and cultural values of any given society as well as people's opinions, convictions, and dreams in a very imaginative and creative way to illustrate particular phenomena or provide a solution to a particular problem. In addition, literature consists of permanent verbal statements (spoken or written) that are structured in aesthetically beautiful, conventional patterns or forms. Thoughts, emotions, ideas, and other unique facets of human experiences are expressed in literature (Tennisanna, 2018).

In the words of Abrams (1999), science fiction is "an imagined reality that is radically different in its nature and functioning from the world of our extraordinary experience." Similarly, *the Hunger Games* trilogy presents a different world, formerly North America, that has been transformed into a horror nation where teens are forced to take part in the most gory yearly competition, *the Hunger Games*, and brutally murder one another. Panem—the imagined reality, the drastically altered representation of modern-day North America—is the name of this nation. In 2008, *The Hunger Games* was released. The first book was made into a movie in 2012, and Collins wrote the script. The setting of this movie is the nation of Panem, which has twelve impoverished districts while the citizens of the Capitol, the country's capital, enjoy wealth. The Capitol forces the 12 districts of Panem to choose two tributes, a boy and a girl, between the ages of 12 and 18, to

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compete in the yearly Hunger Games until only one remains as retribution for a previous uprising (Ardi & Hidayat, 2018; Ningsi et al., 2022).

The strong theme of power and domination in this movie reflects a critique of real issues in American society, such as economic inequality, media control and propaganda politics, issues of power and authoritarianism, media manipulation, and many more. The main character, Katniss Everdeen, as a tribute, not only struggles to survive but also symbolizes resistance to an oppressive system, creating a narrative that is relevant to the contemporary social and political context (Collins, 2008; GradeSaver, 2020; Kincir, 2023). Therefore, the raising of social issues in this movie makes *The Hunger Games* an interesting work of fiction and more than just entertainment. This movie also functions as a critical reflection of the dynamics of power and issues that are relevant to sociopolitical conditions in the United States, which makes this movie understood as a reflection and critique of the dynamics of American society and makes it a cultural product that is full of meaning.

In this study, the researcher reviews several other studies related to this research. By reviewing the existing literature, the researcher aims to highlight the gaps and limitations in current knowledge, thereby building a comprehensive framework for this investigation into how historical and social contexts shape the production and reception of the movie. First, Rezeki et al. (2023) aimed to find out the types of anxiety and defense mechanisms experienced by the main character, Cecilia, in the movie (*The Invisible Man*). The theory used is the theory of Sigmund Freud such as neurotic anxiety. Second, Tarigan et al. (2022) discussed the self defense mechanism found in the main character in *The Blind Side* movie by John Lee Hancock. They focused on the analysis of the main character in the movie, named *Big Mike*. Third, Mahardhika et al. (2023) discussed the bereavement of Amir, the main character of *The Kite Runner*, and analyzes the defense mechanisms projected toward the bereavement. Their study uses a psychological approach to identify and analyze Amir's bereavement and defense mechanisms. The qualitative descriptive nature of their study allows data to be presented in the form of texts or descriptions. Fourth, Zahrah and Wijayanti (2023). The novel to be studied in their research is a children's novel from Germany entitled *Pünktchen und Anton* by Erich Kästner. The main characters, Pünktchen and Anton, are still in elementary school. Their study aims to know in depth the type of self-defence mechanism used by the two main figures in the face of anxiety. Their research is qualitative research with a content analysis method. Fifth, in Meiranti et al. (2023), the main data of this research was *The Last House on The Left* movie script by Mark Haslett published by Midnight Entertainment in 2009 amounted 97 pages. The data were obtained by reading the movie script itself, taking notes on important things related to the main character and then analyzed by applying psychological theory by Sigmund Freud. Sixth, in Chusna and WAF (2015), their research is aimed at revealing the new image of American popular heroes as depicted in the novel adaptation movie of *The Hunger Games*. Their research used textual approach, which focused on the text as the object, that is *The Hunger Games* movie.

In conclusion, the seven studies discussed are relevant to this study because of their similar theories and approaches. The difference is that no one uses the Psychoanalytic Approach with defense mechanisms theory to explore tribute which is a psychological coping mechanism and internal conflict of Katniss Everdeen in the movie *The Hunger Games*, so the writer will use it in this study.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study, the writer applied qualitative research methods. According to Moleong (2016), qualitative research methods are research that aims to understand phenomena about what is experienced by research subjects, for example behavior, perceptions, motivations, actions, etc., holistically, and by means of descriptions in the form of words. Words and language, in a specific

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natural context and by utilizing various natural methods. Research using qualitative descriptive techniques is a type of research that aims to describe and understand certain phenomena in depth and comprehensively. Using qualitative descriptive techniques is a research strategy in which the researcher investigates events and phenomena in the lives of individuals and asks one or a group of individuals to tell about their lives. This information is then retold by the researcher in a descriptive chronology. Through the perspective of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, the writer examines how the main characters in *The Hunger Games* movie deal with trauma, anxiety, and oppressive situations by employing Defense Mechanisms such as repression, denial, and displacement. A selection of stories from Gary Ross's movie *The Hunger Games* have served as the main source to collect data for this analysis. The movie in question, officially released in March 2012, is a movie adaptation of Suzanne Collins' novel *The Hunger Games*. Also, the writer is going to gather support data from a variety of sources, including books, regional and international publications, the internet, and numerous additional sources.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The writer presents the results of the data analysis using leading theory, Sigmund Freud's Defense Mechanism theory. The analysis is divided into one part, following the study's objectives: to analyze the variety of defense mechanisms employed by the main characters to face and survive the life-threatening challenges in *The Hunger Games* movie. To prove the analysis in this paper, the researcher displays pictures and quotes or dialogues from *The Hunger Games* movie.

Analysis of The Tribute's Defense Mechanisms in The Hunger Games movie

This study focuses on the various types of defense mechanisms which Katniss Everdeen, the tribute or the main character in the popular movie *The Hunger Games*, uses. This study employs Sigmund Freud's Defense Mechanism theory to explore how the main character of the movie *The Hunger Games* minimizes or overcomes anxiety that are brought on by unwanted circumstances, assists people in preventing dealing with unpleasant realities, and allows people to live and preserve their mental health when faced with situations of stress and anxiety. According to Masykuroh (2017), Freud classified several types of defense mechanisms that people have when they try to fight anxiety and fear, namely, repression, denial, displacement, projection, regression, rationalization, sublimation, Reaction Formation, intellectualization.

Repression

Repression is an unconscious mechanism where distressing thoughts, memories, or desires are pushed out of conscious awareness to reduce anxiety (Freud, 1936; Cramer, 2000). It serves as a protective function, helping individuals avoid painful emotional experiences. Repression is a self-defense mechanism to get rid of some traumatic experiences in the past. Repression is also a common form of denial, where unacceptable feelings or memories are pushed into the subconscious (Masykuroh, 2017). People tend to store and remember pleasant memories and things rather than unpleasant memories and experiences (Kiatpattananon, 2017). Unpleasant memories in the past will affect people's thoughts in the present. This process involves pushing painful or traumatic memories into the subconscious so as not to be aware of these unpleasant thoughts.

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Figure 1. Katniss is experiencing hallucinations due to being exposed to tracker jacker poison



Peeta : "Run! Katniss, go! Get out of here! Go! What are you doing? Go!"

Caesar : "Not only is it lethal, but the venom of a tracker jacker sting can produce powerful hallucinations." (*The Hunger Games*, 1:28:00)

Based on the results of the data analysis from dialogues and Figure 1, the researcher obtained data which is one type of defense mechanism, which is Repression. Repression is a self-defense mechanism to get rid of some traumatic experiences in the past which is a common form of denial, where unacceptable feelings or memories are pushed into the subconscious (Masykuroh, 2017). The scene in these few minutes shows when the main character, Katniss Everdeen is exposed to tracker jacker poison which almost kills her. It is stated there that tracker jacker stings can cause someone to experience high hallucinations and can even cause the person who is stung to die. Katniss who was stung hallucinated which triggered memories of tragic events regarding memories of her father's death and the mining accident that traumatized her.

This is related to Katniss, who has been applying the repression defense mechanism for plenty of time because, up until *the Hunger Games* arena, she has always suppressed the memory of the sad occurrence in order to survive and live her life. Because Katniss always tries to forget it, the memory of the incident she attempted to forget comes back to her when she gets attacked by a tracker jacker and has led to hallucinations. According to Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, this can therefore be classified as a reflection of the self-defense mechanism in the form of repression, which means an individual is more willing to push down distressing memories or incidents in order to reduce excessive emotional suffering.

Repression is a self-defense mechanism to get rid of some traumatic experiences in the past. Repression is also a common form of denial, where unacceptable feelings or memories are pushed into the subconscious. People tend to store and remember pleasant memories and things rather than unpleasant memories and experiences (Kiatpattananon, 2017). Unpleasant memories in the past will affect people's thoughts in the present. This process involves pushing painful or traumatic memories into the subconscious so as not to be aware of these unpleasant thoughts. Furthermore, the researcher has stated that repression is the main type of other self-defense mechanisms.

Denial

Denial is a defense mechanism in which a person refuses to accept external reality or facts, acting as if a painful event or situation does not exist (Vaillant, 1992). It is often the first response to trauma or overwhelming stress. Denial is a condition of a mechanism when someone is unable to face reality or truth. In this condition, they refuse to accept the reality or reality that occurs. Denial is more often seen as a defense mechanism in real life. The affected person simply acts as if nothing happened, and behaves in a way that others might consider strange. This type of mechanism tries to protect the ego from reality that is detrimental to his self-esteem (Masykuroh, 2017).

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Figure 2. Katniss talks to her sister Primrose



- Katniss : "It's okay. Prim. Prim. It's okay. Prim, I don't have much time. Prim. Listen. You're gonna be okay. Don't take any extra food from them. It isn't worth putting your name in more times. Okay? Listen, Prim. Gale will bring you game. You can sell cheese from your goat."
- Primrose : "Just try to win. Maybe you can."
- Katniss : "Of course. And maybe I can. I am smart, you know?"
- Primrose : "And you can hunt."
- Katniss : "Exactly."
- Primrose : "To protect you."
- Katniss : "Thank you. You can't tune out again."
- Mrs. Everdeen : "I won't."
- Katniss : "No, you can't. Not like when Dad died. I won't be there anymore. You're all she has. No matter what you feel, you have to be there for her. Do you understand? Don't cry. Don't cry. Don't. Don't." (*The Hunger Games*, 18:09 – 19:35)

According to the data found and presented in dialogues and Figure 2, the movie *The Hunger Games* utilizes a particular kind of denial defense mechanism. *The Hunger Games* movie portrays the current condition of a mechanism where a person is unable to deal with reality which means that they refuses to accept what happens (Masykuroh, 2017). This kind of defense mechanism has been discovered by the researcher between minutes 18:09 – 19:35, when Katniss is seen telling her sister Primrose that she will attempt to win the game. Katniss agrees with her sister's prediction that she will succeed due to her intellectual abilities and hunting skills. In addition, Katniss guarantees her sister that everything is going to work perfectly. However, that contrasts with her expression, which makes it obvious that she is unsure about what she has said to her sister. When Katniss talks to her mother and asks her to take care after her sister if she doesn't come home after the game, the situation becomes clearer. This illustrates how Katniss first attempted to avoid facing the truth by telling her sister that she would be alright, despite the fact that this was different from what she told her mother.

The dialogues and Figure 2 show that Katniss uses Denial as a self-defense mechanism in order to protect her sister's emotions and deal with stressful situations. This type of self-defense mechanism appears when someone denies a reality that is hard to deal with (Claney, 2024; Di Giuseppe & Perry, 2021; Denial, 2024; MSEd, 2023).

Displacement

Displacement involves redirecting emotions or impulses from a threatening target to a safer or more acceptable substitute (Freud, 1936; Cramer, 2006). This often results in anger or frustration being expressed in unrelated contexts. Displacement is a mechanism that someone does to change threatening impulses from one object to another (Masykuroh, 2017). Displacement is also considered a type of aggressive reaction. Displacement, as highlighted by Main (2023), occurs when individuals express desires in a way that is unrelated to the original source, potentially leading

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to misunderstandings and strained relationships. This type tends to be more destructive. For example, an office worker is scolded by his boss, then he takes out his anger on his family. Displacement tends to be more aggressive than other mechanisms.

Figure 3. Katniss shooting her arrow at the apple between the roast pig



Katniss : "Thank you for your consideration." (*The Hunger Games min, 46:53 - 46:56*)

Figure 4. Marvel appears and throws his spear



Rue : "Katniss! Help! Katniss!"

Katniss : "It's okay. It's okay. You're okay. You're okay. You're fine. See? It's okay. You're okay. (Marvel appears and throws his spear into Rue's stomach. Katniss shoots him in the chest with her arrow. Rue pulls out the spear and falls into Katniss' arms.)" (*The Hunger Games min, 01:38:56 - 01:39:49*)

Based on the data obtained by the researcher in dialogues and Figure 3, the displacement type of self-defense mechanism was found in the movie *The Hunger Games*. This type tends to be more destructive. For example, an office worker is scolded by his boss, then he takes out his anger on his family. Displacement tends to be more aggressive than other mechanisms (Main, 2023). This type of defense mechanism that someone does to divert threatening impulses from one object to another is used by the main character in the movie, Katniss Everdeen as a tribute, in the segment minutes 46:53 - 46:56. In this segment, it is shown that Katniss enters a room where there are already Capitols who will see her show her talents. This room is intended for evaluating the abilities of each tribute who will take part in *the Hunger Games*. When it was Katniss' turn, she showed her skills in archery. After she introduced herself, she began to shoot at the archery target where when she first threw her arrow, Katniss could not shoot right at her target. That made her laughed at by the Capitol. Katniss felt belittled by the Capitol, so she took another arrow and shot it at the target and the second one went right on target but the Capitols were busy chatting and laughing with each other. The Capitols were indifferent and seemed busy with the newly arrived food which was a roast pig with an apple between the mouths of the roast pig. Because she felt she was not considered and belittled when she managed to shoot an arrow right on target, Katniss looked a little emotional and immediately took another arrow and she got a new target which was an apple between the roast pig.

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Katniss immediately shot her arrow at the apple, and she shot it neatly right at the apple which made the Capitols who were surrounding the roast pig amazed by Katniss' archery skills. The scene where Katniss diverted her anger to another object shows that Katniss uses Displacement to express her anger by shooting arrows at the apple that was being surrounded by the Capitols. This action fits the description of the displacement mechanism which tends to be more aggressive than the others because this action enters a risky situation and could make her assessment in the evaluation session worse because it makes the Capitol not accept Katniss' spontaneous protest action. This scene shows Katniss' courage in facing injustice and shows how the emotions and pressure she feels can be made clear through strong symbolic actions.

An example of the second type of Displacement defense mechanism that researcher found was in the segment from dialogues minutes 01:38:56 - 01:39:49 and Figure 4. In this scene, it is shown that Rue, one of the tributes who has become Katniss's friend, is trapped in a net set by another tribute. Katniss tries to release the net immediately so that Rue can get out of the net. When Rue has managed to get out of the net, they both immediately hug as a form of gratitude for having managed to free Rue from the trap. But when Katniss turns around, behind her there is another tribute who throws a spear at her. Katniss realizes that there is someone behind her, and after turning around Katniss quickly shoots a bow at the tribute who is trying to kill her. The bow that Katniss shoots sticks right into the chest of the tribute who attacked Katniss, which causes the tribute to die. By doing this scene, Katniss has shown her courage and survival instinct by shooting another tribute. Katniss's treatment is not only done as a form of self-protection, but can also be categorized as an outlet for her anger because the tribute has trapped Rue, a friend who has been her ally in the arena. Where previously Katniss was a tribute who was reluctant to kill, but when her ally was trapped, she took more aggressive action in order to survive in a compelling situation.

The researcher might conclude from the analysis previously mentioned that Katniss applies some kind of displacement defense mechanism to deal with the emotional strain she experiences in stressful and challenging situations. This kind of method is used by Katniss to express her frustration at injustice as well as to protect herself.

Projection

Projection is a defense mechanism in which individuals attribute their own unacceptable thoughts, feelings, or motives to another person (Baumeister et al., 1998). It serves to protect the ego by externalizing inner conflict. Projection is a condition where one places unacceptable feelings, thoughts, or urges on another person. It happens when someone allocates undesirable emotions, ideas, or wants to involve another individual. It's an approach used that reduces tension by projecting undesirable emotions onto someone else (Masykuroh, 2017).

Figure 5. Katniss tells Haymitch that Peeta is strong



Peeta : "So how good are they?"

Haymitch : "Obviously they're pretty good. They win it almost every year, but... They can be arrogant. And arrogance can be a big problem. I hear you can shoot."

Katniss : "I'm all right."

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- Peeta : "No, she's better than all right. My father buys her squirrels. He says she hits them right in the eye every time."
 Katniss : "Peeta's strong. He can throw a 100-pound sack of flour right over his head. I've seen it."
 Peeta : "Okay, well, I'm not gonna kill anybody with a sack of flour."
 Katniss : "No, but you might have a better chance of winning if somebody comes after you with a knife." (*The Hunger Games min, 38:43 - 39:23*)

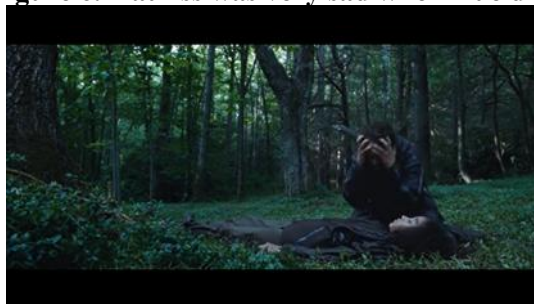
Based on the data obtained in dialogues and Figure 5, the researcher found data that is included in the type of self-defense mechanism, the Projection type. This self-defense mechanism is a type of mechanism that makes someone project their feelings, fears or internal discomfort to other (Masykuroh, 2017). In *The Hunger Games* movie, this Projection mechanism was found by the researcher in the segment minutes 38:43 - 39:23. The scene in this segment shows when Katniss is showing her distrust of Peeta who agrees with Haymitch's opinion about Katniss's extraordinary archery skills. Instead of accepting the compliment well, Katniss throws it at Peeta by saying that Peeta might be the one who will win the game with the physical strength he has. This shows that Katniss is trying to deny and project her worries and indirectly expresses her feelings of insecurity about her chances of surviving during *the Hunger Games*. Katniss also shows her discomfort when she receives praise and recognition from others for her archery skills.

The researcher may arrive at the conclusion that Katniss responded defensively to praise based on the data analysis results. By attempting to cover up her weakness through the projection mechanism, Katniss shows how she feels with being praised for her excellence and what she does to ignore her own worries and redirect her anxieties about her chances of surviving. This is an important part of Katniss' emotional coping mechanism for all of the pressure that she suffers during preparation for *the Hunger Games*.

Regression

Regression occurs when an individual under stress reverts to earlier stages of development, expressing behaviors characteristic of a more immature stage (Freud, 1936; Vaillant, 1992). It is a way of coping with anxiety by retreating to familiar comfort zones. A phenomenon known as regression occurs when a person experiences stress or difficult circumstances that force them to revert to behaviors from a previous stage of development. This kind of behavior pattern is more barely functional or like a kid. They feel more secure at an earlier developmental period, which is why this happens (Masykuroh, 2017).

Figure 6. Katniss was very sad when Rue died



Based on the data found by the researcher in Figure 6, there is an indication of a regression type of self-defense mechanism. This type of mechanism occurs when someone experiences a difficult situation which forces him to behave childishly (Masykuroh, 2017). In *The Hunger Games* movie, Regression researcher found in the scene at minute 1:47:44 – 1:52:12, which in the segment is told after Katniss loses Rue who died because another tribute threw a spear at her. After Rue's

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death, Katniss looks very sad and depressed which causes high stress in Katniss. While still in mourning for Rue's death, Katniss hears an announcement which after hearing it she immediately remembers Peeta and immediately rushes to find Peeta. After walking along the river, forest and rocks Katniss finds Peeta who is disguised as a rock and in a state of many wounds and a weak body. Seeing Peeta's condition like that, Katniss looks grateful to have met Peeta even though her face looks panicked. She immediately helps Peeta to get up and they look for a place to take shelter which eventually they enter a cave. While in the cave, Katniss is seen to show more childish behavior than before. A Katniss who previously seems strong and firm, in this scene she shows her vulnerable side by seeking emotional comfort through interactions with Peeta.

As previously explained in the data analysis, Katniss looks for a way to compensate for the high levels of stress she experiences as a result of losing Rue and the dangers that she struggles with in the arena. In this movie, Katniss acts like a child while she is with Peeta in order to release the pressure she is feeling. Peeta and Katniss's conversation additionally points out Katniss's desire to receive emotional support in a dangerous and threatening environment. By the way she acts, Katniss shows how she uses the regression defense mechanism to cope with the pressure and difficult circumstances she is dealing with.

Rationalization

Rationalization is a process by which individuals justify irrational or unacceptable behavior with logical, plausible explanations, thus protecting self-esteem (Cramer, 2000; Vaillant, 1992). It allows one to maintain self-respect while avoiding guilt. When someone rationalizes an inappropriate behavior in order to protect themselves from guilt or shame, they are acting by doing that in a logical or reasonable way. By doing this, people can preserve their sense of self-worth despite the fact that their initial actions or emotions might have been inappropriate (Masykuroh, 2017; Sierra, 2024).

Figure 7. Haymitch speaks and tries to reassure Katniss



- Haymitch* : "When they ask, you say you couldn't help yourself. You were so in love with this boy that the thought of not being with him was unthinkable. You'd rather die than not be with him. You understand?"
- Caesar* : "How did you feel when you found him by that river?"
- Katniss* : "I felt like the happiest person in the world. I couldn't imagine life without him."
- Caesar* : "And what about you, Peeta?"
- Peeta* : "She saved my life."
- Katniss* : "We saved each other."
- Caesar* : "Ladies and gentlemen, the star-crossed lovers from District 12 this year's Victors of the 74th Annual Hunger Games!" (*The Hunger Games min*, 02:10:38 - 02:11:34)

The Rationalization type of self-defense mechanism occurs when someone tries to protect themselves from guilt, shame or protection from threats (Masykuroh, 2017; Sierra, 2024). By using

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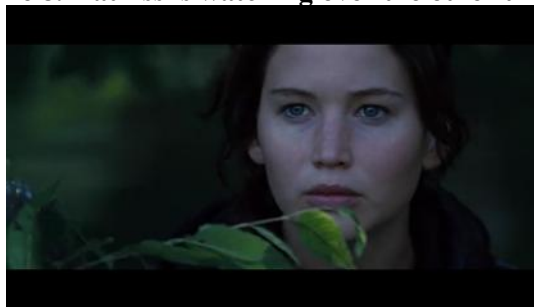
this defense mechanism, they will act in a logical way but still be able to maintain self-esteem even though the thoughts or emotions they feel at the beginning are inappropriate. In *The Hunger Games* movie, the researcher found data that falls into the example of the Rationalization defense mechanism in the dialogues and scene from 02:10:38 - 02:11:34. In this segment, it shows when Katniss and Peeta have won *the Hunger Games* and have returned to the apartment. When they are about to be interviewed by Caesar Flickerman and given the winner's crown, Haymitch advises Katniss to say that she is very much in love and feels happy when she can find Peeta when she is in the arena. This is because Haymitch knows that the Capitol will not accept their district's victory easily due to the change in the rules of the game. Therefore, when she is on stage to be interviewed, Katniss says that she feels like the happiest person in the world and can't imagine her life without Peeta. All of the words that Katniss says are meant to strengthen the romantic or young love narrative as proposed by Haymitch, which is expected to protect them from the Capitol's wrath due to the change in the rules of the game that resulted in two winners.

Based on the data analysis, it can be concluded that Katniss' actions is an example of Rationalization, where she adjusts her behavior to align with the reasoning narrative instructed by Haymitch in order to avoid potential danger from the Capitol. By issuing this statement, Katniss has protected herself and Peeta from a potentially dangerous political situation, while also diverting public attention from their disobedient behavior while in the arena. This shows how the Rationalization type of self-defense mechanism can be used as a tool to overcome high-risk situations and shows how individuals can adapt to existing social demands but by prioritizing logical reasons even though the emotional truth behind it is more complex.

Sublimation

Sublimation is a mature defense mechanism where socially unacceptable impulses are transformed into socially valued actions or creative expression (Freud, 1905; Cramer, 2006). It is considered one of the healthiest ways of coping with stress. Sublimation can be considered as a mature defense mechanism since it transforms undesirable emotions or encourages into positive and constructive activities. This system functions through directing unwanted emotions toward activities that are accepted in a society. This enables one to transform negative energy into positive energy (Masykuroh, 2017).

Figure 8. Katniss is watching over the other tributes



Caesar : "I want to see if she's gonna figure out this booby trap."
 Claudius : "Yes. It seems they've reburied their mines around that big pile of goodies."
 Caesar : "She's certainly figured it out, hasn't she?" (*The Hunger Games min, 01:35:06 - 01:35:30*)

Based on the data in dialogues and Figure 8, the sublimation type of self-defense mechanism is found in the *The Hunger Games* movie in the scene from minute 01:35:06 - 01:35:30. Sublimation can be considered as a mature defense mechanism since it transforms undesirable emotions or encourages into positive and constructive activities (Masykuroh, 2017). In the case of

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this movie, Katniss channels her emotional pain into brave actions in the arena. In the scene in this segment, Katniss is experiencing sadness due to deep loss after Rue's death. However, she does not let herself linger in sadness for too long and chooses to focus on surviving in the arena. Katniss uses her archery skills to hunt for food and uses it as a form of dedication to keep moving forward in the midst of difficult situations.

The researcher takes the conclusion from the data analysis above that Katniss's actions reflect the Sublimation defense mechanism because, in order to maintain the strength she had in the game, she changes her emotions into beneficial activity. In order to utilize strategy and successfully survive, Katniss transforms her feelings into positive energy. The situation described in the segment that explains how Katniss uses her emotions as a motivation to commit the productive acts that will help her to survive in this deadly Hunger Games challenge is consequently consistent with the explanation of the Sublimation defensive mechanism.

Reaction Formation

Reaction formation involves expressing the opposite of one's true feelings, often to hide anxiety-inducing emotions (Freud, 1936; Baumeister et al., 1998). For example, behaving overly nice to mask hostility. In this mechanism, a person expresses feelings with actions that are the opposite of their true feelings in order to hide their true feelings. This is done as a way to protect themselves from the anxiety or guilt that comes from unacceptable feelings (Masykuroh, 2017).

Figure 9. Cinna is talking about the costumes that Peeta and Katniss wore in the parade



Cinna : "You ready? Don't be afraid."
 Katniss : "I'm not afraid." (*The Hunger Games min, 30:53 - 31:07*)

Reaction Formation is one type of self-defense mechanism according to Sigmund Freud. A mechanism in which someone expresses feelings with actions that are contrary to their true feelings (Masykuroh, 2017). The Reaction Formation defense mechanism is found in the movie *The Hunger Games* in the dialogues and Figure 9 at minute 30:53 - 31:07. In this segment, it is shown that Katniss and Peeta will advance to the parade of introduction of tribunes from each district to the Capitol. When being dressed by Cinna, Katniss' stylist, Cinna asks Katniss if she is afraid of the costume with the fire effect, Katniss verbally answers that she is not afraid of the fire accessories that will be installed on her body. Katniss's answer to the question does not seem the same as the facial expression she shows. In that scene, Katniss's expression looks a little anxious and not completely comfortable with the costume.

From this, the researcher learned that Katniss uses the Reaction Formation defense mechanism because she tries to hide her internal anxiety by showing bravery and indifference which is the opposite response to her true feelings. The Reaction Formation mechanism helps Katniss to maintain the strong image she has created in the eyes of others. This scene shows how Katniss uses this mechanism as a way to deal with the pressure that arises from the high expectations of the Capitol.

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Intellectualization

Intellectualization entails focusing on logical reasoning and facts to avoid emotional stress. By distancing oneself emotionally, individuals analyze situations with detached objectivity (Cramer, 2000; Vaillant, 1992). Intellectualization involves separating the emotional aspect of an event and focusing on objective facts or information, as well as focusing on the intellectual aspect of a situation to distance themselves from its emotional content. This is often used to avoid facing painful emotions (Masykuroh, 2017).

Figure 10. Haymitch talks to Katniss and Peeta (*The Hunger Games* min 43:03)



Haymitch : "Tomorrow they'll bring you in one by one and evaluate you. This is important because higher ratings will mean sponsors. This is the time to show them everything. There'll be a bow, make sure you use it. Peeta, you make sure to show your strength. They'll start with District 1, so the two of you will go last. I don't know how else to put this. Make sure they remember you." (The Hunger Games min , 43:03 - 43:28)

Based on dialogues and Figure 10, the researcher found data that shows an example of the Intellectualization defense mechanism. This defense mechanism shows where humans separate emotional aspects by focusing on facts or objective information to avoid facing painful emotions (Masykuroh, 2017). In the *The Hunger Games* movie, this type of defense mechanism is found in the scene from minute 43:03 - 43:28. In that segment, it shows the scene before Katniss and the other tributes enter the Capitol Evaluation session. Katniss and Peeta are advised by Haymitch to make the Capitol like them through the evaluation session. Katniss answers what if the Capitol doesn't like them, and Haymitch answers with make them remember you. From the dialogue they did, it illustrates how important strategy and image are in the game. Haymitch also emphasized that in order for them to survive, they must attract sponsors by using this evaluation session as an initial step to gain support from the Capitol. With the advice given, Katniss decides to maximize her archery skills during the evaluation session. The strategy was aimed at attracting the attention of sponsors who could help him during *the Hunger Games*.

Intellectualization occurs when someone avoids emotions by focusing on the logical or intellectual aspects of the situation they are facing (Zabarenko, 2007). In this movie, the depiction of intellectualization is obtained from Katniss who chooses to stay focused on planning a strategy to attract sponsors to stay alive during the games and put aside the fear and emotional pressure she feels and focus on using her skills to build a positive image in the eyes of sponsors. By utilizing her intellectual abilities, Katniss can overcome anxiety about the games and increase her chances of survival and stay calm under pressure and make decisions based on logic and strategic thinking.

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CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusion

This study analyzed the use of Freud's defense mechanisms in *The Hunger Games*, particularly through the character of Katniss Everdeen. The findings reveal that Katniss employs various defense mechanisms—including repression, denial, displacement, projection, regression, rationalization, sublimation, reaction formation, and intellectualization—as survival strategies in response to the extreme psychological and physical pressures she faces in the *Hunger Games* arena. These mechanisms help her cope with trauma, anxiety, and oppressive circumstances, allowing her to navigate the deadly competition while maintaining emotional resilience.

The application of Freud's theory demonstrates how defense mechanisms are not only psychological coping tools but also narrative devices that shape character development and thematic depth in the movie. Katniss' experiences highlight the interplay between personal survival and emotional suppression, reinforcing the broader themes of power, control, and resistance present in *The Hunger Games*. Ultimately, this study underscores the significance of psychoanalytic analysis in understanding complex character behaviors in literature and movie, opening the door for further exploration of psychological resilience in dystopian narratives. This study contributes to both literary criticism and psychological analysis by illustrating how defense mechanisms are used as survival strategies in dystopian fiction. The research offers a deeper understanding of how characters cope with trauma and adversity, providing valuable insight into the psychological responses to oppression in dystopian settings. Additionally, it emphasizes the importance of psychoanalytic theory in examining character behavior, particularly within modern cinematic adaptations of literary works. The implications extend beyond literature, suggesting that characters' psychological resilience can serve as a tool for psychoeducation and broader discussions about mental health, especially in educational contexts.

Suggestions

Future research could expand on this study by examining the defense mechanisms of other characters in *The Hunger Games*, such as Peeta or Haymitch, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of psychological coping in this dystopian world. Comparative studies of different dystopian narratives, such as *Divergent* or *The Maze Runner*, could further explore the universality of Freud's defense mechanisms across various fictional universes. Additionally, future studies could investigate gender differences in how defense mechanisms are portrayed in male and female characters, or explore the evolution of defense mechanisms in young adult literature as a response to the psychological challenges faced by adolescents in oppressive societal structures.

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