

**RANSOM DRYSDALE'S DEFENSE MECHANISM IN THE
KNIVES OUT (2019) MOVIE**

THESIS

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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI MAULANA MALIK IBRAHIM

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**RANSOM DRYSDALE'S DEFENSE MECHANISM IN THE
KNIVES OUT (2019) MOVIE**

THESIS

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in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of *Sarjana*
Sastra (S.S.)

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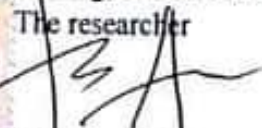
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MALANG 2025**

STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

I state that the thesis entitled "**RANSOM DHRYSDALE'S DEFENSE MECHANISM IN THE *KNIVES OUT* MOVIE**" is my original work. I do not include any materials previously written or published by another person, except those cited as references and written in the bibliography. Hereby, if there is any objection or claim, I am the only person who is responsible for that.

Malang, 24 October 2025
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MOTTO

"Hidup bukan untuk saling mendahului"

Hindia baskara putra

"Melamban bukanlah hal yang tabu, kadang itu yang kau butuh

Ini hanya sementara, bukan ujung dari rencana"

33 - Perunggu

"Life is simple, you make choice and don't look back"

Han - Fast and Furious

DEDICATION

This thesis is fully dedicated to : My beloved family, My mother, Siti Noer Chayati Rois, My father, Taufiqur Rohman, My sister, Siti Fatimah Bilqis Ar Rohman, My little sister Fatimah Az Zahra Ar Rohman, who always give me power, spirit, smoothness and ease in working on this thesis.

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This final assignment was completed thanks to the help, support, and prayers of various parties. Therefore, the author respectfully expresses his deepest gratitude to:

My beloved parents and family, my mother Siti Noer Chayati Rois, my father Taufiqur Rohman, my sister Siti Fatimah Balqis Ar Rohman, my little sister Fatimah Az Zahra Ar Rohman who have always provided endless prayers, love, and motivation.

My advisor, Dr Syamsudin who have dedicated their time, energy, and thoughts to provide direction and guidance throughout the writing process.

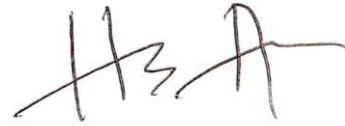
All lecturers and staff of the Faculty of Humanities, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, who have provided the best knowledge and services throughout my studies.

My friends Putri Amalia Febrianti and Vayevienda Muhammad who have consistently supported and encouraged me in completing this final assignment.

The author realizes that this final assignment is far from perfect. Therefore, constructive criticism and suggestions are greatly appreciated for the perfection of this

work. Hopefully, this final assignment will provide benefits, both academically and practically, to both the author and the readers.

Malang, 16 september 2025

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of stylized letters that appear to be 'H', 'A', and 'R' followed by a horizontal line.

Mohammad Hasan Ar Rohman

ABSTRACT

AR Rohman, Mohammad Hasan (2025) "Ransom Drysdale's Defense Mechanism In The *Knives Out* (2019) Movie". Undergraduate Thesis. Department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Advisor Dr. Syamsudin, M.Hum

Key word: Psychoanalysis, Defence Mechanism,, Film

This research analyzes the defense mechanisms of the character Ransom Drysdale in the 2019 film *Knives Out*, using Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory. The study employs a literary criticism approach to dissect the psychological aspects influencing Ransom's behavior. The primary objective is to identify the types of defense mechanisms Ransom uses in response to internal and external conflicts, particularly concerning his family and the inheritance of his grandfather, Harlan Thrombey. The analysis reveals that Ransom Drysdale employs a complex combination of defense mechanisms to protect his ego and justify his antagonistic actions. The most prominent mechanisms identified are projection, where he attributes his own selfish motives to others, particularly Marta; displacement, by redirecting his frustration onto safer targets like the housekeeper, Fran; and rationalization, where he justifies his criminal actions with logical-sounding excuses to minimize guilt. Furthermore, the study identifies reaction formation, in which he feigns helpfulness to manipulate others; regression, demonstrated by his childish and immature outbursts when under pressure; aggression, shown through direct verbal threats; and isolation, where he detaches emotion from his malevolent planning. These defense mechanisms illustrate a significant internal conflict within Ransom, driven by a dominant id and a failure to manage anxiety and moral responsibility maturely. The research concludes that Ransom's manipulative and destructive behavior is a direct manifestation of these psychological strategies, which he uses not only to shield himself from guilt but also as tools to achieve his selfish goals, ultimately highlighting his character's moral failure.

ABSTRAK

Ar Rohman, Mohammad Hasan (2025) "Ransom Drysdale's Defense Mechanism In The *Knives Out* (2019) Movie". Undergraduate Thesis. Department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Advisor Dr. Syamsudin, M.Hum

Kata Kunci: Psikoanalisis, Mekanisme Pertahanan, Film

Studi ini menganalisis mekanisme pertahanan karakter Ransom Drysdale dalam film *Knives Out* (2019) dengan menggunakan teori psikoanalisis Sigmund Freud. Melalui pendekatan kritik sastra, penelitian ini membedah aspek psikologis yang mendorong perilaku antagonis Ransom, terutama dalam merespons konflik terkait warisan kakeknya, Harlan Thrombey. Tujuannya adalah untuk mengidentifikasi berbagai mekanisme pertahanan yang ia gunakan untuk melindungi egonya dari konflik internal dan eksternal. Analisis menunjukkan bahwa Ransom memanfaatkan kombinasi mekanisme pertahanan yang kompleks. Yang paling menonjol adalah proyeksi, di mana ia melemparkan motif egoisnya kepada orang lain, terutama Marta. Ia juga menggunakan pemindahan dengan melampiaskan frustrasinya pada target yang lebih aman seperti pengurus rumah, dan rasionalisasi untuk membenarkan tindakan kriminalnya dengan dalih yang terdengar logis. Selain itu, studi ini mengidentifikasi mekanisme lain seperti pembentukan reaksi, di mana ia berpura-pura membantu untuk memanipulasi; regresi, yang terlihat dari ledakan emosinya yang kekanak-kanakan saat tertekan; agresi melalui ancaman verbal; dan isolasi, di mana ia memisahkan emosi dari rencana jahatnya. Semua mekanisme ini menunjukkan adanya konflik batin yang signifikan, yang didorong oleh *id* yang dominan dan kegagalan dalam mengelola kecemasan serta tanggung jawab moral. Kesimpulannya, perilaku manipulatif dan destruktif Ransom adalah manifestasi dari strategi psikologis ini, yang digunakannya untuk menghindari rasa bersalah sekaligus mencapai tujuan egoisnya, yang pada akhirnya menyoroti kegagalan moral karakternya.

ملخص

أروهمان، محمد حسن (2025) "آلية دفاع رانسوم درايسديل في فيلم "السكاكين خارجة". أطروحة بكالوريوس. قسم الأدب الإنجليزي، كلية العلوم الإنسانية، جامعة إسلام نيجري، مولانا مالك إبراهيم مالانج. المشرف: مفتاح الهدى، ماجستير في الفلسفة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التحليل النفسي، آليات الدفاع، الأفلام

يحلل هذا البحث آليات الدفاع لدى شخصية رانسوم درايسديل في فيلم "السكاكين خارجة" (2019)، باستخدام نظرية التحليل النفسي لسيغموند فرويد. تعتمد الدراسة على منهج النقد الأدبي لتحليل الجوانب النفسية المؤثرة على سلوك رانسوم. الهدف الرئيسي هو تحديد أنواع آليات الدفاع التي يستخدمها رانسوم استجابةً للصراعات الداخلية والخارجية، لا سيما تلك المتعلقة بعائلته وميراث جده، هارلان ثرومي. يكشف التحليل أن رانسوم درايسديل يستخدم مزيجًا معقدًا من آليات الدفاع لحماية غروره وتبرير أفعاله العدوانية. أبرز الآليات التي تم تحديدها هي الإسقاط، حيث ينسب دوافعه الأنانية للآخرين، وخاصة مارتا؛ والتشريد، بإعادة توجيه إحباطه نحو أهداف أكثر أمانًا مثل مدبرة المنزل، فران؛ والتبرير، حيث يبرر أفعاله الإجرامية بأعذار تبدو منطقية لتقليل الشعور بالذنب. علاوة على ذلك، حددت الدراسة تكوين رد الفعل، حيث يتظاهر بالمساعدة للتلاعب بالآخرين؛ والتراجع، الذي يتجلى في نوبات غضبه الطفولية وغير الناضجة عند تعرضه للضغط؛ والعدوان، الذي يظهر من خلال التهديدات اللفظية المباشرة؛ والعزلة، حيث يفصل العاطفة عن تخطيطه الخبيث. توضح هذه الآليات الدفاعية صراعًا داخليًا كبيرًا داخل رانسوم، مدفوعًا بهوية مهيمنة وفشل في إدارة القلق والمسؤولية الأخلاقية بنضج. وخلص البحث إلى أن سلوك رانسوم التلاعب والمدمر هو مظهر مباشر لهذه الاستراتيجيات النفسية، التي يستخدمها ليس فقط لحماية نفسه من الشعور بالذنب ولكن أيضًا كأدوات لتحقيق أهدافه الأنانية، مما يسلط الضوء في نهاية المطاف على الفشل الأخلاقي لشخصيته.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explain about background of study, problem of the study, significances of the study, scopes and limitations, and definition of key terms. The background contains brief information about research object and previous object with using same theory. This part is expected to provide a brief introduction to this research.

A. Background of the study

In everyday life, people frequently encounter situations that cause psychological tension, inner conflict, or discomfort. For instance, a student who fails an exam might convince themselves that the test was not important, or an employee who is scolded by a superior might vent their anger at family members at home. According to Chatterjee (2024), such behaviors represent forms of defense mechanisms, which are unconscious strategies individuals use to protect the ego from anxiety and distress. Sigmund Freud first introduced this concept as the ego's reaction to internal pressure, later refined by Anna Freud, who defined it as "the procedures used by the ego to avoid danger, anxiety, and unpleasure." Over time, Vaillant expanded this idea into a developmental hierarchy that ranges from the most maladaptive defenses, such as denial and projection, to more mature ones, such as sublimation and humor. As discussed in the article "Is Defense a Way of Coping?", these mechanisms enable individuals to maintain emotional stability when facing stressful circumstances, even though they may sometimes lead to a distortion of reality.

Thus, defense mechanisms not only constitute an essential part of human psychological dynamics but also serve as a foundation for understanding the behavior of both real individuals and fictional characters when confronted with internal conflict.

On the other hand, the modern film industry has become an attractive arena for creative expression and social influence. As Hilyati (2014) explains, movies are not just a series of still images projected rapidly to create the illusion of movement; they also integrate spoken dialogue, written text, background music, costumes, backdrops, and props to convey emotions and ideas. Although these elements are not always perfectly integrated, their interrelated nature ensures that each contributes to the overall impact of the film. Much like Chatterjee (2024) strategic use of denial to shape its public narrative, filmmakers harness these multiple cinematic components to construct compelling stories that entertain, educate, and influence society. Together, these examples illustrate how both denial as a psychological defense mechanism and the art of cinema serve as means of controlling and presenting reality—whether by shielding an organization from reputational harm or by crafting narratives that resonate with audiences.

Films consist not only of visual images (sometimes in colour), but also spoken dialogue, written text (such as signs or letters shown in close-up), background music, actors in costume, backdrops, props, and other elements. All these elements are used by the cinematic medium to convey emotions and ideas to the audience. While these

film elements are not always fully integrated, they are interrelated where each element relies on the others to full fill its function. According to the book "The Art of Watching Movies" by Joseph M. Boggs and Dennis W. Petrie, movies are a unique art form with a profound impact on its audience because it combines painting, technology, music, literature, and drama to create a compelling experience. One example of a movie that has great influence and reflects social issues is "The Hole". This film attracts the author's attention to be researched in this thesis, because the film has the potential to be an interesting research object and is relevant to contemporary social issues. By analyzing this film, the researcher can gain a deeper insight into how visual and narrative arts can be used to convey messages and influence viewers.

Movies also have certain types that can be distinguished. According to Alvarez in Adella, R (2021) suggests that films can be divided into 9 kinds of genres, namely: Action, Drama, History, Fantasy, Horror, Comedy, Crime, Musical, Adventure, and War films. Simply put, Action Movie according to Pratista in Adella, R (2021) is a spectacle that contains challenging scenes, making the day pounding with the display of exciting scenes that usually have a fast story tempo. Movies that have the Action genre are always dominant with the presence of shootings, punches, fights, races and actions that make the whole body tense when watching them.

Furthermore, Oktavianus in Adella, R (2021) Suggests that drama films are one of the films that have a wide variety of stories so that very many titles use this genre.

This film genre focuses on stories that involve emotions towards the audience because it emphasizes the deepest side of humanity which has the aim of making the audience participate in the events in the film. Also, Pratista in Adella, R (2021) explains that a horror-themed film is a film that wants fear from the audience which aims to provide shock and terror. Horror movies are generally depicted with a human fighting supernatural creatures as antagonists in the supernatural dimension.

The next explanation is the comedy film genre, according to Oktavianus in Adella, R (2021) is one type of film that makes funny content the spearhead of the broadcast. This genre has existed since ancient times and can be watched by various ages because it only aims to give the audience a laughter reaction. This genre in most movies contains dramas wrapped in action or exaggerated language so as to get a funny impression. Comedies also mostly have happy endings. The next film genre is crime or a group of gangs, according to Oktavianus in Adella, R (2021) describes that this genre has a connection with actions that harm other parties such as robbery, theft, gambling, murder, premeditated crimes in groups, and others. It is not uncommon for this genre to emerge after the incident occurs in the real world, then it becomes a visual cinema that can be known thoroughly from the point of view, plot, setting, flow and so on. This genre heavily emphasizes brutal acts of violence which makes it different from the action genre. Furthermore, the genre that is usually favoured by women is musicals. According to Pratista in Adella, R (2021) explains that in this genre almost all scenes are choreographed between a combination of music and dance that becomes one in the story. Jane Feuer in Adella, R (2021) added that this genre was originally a stage

collection that developed rapidly into a movie cinema. A film genre that has free elements, has a strong curiosity and sometimes the time setting is outdoors is the adventure genre, according to Oktavianus in Adella, R (2021) explains that this genre visualizes the exploration of certain areas and a journey such as climbing mountains, entering forests, seas, islands and others.

Apart from the genres mentioned above, there is one other genre which is the detective or mystery genre. Detective and mystery are two different but related genres in movies. A very famous fictional character that utilizes both genres is Sir Arthur Conan Dyle's Sherlock Holmes who appeared in the late 19th to early 20th century. According to Pudo, F. (2023) the mystery genre is a derivative genre of the crime and mystery genres. This genre combines a protagonist who has very high investigative skills. Trying to uncover odd events and solve murders.

The author focuses the analysis on the movie "Knives Out" by Rian Johnson. In this movie, various top characters such as Daniel Craig, Chris Evans, Ana de Armas, and others play a role. The story centers on detective Benoit Blanc (played by Daniel Craig) investigating the mysterious death of a wealthy mystery writer named Harlan Thrombey (played by Christopher Plummer), who died mysteriously at the age of 85. In this context, the character of Ransom Drysdale (played by Chris Evans) stands out as a powerful example of the use of Freudian defense mechanisms. Ransom, Harlan's grandson, is portrayed as having a complicated and conflicted relationship with his grandfather.

In real life, conflict is a natural part of human interaction. According to Neisya et al (2022), conflict can trigger anxiety that ultimately affects one's personality. As a result of conflict, individuals often develop self-defense mechanisms as a natural response. In this film, the main characters react to their conflicts with different defense mechanisms. Neisya et al (2022) stated that conflict is a mental battle that must be faced in earnest, as also described by Hornby. Therefore, through the conflicts and interactions of its characters, "Knives Out" provides an interesting view of how Freudian defense mechanisms can be reflected in everyday behavior, even in the most extreme situations.

The film "Knives Out" is an interesting object of research because it discusses the topic of defense mechanisms that are important to understand. Many people do not realize that they often use defense mechanisms in their daily lives. The film also presents universal moral values, which serve as a reminder that overuse of defense mechanisms is not good. Thus, the author wants to focus the analysis on previous research that uses the same theory but with a different focus. The previous study emphasized more on the analysis of the main character, while this study will focus on the analysis of defense mechanisms used by one of the characters.

Previous research has identified a wide range of self-defence mechanisms, which have similarities with the characteristics of Ransom Drysdale in the film *Knives Out*. Therefore, the author decided to analyze the character of Ransom Drysdale, who in the film is portrayed as temperamental, cynical, arrogant, and very antagonistic.

Through a psychological point of view, the character of Ransom Drysdale becomes a very complex subject with various situations he faces. In this case, the author will use Sigmund Freud's psychological approach to explain the defence mechanisms used by the character Ransom Drysdale in this film. Thus, this analysis will provide a deeper insight into how Freudian defence mechanisms are reflected in the complex behaviour of Ransom Drysdale's character. It will also provide an understanding of the complexity of the characters in the film and how such defence mechanisms can play a role in the formation of one's personality and actions.

This research will explore the defence mechanism of the main character of the film, as well as its impact on his personality. The analytical approach used is Sigmund Freud's theory of defence mechanisms. To do so, the author refers to several related studies, such as Neisya & Karindrati's thesis entitled "Chris's Self-Defence Mechanism in the Film "Into The Wild". They identified defence mechanisms, such as repression and displacement, that the main character used in dealing with conflict in the film "Into The Wild". With these mechanisms, the main character is able to overcome the internal and external challenges he faces. Furthermore, there is also research by Febrianto & Anggraini (2020) with the title "Defense Mechanisms in the Novel Kaki Langit Talumae by Wishnu Mahendra: A Literary Psychology Study". They explored the characters' self-defense mechanisms in the novel "Kaki Langit Talumae" and found various mechanisms such as repression, sublimation, projection, diversion,

rationalization, regression, and aggression used by the characters in dealing with conflicts in the story.

Another research that becomes a reference is the thesis of Halifah, N. (2015) with the title "Defense Mechanisms and Conflict in the Novel *Lentera Mustika* by Nisah Haron". In this study, researchers revealed the character's defense mechanisms, such as projection and diversion, in dealing with conflicts in the novel "*Lentera Mustika*". Then, there is also research by Yuliari, G. A. P. (2015) entitled "Self-Defense Mechanisms of Female Characters in Inoue's *Ryoujuu Novelet*". This study found seven self-defense mechanisms used by female characters in dealing with conflict, such as Repression, Diversion, Rationalization, Formation Reaction, Primitivation Regression, Aggression, and Apathy.

Next research that becomes a reference is the thesis from Saraswati, N. (2019). with the title "Anxiety and Defense Mechanism of Hannah Baker in Jay Asher's *Thirteen Reasons Why*". In this thesis found nine defense mechanism used by the character such as Repression, Sublimation, Projection, Displacement, Rationalization, Regression, Aggression, Reaction information, And Isolation. After that Thesis, researcher find another research by Shovyanti, H. A. (2023) with the title "The defense mechanism of Anne Shirley in Budge Wilson's *Before Green Gables*". In this thesis researcher found nine types of defense mechanism such as Repression, Sublimation, Projection, Displacement, Rationalization, Regression, Aggression, Reaction information, And Fantasy. And then last previous studies that researcher found is by

Arminata, A. N. D. (2022) with the title "Defense mechanism of the main character in Jostein Gaarder's *An Unreliable Man*". In this thesis researcher found eight type of defense mechanism such as Repression, Sublimation, Projection, Displacement, Rationalization, Regression, Agression, And Reaction information.

The next previous study on psychological conflict and defense mechanisms in literature was conducted by Rayes Syahran (2019) in his thesis entitled "Anxiety and Defense Mechanism of Jordan Garrison in Eric V. Copage's *Between Father and Son*." The research explores the psychological struggles of the main character, Jordan Garrison, who suffers from severe anxiety and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) due to multiple traumatic experiences in his childhood. Guided by Sigmund Freud's theory of defense mechanisms and Ruzek's concept of PTSD, this study examines both the causes of Jordan's trauma and the ways he psychologically copes with it. The analysis reveals that Jordan's traumatic experiences stem from witnessing repeated domestic violence, the murder of his grandfather by his father, and the accidental death of his mother. These events deeply affect his mental state, leading to flashbacks, nightmares, and avoidance behavior—key symptoms of PTSD. To deal with these overwhelming emotions, Jordan unconsciously employs several defense mechanisms, including projection, conversion, substitution, fantasy, and denial. Through these mechanisms, he attempts to reduce anxiety and protect his ego from unbearable pain. The next study conducted by Al Fajri and Kusuma (2025), published in *Diglosia: Jurnal Kajian Bahasa, Sastra, dan Pengajarannya*, examines the psychological development

and defense mechanisms of Queen Elizabeth I as portrayed in the film *Elizabeth: The Golden Age* (2007). Using Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory and Erik Erikson's psychosocial stages, the research explores how Elizabeth's internal conflicts and leadership struggles reflect the tension between her id, ego, and superego. Through a qualitative content analysis approach, the researchers analyzed selected scenes and dialogues that illustrate Elizabeth's emotional and behavioral responses to political and personal challenges.

And the last relevant study in the field of film studies was conducted by Prof. Mundi Rahayu in her dissertation titled "Representation of Arab Muslims in Hollywood Films: A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Muslim Other in Hollywood Cinema" (Universitas Gadjah Mada, 2015). This research focuses on how the cultural identity of Arab Muslims is constructed and represented in Hollywood cinema, particularly in three films: *The Siege* (1998), *Kingdom of Heaven* (2005), and *Syriana* (2005). Through these films, Rahayu explores how Western ideology and global political interests operate behind the construction of the image of "the Muslim Other," especially within the social and historical context following the September 11, 2001 attacks. In her analysis, Rahayu employs the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as proposed by Norman Fairclough, Teun van Dijk, and Theo van Leeuwen to reveal the relationship between language, power, and ideology in film texts—both verbal and visual. This approach is complemented by Edward Said's theory of Orientalism, which distinguishes between the "West," portrayed as rational, civilized,

and superior, and the “East” or “Muslim,” depicted as emotional, uncivilized, and inferior. By referring to these studies, the author will analyze defense mechanisms used by the character Ransom Drysdale in the film "Knives Out". This analysis will provide a deeper understanding of the complexity of Ransom Drysdale's character and how these defense mechanisms play a role in shaping his character and actions.

B. Problems of the study

Based on the research background, this study formulates a problem, namely: What types of defence mechanism used by Ransom Drysdale in the film based on Sigmund Freud's theory?

C. Significance of the study

This research study has significance by contributing to understanding defense mechanisms in the film Knives out. The approach uses Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory to analyze the film Knives Out by focusing on Ransom Drysdale who has complex characteristics. Ransom Drysdale is the main antagonist in Knives Out. To be able to understand the aspects contained in the character, Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis theory can easily understand motivation, and defense mechanisms. This research is expected to provide new perspectives and insights by analyzing film characters using psychological defense mechanisms. This research is also expected to provide a direct representation of the psychological form in the film narrative. The results of this study can contribute to literary psychology research.

D. Scope and Limitation

The scope of this research discusses the defense mechanism of the player in the film *Knives Out*, namely Ransom Drysdale. The main focus of this research is how Ransom Drysdale's defence mechanism is shown in the film *Knives Out*. In this study, the author uses Sigmund Freud's psychological theory to dissect Ransom Drysdale's defense mechanism in the film *Knives Out*.

E. Definition of Key Terms

To be able to understand more about this study, researchers must provide keywords in a study. Some key words are as follows:

1. Psychoanalysis

According to Barry in Arminata, A. N. D. (2022) is a theory that emphasizes dream analysis. Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis examines human behavior, self-defense mechanisms. Psychoanalysis itself can also be used as a therapy to restore mental disorders by examining the relationship between conscious and unconscious aspects of the mind. According to Syawal, H., & Helaluddin, H. (2018) psychoanalysis is a theory that talks about the nature and development of human personality. This theory has several elements such as motivation, emotions, and other internal aspects.

2. Defense Mechanism

According to Arminata, A. N. D. (2022) defense mechanisms are behaviors outside the consciousness of individual humans but the subconscious moves by itself. Defense mechanisms can also be said to be psychological tactics that each individual

has to protect his or her personality from emotional conflict, tension, feelings of anxiety, or in difficult situations. This mechanism can handle individuals to overcome psychological pressure. These mechanisms can mostly come out of selfconsciousness and practice is needed to understand an event in order to help at the right time. Defense mechanisms are ways we think or behave to protect ourselves. It is an attempt to reduce anxiety by methods that deny, falsify, or distort reality, which can inhibit personality development (Freud, 1954: 85). Defense mechanisms have several types, such as repression, projection, negation, displacement, sublimation, denial, regression, rationalization, and reaction formation. This paper will analyze three types of defense mechanisms: sublimation, displacement, and denial. This theory is concerned with the influence of a person's unconscious mind on their behavior. Freud believed that the human mind consists of three elements, namely the id, ego, and superego, which play an important role in generating defense mechanisms.

3. Film study

Film study is a scientific research study to better understand the essence of films that can influence the audience. This research study is very important for all levels of society, not only fans who are interested in communication, culture and the arts.

Understanding research on film media from various points of view can learn something new from the thoughts of a person (director) and the diversity of other cultures. According to Nelmes, J. (2012) in his book, various critical approaches and cinematic examples can give rise to certain similarities in film making, basically films have

entertaining properties, but each person has a different form of assessment. As time goes by, films have been heavily influenced by philosophies and theories such as Freud and Lacan's psychoanalysis, Marx's political theory, and Ferdinand De Saussure's semiotic theory. (Nelmes, J. 2002)

CHAPTER II

REVIEW RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter explains the theory used in this research. The theoretical framework explained is based on the analysis that will be carried out on the selected object.

A. Psychology Analytic Film Theory

Freud's psychoanalytic theory is the study of the unconscious psychological aspects of humans, such as pent-up emotions, motivations that drive actions, inner conflicts, the meaning of dreams, and character complexity. Psychological Literature emerged as a form of literary study that aims to understand and interpret literary works, authors, and readers by utilizing various concepts and theoretical frameworks from psychology (Wiyatmi, 2011). Literature and psychology have similar roles in understanding life, especially in terms of studying human nature and problems both as individuals and as social beings. Both disciplines are based on a deep understanding of the human experience, which is the main focus of their research. Therefore, the psychological approach is considered essential to be applied in literary studies and criticism, as it can open new insights in understanding the various psychological aspects that influence the characters, plots and themes in literary works.

In its application, psychology serves as an analytical tool that allows us to delve deeper into the various mental and emotional dimensions of literature. This approach, for

example, can take the form of psychoanalysis-a method pioneered by Freud-that helps identify the hidden motivations, inner conflicts, or traumas that shape the character and behavior of the characters in the story. Through this approach, readers or researchers can understand how psychological factors play a role in the development of characters and storylines, thus providing a more complex understanding of the meaning and messages conveyed in literary works (Endraswara, 2008).

The relationship between literature and psychology is very strong. Cohen (1971) states that literature allows us to understand various psychological aspects, while psychology, on the other hand, helps decipher the complex issues that arise in literary works. In this case, characters in literature often reflect the author's views or experiences regarding certain psychological phenomena. As a result, literature becomes a medium that can be explored through psychological theories to discover and understand human nature and psyche, similar to the way psychology understands people in real life (Cohen, 1971).

B. Defense Mechanism

Defense mechanisms are strategies that we use to protect ourselves from tension, anxiety or emotional conflict that we may face. By using these mechanisms, we tend to reduce or avoid psychological distress that can arise from various situations. Freud chose the term “defense mechanism” to refer to the unconscious way a person protects themselves from feelings of anxiety. These mechanisms function by altering or distorting reality when faced with external threats or internal drives that cause anxiety (Hilgard et al., 1975).

Freud, S. (2024) identified several types of defense mechanisms, but he observed that usually people do not rely on just one mechanism. In the anxiety theory of Classical Psychoanalysis, people tend to use several mechanisms simultaneously. This suggests that defense mechanisms function collectively to help individuals cope with stress and maintain their emotional balance. Defense mechanisms refer to the various strategies through which the ego manages internal conflicts and safeguards itself from anxiety by controlling or altering instinctual impulses and emotional responses that generate psychological tension Freud, A (1936). According Baumeister, Dale, and Sommer, 1998 p. (1082) A defense mechanism functions as a form of denial, allowing us to select what we wish to hear, see, and do. It involves how the ego protects it from internal experience, particularly impulses that the ego deems unacceptable. There are types of defense mechanism by Sigmund Freud (Minderop, A. (2010); Baumeister, Dale, and Sommer, 1998 p. (1082))

1. Repression

Repression is a defense mechanism that unconsciously works to block or eliminate anxiety-provoking thoughts, feelings, or internal conflicts from entering consciousness. This process occurs when external pressures contradict an individual's inner desires or ambitions, forcing the mind to push unacceptable impulses into the unconscious. As explained by Freud, S (1920), during therapy, when efforts are made to bring these repressed thoughts into awareness, patients often show strong resistance, indicating that the repression mechanism is still actively operating to keep such

thoughts hidden. According to Minderop (2010), repression serves to suppress the id's unacceptable drives from reaching consciousness and becomes the foundation of all other ego defense mechanisms. Its main purpose is to prevent threatening impulses from entering awareness, thereby reducing the anxiety caused by internal conflicts

2. Sublimation

Sublimation is a defense mechanism through which instinctive and socially unacceptable impulses or libidinal energy are transformed into socially and culturally acceptable activities by Freud, S (1905). According to Minderop (2010), sublimation involves converting negative or undesirable stimuli into positive and productive forms through creative or innovative activities. This process helps individuals manage excessive emotions by channeling them into beneficial actions. In other words, sublimation allows instinctual drives to be expressed in ways that differ from their original goals. As Freud frequently emphasized, sexual or aggressive impulses can be redirected toward artistic, intellectual, or socially constructive pursuits (Baumeister, Dale, & Sommer, 1998, p. 1082).

3. Projection

Projection is a defense mechanism in which individuals attribute their own unacceptable feelings, thoughts, or impulses to other people or external circumstances. Freud first introduced this concept through his analysis of primitive belief systems and totemic practices by Freud, S (1913). Anna Freud (1936) explains that projection is a defense mechanism in which an individual avoids acknowledging their unacceptable

impulses by rejecting them internally and attributing those impulses to other people. According to Minderop (2010), projection is an unconscious psychological process that helps individuals justify or deny unpleasant realities by blaming others for their own faults or failures. In this mechanism, a person transfers unwanted traits or emotions from within themselves onto others as a way to protect the ego from anxiety. Similarly, Febrianto and Anggraini (2020) explain that projection serves as a means of releasing disliked psychological aspects of one's character by attributing them to others, thereby maintaining emotional balance and reducing internal tension.

4. Displacement

Displacement is a defense mechanism in which emotional energy or intensity originally directed toward a particular idea or object is redirected to another target that is less threatening or more socially acceptable. Freud first identified this process in his analysis of dream activity by Freud, S (1900). According to Anna Freud (1936), displacement is an ego's way of coping with inner and external pressures by shifting emotional responses from their true source to a less threatening object or person. According to Minderop (2010), displacement allows individuals to avoid or reduce stress and anxiety by transferring unpleasant emotions from their original source to a safer or more appropriate object. This reaction typically arises when individuals face anxiety or mental tension that they cannot express directly. Similarly, Febrianto and Anggraini (2020) explain that displacement serves as a simple yet effective defense

mechanism, enabling individuals to relieve unpleasant emotions or thoughts by engaging in activities that provide comfort or happiness.

5. Rationalization

Rationalization is a defense mechanism that unconsciously enables the ego to produce seemingly logical explanations to justify behaviors, feelings, or impulses that originate from unacceptable motives by Freud, S (1926). Unlike deliberate deception, this process occurs without the individual's awareness that they are concealing their true reasons. According to Anna Freud (1936), rationalization occurs when the ego justifies one's actions or feelings with reasonable explanations to conceal the real psychological motives behind them. According to Minderop (2010), rationalization is an effort to find socially acceptable arguments to justify or correct behaviors that deviate from social norms. This mechanism serves two main purposes: first, to lessen feelings of disappointment when one fails to achieve a desired goal, and second, to provide acceptable reasons for one's actions. Although rationalization can offer temporary psychological relief, excessive use of it may lead individuals to lose self-awareness and confidence in their own identity.

6. Reaction Formation

Reaction formation is a defense mechanism in which individuals adopt behaviors and attitudes that are the opposite of their true impulses or desires, as those original impulses are considered socially unacceptable or psychologically threatening by Freud, S (1905). This process involves transforming unacceptable drives into their contrasting expressions. According to Anna Freud (1936), reaction formation occurs when the ego suppresses unacceptable desires or feelings and replaces them with exaggerated opposite behaviours to prevent those impulses from becoming conscious. According to Baumeister, Dale, and Sommer (1998, p. 1082), reaction formation can serve as a way to protect one's self-esteem, where individuals respond to traits or impulses they perceive as undesirable by exhibiting opposite behaviors. For instance, a person accused of being hostile or intolerant may go to great lengths to appear peace-loving or tolerant, thereby masking their genuine underlying feelings through socially approved behavior.

7. Regression

Regression is a defense mechanism in which an individual's thoughts or behaviors revert to an earlier or more immature stage of psychological development as a way of coping with stress or internal conflict by Freud, S (1900). According to Minderop (2010), this mechanism often emerges when individuals face feelings of anxiety or tension, prompting them to unconsciously return to behaviors typical of childhood, such as nail-biting or seeking comfort through dependency. Minderop

distinguishes two forms of regression. The first, known as *backward behavior*, refers to childish actions like crying, acting spoiled, or seeking attention from others to gain a sense of security. The second, referred to as *primitivation*, involves adult behaviors that violate social norms or moral rules, reflecting a loss of self-control and often leading to conflict with others.

8. Aggression

According to Freud, A (1936), aggression is an instinctual drive that can be directed either outward toward others or inward toward the self, and it often becomes the focus of ego defense mechanisms. This drive, closely related to the *Thanatos* or “death instinct,” reflects a natural human tendency toward destruction or the urge to respond to frustration, conflict, or threats to the ego. Minderop (2010) explains that aggression can manifest in two primary forms: direct and displaced aggression. Direct aggression occurs when an individual openly attacks the source of frustration, whether verbally or physically, often provoking a reaction from the target. In contrast, displaced aggression arises when the true source of frustration is unclear, inaccessible, or socially unacceptable, leading the individual to redirect anger toward an innocent person or a scapegoat. In the context of Ransom Drysdale’s character in *Knives Out*, aggression operates as a complex defense mechanism, helping him cope with emotional tension and unfavorable circumstances by projecting his internal conflict outward through hostile and manipulative actions.

9. Isolation

Isolation is a defense mechanism in which anxiety-provoking thoughts or memories are detached from their emotional components or separated from their original context and associations by Freud, S (1926). This mechanism functions as an unconscious effort to create psychological distance between threatening thoughts and other emotions or mental processes. Freud illustrated this concept through examples where an individual, while thinking about something distressing, suddenly pauses and shifts to another topic—an indication of the mind's attempt to prevent the distressing thought from connecting with other ideas. According to Anna Freud (1936), isolation occurs when the ego separates a thought or event from the emotion that normally accompanies it, allowing the idea to stay in consciousness while its emotional impact is suppressed. According to Baumeister, Dale, and Sommer (1998, p. 1082), isolation does not eliminate the threatening idea but merely reduces its emotional impact. Because the thought becomes separated from its emotional and contextual links, it rarely reemerges and has limited influence on one's mind, self-esteem, or self-concept.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHOD

This chapter explains how the mechanisms and procedures for carrying out this research. This part describes the research design, data source, data collection, and data analysis process in this research.

A. Research Design

This film studies uses literary criticism. As revealed by Fard, S. F. (2016), Literary criticism is a field of study that focuses on interpreting, analyzing and assessing literary works. Literature is generally defined as written works that are able to endure because they raise ideas that have eternal and universal relevance, and are presented with extraordinary beauty and artistic power. These literary works can be poems, stories, novels, plays, essays, and so on. In the other words, it means giving a judgment or decision. In general, a critic is a person who passes judgment or opinion on the meaning, value, truth, beauty, or artistic aspects of a work.

The author use this method to explore information and understanding of the psychoanalytic aspects, namely the defense mechanisms in the film "Knives Out". This research is based on the psychoanalytic theory approach by Sigmund Freud.

B. Data Source

In this research film studies, the researcher looks for data sources in the form of the *Knives Out* movie which is the main data in making this analysis. This movie is about a mystery film and release in US at 27 November, 2019. Duration of this film is 2 hours and 10 minutes or 130 minutes. *Knives Out* movie was directed and written by Rian Johnson. This film includes data in the form of scenes, narratives, dialog that have to do with Ransom Drysdale. Furthermore, the author's data source is a movie scene to become supporting data in the form of Ransom Drysdale's dialog quotes.

C. Data Collection

The method used in data collection is downloading film and their subtitle in website. After downloading have done, researcher watched movie and observe dialog, scene, gesture actors from that movie indicating defense mechanism. Defense mechanism data is analyzed and classified based on Sigmund Freud's theory which group rationalization, projection, diversion, passive, aggression, repression, denial, and sublimation.

D. Data Analysis

In analyzing data, researcher will take steps: first, the researcher watched movie and analyzes defense mechanism dialog, gesture or scene in "*Knives Out*" movie by putting data. After that, the researcher explain concept of defense mechanism with following the data. And then the researcher analyzes conceptual of defense mechanism based on theory of Sigmund Freud. The impact of the characters analyzed using defense

mechanisms feels regret, experiences mental disorders, loneliness, goes crazy, violates norms, and does futile things.

CHAPTER IV

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This chapter contains answers to the problem formulation. The author attempts to describe Ransom Dhrysdale's personalities, and analyse Ransom Drysdale's defense mechanisms using Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory.

A. Ransom Drysdale's Defense Mechanism

Mechanisms Defense mechanisms are unconscious psychological processes that function to protect the ego from anxiety, internal conflict, or id impulses that are unacceptable to the individual's consciousness. This concept was first introduced by Sigmund Freud in his work *The Neuro-Psychoses of Defence* (1894) and later expanded by his daughter, Anna Freud (1936) in her book.

Anna Freud explains that the ego uses various defense mechanisms in response to threats originating from within (id and superego) and from without (social environment or reality). The purpose of these mechanisms is to maintain psychological balance, reduce anxiety, and avoid guilt. Defense describes the ego's struggle against painful or unendurable ideas or affects Freud, A. (1936)

Furthermore, she states that the term defense is general and encompasses various techniques used by the ego in dealing with conflicts, while repression is one of the earliest known forms of defense mechanisms:

"We employ it defense as a general designation for all the techniques which the ego makes use of in conflicts, while we retain the word 'repression' for the special method of defense.." Freud, A (1936).

Defense mechanisms operate unconsciously and are often not recognized by the individuals using them. However, certain behaviors or attitudes can indicate that these mechanisms are active. After understanding Ransom Drysdale's background, motivations, and psychological influence on the story's development in *Knives Out*, the next step is to analyze how he deals with internal and external pressures through self-defense mechanisms. Based on the ego defense theory introduced by Sigmund Freud and expanded by Anna Freud, Ransom exhibits complex defense symptoms, which he unconsciously uses to alleviate inner conflict, anxiety, and guilt. The following analysis will outline the three main forms of defense mechanisms shown by Ransom Drysdale's character, namely reaction formation, rationalization, projection, displacement, sublimation, repression, regression, aggression, and isolation, as well as their role in shaping the character's psychological dynamics and their contribution to the plot's development.

1. Projection

Researcher find one of the clearest examples of Ransom Drysdale using the psychological defense mechanism of projection occurs during his confrontation with Marta Cabrera, as it can be seen in Datum 1:

Datum 1



“We let you take care of Grandpa, be part of our family, and now you think you can steal it from us?” (Johnson, R. 2019, 01:59:18)

According to Datum 1 below, statement illustrates Ransom's attempt to shift his guilt and selfish intentions onto Marta. The aggressive accusation conceals his desire to control Harlan Thrombey's inheritance, as well as his feelings of betrayal and inadequacy after being disinherited.

According to Freud, A (1936), projection occurs when the ego defends itself from unacceptable impulses by denying their existence within oneself and attributing them to others. In this case, Ransom cannot accept the reality that he himself has tried to manipulate and steal the inheritance by planning a murder and framing Marta. Instead, he accuses Marta of theft and betrayal—emotions and intentions that more accurately reflect his own inner state the ego refuses to recognize its own instincts and

desires, and shifts them outwards so that they are attributed to others or to the external world Freud, A (1936).

Ransom's projection serves two psychological purposes: first, it allows him to avoid feelings of guilt and moral failure by shifting blame; second, it allows him to justify his hostility towards Marta, portraying himself as a victim rather than an aggressor. This also aligns with Freud's initial view that projection helps the ego reduce anxiety by placing threats outside the self.

Narratively, this moment strengthens the conflict and tension in the plot. The audience, along with other characters, is momentarily made to doubt Marta's innocence, which maintains the mystery. However, the eventual revelation that Ransom is the true perpetrator confirms that the projection is not only a psychological defense mechanism but also a strategic manipulation. In short, Ransom Drysdale's projection onto Marta reflects his psychological struggle to suppress guilt and his attempt to maintain control in a situation where his rights are threatened. It is a defense mechanism that conceals the dark truth of his character and plays a significant role in the film's dramatic structure.

2. Displacement

Researcher find one of the clearest examples of Ransom Drysdale using the psychological defense mechanism of displacement. In the film *Knives Out*, the character Ransom Drysdale exhibits behavior that reflects the psychoanalytic defense

mechanism, specifically displacement, through his interaction with Fran, the housekeeper, Data can be seen as the Datum 2:

Datum 2



“Hey Frannie can you get me a glass of cold milk?” (Johnson, R. 2019, 01:01:05)

According Datum 2, when Ransom asks Fran for a glass of cold milk in a condescending tone, this statement not only reflects his superior attitude but also indicates a deeper emotional transfer. Ransom, trapped in an internal conflict between selfish impulses and moral demands from his family, redirects his dissatisfaction and frustration with his family situation onto Fran, whom he considers a weaker and safer target. This seemingly trivial request actually reflects his inability to deal with larger conflicts in his life, such as tension with family members and pressure from social expectations. By belittling Fran, Ransom not only displaces his emotions but also

creates a distance between himself and the actual source of conflict. This shows how displacement functions as a defense mechanism that allows Ransom to avoid direct confrontation with his more complex feelings, such as anger, guilt, or dissatisfaction with his family.

Freud, A. (1936) defines displacement as an ego defense mechanism that functions as an adaptive strategy to deal with pressures originating from id demands, superego, and external demands from the environment. Essentially, displacement occurs when an individual transfers emotions, desires, or psychic impulses from their original object, which is considered threatening or socially unacceptable, to a substitute object that is safer or more tolerable. This mechanism allows a person to maintain psychological balance by avoiding direct confrontation with the source of anxiety, but without truly eliminating the underlying unconscious impulses. In the context of character analysis, displacement is often manifested through patterns of behavior that appear irrational or disproportionate when faced with certain situations. This defense mechanism becomes interesting to explore because it can reveal the complex psychological dynamics behind the actions of fictional characters, as we will analyze in the character of Ransom Drysdale in the film *Knives Out*.

This analysis highlights how Ransom's behavior not only reflects an egoistic and manipulative character but also illustrates the deeper psychological dynamics that influence his actions. Thus, this condescending behavior becomes a concrete example

of how displacement operates in the context of the character, providing deeper insight into the internal conflicts Ransom faces in the film's narrative.

3. Rationalization

Researcher find one of the clearest examples of Ransom Drysdale using the psychological defense mechanism of rationalization. In the film *Knives Out*, the character Ransom Drysdale clearly demonstrates the defense mechanism of rationalization in his dialogue with Blanc can we see in Datum 3 when he says:

Datum 3



"Yeah I killed Fran but I guess I didn't, so what do you have on me. Nothing. What? Attempted murder... I get arson for the bombing, maybe a few other charges, with a good lawyer I'll be out before you know it." (Johnson, R. 2019, 01:59:42)

According Datum 3, this statement reflects how Ransom tries to cover up and justify his criminal actions with seemingly logical reasons, even though they do not reflect a deeper emotional and moral reality Admission and Denial. In the first

sentence, Ransom directly admits that he killed Fran, but immediately after, he adds "but I guess I didn't," which shows a denial of his responsibility. This is a classic example of rationalization, where he tries to shift attention from the act to the feeling of innocence he creates for himself. In this way, Ransom tries to reduce the emotional burden of the admission.

Ransom then proceeds to rationalize the consequences of his actions by stating that he is not worried about the charges he might face. By mentioning that he will only face "attempted murder" and "arson," he tries to minimize the impact of his criminal actions. This statement shows that Ransom is not only trying to justify his actions but also trying to reduce any guilt he might feel by assuming that with the help of a good lawyer, he will be able to get out of the situation easily.

According to Freud, A (1936), rationalization is an ego defense mechanism used to cover up true motives or feelings with logical or socially acceptable reasons, even if those reasons do not reflect the actual psychological impulses. In the context of Ransom Drysdale's character in the film *Knives Out*, this rationalization mechanism is very evident in how he justifies his actions and decisions. Ransom often uses seemingly logical reasons to support his manipulative and selfish behavior, as if he is acting in the best interest of his family, when in fact he is more concerned with personal interests and ambitions to obtain the inheritance.

Through this rationalization, Ransom also tries to maintain his self-image as someone who has control over the situation, even though he is involved in very serious

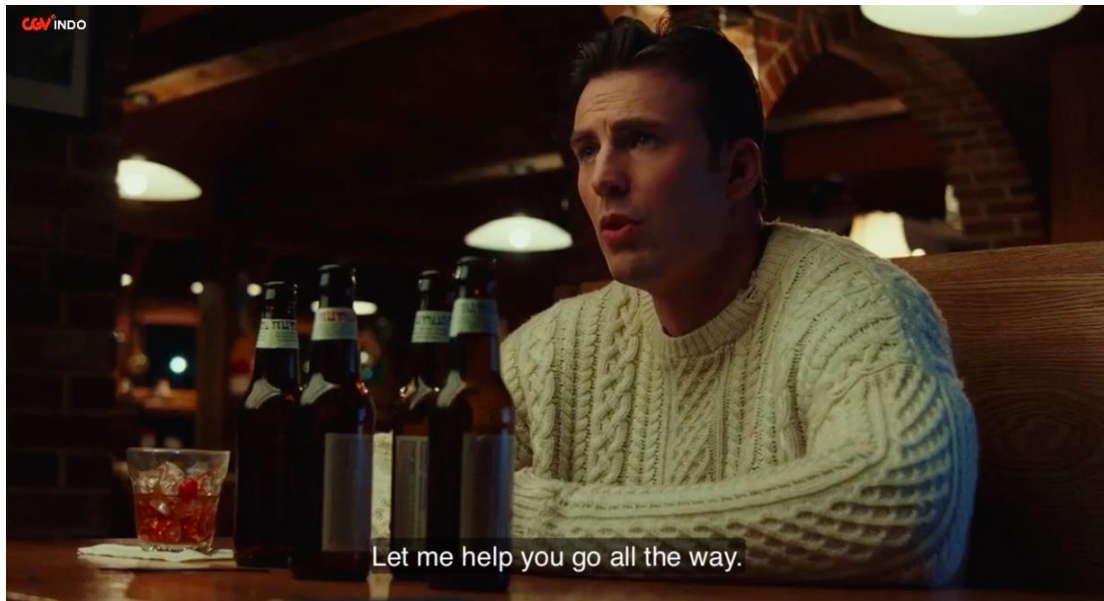
actions. By assuming that he can easily overcome the legal consequences, Ransom creates a narrative where he is not only a perpetrator but also a smart person capable of managing situations for his own benefit. This reflects Ransom's inability to face the reality of his actions and shows how he uses rationalization to protect his ego and self-image.

Through this analysis, we can see how the mechanism of rationalization functions in Ransom Drysdale's character, providing deeper insight into the psychological complexity underlying his behavior. Rationalization not only helps Ransom avoid feelings of guilt but also creates the illusion that he can control the situation, even though his actions have brought serious consequences. Thus, this analysis highlights how Ransom uses this defense mechanism to maintain his self-image and avoid confrontation with a deeper emotional reality.

4. Reaction Formation

Researcher find one of the clearest examples of Ransom Drysdale using the psychological defense mechanism of reaction formation. In the film *Knives Out*, the character Ransom Drysdale demonstrates the defense mechanisms of reaction formation and rationalization through his interaction with Marta, as revealed in

Datum 4 :



“Let me help you go all the way.” (Johnson, R. 2019, 01:19:17)

According Datum 4, at first glance, this statement appears to be an expression of good intentions and support for Marta, who is a weaker character in the context of the story. However, behind this attitude, there is a deeper impulse that reflects dishonesty and manipulation, Helpful Attitude as Reaction Formation by acting as if he is helping Marta, Ransom conceals his true selfish and manipulative intentions. In the context of reaction formation, this "helpful" attitude serves to suppress feelings of insecurity and dissatisfaction he might feel towards the inheritance situation. Ransom tries to create a self-image as a good and generous person, while internally, he is actually struggling with the urge to control the inheritance and gain personal profit. In this way, he covers up unacceptable original impulses with an extremely opposite attitude.

According to Freud, A (1936), reaction formation is an ego defense mechanism where unacceptable impulses or feelings are repressed and replaced by attitudes or behaviors that are extremely opposite. This is done to keep the original impulses unconscious and unmanifested. In the context of Ransom Drysdale's character in the film *Knives Out*, the mechanism of reaction formation can be seen in how he interacts with his family members and how he expresses his attitude towards the situations he faces.

After showing a helpful attitude, Ransom then demands a share of the inheritance, which shows that his good intentions were merely a facade to achieve his goals. In this case, Ransom uses rationalization to justify his manipulative actions. He might think that by showing kindness to Marta, he can claim that he deserves a share of the inheritance, as if his good deeds should be reciprocated with a reward. This reflects how Ransom tries to avoid guilt and maintain a positive image in the eyes of others, even though his actual actions contradict higher moral values.

This analysis shows that Ransom not only operates within the framework of defense mechanisms but also creates complex dynamics in his interaction with Marta. He tries to control the situation in a seemingly altruistic way, but in reality, he uses manipulation to achieve his goals. This reflects a deep internal conflict, where Ransom struggles between the urge to gain power and inheritance, and the need to maintain a positive self-image. Through this analysis, we can see how Ransom Drysdale uses the defense mechanisms of reaction formation and rationalization to conceal his true

intentions and create a favorable self-image. This provides deeper insight into the psychological complexity underlying his behavior and how it contributes to the main conflict in the film.

5. Regression

Researcher find one of the clearest examples of Ransom Drysdale using the psychological defense mechanism of Regression. In the film *Knives Out*, the character Ransom Drysdale demonstrates the defense mechanism of regression when he expresses his anger with harsh words, as seen in Datum 5:

Datum 5



"Eat shit. Eat shit. Definitely eat shit." (Johnson, R. 2019, 01:04:41)

According to Datum 5, this attitude reflects childish behavior that emerges when Ransom feels cornered and loses control after not getting the inheritance he expected. Childish Behavior as Regression, when faced with situations of pressure and disappointment, Ransom is unable to deal with his emotions in a mature way. Instead, he reverts to a more primitive and childish pattern of behavior, where he expresses his anger and frustration in an immature manner. The repetition of the phrase "Eat shit" shows his inability to communicate constructively and reflects an exaggerated emotional reaction, which is characteristic of regression.

By using harsh language and displaying an immature attitude, Ransom tries to divert attention from the emotional pain he experiences due to losing the inheritance. This regression functions as a defense mechanism to avoid responsibility for his actions and decisions, and to protect himself from feelings of shame or regret. In this context, Ransom's childish behavior reflects his inability to face the reality that he did not get what he wanted.

This analysis shows that Ransom's behavior not only reflects anger but also deep emotional instability. When he feels threatened and loses, he reverts to an earlier pattern of behavior, where he tries to gain attention and recognition in an immature way. This creates a picture of the internal conflict Ransom faces, where he struggles between the urge to gain power and inheritance, and his inability to face the consequences of his actions. Through this analysis, we can see how the mechanism of regression functions in Ransom Drysdale's character, providing deeper insight into the

psychological complexity underlying his behavior. Regression not only helps Ransom avoid confrontation with painful reality but also creates a pattern of behavior that reflects immaturity and emotional instability.

6. Aggression

Researcher find one of the clearest examples of Ransom Drysdale using the psychological defense mechanism of Aggression. In the film *Knives Out*, Ransom Drysdale's clearly show use aggression as his defense mechanism, through Datum 6 below:

Datum 6



“And then you'll see just how much hell I can wreak on your life, you vicious little bitch,”
(Johnson, R. 2019, 01:59:57)

According Datum 6, reflects the use of aggression as a defense mechanism in facing a situation full of pressure and conflict. In this context, Ransom expresses deep

anger and frustration towards Marta, whom he considers an obstacle in achieving his goal of obtaining the inheritance.

According to Freud, A (1936), aggression is an instinctual drive that can be directed outwards or inwards, and is often the target of ego defense mechanisms. Aggression appears in various forms—whether direct, hidden, or displaced—depending on the pressure from the superego and external reality. In the context of Ransom Drysdale's character in the film *Knives Out*, we can see how aggression plays a role as a complex defense mechanism in dealing with emotional pressure and unfavorable situations.

Ransom's statement is an example of direct aggression, where he openly threatens and attacks Marta's character. This reflects the dissatisfaction he feels towards the unfavorable situation for him. By using harsh words and threats, Ransom tries to show power and dominance, as well as express pent-up anger. This aggression functions as a way to divert attention from the helplessness and insecurity he may experience due to losing the inheritance, aggression as a Defense Mechanism.

In the context of defense mechanisms, Ransom's aggression can be seen as an attempt to protect himself from deeper emotional pain. By directing anger and threats towards Marta, he tries to create a strong and intimidating self-image, which can divert attention from the vulnerability he feels. This shows how Ransom uses aggression to maintain control over the situation and avoid confrontation with painful reality.

This statement which is Datum 6 also reflects the internal conflict Ransom faces, where he struggles between the urge to gain power and inheritance, and the pressure from the superego that might remind him of morality and responsibility. By threatening Marta, Ransom tries to assert dominance and divert attention from any guilt or regret he might feel. This creates a picture of how aggression functions as a defense mechanism to protect himself from negative feelings arising from his actions.

Through this analysis, we can see how aggression functions in Ransom Drysdale's character, providing deeper insight into the psychological complexity underlying his behavior. Aggression not only helps Ransom avoid confrontation with painful reality but also creates a pattern of behavior that reflects emotional instability and immaturity. Thus, this analysis highlights how this defense mechanism contributes to the main conflict in the film and the development of Ransom's character.

7. Isolation

The next defense mechanism who Ransom use clearly show in his dialogue with Marta after learning that Harlan bequeathed everything to Marta is Isolation, as we can see in Datum 7:

Datum 7



“When he told me... Jesus Christ, I coulda killed him.” “But then I got this weird... clarity. That from here on I was going to have to do for myself.” (Johnson, R. 2019. 01:17:14)

According show in Datum 7, instead of directly showing anger or sadness, Ransom "jumps" to a calm and rational feeling as if he accepts the situation—when in fact it leads to planning a murder. This action reflects the use of the defense mechanism of isolation and a significant shift in emotion.

According to Freud, A (1936), isolation is a process where an idea or emotional event is separated from the affect (emotion) that accompanies it. The idea remains in consciousness, but is detached from the feelings that should follow it. In the context of Ransom Drysdale's character in the film *Knives Out*, we can see how the defense mechanism of isolation operates in how he deals with conflict and emotional pressure.

Ransom initially expresses deep anger by stating that he could have killed Harlan. However, instead of continuing with the anger or sadness that should accompany it, he immediately shifts to a calm and rational feeling. This shows how he isolates negative emotions from ideas about losing the inheritance and the dissatisfaction he feels. By separating anger and sadness from the actions he might take, Ransom creates a distance between his feelings and a more rational response, which allows him to plan his next steps without being hindered by painful emotions. Ransom's statement about gaining "clarity" reflects his attempt to rationalize a painful situation. He tries to transform a painful emotional experience into a calmer understanding, as if he has accepted the situation. However, this statement also hints that he is planning something darker. By pretending to accept the situation, Ransom is actually preparing himself to take extreme action, namely planning a murder. This shows how he uses defense mechanisms to avoid confrontation with his true emotions, while still maintaining a rational and controlled self-image.

This analysis shows that although Ransom appears calm and rational, there is a deep internal conflict going on. He struggles between the urge to gain power and inheritance, and the need to maintain a positive self-image in the eyes of others. By isolating emotions and shifting to rationalization, Ransom tries to protect himself from guilt or regret that might arise from his actions. This creates a picture of the emotional instability underlying his behavior, where he tries to cope with pressure from unfavorable situations.

Through this analysis, we can see how Ransom Drysdale's dialogue reflects the use of the defense mechanisms of isolation and rationalization, providing deeper insight into the psychological complexity underlying his behavior. By separating emotions from actions and shifting to a calm feeling, Ransom creates a pattern of behavior that reflects immaturity and emotional instability, which ultimately leads to the planning of extreme actions. Thus, this analysis highlights how this defense mechanism contributes to the main conflict in the film and the development of Ransom's character.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

This chapter contains answer research question of this study. The researcher explain analysis based on data in *Knives Out*. This chapter will analyse character Ransom Dhrysdale with Sigmund Freud Psychoanalysis Defense Mechanism.

A. Conclusion

Based on the analysis of Ransom Drysdale's character in *Knives Out* using Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic approach, it can be concluded that he employs various defense mechanisms. The most prominent is aggression, shown through confrontational attitudes, threats, and intimidation toward family members and others he sees as obstacles, especially in the inheritance dispute.

He also shows regression, reverting to childish behavior under pressure, such as mocking and acting immaturely to avoid responsibility. Another mechanism is displacement, seen in how he redirects anger toward Marta as a scapegoat when he cannot control his family situation.

To some extent, Ransom uses sublimation, channeling aggressive impulses into manipulative strategies instead of direct violence, showing his ability to disguise destructive urges. He also applies reaction formation by pretending to help Marta while secretly plotting against her, thus creating a false image.

Ransom further demonstrates isolation, separating emotion from action by planning murder calmly without guilt or empathy, revealing moral insensitivity. Finally, he uses rationalization, convincing himself he deserves the inheritance and justifying his greed

B. Suggestion

This study still has several limitations and therefore can be further developed by future researchers. The analysis of defense mechanisms in Ransom Drysdale focuses only on one antagonistic character, so subsequent studies may expand the object of research by examining other characters in *Knives Out* or similar films. In doing so, the understanding of psychological dynamics between characters will become more comprehensive.

In addition, future research may also compare the defense mechanisms employed by antagonistic and protagonist characters. Such a comparison would reveal the different psychological strategies used by each character, providing a more complete picture of inner conflict and psychological conditions represented in a film.

Furthermore, upcoming studies can also connect the psychological analysis with the social and cultural contexts underlying the work. This approach is important so that the results do not only focus on the individual character's psyche, but also contribute to a broader understanding of how films reflect the social, moral, and cultural values of society.

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PAS FOTO
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