

Anxiety and Defense Mechanism Portrayed by the Main Character in *Puss in Boots: The Last Wish* (2022) Novel

Angel Kharisma^{1*} & Nita Maya Valiantien²

English Literature Study Program, Faculty of Cultural Sciences,
Universitas Mulawarman

*Email: angelkharisma03@gmail.com

ABSTRAK

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah mengeksplorasi kecemasan dan mekanisme pertahanan yang digambarkan dalam diri Puss sebagai tokoh utama dalam novel *Puss in Boots: The Last Wish* dengan menggunakan teori kecemasan dan mekanisme pertahanan dari Sigmund Freud. Peneliti menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dengan pendekatan psikoanalisis. Data penelitian berupa kata, frasa, dan kalimat merujuk pada kecemasan dan mekanisme pertahanan yang dialami Puss, lalu dikumpulkan melalui kegiatan membaca, menyoroti, serta mencatat. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa Puss mengalami kecemasan berupa: kecemasan realistis dari lingkungan dan sosok Big Bad Wolf; kecemasan neurotik dari pikiran bahwa Big Bad Wolf akan menghukumnya; serta kecemasan moral yang muncul akibat melanggar nilai moral. Selanjutnya, mekanisme pertahanan Puss untuk mengatasi keemasannya meliputi: represi melalui pelarian dan menenangkan diri dengan bantuan Dog; penyangkalan untuk menolak kenyataan pahit; sublimasi dengan mengubah keraguannya menjadi pola pikir positif; rasionalisasi dengan membenarkan tindakannya; serta kompensasi untuk mengatasi kelemahannya dengan menguasai bidang yang lain. Untuk itu, mekanisme-mekanisme ini berhasil membantu Puss keluar dari kondisi penuh ketakutan dan melangkah maju untuk menjalani sisa hidupnya dengan berani.

Kata kunci: psikoanalisis, kecemasan, mekanisme pertahanan, *Puss in Boots*

ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the forms of anxiety and defense mechanisms experienced by Puss, the main character in *Puss in Boots: The Last Wish*, through the lens of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory. Employing a descriptive qualitative method within a psychoanalytic framework, this research analyzes words, phrases, and sentences that reflect Puss's experiences of anxiety and the psychological strategies he employs to manage them. The data were collected through repeated reading, highlighting, and note-taking from the novel. The findings reveal that Puss experiences three types of anxiety: realistic anxiety, resulting from external threats posed by his environment and the Big Bad Wolf; neurotic anxiety, stemming from his fear of punishment by the Big Bad Wolf; and moral anxiety, associated with guilt for violating moral standards. To cope with these anxieties, Puss unconsciously employs several defense mechanisms, including repression, demonstrated by his tendency to flee and seek comfort from Dog; denial, used to reject painful realities; sublimation, manifested in transforming hesitation into a positive mindset; rationalization, through justifying his actions; and compensation, by attempting to overcome his weaknesses in other areas. Overall, these defense mechanisms enable Puss to overcome his fears, achieve self-understanding, and ultimately face his final life with renewed courage and emotional resilience.

Keywords: psychoanalysis, anxiety, defense mechanism, *Puss in Boots*

A. INTRODUCTION

According to WHO (2023), anxiety is recognized as one of the most widespread mental health challenges across the globe, significantly affecting individuals' ability to function effectively in their daily lives and impacting their overall standard of living. Javaid et al. (2023), also stated that about 4% of the global population is affected by anxiety, underscoring its

widespread impact on individuals' lives across different societies and cultures. With over 301 million individuals affected in 2019, the potential consequences underscore the importance of raising awareness through various media.

Contemporary literature serves as a significant medium for raising awareness about mental health issues by portraying characters who experience various psychological conditions, one of which is anxiety (Rani, 2024). In doing so, literature becomes a creative reflection of real-life experiences that are closely related to human psychological aspects (Fitriyah, 2022). Through such portrayals, literature not only mirrors reality but also plays an active role in reducing stigma, fostering empathy, and shaping societal attitudes toward greater acceptance (Rani, 2024).

Specifically discussed by Freud's psychoanalysis, anxiety is an emotional response marked by unease and vague discomfort that acts as a warning of impending danger (Feist & Feist, 2020). Meanwhile, defense mechanisms were subconscious psychological processes that prevent a person from anxiety produced from internal conflicts or external threats (Freud, 1992). These systems help the ego balance both superego (internalized morality) and id (primitive desire) and can manifest in various ways. By applying Freud's psychoanalysis framework to literature, researchers can delve story on a deeper level and gain insights into the intricate interplay of psychological processes within a narrative.

One of the works that has caught the attention of researcher for its rich depiction of the character's psychological struggles is *Puss in Boots: The Last Wish* (2022) by Calla Spinner. Puss, as a main character, is an arrogant and bold cat who has already lost eight out of his nine lives because he is always confronting challenges and adventures. As he approaches his last remaining life, he dismisses the suggestion to step away from danger until ultimately defeated by The Big Bad Wolf, a figure that symbolizes death. This encounter generates Puss's deep fear of death, prompting him to employ different defense mechanisms in order to manage his growing anxiety over his own mortality throughout the entire narrative.

Furthermore, while a cat is considered to be a mindless animal in the real world, Puss instead represents various human behaviors in this story. His transformation from a fearless adventurer to someone consumed by the fear of death marks a significant shift in his character. His attitude change because of his vulnerability provides a compelling case for exploring the mental state of a character grappling with anxiety and making his character a fascinating object for analysis.

This study aims to analyze Freud's psychoanalytic approach applied to Puss, as the main character in Calla Spinner's *Puss in Boots: The Last Wish* (2022). The novel presents a fitting narrative for exploring themes of anxiety and conflict resolution through defense mechanisms, inspiring the researcher to delve into Puss's psychological journey. Given the lack of existing research on this topic within the context of the novel, this study aims to fill that gap. By examining Puss's behavior, the researcher hopes readers will gain a deeper understanding of the character's psychological process in overcoming challenges, offering valuable insights into his emotional development.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Character and Characterization

In a dramatic or narrative work, a character is shown as possessing unique moral, intellectual, and emotional attributes that the reader interprets. Characterization helps build distinct characters in a story by presenting their behaviors and allowing readers to infer the

motives and dispositions that underline what they say, do, and think (Abrams, 1999). There are numerous forms of characterization such as:

a. Characterization Through Appearance

Characterization through appearance is frequently revealed by visual or what one's eyes can capture. The use of facial features, costumes, mannerisms, and movement become crucial to express character. The very first impressions of a character may shift as the story progresses, but it plays an important role in establishing character (Boggs & Petrie, 2017).

b. Characterization Through Dialogue

Characterization through dialogue naturally exposes a lot from the character's words and how they say it. Genuine ideas, attitudes, and feelings can be portrayed in very subtle ways through word choice, stress, tone, and patterns in speech. Dialogue can convey information, personality, background, and their relationship with others (Boggs & Petrie, 2017).

c. Characterization Through External Action

This type reflects by how the character has a tendency to do an action since it relates to each other. Even an insignificant action can make it possible to look closely into their personality as it reveals the true nature of the character (Boggs & Petrie, 2017).

d. Characterization Through Internal Action

This type takes place within a character's mind that encompasses hidden, unspoken ideas of what they think about. It often depicts their inner action by visually immersing the audience into the character's thought, allowing them to see or hear what the character is feeling or contemplating (Boggs & Petrie, 2017).

e. Characterization Through Reaction of Other Characters

This characterization is served by how other characters perceive and react to a person. Before a character appears on screen, this method can reveal a great amount of information about their personality from the conversation of other characters (Boggs & Petrie, 2017).

f. Characterization Through Contrast: Dramatic Foils

This type of characterization is usually shown by comparing a character with an exact opposite of their attitude, belief, way of life, or even the whole appearance of those different characters to achieve such contrast (Boggs & Petrie, 2017).

g. Characterization Through Caricature and Leitmotif

Characterization with caricature involves exaggerating or distorting a character's dominant features or personality traits to leave a lasting impression on the audience. On the other hand, a leitmotif involves repeating a single action, phrase, or idea by a character until it becomes a trademark or theme of their own (Boggs & Petrie, 2017).

2. Psychoanalysis Theory

Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory offers an extensive and nuanced framework for understanding human development and mental functioning. Through his clinical work with

patients exhibiting hysterical symptoms, Freud advanced the idea that their difficulties were fundamentally psychological rather than physical. At first, Freud divided human thoughts into two categories of the conscious and the unconscious. However, he later refined this idea in his model; the id represents the instinctual and unconscious part; the ego is the rational and logical aspect; while the superego is an internal guide that represents ideal and moral values (Bressler, 1994).

3. Anxiety

Freud posits that anxiety is a fear without a specific object, meaning it cannot be pinpointed to a particular cause (Schultz & Schultz, 2016). The experience of anxiety can be attributed solely to the ego. However, it is essential to recognize that the id, superego, and external circumstances each play a role in different types of anxiety (Feist & Feist, 2020).

a. Realistic Anxiety

Realistic anxiety arises from the perception of potential real-world danger. It is similar to fear but slightly different because fear does not involve a particular object, while this type of anxiety possesses actual danger (Feist & Feist, 2020).

b. Neurotic Anxiety

Neurotic anxiety is characterized by a sense of unease stemming from an unidentified threat. It originates from the id's impulses but is experienced within the ego. This anxiety often stems from childhood fears of punishment, which manifest as general, unconscious anxiety (Feist & Feist, 2020).

c. Moral Anxiety

A clash between the ego and the superego leads to moral anxiety, which arises from concerns about one's moral standards. This type of anxiety occurs when an individual is tempted to engage in behavior that contradicts their moral values or is considered wrong by societal norms, the superego responds by inducing feelings of shame or guilt (Feist & Feist, 2020).

4. Defense mechanism

The concept of defense mechanisms marks a significant development in psychoanalytic theory. This groundbreaking idea provided a framework for understanding strategies of how individuals unconsciously protect themselves from psychological distress and internal conflicts. All types of defense mechanisms share two common characteristics: (1) they distort reality, and (2) they function without conscious awareness (Schultz & Schultz, 2016).

a. Repression

Repression operates to eliminate the source of psychological danger by pushing distressing thoughts or impulses out of conscious awareness. This mechanism functions to make uncomfortable feelings seem less threatening, causing individuals to become unaware of, or even forget, the existence of thoughts or experiences that may cause them harm (Schultz & Schultz, 2016).

b. Denial

Denial is a defense mechanism in which a person rejects the reality of an external danger or a distressing event that has already taken place (Schultz & Schultz, 2016).

c. Reaction Formation

Reaction formation occurs when an individual unconsciously transforms a disturbing or unacceptable impulse into its opposite, resulting in behavior that is completely contrary to the person's true feelings or original inclination. (Schultz & Schultz, 2016).

d. Displacement

Displacement occurs when the original target for the satisfaction of an id impulse is inaccessible or unsafe, causing the individual to redirect their emotions or impulses toward a more acceptable or less threatening object or person. (Schultz & Schultz, 2016).

e. Regression

Regression happens when someone reverts to a more comfortable and less stressful period of their life, often returning to behaviors typical of earlier developmental stages (Schultz & Schultz, 2016).

f. Sublimation

Sublimation involves transforming the underlying impulses from the id into socially acceptable and positive forms, rather than simply redirecting them towards different objects as in displacement. This process instinctively drives toward good outputs (Schultz & Schultz, 2016).

g. Rationalization

Rationalization is a defense mechanism that involves reinterpreting one's actions to make them seem reasonable or acceptable. It involves justifying or excusing a distressing idea or action by persuading oneself that it has a valid reason (Schultz & Schultz, 2016).

h. Compensation

Compensation involves addressing a deficiency by enhancing a weakness or making up for a lack through exceptional performance in another area. The process of compensation is influenced by the inherent sense of inferiority and the skills available for improvement (Vaughan, 2010)

C. METHOD

This research adopted a qualitative design, employing a psychoanalytic approach specifically focused on the theories of anxiety and defense mechanisms as proposed by Sigmund Freud and further developed by Anna Freud. This method allowed the researcher to investigate the data, highlight, capture, and analyze the data collected previously. The source of data was derived from the novel *Puss in Boots: The Last Wish* (2022) in form of words, sentences, and phrases that illustrated the portrayal of anxiety in Puss's character.

The researchers employed a content analysis approach following the three steps outlined by Huberman (1994). First, in the data reduction process, the researchers carefully selected relevant data from the novel *Puss in Boots: The Last Wish* by closely examining the text to identify elements that aligned with the research objectives. Next, the researchers organized and presented the valid data according to the theoretical framework to determine the types of anxiety and defense mechanisms exhibited by Puss's character. Finally, conclusions were drawn based on the analytical findings to address the research questions.

D. FINDINGS

1. Types of Anxiety

a. Realistic Anxiety

As claimed by Freud (1992), realistic anxiety is the fear the ego feels because of danger from the outside world. It is considered a natural response and causes ego to defend itself against external sources of threat. The data that showed his realistic anxiety toward another character is provided in the passage below:

“Good people! Accept these golden gifts from Puss in Boots,” Puss called out. The crowd cheered for him; Puss, naturally, basked in the adoration. But then Puss heard a familiar, eerie whistle break out from the crowd. **As he turned, he froze in fear as he caught glimpse of the wolf standing among them.** (Spinner, 2022, p.39)

In this case, Puss was enjoying the crowd that cheered for him after he had thrown gold at them to block the road from Jack Horner's henchmen. However, hearing an eerie whistle break out from the crowd made the feeling of fear strike again in Puss. The characterization was shown by external action because Puss was constantly frozen in fear due to his sense of safety that shattered as soon as he caught any smallest sign that the Wolf was around, since Puss perceived him as a real threat. This attitude is considered as Puss feeling realistic anxiety since he was aware of the Wolf's presence as an actual threat that he truly wanted to avoid.

Another realistic anxiety data that is grounded in the environment could be seen through the scene below:

Still on the conveyer belt (with no map, no boot), Goldilocks and the bears, still hot on the trail, descended upon him. Puss was terrified. With only one life left, if something happened to him on this mission, that was it. (Spinner, 2022, p.37)

This scene was where Puss was being chased by Goldilocks and the Bears Family while defenseless, since he was not holding any boots or a sword in his hand as a combat tool and protection. Trapped in a chaotic circumstance, it triggered Puss to be terrified by his surroundings, which was viewed from characterization through internal action. The situation he was facing at the moment exposed a serious threat to his safety and made him think that something bad might happen to him during the mission because all that crossed his mind was about the possibility of it being the last thing that hit him, which produced a feeling of anxiety. The data above illustrated that Puss experienced realistic anxiety, as Puss

was undergoing an unfavorable environment where he was surrounded by enemies and lacked the tools he usually relied on, which is his sword, thus making this situation perceived as an external danger.

b. Neurotic Anxiety

Freud (1992) explained that neurotic anxiety is unconscious fear the ego feels when overwhelmed by a state of unprotected or being punished for expressing id-dominated behavior. The neurotic anxiety that occurred in the narrative is evidenced in the scene below:

“Hey. I never do this, but can I get your autograph? I’ve been following you for a long time,” the wolf said. He pulled out a Puss in Boots “Wanted” poster and unrolled it, letting the “Wanted: Dead or Alive” message unfurl at top. **Then he tapped the word “dead” and said, “Sign right there.” Okay, that made Puss feel VERY uneasy.** (Spinner, 2022, p. 20)

This scene is stamped as Puss’s first encounter with the Big Bad Wolf, who suddenly approached him in an unusual way. The characterization viewed through the internal action as Puss felt very uneasy when the Wolf revealed the wanted poster and pointed at the word “death”, which triggered a spontaneous reaction to the underlying threat that he was on the verge of death. Even though he knows his life will not end right at that moment, but imagining the possibility of whether he would actually die was enough to make him uneasy. It then raised the unconscious fear of being punished (death) because in the past, he had always been arrogant and acted carelessly solely to chase fame and pleasure, which reflects an id-dominated behavior. Therefore, this scene demonstrated that the anxiety experienced by Puss was a form of neurotic anxiety, as it came from a fear of the consequences of following his desires. The characterization is viewed through internal action.

c. Moral Anxiety

According to Freud (1992), moral anxiety is the fear the ego feels when it wants something but knows deep down that it will violate moral values formed by society. The moral anxiety encountered by Puss could be seen through the passage below:

“Pretty stupid, huh? Same old Puss in Boots,” she said. These words stung. This Puss wasn’t anything like the other eight lives he’d lived. **No, he cared about Kitty. And a part of him cared about Dog. But she didn’t understand. He had to make her. “But I’m not! I’m not Puss in Boots! I’m . . . I’m on my last life! I need to get my lives back. Without them I’m . . . I’m not—” Puss could barely squeak the words out. They felt like a betrayal to his very core.** (Spinner, 2022, p.73)

In this passage, Puss had already violated moral values by prioritizing his own survival over companionship with Kitty and Dog, which broke their trust in him. Kitty then expressed her disappointment, indicating that Puss was still the same self-centered cat he once was, because deep down she believed that Puss had changed. Her statement made Puss feel anxious, as he did not want the others to judge him as selfish, since he had actually changed from his past lives and really cared about Kitty and Dog. It then showed how Puss tried to

assert his clarification to make Kitty understand that he was different from the arrogant old Puss she had known a long time ago, and that he would not have left them behind if it had not been because he was driven by his fear of death, that were getting closer since Puss was on his last life. However, a feeling of guilt arose from Puss's superego, knowing that his action was rationally wrong, and made him unable to verbalize his words because it felt like betrayal even to himself. This action emphasized his internal clash that he desperately wanted to restore his nine lives (ego) but did not want to abandon those who genuinely cared about him (superego). Therefore, Puss illustrated moral anxiety as he fights against his current desire and wrongdoing. The characterization is viewed through internal action and dialogue.

2. Types of Defense Mechanism

a. Repression

Based on Freud (1992), repression is a specific way ego uses to defend itself when facing conflict that could lead to harm. It is worked by protecting the mind from painful feelings or thoughts whenever threatened, then pushing it unconscious. The data that proved his repression is stated in the quotation below:

“Speed up! Go, go, go!” Puss called to Dog. The carriage raced off in the distance and Puss was happy to put as much distance between him and the wolf as possible. (Spinner, 2022, p.39)

The evidence showed that Puss felt anxious after hearing the Big Bad Wolf's eerie whistle from the crowd. To secure himself from being detected by the Wolf, whom Puss found terrifying, he immediately instructed Dog, who was driving the carriage, to go faster, as displayed by characterization from his dialogue. Once Puss successfully put as much distance as possible between himself and the Wolf, he instantly felt happy as a result of avoiding the danger that was viewed by the characterization through internal action. By doing this, Puss applied the defense mechanism of repression to push away the threatening feeling of realistic anxiety or fear that arose from catching the Wolf's presence nearby as the danger source into the unconscious mind.

b. Compensation

Compensation is a condition where people attempt for superiority or success as a way of covering feelings of inferiority or weakness (Feist & Feist, 2020). This defense mechanism could be seen through the passage below:

Puss scrambled to find something to fight with and against the bears. Instinctively, he reached for his sword, but it wasn't there. It was just the stick that Dog had given him. “Is that a stick? What are you going to do with a stick?” Baby Bear taunted him. Puss threw it into his face. “Ow!” Baby Bear yelped. Then Puss caught it in midair and swatted Mama with it. (Spinner, 2022, p.37)

In this passage, Puss was currently unarmored while being chased by Goldilocks and the Bear Family. Puss then tried to find a tool to attack them, but realized it was only a simple

stick that he had. The stick was objectively weaker compared to his sword and represented a deficiency in that situation. However, Puss compensated for the absence of his sword by utilizing the stick in a skillful way. Despite the teases, he managed to catch the opponents off guard because they did not expect the stick would be useful in Puss's hand, and it prevented them from catching him, that identified by characterization through external action. This action illustrated the defense mechanism of compensation, since Puss can substitute the inadequacy of a merely weak stick by maximizing his combat instincts and making it into an effective weapon, which allows him to temporarily control the situation and reduce his anxiety.

c. Denial

Freud (1992) stated that denial is a way the mind deals with unpleasant facts by refusing to accept them, even though it still understands the reality. This defense mechanism could be seen in the following statement:

“Ha ha. Puss in Boots laughs in the face of death, bounty hunter!” Puss said. (Spinner,2022, p.20)

This statement occurs in response to the Big Bad Wolf's request for an autograph on Puss's wanted poster, in which the Wolf specifically taps on the word *“death.”* Feeling uneasy, Puss reacts in a way that reveals his refusal to accept the reality of his own mortality. Despite having died many times before, he still views himself as a legendary hero who will always return to life, a belief revealed through the characterization in his dialogue. Puss's laughter further functions as an illusion of control, suggesting that he attempts to maintain composure and confidence in front of the Wolf. Through this behavior, Puss employs the defense mechanism of denial, rejecting the idea that death is pursuing him rather than acknowledging his vulnerability as he faces his final life.

d. Rationalization

Rationalization is a process of providing a person with a reasonable explanation for someone's conduct to make it appear acceptable (Minderop, 2011). The scene that presented how Puss using the defense mechanism of rationalization is proved through the data below:

“Kitty, I'm sorry. Death is after me!” Puss tried to reason. His explanation was enough to make Kitty stop in bewilderment, but that was short-lived. (Spinner,2022, p.74)

In this data, Puss was applying rationalization when he said that the death was after him in an attempt to explain his decision to leave Kitty and Dog behind to reach the Mythical Wishing Star alone. As a result, when Kitty previously uttered her disappointment toward Puss, he instinctively responded with a reason that made it seem more acceptable for them. The characterization viewed through dialogue, because by mentioning his critical condition rather than admitting his anxiety-driven selfishness, he was trying to put all the blame to death as a natural force that currently haunts him. In doing so, Puss wanted to justify his friendship betrayal to Kitty and Dog by framing it as an urgent necessity due to a serious

threat. His explanation made Kitty stunned for a while, but eventually failed to convince her. This event described how Puss used the defense mechanism of rationalization to cope with overwhelming guilt by creating a reasonable excuse to leave his friends behind.

e. Sublimation

Sublimation is a kind of successful diversion, its goal is to replace feelings of anxiety or fear with actions that result in a positive way or are socially useful (Kelland, 2010). This mechanism is evidenced by the passage below:

Puss's breath hitched as he struggled to continue the incantation, but, in this pivotal moment, he couldn't help but think about his past. **His memories rushed forward, overriding any fear he felt, and he saw himself as he truly was...** Puss as a kitten. Puss getting his boots. Meeting Dog. Reuniting with Kitty. Escaping with Dog. Showing Dog the super-cute eyes. Dancing with Kitty. Smelling roses with Dog... (Spinner, 2022, p.79)

In this passage, Wolf challenged Puss as he struggled to read the Wishing Star incantation. But rather than submit to fear itself, his mind instinctively brought back significant memories from his past, especially those joyful moments from this current life with Kitty and Dog that were conveyed from characterization through internal action. By recalling these experiences, he successfully altered his panic into renewed determination while also boosting his sense of self. This shift illustrated the defense mechanism of sublimation since Puss converted his anxiety into constructive reaffirmation of who he truly was without the legendary status that always labeled to him.

E. DISCUSSION

Based on the findings, the researcher found the defense mechanism types of repression, compensation, denial, rationalization, and sublimation in the novel *Puss in Boots: The Last Wish*. In this case, realistic anxiety was countered not only by repression but also by compensation and sublimation. Meanwhile, neurotic anxiety triggered the use of denial. Moral anxiety, on the other hand, can only be fought by rationalization. Puss did not display any defense mechanisms of reaction formation, displacement, and regression, as there were no signs of such behaviour existed in the narrative. He did not rely on these mechanisms mainly because he did not seem to experience something that triggered or required him to use it in order to overcome his anxiety.

The defense mechanisms discussed above indicate that Puss strives to adapt to dangerous situations as a means of reducing his anxiety about mortality. Moreover, by the end of the narrative, he succeeds in confronting his fear and accepting his fate of living his final life, which marks a significant stage in his character development. This transformation portrays him as a more mature and self-aware individual compared to his former, fearless self. The constant fear that once burdened Puss ultimately becomes a humbling experience that reshapes both his mindset and attitude. His journey from avoiding fear to facing it illustrates not only a behavioral shift but also a profound psychological transformation that defines his overall character growth.

D. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion within Freud's psychoanalytic framework, the analysis reveals that Puss, as the main character, experiences three types of anxiety: realistic anxiety, neurotic anxiety, and moral anxiety. To cope with these anxieties, he employs five defense mechanisms: repression, denial, sublimation, rationalization, and compensation. Through these mechanisms, Puss manages to confront his fear of mortality and ultimately regains his courage by the end of the story. For future research, it is recommended that subsequent studies explore similar themes of anxiety and defense mechanisms by focusing on other characters, such as Kitty, or by applying different Freudian concepts like the structure of personality. Additionally, Joseph Campbell's theory of the hero's journey could serve as an alternative framework to analyze *Puss in Boots: The Last Wish*. Thus, this study can serve as a valuable reference for understanding similar psychological phenomena in literary works.

REFERENCES

- Abrams, M. H. (1999). *A glossary of literary term* (7th ed.). Boston: Thomson Learning, Inc.
- Boggs, J., & Petrie, D. W. (2017). *The art of watching films*.
- Bressler, C. E. (1994). *Literary criticism: An introduction to theory and practice*. Prentice-Hall Inc.
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing Among Five Approaches* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications, Inc.
- Dobie, A. B. (2011). *Theory into Practice: An Introduction to Literary Criticism*. Cengage Learning.
- Feist, J. F., & Feist, G. (2020). *Theories of personality*. McGraw-Hill Education.
- Fitriyah, V. N. (2022). Dampak kecemasan terhadap fungsi ego tokoh dalam novel gemulung karya tary lestari (Kajian psikoanalisis). *Sapala*, 9(2), 113-122.
- Freud, A. (1992). *The ego and the mechanisms of defence*. Routledge.
- Javaid, S. F., Hashim, I. J., Hashim, M. J., Stip, E., Samad, M. A., & Ahbabi, A. A. (2023). Epidemiology of anxiety disorders: global burden and sociodemographic associations. *Middle East Current Psychiatry*, 30(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s43045-023-00315-3>
- Kelland, M. D. (2010). *Personality theory in a cultural context*. Lansing Community College.
- Meiranti, D. S., Maca, S., & Asyrafunnisa, A. (2023). Anxiety through id, ego, superego defense mechanisms. The Last House on the Left movie script by Mark Haslett. *Humaniora Journal of Linguistics Literature and Education*, 3(1), 01–14. <https://doi.org/10.56326/jlle.v3i1.2837>
- Minderop, A. (2011). *Psikologi sastra: Karya sastra, metode, teori, dan contoh kasus*. Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications, Inc.
- Rani, S. (2024). The portrayal of mental illness in contemporary literature. *International Journal of Research in Social Science*.
- Sanggalangi, I. A., & Saptanto, D. D. (2023). Psychological conflict toward the main characters in Puss In Boots: The Last Wish (2022) film. *The Virtual International Conference on Economics, Law and Humanities*, 2(1), 10–19.
- Salsabila (2023). *The main character's anxiety and defense mechanism in Matt Haig's The Midnight Library*. Etheses of Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University.
- Schultz, D., & Schultz, S. (2016). *Theories of personality*. Cengage Learning.

Ilmu Budaya

Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra, Seni, dan Budaya

e-ISSN 2549-7715 | Volume 9 | Nomor 4 | Oktober 2025 | Halaman 695—706
Terakreditasi Sinta 4

- Silverman, D. (2013). *Doing Qualitative Research* (4th ed.). Sage Publications, Inc.
- Spinner, C. (2022). *Puss In Boots: The Last Wish Junior Novel*. Andrews McMeel Publishing.
- Tarzian, M., Ndrio, M., & Fakoya, A. O. (2023). *An introduction and brief overview of psychoanalysis*. Cureus.
- Vaughan, W. F. (2010). The psychology of compensation. *Psychological Review*, 33(6), 467–79.
- World Health Organization: WHO. (2023, September 27). *Anxiety disorders*.