

**OPPOSING REALITY IN 3 SHORT STORIES BY SHIRLEY REN'S
THE PINK UMBRELLA (2019), JASON SANFORD'S
THE EIGHT-THOUSANDERS (2020) AND ALYSSA WONG'S *A FIST OF
PERMUTATIONS IN LIGHTNING AND WILDFLOWERS* (2016)**

THESIS

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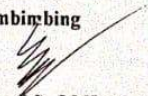
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
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ABSTRACT

This research is an analysis of 3 short stories by Shirley Ren's *The Pink Umbrella* (2019), Jason Sanford's *The Eight-Thousanders* (2020) and Alyssa Wong's *A Fist of Permutations in Lightning and Wildflowers* (2016). This research discusses about defense mechanisms applied to oppose reality. Defense mechanisms are commonly applied in everyday life, a person applies defense mechanisms when the ego can no longer balance the id and superego and worries arise in the person. However, if character applies defense mechanism improper use to oppose reality, it will cause new prolonged conflict. This research aims to find out what types of defense mechanism applied by character and what actions that appear. This research uses a descriptive qualitative method which is using psychoanalysis theory by Sigmund Freud which deals with opposing reality and defense mechanisms. The analysis of this study revealed that the characters apply 2 defense mechanisms, namely denial and displacement to oppose reality and actions that arise. The conclusion of this study is that improper use of defense mechanism to oppose reality is causing new prolonged conflicts. Opposing reality means that the characters are not being able to come to terms with reality and not being able to come to terms with oneself so that as a result the characters go through life in misery.

Keywords: *Opposing Reality, Defense Mechanism, Denial, Displacement, Actions.*

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini menganalisis 3 cerita pendek dari Shirley Ren *The Pink Umbrella* (2019), Jason Sanford *The Eight-Thousanders* (2020) And Alyssa Wong *A Fist Of Permutations In Lightning And Wildflowers* (2016). Penelitian ini membahas tentang mekanisme pertahanan diri yang digunakan untuk melawan kenyataan dan tindakan-tindakan yang menunjukkan bahwa memang karakter menggunakan salah satu mekanisme pertahanan diri atau lebih. Mekanisme pertahanan diri umum digunakan dalam kehidupan sehari-hari, seseorang menggunakan mekanisme pertahanan diri ketika ego tidak bisa lagi menyeimbangkan id dan superego dan muncullah kekhawatiran dalam diri seseorang tersebut. Namun jika karakter menggunakan mekanisme pertahanan diri dengan tidak tepat untuk melawan kenyataan maka akan menimbulkan masalah-masalah baru yang berkepanjangan. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskripsi kualitatif dengan menggunakan psychoanalysis theory dari Sigmund Freud yang berkaitan dengan melawan kenyataan dan mekanisme pertahanan diri. Analisis dari penelitian ini mengungkapkan bahwa karakter menggunakan 2 mekanisme pertahanan diri yaitu denial dan displacement untuk melawan kenyataan. Kemudian penelitian ini juga mengungkapkan tindakan-tindakan yang terlihat ketika karakter menggunakan mekanisme pertahanan diri tersebut sehingga tampak bahwa karakter memang menggunakan salah satu tipe mekanisme pertahanan diri untuk melawan kenyataan. Kesimpulan dari penelitian ini yaitu mekanisme pertahanan diri yang digunakan secara tidak tepat akan menimbulkan konflik-konflik baru yang berkepanjangan. Melawan kenyataan berarti tidak bisa berdamai dengan kenyataan dan tidak bisa berdamai dengan diri sendiri sehingga akibatnya karakter-karakter tersebut menjalani hidup dalam kesengsaraan.

Kata kunci: *Melawan Kenyataan, Mekanisme Pertahanan Diri, Denial, Displacement, Tindakan-Tindakan.*

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Humans are the most perfect creatures created by God among other living things. Intellect is one of the main qualities possessed by humans. In addition to intellect, emotion is another superiority that cannot be separated from it. We will feel happy when what we expect is accordance with reality. We will feel sad if what we expect is not in accordance with reality; even feel angry when we cannot control our feelings of sadness about something that happens opposite to what we expected. Anything can be the impact when we can no longer control these emotions, whether we have a high level of intelligence or high education, but if emotions are stronger than our thoughts then everything will no longer be under control.

We as a human have to balance our thoughts and emotions because when emotions have controlled us then all means nothing anymore. Goleman (2006) says that:

“If your emotional abilities are not in hand, if you do not have self-awareness, if you are not able to manage your distressing emotions, if you cannot have empathy and have effective relationships, then no matter how smart you are, you are not going to get very far.”

From the quote above it can be concluded that it does not mean anything for those who have above average intelligence but low emotional intelligence,

because when we cannot control emotions, what we build will be destroyed.

Goleman (2006) adds that,

“If a person has a high IQ but low EQ, they tend to appear stubborn, difficult to get along with, easily frustrated, less trustworthy, insensitive to environmental conditions, and often discouraged when faced with stress. People with an average IQ but high emotional intelligence experience the opposite.”

From the quote above it can be concluded that we as a human must be able to control these 2 concepts of life, be smart and be able to control our emotional intelligence. When we can control these 2 important things, it means that we understand ourselves, then what is our goal will be achieved.

Understanding our own personality is to understand ourselves as a whole. According to Encyclopedia of Personality (2000) Personality refers to individual differences in characteristic patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving. It means that we do understand who we really are, which make us comfortable and which do not, for example, being more comfortable with people outside or preferring to stay at home. Freud (1986) states that humans have a psychological structure consisting of three elements; these are the Id, Ego, and Superego. These three things are mutually exclusive but still interact with each other. First, Id, this comes from the subconscious and related to human natural need for example: eating, drinking, and sex. Second, Superego is the moral aspect of a personality that is obtained from parental upbringing or norms and values in society and is based on morals and judgments about right and wrong. Last is the Ego, this comes from consciousness and is concerned with how to face reality, trying to fulfill the

desires of the id in a socially acceptable way. Therefore, the ego becomes the mediator between the id and the superego. When the ego tries to mediate between the id and the superego, the ego tries to balance what it desires and what is moral value in society, but ego failed to balance them, therefore worries arise in a person and try to oppose reality with Freud called "Defense Mechanism".

People usually use various defense mechanisms throughout their lives. Wulidha (2020) argues that “Defense mechanisms are someone's strategy to hide and reduce anxiety” (p.97). The use of defense mechanism is to protect the mind/self from anxiety, social sanctions, or being a “Sanctuary” from situations that cannot handle. In the psychoanalytic school of Sigmund Freud, defense mechanism is Psychology strategies carry out by a person, group of people, or even a nation to oppose reality and maintain self-image. Several people disable to accept and face reality, they decide to refuse and oppose something that not accordance with their expectations. Basically the self-defense mechanism is a normal and universal thing for everyone, but when it is use to oppose reality and do not want to deal with reality, it will lead to Neurotic behavior. Neuroticism is a tendency for negative individual emotional behavior because a conflict cannot be resolved properly even though the individual is aware that he is disturbed, it can be seen with the emergence of symptoms of anxiety, depression and the existence of prolonged conflicts. According to Dr. Benjamin B. Lahey (2009) of the Department of Health Studies and Psychiatry and Behavioral Neuroscience at the University of Chicago, although neuroticism is not a medical diagnosis or

problem with a balanced personality, having it can trigger a variety of mental and physical health problems.

As previously explained, one of the factors that is causing defense mechanism is the powerlessness of human beings to face reality. In Britton's book *The Blindness of the Seeing Eye: Inverse Symmetry as a defense Against Reality* (1994) states that as early 1893, Freud drew attention to a state of mind that he described as "Blindness of the seeing eye" in which "one knows and does not know a thing at the same time" (p.117). From the statements of the expert it can be revealed that in Freud describe about against reality as the blindness of the seeing eye means that they see a real thing, but at one time they do not see it. For example, Projection, projection is putting our own mistake with blame on objects or people around us, such as; a mother is cooking dinner, then a child comes asking if her mother saw her hair tie, but at the same time the mother's spoon fell and blamed her child for making the spoon fall. What Freud calls one real thing is that the spoon fell because his mother was negligent and she understood that was her mistakes but at the same time she tries to against reality with Freud described as *not seeing reality*, that is blaming her daughter for her mistakes.

In 1938, Freud wrote of it as a "half measure" in which "the disavowal is always supplemented by an acknowledgement; two contrary and independent attitudes arise and result in...a splitting of the ego" (p.204). So that Basch (1983) has suggested that unlike psychotic denial, it obliterates only the significance of things, not their perceptions. So, the mother just makes the accident did by her daughter but not change her perceptions that are her own mistakes.

We can see real phenomenon in this world that occurred at the end of 2021 aired on *TV One*. The victim as known as “WPS”, a housewife in Selomarto Village, Giriwoyo, Wonogiri, Central Java, who have ended her life on Saturday afternoon. WPS took an online loan and her bill swelled to IDR 51.3 million. She acted as if there was no something happen to her family. This kind of *Undoing* in defense mechanism, undoing is changing a behavior as if to cover up so that her/his mistakes are not known that there is something wrong with her/him. When her husband asks for something weird to WPS, she denies for something that she has done. WPS not able to pay her online loan in a long time and the amount of money that is always increasing all the time. In other side, the collector always collects his debt every day, terrorizes her, and will even commit a crime to her family if she does not pay off her debt quickly. WPS haunted by fear and does not want to give a truth to her family, it is such as improper use of defense mechanism, so that things that appear after is a new prolonged conflict for a long time, causes a neurotic behavior, mental disease such as stress and depression until it has bad effects such as finally ending herself by did a suicide.

Other phenomenon occurred recently on Monday, June 20 2022, reported from *Detik Jatim*. A woman in Blitar was deperate to end her life by stabbing herself in the stomach. Allegedly, this action was carried out by Tatic (37) because his illness not getting better. Tatic is known to have suffered from acute stomach pain for the past month. This woman from Selorejo Subdistrick, Blitar regency was found lying in a sugarcane field behind her house. The victim allegedly tried to end his life by stabbing herself in the stomach with a knife.

From this incident, it can be concluded that Tatik cannot accept reality by means of Emotional insulation, she shuts herself off, passive and over time her mental condition worsens and tries to end her life. From the two phenomena above, it can be seen that applying of improper use of defense mechanism to oppose reality, do not want to deal with reality, we will live a life in a misery and make a prolonged conflict.

So researcher analyze other phenomenon about applying defense mechanism to oppose reality through a literary work. "Literature adds to reality, it does not simply describe it. It enriches the necessary competencies that daily life requires and provides; and in this respect, it irrigates the deserts that our lives have already become" (Lewis, 1898). It can be concluded that literary works are not just entertainment or empty time fillers, but literary works are a world criticism, if we can explore the meaning conveyed by the authors, we will find a message about the real world. Therefore, the researcher wants to examine defense mechanism in the form of literary works, with 3 short story entitled; *The Pink Umbrella* (2019), *The Eight-thousanders* (2020) and *A Fist of Permutation in Lightning and Wildflowers* (2016). The authors of the short story are an author who has won best winner awards from print media such as in magazines, newspaper and on websites, so their works publish as a book and traded. Short story *The Pink Umbrella* recorded by Alice Munro Festival while 2 more stories were both published, namely from The Nebula Awards. The story of *The Eight-Thousanders* was published in Apex Magazines and the story *A Fist of Permutations in*

Lightning and Wildflowers was published in a collection of short stories with the book title “*The Years Best Science Fiction and Fantasy 2018*”.

This study aims to find out through literary works, especially in these 3 short stories what defense mechanisms are often apply by characters and how the characters apply defense mechanism to oppose reality. From these 3 short stories the reader can see how terrible improper use of defense mechanisms to oppose reality and do not want to deal with reality that make prolonged conflict and living in misery, therefore this research is very suitable for doing a research.

1.2 Focus of the Problem

This analysis is focused on how the characters apply defense mechanism through their lives in 3 short stories *The Pink Umbrella (2019)*, *The Eight-Thousanders (2020)* and *A Fist of Permutations in Lightning and Wildflowers (2016)*. The researcher wants to see how the characters applies defense mechanism to oppose reality. As we know common people apply defense mechanism in daily life but if human do that for opposing reality, do not want to deal with reality, it means that they do not want to deal with themselves and live a life in misery.

1.3 Research Question

This research focus on several problems, namely:

1. What are types of defense mechanism that appear in 3 short stories *The Pink Umbrella (2019)*, *The Eight-Thousanders (2020)* and *A Fist of Permutations in Lightning and*

Wildflowers (2016)?

2. How do the characters apply defense mechanisms to oppose reality they face in 3 short stories *The Pink Umbrella (2019)*, *The Eight-Thousanders (2020)* and *A Fist of Permutations in Lightning and Wildflowers (2016)?*

1.4 Purpose of the Research

1. To reveal what types of defense mechanism that appear in these stories *The Pink Umbrella (2019)*, *The Eight-Thousanders (2020)* and *A Fist of Permutations in Lightning and Wildflowers (2016)?*
2. To reveal how the characters apply defense mechanisms to oppose reality in 3 short stories *The Pink Umbrella (2019)*, *The Eight-Thousanders (2020)* and *A Fist of Permutations in Lightning and Wildflowers (2016)*.

1.5 Conceptual Framework

