



FREUDIAN DEFENSE MECHANISMS OF THE CHARACTER KENNA IN THE NOVEL *REMINDERS OF HIM* BY COLLEEN HOOVER

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ABSTRACT

The novel *Reminders of Him* depicts the inner conflicts of the main character, Kenna, caused by her past experiences and mistakes, and displays her responses in facing these inner conflicts. This research is important to enrich knowledge about psychological defense mechanisms in facing inner conflicts. Thus, this study aims to analyze Kenna's response to her inner conflict in the novel *Reminders of Him* using Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory. This study uses qualitative method with a literary structural and psychological approach. This study shows that the defense mechanisms of rationalization, denial, suppression, repression, and sublimation are the responses shown by Kenna in facing her inner conflicts. This analysis shows that past experiences and mistakes are able to trigger ego defense mechanisms that hinder personal growth, but encounters with positive figures ultimately have a positive impact, such as the use of sublimation, emphasizing the role of literature as a means to have an understanding of the complexity of human psychological development and strengthening.

Keywords: *Reminders of Him* novel, Kenna, Inner conflict, Defense mechanisms, Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory

A. INTRODUCTION

Novels are a form of human creativity in presenting the complexity of human psychology, often depicted through inner conflict (Rohmani, 2025). This is demonstrated by the character Kenna in Colleen Hoover's novel *Reminders of Him*, who experiences inner conflict stemming from traumatic events, negative experiences, and life problems. In responding to this inner conflict, Kenna uses mechanisms that can be explained through a psychological approach. This explains that the novel presents interesting psychological aspects to explore.

The novel *Reminders of Him* tells the story of a mother, Kenna, who has just been released from a five-year prison sentence for an accident that killed her boyfriend and is trying to reunite with her daughter (Hoover, 2022). This tragic experience not only triggers inner conflict but also presents various obstacles in her quest. However, these obstacles do not make her give up on meeting her daughter. She also grows in responding to the inner



conflicts that arise. This novel shows Kenna's inner conflicts and the ego defense mechanisms that she uses to deal with these conflicts.

Psychological analysis of Kenna's defense mechanisms is still limited. However, gaining a better understanding of these defense mechanisms will help us better understand how Kenna developed and how she found ways to recover from inner conflict. Therefore, this study uses Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory to address this gap. This framework encompasses concepts such as the id, ego, and superego, which are central to Freud's thinking, and encourages the creation of defense mechanisms that address the interaction of these three parts. The purpose of this study is to examine how Kenna handles her inner conflicts, referring to ego defense mechanisms.

Freud's psychoanalytic theory is used as a framework because of its ability to explain the layers of the human unconscious, which is the source of inner conflict. Freud (1923) in (Masyhur, Fitratullah, & Kasih, 2023) explained that psychoanalysis aims to awaken the subconscious. The unconscious is where traumatic experiences, unspoken desires, unresolved conflicts, repressed libidos, and phobias are stored. Bringing what is in the unconscious to consciousness can help resolve inner conflict.

An analysis of Kenna's character in the novel *Reminders of Him* can enrich students' or readers' insights into literature and encourage strong character development. Furthermore, this research can help foster better personal growth, which can be achieved through increased self-awareness, effective emotional regulation, mental health protection, and the development of healthy thinking. Therefore, this research is important because educational institutions serve not only as a place to transfer knowledge but also as a place for character formation.

B. METHOD

This research employs qualitative methods and a structural literary approach, as well as psychoanalysis as its theoretical approach. Considering that the research data are in written form, qualitative method is considered appropriate. This refers to Bogdan and Taylor (1992) in (Tolhairi, 2023), who explain that qualitative research is a type of research that produces descriptive data in the form of written and spoken words, as well as the behavior of the people studied. Psychoanalytic theory is used because it can help understand how characters



deal with their inner conflicts. Meanwhile, a literary structural approach can help identify fictional elements that can influence a character's ego defense mechanisms.

The primary data source for this study is Colleen Hoover's novel *Reminders of Him*, published by Montlake in 2022. The novel presents a theme of redemption rooted in inner conflict, with a main character experiencing inner conflict, and a plot that explains the inner conflicts and defense mechanisms. In addition to primary data sources, this study also refers to secondary data sources, namely Freud's psychoanalytic theory. This theory can explain how the novel's characters deal with their inner conflicts by applying ego defense mechanisms. This indicates that the novel *Reminders of Him* is relevant to be studied using this theory.

To obtain the data, the researcher took several steps, including reading the novel *Reminders of Him* thoroughly to get a general understanding of the story; conflict; and fictional elements, making notes and marks for important parts related to Kenna in facing her inner conflicts which focused on dialogue; narrative; description; interaction that reveals psychological aspects; as well as fictional elements, the data are classified and determined based on Psychoanalytic aspects and fictional elements, and finally the collected data are entered into a data scheme as a data source in the form of a table or data organization. Next, after the data are collected, the data are analyzed using the following steps:

1. The researcher applies the three parts of personality structure from Freud's theory, namely id, ego and superego to comprehend the formation of inner conflict. The conflicts between the id and the superego, mediated by the ego, are observed to see what defense mechanisms that the ego uses to deal with the inner conflicts. These are able to know through thoughts, actions, events, dialogues between the character and elements of fiction: themes, characters, settings, plots, points of view, language styles, and messages.
2. The researcher groups the data on Kenna's efforts to resolve her inner conflicts. These data are revealed through thoughts, actions, events, and dialogues between the characters and Kenna (main character) without ignoring elements of fiction. The inner workings, motivations, anxieties, and wants of characters can be shown through the literary elements. They provide insight into the mind. Readers can



better comprehend the motivations behind characters' actions and the reasons behind their behavior by attentively scrutinizing these components.

3. The researcher concludes types of defense mechanisms Kenna uses in dealing with her conflicts based on psychoanalytic theory.

C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Finding

In the novel *Reminders of Him* by Colleen Hoover, the main character, Kenna, is a mother who has just been released from a five-year prison sentence as a consequence of an accident that resulted in the death of her boyfriend (Scotty). Kenna, who has just been released from prison, is determined to meet her daughter with Scotty, whom she has not been able to see since her imprisonment. These events make her experience inner conflicts. However, Kenna's sadness and anxiety are not limited to the death of her boyfriend and her separation from her daughter; she has experienced problems since she was a child that also creates inner conflicts. These problems include being neglected by her father and mother; she also experienced verbal abuse from her mother.

The inner conflicts that are created, which are rooted in these problems, drive Kenna's ego to use defense mechanisms to protect herself from anxiety or negative emotions. This synergizes with the basic principles of Freud's psychoanalytic theory in (Sosrohadi & Lutfhu, 2022) and (Rohmani, 2025) that inner conflict arises when there is a conflict or dynamics between three psychological structures (id, ego, superego), and if there is a mismatch between the id (pleasure principle) and the superego (moral principle) anxiety will be generated as a warning signal for the ego (mediator of the id and superego) that it is threatened, thus leading to the application of defense mechanisms (Rohmani, 2025) which is in accordance with the purpose of the defense mechanism, namely to maintain the ego by distorting reality to reduce anxiety stress (Andri, 2011). The following are inner conflicts and the defense mechanisms used by the ego of Kenna.

The inner conflicts of Kenna

1. Inner conflict caused by experiences of neglect and verbal abuse



The id, which functions based on the pleasure principle, encourages Kenna to seek love and attention from her parents (especially her mother), but the superego judges her mother as inadequate as a mother, as evidenced by Kenna's experiences of neglect. This indicates a conflict between the id and the superego.

2. Inner conflict triggered by the accident that caused Scotty's death

Scotty's death made Kenna feel like she had lost an important figure who fulfilled her need for affection, so it can be said that the demand from the id was not fulfilled and then led Kenna to seek a source of pleasure in an unrealistic way, namely committing suicide because Scotty had died. In addition, the encouragement from the superego made Kenna feel guilty for the accident, making her think that a five-year prison sentence was not enough to atone for her actions in harming Scotty. This shows the dynamics between the id, superego, and external reality.

3. Inner conflict triggered by separation from daughter

The id urges Kenna to see her daughter, but the superego urges her to see her separation as punishment for causing Scotty's death. This can also be understood as a conflict between the superego and external reality. The superego believes that being there for her child and taking good care of her are positive values derived from her life experiences with her foster parent (Mona), while external reality does not support the superego's urge that Kenna be serving a prison sentence as ordered by the court.

The defense mechanisms of Kenna

The inner conflicts mentioned earlier trigger the ego to implement defense mechanisms. According to Sigmund Freud, as quoted in (Piliang, 2016), defense mechanisms refer to methods used by individuals to protect themselves from pressure from the conscience (superego) and impulses originating from the subconscious (id). Their primary purpose is to reduce or eliminate the discomfort caused by conflicts between moral values and basic desires. Defense mechanisms are automatic reactions to unpleasant feelings, intended to protect the ego from stress (Kaya, 2021). These mechanisms will be further explained in the following section.



1. Rationalization

Kenna felt stressed and uncomfortable in her first foster family environment, so she wanted to return to her mother. This situation prompted the ego to reduce these negative emotions. In this case, Kenna made up logical reasons to justify her feeling of relief to return to live with her mother even though her mother had abandoned her. She lied to herself as if her mother had never abandoned her, so it was natural for her to feel relieved to return to live with her mother. This indicates that the ego uses the defense mechanism of rationalization as explained in (Solihah & Ahmadi, 2022) that rationalization occurs when people lie to themselves by thinking that something that is inherently bad is good, and vice versa by providing a socially acceptable explanation. Rationalization is how the ego creates rational excuses for unacceptable behavior and conceals its true desires. For example, Kenna creates rational excuses to move back in with her mother, who abandoned her. This can be seen in the following quote from the novel.

I was placed into a foster family for nine months while my mother worked to get her rights back. There were a lot of kids and a lot of rules and it felt more like a strict summer camp, so when my mother finally regained custody of me, I was relieved. (Hoover, 2022, p. 101-102)

The quote shows that Kenna reasoned that there were many children and many rules in her first foster family so she felt relieved to return to her mother even though her mother had previously abandoned her, which caused her to live in the foster family as a form of state intervention for her mother's negligence in caring for her. She also hid her desire for affection and attention that she did not receive from the foster family and also from her parents. This is the ego's way of balancing the desire for affection (impulses from the id) and the reality of the foster family environment that made her uncomfortable.

Furthermore, Kenna eventually also used rational reasons to justify her decision to avoid her mother, who had neglected her and was verbally abusive. This is explained in the quote below.

I thought I'd never speak to her again, not because we had some huge falling-out, but because our relationship was a burden and I think we both felt like we'd been set free when that relationship broke down. I didn't realize how desperate I would one day become, though. (Hoover, 2022, p. 103)

The data explains that Kenna felt her relationship with her mother was burdensome, leading them to stop communicating. However, she justified this by saying that they both benefited from their breakup. These reasons were used to avoid the conflict between her and her mother, which was the root of her inner conflict between her desire to be loved (an id impulse), her ideal mother (a superego drive), and the reality of the neglect and abuse she had experienced. These reasons also eased her guilt for cutting off communication with her mother.

2. Denial

Kenna's relief when her mother regained custody of her indicates that she is rejecting the reality of her mother's neglect. This explains that in addition to rationalization defense mechanisms, the ego also uses denial defense mechanisms to reduce stress and discomfort in her first foster family environment. This aligns with the explanation in (Mcleod, 2024) that denial is a defense mechanism in which the ego rejects reality and removes external events from awareness. This is what Kenna's ego did, denying that her mother had left her, a seven-year-old, home alone for seven days without adult supervision. This denial is illustrated in the following quote from the novel.

I was placed into a foster family for nine months while my mother worked to get her rights back. There were a lot of kids and a lot of rules and it felt more like a strict summer camp, so when my mother finally regained custody of me, I was relieved. (Hoover, 2022, p. 101-102)

Based on the quote, it is known that instead of feeling anxious about returning to live with her mother, Kenna actually felt relieved, even though it is known that her mother had abandoned her. This indicates that Kenna refused to acknowledge this reality by hiding the desire for affection and attention that she did not receive from her first foster family and her mother.



Kenna carried out denial to reduce the pressure or stressful situation in the foster family environment. This is an ego response to mediate the desire for affection (impulses from the id) and the reality of the foster family environment that makes her uncomfortable.

Kenna also denies the reality of Scotty's death. This denial is evident in her suicide attempt, as she states in the novel, "I tried three times, in three different cars, but none of them hit me" (Hoover, 2022, p. 246). Instead of accepting the fact that her boyfriend (Scotty) had died and that she would have to move on without him, Kenna denies it. She attempts to end her life in the hope that her grief will end, which is an irrational way of thinking that aims to fulfill her desire to be with her loved one (an id impulse) and protect herself from the pain of the death of her loved one (an id impulse). This is the ego's way of mediating the impulses of the id, the guilt impulses of the superego, and the reality of Scotty's death.

3. Suppression

The experience of being neglected by her own mother made Kenna anxious about returning to her mother for a second time. Kenna worried that the same thing would happen again. However, when living with her, instead of being abandoned, Kenna experienced verbal abuse from her mother. This made Kenna view her mother as an enemy rather than a child. This prompted the ego to suppress the memory of the abandonment and the feelings and thoughts associated with the abandonment to avoid a strained relationship between her and her mother. This is related to the concept of suppression, a deliberate and voluntary effort to keep burdensome or unpleasant mental content, including memories, emotions, or thoughts, from conscious awareness (Costa, 2020). Kenna deliberately suppresses impulses from the id: seeking affection and attention from her mother and suppress the neglect memories to avoid the verbal abuse she experiences. This is as Kenna reveals in the novel, "I preferred the neglect over the verbal abuse" (Hoover, 2022, p. 103).

Based on the quote, it is known that the experience of being abandoned by her mother was negative for her, but more than that, Kenna felt unhappy with her mother's attitude of verbal abuse. Thus, rather than living with her mother and experiencing abuse, Kenna preferred to be abandoned even though she longed for her mother's love and attention. This explains that Kenna suppressed impulses from the id to avoid situations that were more burdensome or that



made her unhappy. This is an ego response in balancing the desire to avoid conflict with her mother (impulses from the id), the assumption that her mother was inadequate as a mother (superego drive), and the reality of living with a mother who verbally abused her. This is in accordance with the principle of the ego defense mechanism, namely seeking pleasure and suppressing tension.

4. Repression

The experience of being abandoned, neglected, and verbally abused by her parents leaves trauma. Therefore, the ego represses these bad memories. Repression is the ego's way of repressing unacceptable or unwanted impulses into the unconscious. This relates to Kenna's case, Kenna represses negative memories and feelings related to her experiences of being abandoned by her parents and verbally abused by her mother. Kenna represses these id impulses to protect herself from anxiety. However, what is repressed by the ego can manifest in the individual's behavior, as explained below.

The quotes "Girls like me just didn't seem to fit in with any family" (Hoover, 2022, p. 132), "Between the catcalls and the sexual expectations, I had lost complete faith in the male population of my generation" (Hoover, 2022, p. 40), and "You were more than I deserved" (Hoover, 2022, p. 236) explain that Kenna repressed memories of being abandoned, neglected, and abused into her unconscious. However, even though it has been repressed, what is in the unconscious can manifest in behavior and words. As the quote above, Kenna felt like she didn't fit in with any family because she didn't have a harmonious family. Kenna also lost trust in men because she didn't have a good male figure in her life before meeting Scotty. Furthermore, Kenna became inferior, thinking as if she didn't deserve to find or meet a good man. This is the ego's way of protecting itself from the sadness of its bad experiences by mediating the impulses of the id (the desire for affection) and the reality of those bad experiences.

5. Sublimation

Kenna felt sad and guilty over Scotty's death, and she was also saddened by being separated from her daughter. However, an inmate approached her and directed her to positive activities, such as reading books in the prison library, motivating her to remain optimistic about moving



on with her life and eventually meeting her daughter. Thus, Kenna, who had only cried, was able to channel her emotions into artistic and positive activities, namely writing and working hard after her release from prison. This indicates the application of the sublimation defense mechanism. Sublimation is an ego mechanism that redirects unacceptable impulses into positive activities (Minderop, 2010). Kenna redirects her sadness into positive activities such as working hard and writing, as illustrated in the quotes below.

I lock the door this time, and then immediately grab my note book and write a letter to Scotty because it's the only thing that can prevent me from crumbling. (Hoover, 2022, p. 87)

The data shows that Kenna's bad experiences, especially the death of her boyfriend and her separation from her daughter, made her vulnerable to sadness, but instead of wallowing in sadness, the ego channeled the sadness that could make her in a bad condition into a positive activity, namely writing. In addition to writing, the ego directed Kenna's sadness into another positive activity, namely rebuilding her life one by one after being released from prison, starting from looking for a place to live and then looking for several jobs while struggling to meet her daughter. This is as stated by Kenna below.

“...but so far things are working out. I have an apartment and now a job. Now I just need to find my daughter.” (Hoover, 2022, p. 58)

Writing and working hard are the ego's ways of balancing her desire to avoid the grief of Scotty's death and separation from her daughter (an id impulse), the guilt over Scotty's death (a superego drive), and the harsh reality of not being with her daughter and her boyfriend. These activities help Kenna avoid dwelling on her grief and help her focus on her goal of seeing her daughter.

Discussion

During childhood and adolescence, children rely on defense mechanisms that are effective in the short term but ineffective in the long term. This aligns with psychoanalytic theory that the ego in children is not yet sufficiently developed to control the id and superego. In other



words, the cognitive functions, related to the reality principle and the development of psychological defense mechanisms, have not yet reached maturity (Benveniste, 2015). Children often use instant (short-term) defense mechanisms such as denial or regression because they are not yet mature in abstract thinking or have not yet developed the coping skills to handle complex conflicts or anxieties. The ego, with its defense mechanisms, naturally suppresses uncomfortable feelings and fulfills the child's need for safety, but because it is done unconsciously, it often involves distortion of reality (Andri, 2011). Thus, in the long term, this is harmful because it hinders psychological development, prevents true problem-solving, and can lead to behavioral or emotional problems in adulthood if the person does not use more adaptive mechanisms such as sublimation.

Based on the findings above, it is known that defense mechanisms are ways the ego uses to respond to inner conflicts to reduce anxiety or avoid negative feelings that are felt due to external conflict or problems that befall it. In this case, Kenna's ego uses some defense mechanisms analyzed from the perspective of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, including rationalization, denial, suppression, repression, and sublimation. Defense mechanisms can have a positive impact on the user. However, excessive use can have negative effects on the individual who uses them, such as experiencing difficulty in solving problems and inhibiting the formation of a better personality. This is as explained that dependence or excessive use of defense mechanisms is the same as lying to oneself so that one loses contact with reality which then becomes a fundamental barrier to rational thinking and effective problem solving (Andri, 2011), this can also drain energy that can actually be used for better things than distorting reality as the process of defense mechanisms works (Freud S. , 1961), and in the end, excessive use of defense mechanisms indirectly hinders the growth and psychological maturity of individuals (Masyhur, Fithratullah, & Kasih, 2023). The following explains the defense mechanisms, both effective and ineffective, in responding to Kena's inner conflicts.

The effectiveness and ineffectiveness of defense mechanisms

1. Rationalization

In Kenna's case, the rationalization defense mechanism failed to resolve her inner conflict; instead, it made her more anxious, sad, and regretful. This was because it only provided



logical explanations that obscured reality without addressing underlying emotional issues or unmet Id and Superego impulses. This ineffectiveness was evident when Kenna rationalized her feelings of relief when her mother gained custody. This conflicted with the Id's impulses demanding attention and affection, and the Superego's demands for adequate maternal care. Furthermore, both demonstrated the Ego's failure to resolve conflict and release psychic energy caused by past trauma. This mechanism prevented her from accepting negative experiences and seeking better solutions (Andri, 2011). However, as noted in (Shine & Falah, 2021), recovery from anxiety requires accepting reality and truth without altering them.

2. Denial

The defense mechanism of denial proved ineffective in resolving Kenna's inner conflict, as seen in two key events: the denial of her mother's neglect and the denial of Scotty's death. In the first instance, denial failed to repair the existing relationship or fulfill Kenna's need for affection. Instead, it created prolonged stress due to the ego's failure to balance id and superego impulses with reality, hindering the healing process and acceptance of painful memories. Furthermore, the denial of Scotty's death is indicative of a more severe ego failure because it hinders adaptation, exacerbates grief, and can even trigger dangerous actions (suicide attempts) due to poorly managed id and superego impulses. Overall, the use of denial is considered maladaptive because it contradicts the reality principle and hinders personal development and healing (Solihah & Ahmadi, 2022).

3. Suppression

Although Kenna's ego utilizes a defense mechanism in the form of suppression, namely a cognitive action chosen to prevent unpleasant thoughts, emotions, or desires from entering consciousness, as described by (Costa, 2020), in an attempt to deal with the conflict within herself between the id's demand for affection and the superego's judgment regarding her mother's neglect, this method of suppression proves unsuccessful in the long term. Suppression only offers the most comfortable and temporary solution, as expressed by (Freud S. , 2005), but in Kenna's situation, this prolonged suppression eventually emerged as discomfort, dissatisfaction, and conflict when she confronted her mother. This indicates that suppression hinders the resolution of her inner conflict and the process of healing from trauma.



4. Repression

Repression, a fundamental element of psychoanalysis proposed by Freud, functions as a defense mechanism, where unpleasant thoughts, urges, or memories are unconsciously held back from entering consciousness (Masyhur, Fitratullah, & Kasih, 2023); however, its application to Kenna's inner conflict proved unsuccessful because the repressed trauma she experienced in childhood and adolescence (such as unmet love needs and negative experiences) still impacted her behavior without her realizing it, seen in difficulties in establishing trust, feelings of anxiety, feelings of worthlessness, and low self-esteem. This repressed trauma prevented Kenna from resolving issues with her parents, and with the superego overly dominating the id and ego, this situation could trigger low self-confidence, low self-esteem, and hopelessness (Rohmani, 2025).

5. Sublimation

Faced with intense inner conflicts, driven by the id's desire to avoid the pain of losing a partner (Scotty's death) and separation from her daughter, and the pressure of the superego, which emanates guilt over her boyfriend's death, Kenna's ego operates under the reality principle to mediate the demands of the id and superego. Kenna's ego successfully transforms the negative energy arising from grief, guilt, and social stigma into positive, socially acceptable outcomes. This is manifested through creative activities (writing letters and poetry) and persistent efforts to rebuild her life (finding suitable employment) as strategies to achieve her goals (reuniting with her daughter, gaining social acceptance, and achieving redemption). This process of sublimation reflects the adaptive, goal-oriented functioning of the ego, which not only resolves inner conflicts but also promotes Kenna's personal progress.

Sublimation enables Kenna to channel repressed impulses into art and self-healing. Rather than succumbing to impulsive or self-destructive behavior, Kenna's ego utilizes this process to address deep-seated emotions, enrich creativity, and build resilience. The effectiveness of the sublimation mechanism in addressing Kenna's inner conflicts aligns with Freud's classic view of positive impulse release, which is supported by (Minderop, 2010), who validates the assertion that Kenna is able to develop her character rather than being trapped in the grim realities of life through the application of sublimation.



Implication of the other figures on Kenna's ego strengthening

A strong and resilient ego is defined by its ability to reintegrate a suppressed libido and distribute it efficiently, primarily through sublimation, in order to achieve mental harmony (Freud S. , 2005). In this case, the transition of defense mechanisms implemented by Kenna, from less effective ones (such as denial) to adaptive and successful ones (sublimation), reflects the progress of Kenna's Ego towards resilience. This process of becoming a resilient ego is greatly influenced by the vital roles of external figures such as Mona, Scotty, Diem (Kenna's daughter), Ivy, and Ledger. Each character has a constructive impact, encouraging Kenna to use a more adaptive and productive defense mechanism in her life, namely sublimation. The experience of being raised by Mona gives Kenna a view of what a mother should be like, Scotty fulfills Kenna's emotional need for affection, Diem indirectly encourages Kenna to build her life for the better, Ivy directs Kenna to positive activities such as reading and motivates Kenna not to wallow in sadness, and Ledger supports and helps Kenna to get forgiveness from Scotty's parents and meet her child. These positive impulses gradually shape Kenna into a stronger individual in facing life's challenges and inner conflicts. This is as explained in (Ardiansyah, Sarinah, Susilawati, & Juanda, 2022) that external figures have a significant impact on the structure and role of the ego, particularly through the formation of the superego. The superego functions to internalize conventional values, commands, and prohibitions from these figures (such as parents and society). Thus, healthy ego development depends heavily on the ability of external figures, particularly parents, to instill moral norms (the Superego) without creating excessive moral anxiety (Solihah & Ahmadi, 2022).

Pedagogical implications

The analysis of Kenna's ego defense mechanisms has pedagogical implications. A thorough examination and understanding of Kenna's ego defense mechanisms in dealing with inner conflicts will yield relevant consequences for application in the field of education or learning. This analysis suggests that literary works can be used as a medium to teach students various ways to understand psychological aspects and help them learn about emotional processing and more adaptive responses to inner conflicts. This study can be used as an engaging and relevant method for character education, helping students become more self-aware and find



positive or non-destructive ways to resolve their inner conflicts. Furthermore, this study can encourage the development of story-building skills based on life phenomena related to human psychology.

D. CONCLUSION

The analysis of Kenna's character of the novel *Reminders of Him* suggests that she underwent a combination of challenging and favorable situations that had an impact on her mental well-being. Her childhood and teenage years were filled with detrimental events such as her father's desertion, her mother's disregard, and her mother's use of harsh language, all of which contributed to her sentiments of being unwanted by her parents and caused psychological damage. This suffering caused her to have low self-esteem, believe that her mother despised her, and develop a suspicion of males. Additionally, in her adult life, she also had to deal with the pain of losing her significant other, being denied the right to raise her daughter, and being turned away by her significant other's family. Kenna's already existing emotional pain was made worse by these events, which led to her developing depression.

In psychoanalytic theory, the ego, which operates on the reality principle, strives to fulfill the id's desires in a practical way, while steering clear of the adverse effects imposed by society and the superego's social standards. Kenna's ego was therefore driven by the reality of this distressing psychological state to employ defense mechanisms in order to strike a balance between her id and superego. Her ego displayed the utilization of defense mechanisms such as rationalization, denial, repression, and suppression throughout her childhood and adolescence. These strategies are not suitable for prolonged use, as they have the potential to impede the growth of personality. As Kenna went through, these mechanisms can surface into awareness, manifesting as emotions like anger, low self-esteem, and trust issue towards men.

Throughout various periods in her existence, she encountered supportive individuals who, whether explicitly or implicitly, fostered her mental growth; these people included Diem, Scotty, Ledger, Mona, and Ivy. Kenna's daughter, Diem, plays a significant role in her world, serving as a source of motivation for her to strive for an improved existence. Scotty, Kenna's deceased partner, assumed the role of a paternal figure in her life. Ledger, Kenna's romantic



partner, provides encouragement and support, facilitating her reunion with her daughter. Mona served not only as a foster parent but also as a maternal inspiration, imparting valuable life lessons to Kenna through adequate means. Furthermore, Ivy, a fellow inmate, inspires Kenna to persevere in her pursuit of a more fulfilling life despite enduring profound grief, while also nurturing her artistic inclinations, thereby enabling Kenna to channel her negative emotions more effectively. These favorable interactions shaped Kenna's sense of self, prompting her to employ a beneficial defense mechanism known as sublimation.

This novel focusing on Kenna's experiences furnishes readers with insights into the progression of a person's mental and emotional state: it explores the origins of her pessimistic emotions and ideas, and her methods of converting these unfavorable feelings and thoughts into optimistic ones, thereby shaping a resilient character. This demonstrates that literature, exemplified by Kenna's tale in the book *Reminders of Him*, acts as a tool for gaining knowledge and comprehension of the intricate workings of human psychology, which in turn assists individuals in refining their cognitive abilities, enhancing self-understanding, and fostering personal growth.

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