

The Response of Teenage Anxiety to Parents Wishes in *Dead Poets Society* (1989) and *Negeri 5 Menara* (2012)

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Abstract

This study examines parent-teen relationships in 'Dead Poets Society' and 'Negeri 5 Menara,' two influential movies from Western and Indonesian cultures. The research investigates how diverse social and cultural norms influence family values and the resolution of common issues. It specifically focuses on the psychological consequences of repressive and authoritarian parenting styles on central characters Neil and Alif, using Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory as a framework. Employing descriptive qualitative analysis and extensive literature and film documentation, the study uncovers distinct anxiety manifestations in Neil (fear) and Alif (depression). Additionally, it highlights the role of unconscious defense mechanisms in dealing with anxiety. This research underscores the universal impact of authoritarian parenting on adolescent mental health and the unique coping mechanisms individuals develop when faced with such stressors.

INTRODUCTION

Dead Poets Society which was produced in 1989 and achieved fame through the Oscar awards. The winning nominations, ranging from the cast to the original screenplay, show that the movie has a high standard, in fact until it must be played in every high school in America. The movie, which originated from Western culture with a 1950s setting, tells the big dream of a teenager sitting in school to become an actor, while the parents who only have a son have full rights in the teenager's future by instead becoming a Harvard-educated doctor. Meanwhile, Indonesia launched a movie with the same issue about the world of education entitled *Negeri 5 Menara*. The movie tells the struggle of a teenager who wants to enter a high school in Bandung in order to continue his studies at ITB and achieve success like his motivator, BJ Habibie. However, he is constrained because he has to obey his parents' wishes to enter a boarding school to study religion like Buya Hamka. The two movies show the attraction through the existence of the same problems that come from two different cultures.

The main characters Neil (*Dead Poets Society*) by Peter Weir and Alif (*Negeri 5 Menara*) by Ahmad Fuadi, both come from families with repressive parents. The great expectations born by the parents of each character lead to acts of suppression that ultimately lead to psychological conflicts that prevent adolescents from developing and

do not have the right to choose their own way of life. The existence of problems in mental health does not only come from external influences, but greater influence often comes from internal factors, one of which is parents along with irrelevant parenting.

Anxiety is often thought of as an unpleasant tone of expectation. A relatively substantial quantity of adrenaline is released into the circulation, which activates the "fight or flight" mechanism, which is how it manifests physiologically. Pulse quickens, respirations grow shallower and faster, and the hue of the skin typically shifts to a paler shade with occasional flushing (Neylan, 1962). In reality, because of internal tensions that make a person's inner self more vulnerable, one finds it difficult to control even relatively moderate levels of anxiety. "The person feels threatened, but it is as though by a ghost; he does not know where the enemy is or how to fight it or flee from it." The fear of the past threat, which the individual did not feel prepared to confront and, as a result, repressed, multiplies the fear of the current threat. More internal conflict is now the anxiety caused by the problem that was suppressed (Ritter, 1990).

In essence, the impact of mental disorders that occur in adolescents who are considered to be still in an unstable period will result in unstable behavior ranging from drug use to encouraging self-harm or suicide. From the situation experienced by Neil and Alif, it can be seen that the great emphasis comes from the unfulfilled id and the instability between ego and superego which creates a state of anxiety. The response of the subconscious to the turmoil of anxiety that occurs will give rise to the position of self-defense mechanisms to protect themselves from the pressure of anxiety. Theories of "psychological defense" suggest that people are driven to defend themselves from a variety of psychological dangers, such as the consciousness of mortality, uncertainty, and other situations that are intrinsically threatening to cause anxiety. Developing meaningful worldviews and retaining self-worth, accomplishment, and agency are some examples of protective mechanisms (Hart, 2014). From this issue, a significant question can be drawn regarding, How is the teenage anxiety response caused by repressive parental wishes?

METHOD AND THEORY

In conducting a deeper analysis, researchers use qualitative descriptive research methods in the process of analyzing problems; *Dead Poets Society* and *Negeri 5 Menara film* are the primary sources of data in this study. There are also film elements such as scenes, events, stories, and dialogue. Secondary sources include information from some articles, books, websites, and journals that are relevant to the topic. A methodological strategy for gathering information on the structure of policies is the qualitative descriptive approach. Sampling, data collecting, and data analysis in this situation are most pertinent (Seixas et al., 2017). In this study, the data was collected through a documentation process by creating a database based on several records in the form of events, time, scenes, dialog, scenes, symbols, practices, and discourse in both films. Observation is done directly by watching the movie repeatedly by collecting data according to variables from psychoanalytic theory in the form of anxiety condition and the role of self-defense mechanism. In the data collection process, some data used film theories forward mise en scene and cinematography data in analyzing the problem.

The theory used is Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalysis Theory, which focuses on the structure of id, ego, and superego, where humans are divided into conscious and unconscious in fulfilling mental images and forms of self-defense mechanisms that play a role in anxiety responses. Freud asserts that the superego is aggressive, sadistic, and cruel, but he never goes into detail about how it is cruel. He claims that the superego

watches the ego, commands it, evaluates it, and threatens it with punishment. He claims, at one point, that the superego "torments the sinful ego with the same feeling of anxiety and is on the lookout for opportunities to have it punished by the external world" (Velleman, 1999). The ego is actually only a portion of the id; it developed from the id under the influence of the outside world and has taken over some of the id's functions. So, it is safe to argue that the id has produced the ego (Nunberg, 1942).

Sigmund Freud's theory of psychoanalysis serves as a significant foundation for studying human psychology, particularly in the context of fictional characters. We can explore characters' internal conflicts, anxieties, and defense mechanisms using Freud's theory, which emphasizes the human psyche's tripartite structure the id, ego, and superego (Nunberg, 1942).

In some characters, such as Teddy alias Andrew in Dennis Lehane's book "Shutter Island," the Id, representing the primal desires, is the most prominent trait (Rahmi & Arianto, 2019). Because of his traumatic experiences, Andrew's id dominates his ego and superego, which results in severe schizophrenia symptoms. This dominance of the id, which is frequently brought on by intense emotional experiences, can cause irrational behavior and mental disorders in a character.

The desires of the id and the moral superego frequently put the ego, the logical aspect of the psyche, at odds. As the ego tries to mediate between the demands of the id and the superego and the realities of the outside world, this conflict can cause anxiety. For example, Aza Holmes, a character in John Green's "Turtles All the Way Down," goes through this type of psychoanalytic conflict, which causes her anxiety (Palarani & Hadiyanto, 2021).

As Freud proposed, characters frequently use a variety of defensive strategies to deal with these internal conflicts and anxieties. The ego is shielded from the anxiety brought on by the conflict between the id and the superego by these defense mechanisms, which include repression, denial, reaction formation, rationalization, and displacement (Tenrisanna, 2018). For instance, these defense mechanisms are used by the characters in "The Black Cat" and "The Tell-Tale Heart," two short stories by E.A. Poe, to resolve their conflicts.

However, these defense mechanisms occasionally exhibit maladaptive behavior, which causes additional psychological problems. In Najib Kailani's drama script "Al-Wajhu Al-Mulim li Al-Qamar," for instance, the character Salim frequently employs displacement as a defense mechanism, directing his resentment towards other things to avoid his internal conflict (Fatoni, 2020). Even though this mechanism offers short-term solace, it does not address the underlying causes of his psychological conflict, which creates new problems.

There are several previous studies related to this research, namely, Ajeng Eka Noviyanty's journal entitled "The Representation of Literacy as Salvation in Peter Weir's *Dead Poets Society*" uses Street's New Literacy Theory, which suggests the research results that Literacy can be a savior for Neil perry (Noviyanty, 2021). According to Muhammad Yanuar Arifin's thesis, which is titled "The Character of Neil Perry in the Novel *Dead Poets Society* as viewed from Abraham H. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory," Neil actually ignores three needs that are below the need for self-actualization, which is at the top of the pyramid. Security is the most important need, followed by a desire for belonging and, finally, a need for self-worth (Arifin, 2008). The same object is also found in the research of Wira Fitria Atnur from the title of her journal "Psychological Analysis of the Main Character of the Novel *Negeri 5 Menara Karya* A. Fuadi, which suggests Sigmund Freud's id, ego, and superego theory was used

to analyze the character's additional ego traits (Atnur, 2019). The same theory of psychoanalysis is also found in the journal by Nezia, Alit, and Made entitled "The Psychological Analysis of Jamie Sullivan's Behaviors in Nicholas Sparks' Novel *A Walk to Remember*.", According to the findings of this study, Jamie's dominant personality in Freud's three part personality theory is superego, as she behaves in a civilized manner. Jamie has a tendency to assist others. She makes moral decisions and judgments about what is good and bad, and her decisions are more founded on moral principles (Bulan et al., 2019). Sri Utami, who employs the same theory in the form of psychoanalysis, argues in a journal titled "Psychoanalysis of the Characters in Schneider's *The Beginning of Everything*", That the study's findings indicate that the characterization of the characters can alter depending on the conditions they face. The Freudian link between the id, ego, and superego is used throughout the narrative and influences every decision made by the characters (Utami, 2018). The difference between previous research and this research is in the focus of research, where this research is a comparative study of the psychological responses of each main character in the anxiety category of the two literary works *Dead Poets Society* and *Negeri 5 Menara* and the differences in self-defense mechanisms studied using Sigmund Freud's id, ego, and superego psychoanalytic theory supplemented by data in the form of scenes, dialogs, images, and so on. The form of psychological response is anxiety in the form of fear in Neil's Character (*Dead Poets Society*), Anxiety in the form of Depression in Alif's Character (*Negeri 5 Menara*), and Self Defense Mechanism.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this study, researchers have found the existence of anxiety conditions divided into several subcategories that occur in adolescents in each of the main characters of the films *Dead Poets Society* and *Negeri 5 Menara*, along with the response of anxiety that raises different self-defense mechanisms. The categories of anxiety conditions are divided into: 1. Anxiety in the form of fear in Neil's Character (*Dead Poets Society*), 2. Anxiety in the form of Depression in Alif's Character (*Negeri 5 Menara*), 3. Self Defense Mechanism That will be explained below :

Anxiety Condition

Anxiety is an emotion concerned with the future. An anxious person is not anxious about what has happened, nor even about what is happening, but about what may happen. Besides, anxiety has three basic responses to it-attack, flight, or submission-and the obsessional, phobic schizoid, and hysterical defenses (Rycroft, 2018). Anxiety is sometimes said to be crippling or disabling because it prevents a person from being adaptively. Sometimes, a person is "obviously" anxious; in the face of some danger, real or imagined, he trembles, perspires, or turns pale. Anxiety, at times, seems to be directed toward a specific object; in such cases, it is often called fear (Sidman, 1964).

The ego is in search of gratification and is there to produce feelings of tension and unpleasure; we can learn nothing of the id contents. It follows, at least theoretically, that the id is not open to observation under all conditions. The situation is, of course, different in the case of the superego. Its contents are, for the most part, conscious and so can be directly arrived at by endopsychic perception (Routledge, 2018).

Anxiety in the form of Fear in Neil's Character (*Dead Poets Society*)

According to Freud, anxiety is an emotion that is concerned with the future and frequently results from conflicts between the id and the ego. The ego, which tries to

mediate between these desires and the realities of the outside world, and the id, which is motivated by primal desires, frequently clash. This conflict can manifest as fear, as seen in the character of Neil from "Dead Poets Society".

Fear originates in the disruption of temporally and spatially organized cerebral activities; that fear is distinct from other emotions by the nature of the processes tending to restore equilibrium." The sources of fear involve conflict, sensory deficit, or constitutional change (Hebb, 1946). Fear plays an important role in shaping mental health service users' experiences (Sweeney et al., 2015). Fears and anxieties include the dreaded notion of the unknown and of being alone; the fear of losing family, friends, and other people; the fear of one's own body and its identity; the fear of losing the ego function of self-control and becoming the victim of uncontrollable regression (Heim et al., 1978).



Scene Mr.Perry is angry that Neil lied to audition at Henley Hall.

Mr.Perry : "Don't you dare talk back to me! It's bad enough that you've wasted your time with this absurd acting business. But you deliberately deceived me. How did you expect to get away with this? Answer me. Who put you up to it? Was it this new man, uh Mr. Keating?"

Neil : "No. nobody. I thought I'd surprise you. I've gotten all A's every class."

Mr.Perry : "So did you think wasn't gonna find out?. Oh, my niece is in a play with your son, says Mrs. Marks. No. no I says you must be mistaken. My son's not in a play. You made a liar out of me, Neil. Now, tomorrow, you go to them and you tell them that you're quitting."

Neil : "No, I can't. I have the main part. The performance is tomorrow night."

Mr perry : "I don't care if the world comes to an end tomorrow. You are through with that play. Is that clear?"

Neil : "Yes, sir."

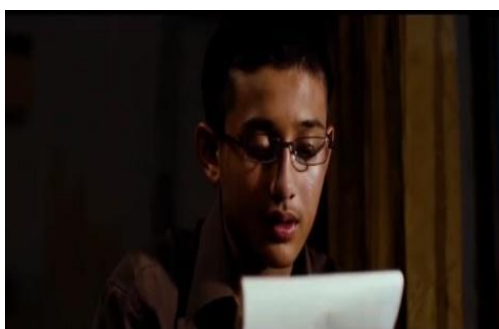
The scene, which was shot with the Medium Shot (MS) method, clearly highlights the expression of Mr. Perry, Neil's father, who is sitting in the dormitory room showing his disappointment over Neil's insubordination. A midsummer night's dream is one of Neil's dream lists to reach the actor stage. Neil's id comes from a great desire to become an actor, while his superego works consciously because it is influenced by social morals where as a child Neil has an obligation to obey Mr. Perry's wishes and orders as a parent. Neil's ego works consciously to stop leaving the acting activity and ends with an agreement dialog.

Mr. Perry's dialogue that " I don't care if the world comes to an end tomorrow," seems to interpret a blanket prohibition against Neil's wishes and indicates the firmness

of his request. Therefore, Neil's inability to deal with the debate with Mr. Perry makes Neil afraid because his superego kicks in and he chooses to agree even though he doesn't want to.

Anxiety in the form of Depression Depression in Alif's character (*Negeri 5 Menara*)

According to American Psychiatric Association (1980) Depression is classified as a syndrome, or a group of symptoms, by the DSM-III. First of all, a "major depressive episode" is characterized by "dysphoric mood or loss of interest or pleasure in all or nearly all regular activities and pastimes." The dysphoric [person] is characterized by [adjectives] such as depressed, sad, blue, hopeless, low, down in the dumps, irritable" (Robinson, 1991).



Scene Alif writes a letter to his mother in the Minangkabau house.

Taking pictures with the Medium Close Up (MCU) technique gives details of Alif's sad expression when holding a letter written to his mother. In the letter, Alif conveyed his Id to transfer from Pesantren Madani to his dream school in Bandung. Alif insisted on wanting permission to transfer because he felt uncomfortable after seeing his best friend named Randai successfully pursue education in the city and was saddened when Baso was one of his motivations for leaving the pesantren. These external influences eventually push Alif's id even more unstoppable. Although Alif's superego works consciously that denying and forcing parents to fulfill a child's wishes is considered inappropriate because in any social morals the parents' decision is the best for their children. Besides, Alif's ego insists on prioritizing his Id, thus his ego and superego agree to reach the same decision by continuing to send letters to his mother. The unstable conflict illustrates a form of anxiety condition in the form of depression. The depression Alif feels is due to the imbalance between ego and superego.

Isi surat ibu Alif : "Amak dan ayah bisa mengerti, mungkin salahku terlalu memaksakan kehendakmu, amak dan ayah tidak akan melarang, sudah amak kirim surat persetujuan kepindahanmu ke pondok. Satu saja minta amak entah itu dibandung atau dimanapun kau mau belajar, lakukan lah dengan kesungguhan. Amak juga baru menyadari tempat belajar memang penting tapi kesungguhan hati lebih penting lagi." (1:35:24-1:36:30)

The content of Alif's mother's letter: "Mom and dad can understand, it may be my fault to force your will too much, Mom and dad will not forbid, I was sent a letter of approval of your move to the cottage. Just an advice from me, whether it's in the room or wherever you want to learn, do it with sincerity. I also just realized that learning is important but sincerity is even more important."

The content of the message illustrates the change in actions taken by Alif's parents, who were initially repressive. But after reading the letter, Alif's id changes to become unconditioned. Alif's ego decides to stay at Pesantren Madani when the superego plays a role in morality and ends up in stable decision making. Alif's superego consciously as a child should obey the wishes of his parents. This is influenced by the elements of religious education taught in the Pesantren, especially seen from the eyes of Islam, the majority of which prohibit children from disobeying their parents.

Self Defense Mechanism

A key component of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory is the idea of self-defense mechanisms. These coping mechanisms, in Freud's opinion, are unique means of dealing with anxiety-related outbursts, which can occur when there is a conflict of desire between the Id and the Ego. Internal conflict and anxiety are frequently caused by the Id's constant pressure to act in ways that the Ego may not want to, which is motivated by aggressive primal desires.

While the 'id' and 'superego' produce defense, the 'ego' is where the defense mechanism is initiated. The ego serves as a lens through which an image of the other two instances can be understood when a defense mechanism is being seen consciously (Ehlers et al., 1995). The ego frequently uses these defense mechanisms to reduce the stress brought on by this internal conflict in its capacity as the intermediary between the id and the superego. Among other things, these mechanisms also include sublimation, rationalization, displacement, and repression.

The results of the dialogue struggle in the scene of Neil and Mr. Perry (*Dead Poets Society*) show the anxiety disorder experienced by Neil in the form of fear. The dialogue that contains rejection at the beginning is a form of rationalization which becomes a self-defense system because Neil takes action to justify what he did and gives several reasons. But in the end, the dialogue is finished with Neil's agreement which changes the form of self-defense mechanism from rationalization to repression by accepting reality but still thinking there will be a way out to keep coming to Henley Hall to act despite being in the midst of an attacking inner conflict. Rationalization is Dealing with emotional stressors by inventing a socially acceptable or logical reason to justify an already taken unconscious emotional action (Northoff et al., 2007).

In the scene of Alif (*Negeri 5 Menara*) who experiences anxiety in the form of depression unconsciously. But after going through a big psychological conflict, Alif shields himself by trying to present a self-defense mechanism in the form of sublimation by showing the process of maturity in Alif. The form of sublimation is in the form of changing Alif's decision which is considered selfish into a decision that is beneficial to others and acceptable to Neil, his parents, and the surrounding community. Sublimation is Achieving gratification of a drive or impulse in an indirect way by channeling the energy of the drive into an acceptable, adaptive, or constructive pursuit (Peterson, 1972).

The end of the ending on Neil's character (*Dead Poets Society*) is the decision to commit suicide. The incident occurred on the day Neil had performed his play at Henley Hall. The location of the incident is right inside Mr. Perry's office. at night Neil shoots a firearm at his body. Man's greatest escape from life is suicide. He uses it as a last resort when he no longer feels capable of withstanding current agony or future pain. As a result, it represents a final regression from reality and an inability to adapt (Crichton-Miller, 1931). This response shows that Neil's anxiety is already at a high level of despair. On the other hand, Alif (*Negeri 5 Menara*) managed to become one of the

famous journalists in America by following the interests of the talents he had nurtured since living in Pesantren Madani. The process of self-defense mechanisms shows a response that is able to improve anxiety conditions in improving a better quality of life.

In the application of psychoanalytic theory to two literary works of film comparison, the theory of id, ego, and superego turns out that the process does not always end the same. In the case of Alif (negeri 5 menara), it can be proven that the response of his id, ego, and superego can change through self-defense mechanisms that play a role when feelings of anxiety act. The super ego cannot always be defined as cruel because it depends on the defense mechanism system itself that works in response.

CONCLUSION

In this study, the researcher concluded that the anxiety response experienced by the two main characters between Neil (Dead Poets Society) and Alif (Negeri 5 Menara) had significant differences. These differences can be seen in different anxiety conditions, forms of relationships with parents, the influence of teachers as educators, and the role of self-defense mechanisms.

From the condition of anxiety experienced by Neil (Dead Poets Society) is one type of anxiety in the form of fear that has risen one level to the condition of acute depression so that self-defense mechanisms no longer play a role in covering the anxiety experienced. When recounting how Samuel Ajayi Crowther experienced shock, depression, and ultimately suicidal thoughts due to his fear of being sold to the Portuguese, he described a typical reaction (Piersen, 1977). It illustrates that Neil's suicide case started with fear, then developed into shock, depression, and then suicidal thoughts. Neil's suicide comes from the influence of the family seen from the angle of wrong parenting through repressive and dictatorial actions such as those carried out by Mr. Perry as a parent. Welton Academy is known as a stressful place that contains old (orthodox) thoughts describing formal education and strict rules with four pillars in the form of honor, discipline, achievement, and tradition which have indirectly become a prison for Neil, so that the role of an educator Mr. Keating and the presence of Dead Poets Society group friends such as Tod Anderson, Charlie Dalton, Knox Overstreet, Steven Meeks, and Gerard Pitts are unable to motivate and support Neil to dare to choose his own way of life.

Suicide is veiled by two moral omens. Both of these are influenced by modern behavioral sciences, with one being influenced by medieval theology. The Catholic view on suicide was developed by Saint Augustine, who believed that self-harm is a sin and a form of murder. Disposing of one's life has been seen by psychologists as a symptom of mental disorder since the eighteenth century. Suicide, according to sociology's father Emile Durkheim, is a pathological "social fact" that exemplifies the fallacy of contemporary individualism. However, the perception of suicide as a sign of dysfunction has not always existed. Suicide has occasionally been given honor in European thinking. The early Romans believed that a suicide led to the creation of their government (Gordon, 2016). The depiction of suicide implicated in Neil comes from a Western culture with orthodox thinking that assumes suicide is often associated as an honorable act.

When viewed from Alif's life (*Negeri 5 Menara*), he managed to change the repressive nature of his parents even though by urging and being selfish. However, the improvement of the relationship between Alif and his parents was able to make Alif consciously change his decisions and life path. Environmental influences such as Baso, Dulmajid, Radja, Said, and Atang are able to become a support system and show many

ways to achieve dreams. In addition, Figure Ustad Salman is equally important in the process of improving Alif's unstable mentality. Other influences come from religious norms and values, forms of discipline, and the unrestrictive life of the pesantren, togetherness, and simplicity as a path that makes it easier to achieve dreams.

Other differences in response are based on the importance of social interaction between children and parents. Cultural differences are reflected in different forms of parenting, education systems, values and traditions, and language and culture. Meanwhile, The results suggest the need for further research by modifying or adding research variables or using an experimental approach. Further research should focus on character objects with similar backgrounds, considering biological and anatomical aspects of age.

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