

# THE MAIN CHARACTER'S MENTAL STATE IN THE MOVIE THE UNINVITED

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**Abstract:** The aim of this study is to analyze the main character's mental state in the movie *The Uninvited* using the theory of psyche and defense mechanism. This study used descriptive method. The first step of analyzing *The Uninvited* movie was observing the main character's mental state from the beginning until the end of the story, determining the cause of the main character's unstable mental state by using Freud's psyche theory through the character's dialogues and certain scenes, determining types of defense mechanisms deployed by the main character in the movie, the last is interpreting how the main character's mental state affects the plot of the movie. The results of this study are the writer found three factors that trigger the unstable mental states; six types of defense mechanism the main character deployed, and the impact of the main character's mental state.

**Keywords:** Psychoanalysis, Mental State, Defense Mechanisms

**Abstrak:** Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menganalisis keadaan mental karakter utama di film *The Uninvited* menggunakan teori kejiwaan dan mekanisme pertahanan. Kajian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif. Langkah pertama dalam menganalisis film *The Uninvited* adalah mengamati keadaan mental karakter utama dari awal hingga akhir, menentukan penyebab ketidakstabilan mental karakter utama dengan menggunakan teori psikoanalisis Freud melalui dialog-dialod dan scene tertentu karakter utama, menentukan tipe mekanisme pertahanan yang dilakukan karakter utama di dalam film, dan terakhir menginterpretasi dampak keadaan mental karakter utama terhadap alur cerita. Hasil dari penelitian ini adalah penulis menemukan tiga faktor yang memicu ketidakstabilan mental, enam tipe mekanisme pertahanan yang dilakukan karakter utama, dan dampak keadaan dampak keadaan mental karakter utama terhadap cerita.

**Kata kunci:** Psikoanalisis, Kondisi mental, Mekanisme pertahanan

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Literary work is the work of an author as the result of conscious reflection and imagination of things that known, avoided, felt, responded, and fantasied, then showed to the audience through the media of language with all the tools, so it becomes a beautiful work. The problems contained in the literary work bear a resemblance to the circumstances

outside the literary work. Therefore, the world that has been mixed with the author's imagination and engagement in the literary works is a mirror of the real world (Siswanto, 1993, p. 19).

A literary work is something that always revolves around the characters created by the author. In order to make the story more interesting, the author often displays the behavior of characters with unusual, strange,

or abnormal personalities that attract the reader's feelings. It is common for the reader to wonder why the character behaves so, what happens to him, what causes it, and what are the effects of all this. Those behavioral problems may be related to psychiatric problems. This issue then is interested to be analyzed by using psychoanalysis approach.

The psychoanalysis in literature is frequently debated because the essence of literature is often lost which makes the literary study seems to be a psychology study. Therefore, in order to connect the study of psychoanalysis with the literary work analysis, the reflection of psychological concepts need to be conveyed through the usual methods used in literary study. Such methods are for example, telling (direct) and showing (indirect) (Minderop, 2010, p. 8).

The direct method (telling) relies on the exposure of the character's personality in a story and the direct comment of the author (Minderop, 2010, p. 8). By this method, the participation or interference of the author in presenting the character's personality is exquisite that the reader understands and appreciates the character's personality according to the author's exposure. Direct Method (telling) includes: characterizations through the use of character names, appearance of characters, and author's speech. On the other hand, the indirect method (showing) is when the authors placing themselves outside the story by giving the characters a chance to show their personality through dialogue and action. Methods of Showing includes: dialogue, behavior and

characterization through dialogue (Minderop, 2010, p. 8).

It is a common knowledge for everyone that the function of literary works is for satisfaction and education (Skrabanek, 2012, p. 1). It means that the authors have to think hard in creating a literary work, like movie. The movie that they produce should give the viewer's additional values. The viewers do not only get satisfaction in watching the movie, but also new things as knowledge. In order to achieve that, the authors usually include other aspects in their work, for instance the psychological aspects.

By including the psychological aspects in literary works, the authors can create a more interesting story, yet hard to predict. Therefore, it is interesting enough to study it since it usually has hidden stories behind the characters waiting to be revealed. For instance, in *The Uninvited* movie, the main character becomes mentally unstable after witnessing the death of her ill mother from a boathouse fire. Thus the main character's mental state becomes the core of the story and analyzing the main character is the key to understand the whole story.

Based on the explanation of psychology and literature above, it can be concluded that psychology and literature is related to each other. This can be seen in the characters that exist in a literary work, the authors who create literary works, and even the readers as the enthusiasts of literature. This is because the literary work is a psychological reflection of the author and also has psychological impact to the reader.

Due to the above issues, the writer is interested in conducting a study on the main character's mental state in a movie through psychological approach, on a thesis entitled "*The Main Character's Mental State in The Uninvited Movie*". The discussion of the study includes the factors that make the main character mentally unstable, as well as the types of defense mechanism that the main character deploys in order to avoid overwhelming anxiety and as a result of that it might be possible to find the cause and effect behind the main character's action in the movie.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study the descriptive method was used. Descriptive method is a research method to test hypothesis or to answer questions concerning the current status of the subject of the study by involving collection of data (Gay, 1976, p. 217). In this study, the descriptive method is operating through the collection of data by examining records and documents. To describes the main character's mental state and defense mechanisms through the dialogues and scenes in the movie.

Freud, in 1923, developed a structural model of mind which he called as "the psychic apparatus" consisting the entities id, ego, and superego (Freud, 2006, p. 32). These are not physical areas within the brain, but rather hypothetical images of important mental functions.

The id, just like Freud assumed is operated at an unconscious level according to the pleasure standard, a feeling of joy from satisfying basic instincts. Freud also states that the id consists of two kinds of biological instincts called Eros and Thanatos.

Eros is a life instinct which helps the individual to survive. It manages activities related to life-sustaining, such as eating, breathing, and sex. The life instinct creates energy known as libido. On the other hand, Thanatos is a death instinct. The death instinct is a set of destructive forces that exist in all human beings. The death instinct creates energy known as violence when directed toward others. However Freud believes that Thanatos is weaker than Eros, therefore enabling people to survive rather than self-destruct.

The ego has a goal to satisfy the demands of the id in a safe socially acceptable way. The ego starts to develop during infancy from the id. In contrary to the id, the ego follows the reality standard as it operates in both the unconscious and conscious mind.

The superego has a job to ensure that people follow the morality principles and is developed during early childhood. The superego works based on the moral standard to motivate us to behave in a socially responsible and acceptable manner.

However there is always a basic dilemma in all human beings, which is each element of the psychic apparatus makes demands upon us that are contradictory to the other two and also result in inevitable inner conflict. For example,

the superego can make a person feels guilty if the rules are violated.

The ego must act as an arbitrator when there is a contradiction between the goals of the id and superego, and mediate this conflict. Furthermore, various defense mechanisms can be deployed by the ego to prevent it from becoming overwhelmed by anxiety.

## **2.1 Defense Mechanism**

Freud(1992) uses the defense mechanism to refer to the subconscious process of a person who defends against anxiety. There are 15 types of defense mechanisms according to him:

### **2.1.1 Repression**

Repression is the first defense mechanism that Freud discovered. It is defense mechanism deployed by the ego that keeps frightening or painful thoughts from becoming conscious.

### **2.1.2 Projection**

This defense mechanism involves people attributing their own feeling, thoughts and motives to another individual.

### **2.1.3 Displacement**

Displacement is the shifting of an impulse (usually violence) from a desired target to a powerless substitute target usually because the desired target is not available or not allowed.

### **2.1.4 Sublimation**

Sublimation is takes place when someone manages to transform

unwanted impulse into a constructive rather than destructive activity.

### **2.1.5 Denial**

This defense mechanism involves blocking some events from awareness. If some situation is just too much to handle, the person is simply refusing to acknowledge that an event has happened if the situation is just too much to handle.

### **2.1.6 Regression**

Regression is a defense mechanism that taking the position of a child in some problematic circumstance, instead acting in a more adult way.

### **2.1.7 Acting out**

Acting out is when an individual unable to expresses his feelings or thoughts, this individual will performs an extreme behavior in order to express thoughts or feelings.

### **2.1.8 Dissociation**

Dissociation is when an individual loses track of time and/or person, and instead finds another image of them in order to continue in the moment.

### **2.1.9 Compartmentalization**

Compartmentalization is an inferior form of dissociation; compartmentalization is a wall that built to separate different value sets in different groups we belong.

### **2.1.10 Reaction formation**

Reaction Formation is the transforming of unwanted or dangerous thoughts, feelings or impulses into the opposites.

### 2.1.11 Intellectualization

Intellectualization is the defense mechanism that emphasize on reasoning and thinking when confronted with an unacceptable situation or behavior without employing any emotions whatsoever to help mediate and switch the emotional feelings with reasoning.

### 2.1.12 Rationalization

Rationalization is when people make up a logical explanation about something that they find difficult to accept.

### 2.1.13 Undoing

Undoing is the attempt to undo an unconscious behavior or thought that is painful or unacceptable.

### 2.1.14 Compensation

Compensation is a mechanism that psychologically counter-balancing perceived weaknesses by emphasizing strength in other areas. When they are facing their weakness, they can feel reasonably good about the situation. When done properly and not in an attempt to over compensate, compensation is a defense mechanism that helps strengthen a person's self-esteem and self-image.

### 2.1.15 Assertiveness

Assertiveness is standing up for your rights and expressing your thoughts in a manner that are respectful, direct and firm. People who are assertive find a balance where they speak up for themselves, express their opinions or needs in a respectful yet firm way, and

listen when they are being spoken to. Becoming more assertive is one of the most desired skills in communication and helpful defense mechanisms most people would benefit in doing so.

## 3. RESULTS

The writer found three factors that trigger the main character's unstable mental state in the movie. They are id, superego and ego. These factors are not physical areas within the brain, but rather hypothetical images of important mental functions.

### 3.1 Id

Anna's *id* is to burn the house down along with her father and her ill mother's nurse. Anna decided to do that because she feels disappointed toward her father and also feels betrayed by her father that was having a love affair in their house even though her mother was still alive. It can be seen from these scenes and dialogue:

#### Scene 01:13:50-01:14:44



Picture 1. Anna's id

(Alex): *The guys, they want to come back to our house.*

(Anna): *It's not our house anymore.*

(Alex): *What are you doing?*

(Anna): *They can burn in hell.*

### 3.2 Superego

Anna's superego in the movie shown in the scenes below:

**Scene 01:14:46-01:15:13**



**Picture 2. Anna's superego**

*(Mom): Alex? (Calling from inside the boat house)*

*(Alex): Coming, Mom.*

*(Anna): Alex! (The boat house explodes)*

Unfortunately not too long after Anna takes the fuel from inside the boat house, the fuel's valve is broken and it continuously drop fuel onto the wooden floor, then the lamp fell down because Alex slams the door that ultimately make the boat house explode along with Alex and her mom. Since that incident, Anna's *superego* makes her feels guilty and sad, because she believes that what happened at that night was her fault.

**3.3 Ego**

Anna's mental state becomes unstable because there was a conflict between the demand of Anna's id and superego, thus Anna's ego will act as a mediator to mediate the conflict. However, since the negative emotions that Anna feels is too overwhelming, the ego might need to deploy various unconscious defense mechanisms to prevent it becoming overwhelmed by anxiety.

Anna's defense mechanisms in this movie are repression, displacement, sublimation, projection, regression, and denial. The defense mechanisms are described as following:

**Table 1. Types of defense mechanism deployed by Anna**

Scene	Situations	Type of defense mechanism
00:04:16 - 00:04:24	Visions of blood flowing through the door keyhole and an explosion at the boat house.	Repression
00:08:27 - 00:08:30	Anna stops eating cookies after she heard from her father that Rachel made them.	Repression
00:00:54 - 00:00:57	Anna intentionally hitting the wall with her hammer <del>with</del> hammering the nail put back her mom's old chalkboard.	Displacement
00:00:22:01 - 00:00:22:48	After Anna got lectured by Rachel, she decided to swims with her sister Alex.	Sublimation

**3.4 Defense mechanism**

The defense mechanisms found in this study that deployed by Anna are repression, displacement, sublimation, projection, regression, and denial.

### 3.4.1 Repression

This is the scene where Anna unconsciously deployed three defense mechanisms of repression in the movie:

#### Scenes 00:04:16-00:04:24



**Picture 3. Anna's Repression 1**

(Anna): There's something evil in the house.

Anna was asked by her psychiatrist about what happened in the night when her seriously ill mother died on a boat house fire. Anna told the psychiatrist that there is something evil in the house and it comes from one of the rooms in the house. Anna also believes that the death of her mother was caused by the fire of the boat house. However, in reality the above scenes show some repressed memories of Anna from the incident. An evil that Anna mentioned is actually Rachel, her seriously ill- mother's nurse, because Anna believes that the root of all problems in the house is caused by Rachel. Then, the blood that flows through the door's keyhole of a room is actually where Anna saw her unfaithful father and the nurse having a love affair from. Anna represses these memories because she does not want to remember that she was the one who caused the incident.

#### Scene 00:08:27-00:08:30



**Picture 4. Anna's Repression 2**

(Steven): *I know something that's good.*  
(Anna): *Oh, awesome. Thank you.*  
(Steven): *Yeah, Rachel made them.*  
(Anna): (Put the cookie back to the box)

The scenes above show that Anna feels happy at first when her father is giving her cookies. However, Anna suddenly stops eating and puts the cookies back when she knows that the cookies are made by Rachel. This indicates that Anna hates Rachel but she represses her feelings from her father to avoid creating new problems.

#### Scenes 00:38:43-00:40:00



**Picture 5. Anna's repression 3**

(Anna): *Matt. Where were you? We waited for you at the rock, just like you said.*  
(Matt): *Yeah, I know, I....*  
(Anna): *What happened? You're soaked.*  
(Matt): *You know, I fell and hurt my back or something.*

In the scene above, Matt is entering Anna's room through the windows with his body which is all soaked. Anna asked him what happened, and he said that he just fell and hurt his back. However, in reality, Anna actually met Matt at the rock and pushed

Matt to the seabecause Matt saw everything in the night of the boat house fire incident, including the one that caused the incident and that person was Anna herself. After killing Matt, Anna unconsciously repressed her memories to protect herself from overwhelming anxiety. Thus, the above scenes are the fragments of Anna's repressed memories that are coming back to her during her sleep.

### 3.4.2 Displacement

It is the moment when Anna mad at Rachel for removing a memento from her mother. Therefore, Anna intentionally hammering the wall to displace her anger toward Rachel.

#### Scenes 00:20:54-00:20:57

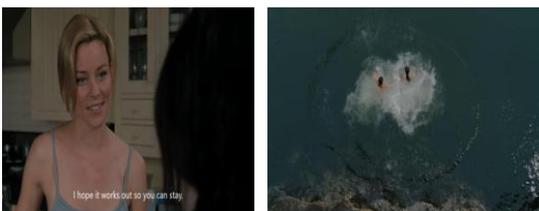


Picture 6. Anna's displacement

### 3.4.3 Sublimation

The following is the scenes where Anna deployed the sublimation defense mechanism in the movie.

#### Scenes 00:22:01-00:22:48



Picture 7. Anna's sublimation

*(Rachel): When I was your age, I had to deal with some rough things, like you, and I learned to be strong. To be a girl nobody fucked with. I am so glad to have you back. I hope it works out so you can stay.*

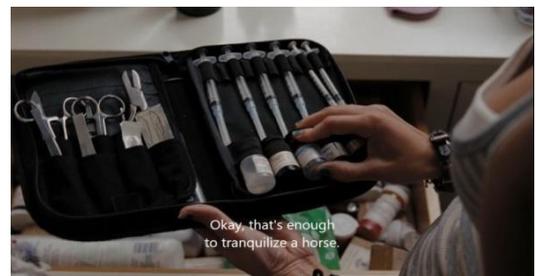
*(Anna): Thanks, I intend to.*

Rachel saw Anna hammering the kitchen's wall. She starts lecturing Anna, saying that if Anna does not behave she might need to take her back to the psychiatric institution. Although Rachel threatens her, Anna still replies it with a polite sentence. Thus, to relieve her stress, Anna decided to swims with Alex after Rachel done talking.

### 3.4.4 Projection

There are two projections that deployed by Anna during the following scenes in the movie.

#### Scenes 00:36:21-00:36:35



Picture 8. Anna's projection 1

*(Alex): Okay, that's enough to tranquilize a horse.*

*(Anna): Or you and me.*

Alex and Anna found a lot of tranquilizers in Rachel's room. She said those tranquilizers are enough to tranquilize a horse. However, then Anna said that those also enough to tranquilize both of them. This scene indicates that Anna projecting her thoughts that Rachel is

a dangerous person and they need to be careful around her. Even though, in reality that is not true. Rachel has the tranquilizer because her job was a nurse thus it only natural for her to have that kind of medicines.

#### Scenes 00:53:54-00:55:38



**Picture 9. Anna's projection 2**

- (Steven): *All she is trying to do is make this family work.*  
 (Anna): *She's not trying to make it work. She wants you for herself.*  
 (Steven): *That is ridiculous.*  
 (Anna): *God, if Mom could see you now, siding with that bitch who's trying to tear us apart!*

In the scenes above, Steven and Anna was arguing about Rachel. Anna said that Rachel was a snake that only wants her father and does not care about her at all. Anna also yells at her father saying that her mother would be really sad seeing Steven siding with Rachel who is trying to tear them apart. However, what Anna was saying was not true; she was only projecting her thoughts and feelings of Rachel toward her father, because in reality Rachel was indeed trying to be a good mother and wife. Rachel was actually caring about Anna, especially since she cannot have her own child because she was infertile.

### 3.4.5 Regression

The following is the scenes where Anna deployed regression in the movie.

#### Scenes 00:37:47-00:38:01



**Picture 10. Anna's regression**

- (Alex): *I'm gonna go to bed.*  
 (Anna): *No, please stay with me till I fall asleep.*  
 (Alex): *If I had 10 bucks for every time I heard that.*

Anna feels scared because she did not meet her boyfriend, Matt, at the meetingplace that he told her. Thus, Anna asks Alex to stay with her until she falls asleep. This scene indicates that Anna unconsciously deploys the defense mechanism regression or acting like a child in order to sleep peacefully.

### 3.4.6 Denial

Anna does two denials as her defense mechanism. These are the scene of the movie:

#### Scenes 00:44:21-00:45:02



**Picture 11. Anna's denial 1**

(Alex): *You okay?*

(Anna): *No, I'm not okay. I'm not crazy,  
Alex.*

Anna told Alex that she is not crazy because she believes that the night she met Matt in her bedroom was not a dream, it was real. However, the very fact that she was having a conversation with her sister Alex is a proof that she was wrong, because Alex is already dead with her mother in the boat house incident.

### Scenes 01:11:01-01:12:36



**Picture 12. Anna's denial 2**

(Anna): *Alex had to do it, Dad. She saved us.*

(Steven): *Alex? Anna, what are you saying? Anna, you know what happened to your sister.*

(Anna): *Tell him, Alex!*

(Steven): *She died in the fire. It was a year ago. Alex is dead.*

In the scenes above, when Steven came back home from work he saw Anna covered in blood outside of the house. Anna told her father that Alex had to kill Rachel to save them, but it only makes her father confuse. Steven said that Alex was already died in the fire along with mother. However, Anna still denies it and telling Alex to talk to her father. It only makes Steven mad and yelling to Anna that her sister Alex is already dead. A moment after that, Alex disappears and Anna is actually holding a knife not her sister's hand and then she run inside the house recalling

what really happened at the night of the boathouse fire incident.

The writers studied that there are various factors which trigger Anna's unstable mental state. Anna becomes mentally unstable because she was blinded by anger and decided to follow her id completely and ignoring her superego in the process. However, after the incident of the boathouse fire that killed her mother and her sister Alex, she then realize what she was doing is wrong. Then, the ego deploys unconscious defense mechanisms, in order to protect her from overwhelming anxiety, but her ego only makes everything worse, damaging her memories and ultimately makes Anna mentally unstable.

Moreover, there are found six types of defense mechanism that deployed by Anna in the movie. They are repression, displacement, sublimation, denial, projection and regression. However, it did not found the others nine of defense mechanism that Anna deployed in the movie. It was because in the movie, Anna is mainly repressed her memories of every bad things that she done, in order to protect herself from overwhelming anxiety.

The most dominant of defense mechanism that Anna deployed in the movie is repression. Freud states that repression helps minimize anxiety but will linger nonetheless. This is true to Anna's case; forgetting helps her deal with what really happened but it still comes out at random, undesired times. She forgot everything in order to protect herself. Anna then rebuilds piece by piece the memory of the accident with events that did not actually happen. This suited

her subconscious longing for justice towards her unfaithful father and his girlfriend.

With memory being damaged, it is important to know how and why. Perhaps Anna repressed the painful memory of the accident in order to be at peace. Anna is trying to find out the origin of the accident when it was technically her fault all along. After a failed attempt at suicide, repressed memories begin to come out as Anna is about to leave the psychiatric institution for the first time. Over getting reacquainted with her former life, memories are constructed and Anna somehow sees and imagines her sister Alex. Anna was plagued by delusions upon returning home. She arguably displayed symptoms of Schizophrenia. Schizophrenia creates hallucinations, delusions, and is characterized by a split mind. This is evident when Anna believes that Alex has killed Rachel when it could have only had been herself.

This mental illness of Anna is a tool the author used in order to make the story more interesting yet difficult to predict. This mental illness is also can easily affect the plot in the story. For instance, when Anna seeing ghost of Matt in her bedroom. If we do not know that Anna was having schizophrenia, we would said that the ghost was trying to warn Anna that Rachel was dangerous. However, after we learned the mental illness, it was clear that it was not a ghost but rather a repressed memory of Anna that slowly coming back to her. Therefore, Anna's mental state is really affecting the plot in the movie because in the movie, Anna is continuously hallucinating that her sister, Alex, is still alive.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Conclusively, this film effectively describes how trauma can influence people. Repression, while intending to protect, can harm a person by producing inaccurate, false memories. In this story, more people die because of insufficient attention to Anna's mind. Scenarios like Anna's are infrequent but not rare. How people are treated following disastrous events like this one speaks volumes to how people recover. Maybe Anna never would have recovered; but it's easy to wonder. With better treatment and kindness, Anna might have had the chance to move on. Ultimately, *The Uninvited* toys with the balance of psychotic mind.

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