

**LAUREL'S DEPRESSION IN THE NOVEL *LOVE  
LETTERS TO THE DEAD* BY AVA DELLAIRA**



**A THESIS**

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English Literature Department**

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THESIS

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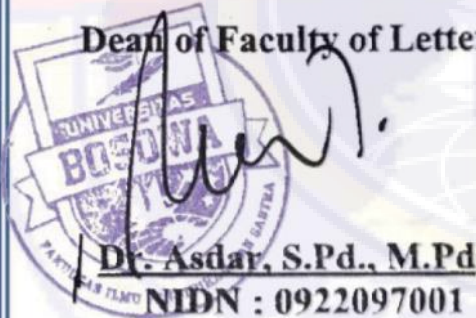


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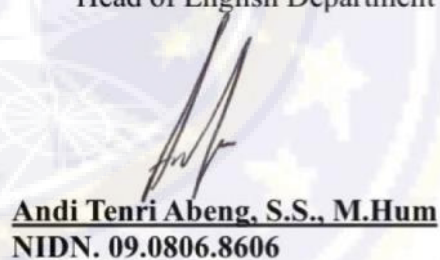
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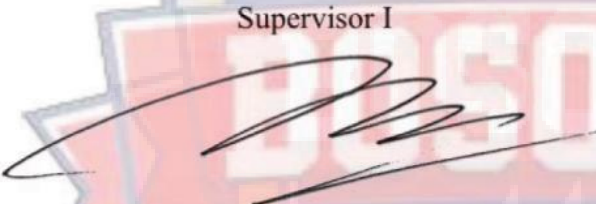
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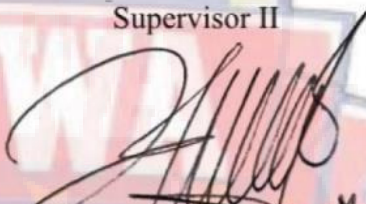
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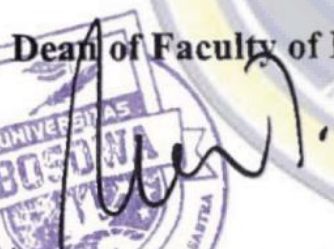
  
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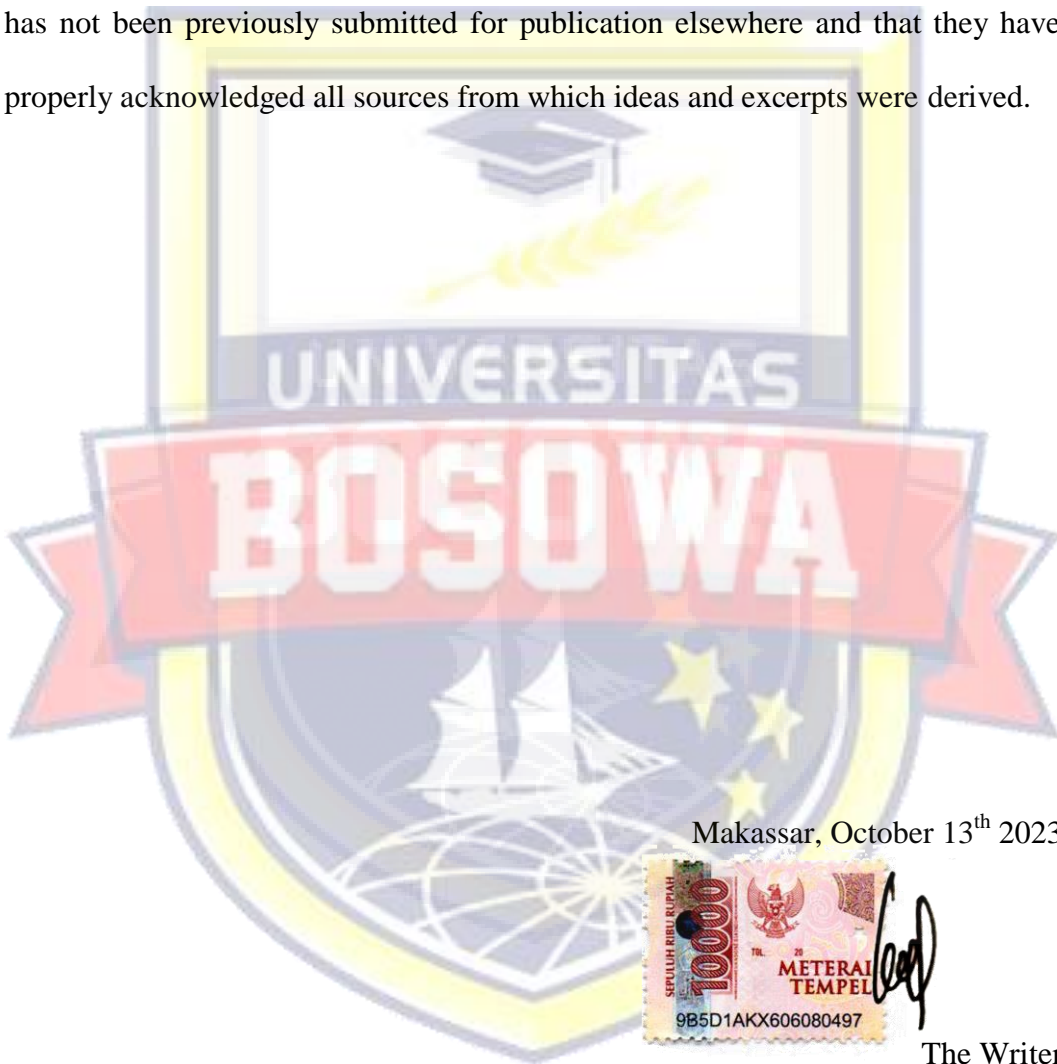
  
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## STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

The writers confirms that they have independently composed and finalized the thesis titled **Laurel's Depression in the Novel Love Letters to the Dead** with guidance from their supervisors. The writer also assure that the thesis's content has not been previously submitted for publication elsewhere and that they have properly acknowledged all sources from which ideas and excerpts were derived.



Makassar, October 13<sup>th</sup> 2023



The Writer

Fajar Islam



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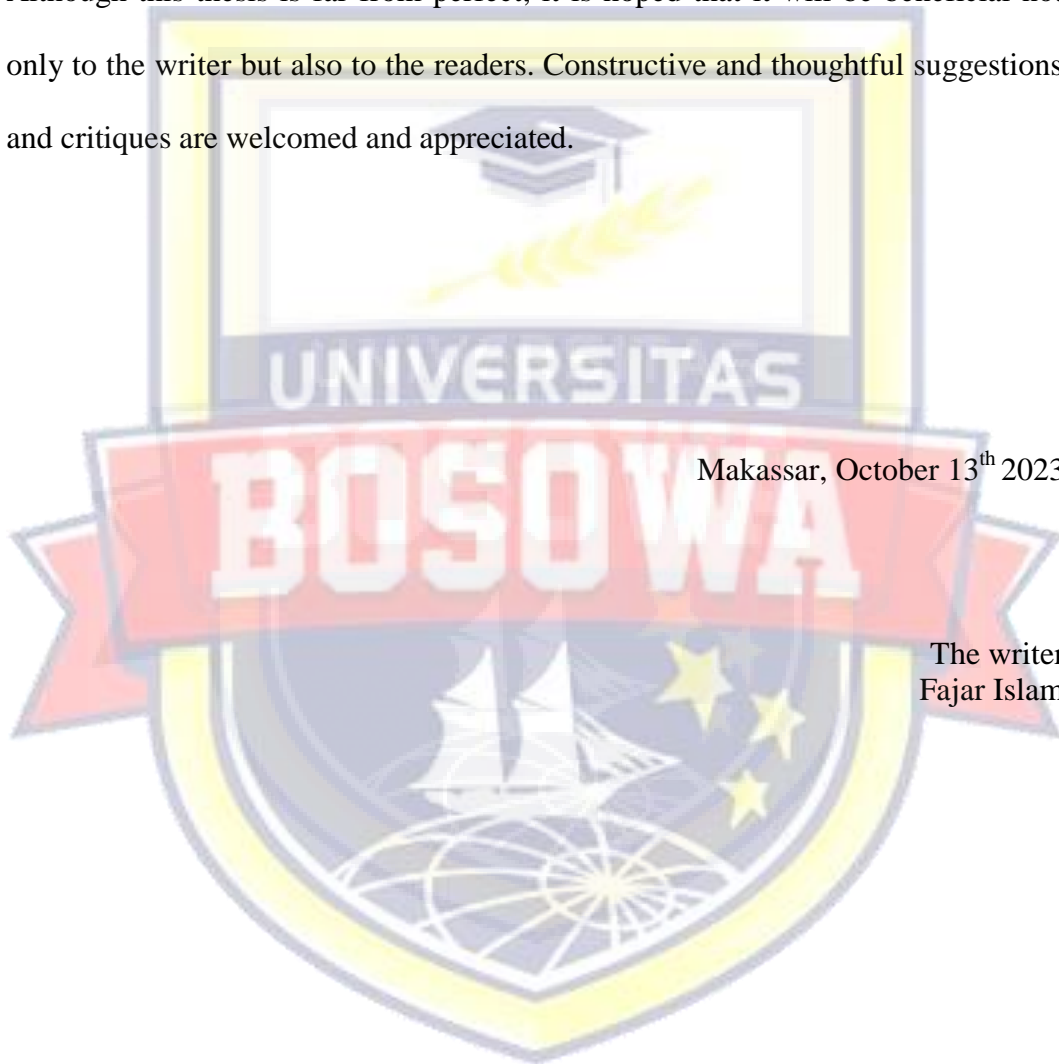
The writer expresses his deepest gratitude to his beloved family, his mother **Nurmiati**, his father **Firdaus**, his sister **Dini Firdayanti**, along with his sister's husband **Rahmat**, and his niece **Rumaisha** for their boundless love, prayers, and unwavering support.

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Makassar, October 13<sup>th</sup> 2023

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## ABSTRACT

Fajar Islam. 4519051014. “*LAUREL’S DEPRESSION IN THE NOVEL LOVE LETTERS TO THE DEAD BY AVA DELLAIRA*”. English Literature, Faculty of Education and Literature, Bosowa University. Supervisors: Sudirman Maca and Asyrafunnisa.

This study aimed to provide insights into the complex experiences of individuals dealing with depression and enhancing our understanding of mental health. Focusing on the character Laurel in *Love Letters to the Dead*, the research explored depression symptoms, factors, and cope mechanisms.

The method used in this research is a qualitative descriptive research methodology with a psychological approach. Data is obtained by repeatedly reading the novel, taking notes, and then categorizing data related to this study.

The results of this study showed that the factors contributing to Laurel's depression were categorized into two main categories: firstly, a stressful environment and life events, and secondly, psychological vulnerability caused by facing sexual abuse, divorce, and mourning. Laurel also exhibited depressive symptoms, including emotional, cognitive, motivational, and physical depression symptoms. Laurel used four types of defense mechanisms to cope with her depressive disorder: repression, displacement, reaction formation, and sublimation. The researcher identified a total of 39 data points, which could be further classified as follows: 6 data points related to depressive factors, 28 data points related to depressive symptoms, and 6 data points related to defense mechanisms. From the explanations above, it could be concluded that depression could occur in individuals simultaneously with various causes.

**Keyword:** Psychoanalysis, depression, defense mechanism, factor depression.

## ABSTRAK

Fajar Islam. 4519051014. “*LAUREL’S DEPRESSION IN THE NOVEL LOVE LETTERS TO THE DEAD BY AVA DELLAIRA*”. Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan dan Sastra, Universitas Bosowa. Pembimbing: Sudirman Maca dan Asyrafunnisa.

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memberikan wawasan tentang pengalaman kompleks individu yang menghadapi depresi dan meningkatkan pemahaman kita tentang kesehatan mental. Fokus penelitian ini adalah karakter Laurel dalam *Love Letters to the Dead*, yang menjelajahi gejala depresi, faktor-faktor yang berkontribusi, dan mekanisme penanganannya.

Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metodologi penelitian deskriptif kualitatif dengan pendekatan psikologis. Data diperoleh dengan membaca novel berulang kali, mencatat, dan kemudian mengkategorikan data yang terkait dengan penelitian ini.

Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa faktor-faktor yang berkontribusi pada depresi Laurel dapat dikategorikan menjadi dua kategori utama: pertama, lingkungan yang stres dan peristiwa kehidupan, dan kedua, kerentanan psikologis yang disebabkan oleh menghadapi pelecehan seksual, perceraian, dan berduka. Laurel juga menunjukkan gejala depresi, termasuk gejala emosional, kognitif, motivasional, dan fisik. Laurel menggunakan empat jenis mekanisme pertahanan untuk mengatasi gangguan depresinya: represi, pergeseran, reaksi berlebihan, dan sublimasi. Peneliti mengidentifikasi total 39 data, yang dapat diklasifikasikan lebih lanjut sebagai berikut: 6 data terkait dengan faktor depresi, 28 data terkait dengan gejala depresi, dan 6 data terkait dengan mekanisme pertahanan. Dari penjelasan di atas, dapat disimpulkan bahwa depresi dapat terjadi pada individu secara bersamaan dengan berbagai penyebab.

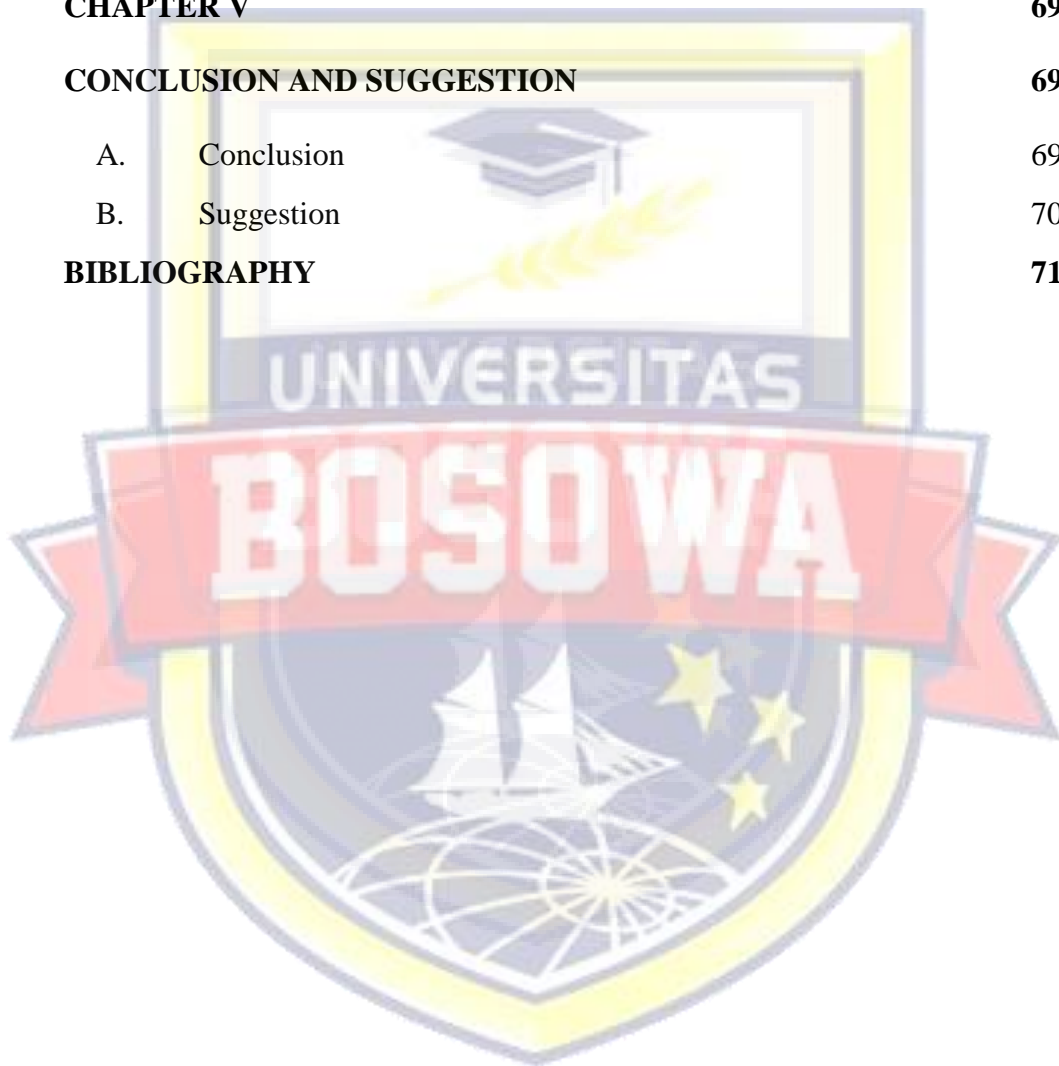
**Kata kunci:** Psikoanalisis, depresi, mekanisme pertahanan, faktor depresi.



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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of background, reason for choosing the title, problem of the research, scope of the research, research of questions, objectives of the research, and the significance of the study.

### A. Background

In recent years, literature has emerged as an important medium for exploring and understanding mental health conditions such as depression. Authors have used their stories and characters to raise awareness of mental health issues, challenge stereotypes, and offer hope and support to those struggling with their mental health. One such example is Ava Dellaira's novel *Love Letters to the Dead*, which explores the theme of depression through the character of Laurel.

Literature is an integral part of society, and its existence relies on language, which is fundamentally a social construct. Literary traditions, such as symbolism and metaphor, are inherently social in nature (Wellek & Warren, 1970:89). Through literature, authors share their inner experiences with readers or the public. According to (Pradopo, 2017:19), literary works portray the world and human life. Truth serves as the main criterion for literary works, representing everything the author intends to depict.

Contemporary literary theory challenges the rigid distinction between prose and poetry, opting instead to classify imaginative literature into three primary genres: fiction, drama, and poetry (Wellek & Warren, 1970:236). As a genre,



fiction encompasses a broad range of narrative forms, including novels, short stories, and epics. Novels, specifically, are extended pieces of fiction that allow for in-depth exploration of complex storylines, while short stories offer concise narratives that often aim to convey a specific mood or idea.

A psychological novel is a genre of fiction that encompasses a wide range of works, characterized by its central focus on delving into the inner experiences and thoughts of its characters. Rather than prioritizing plot and action, these novels emphasize exploring and analyzing the characters' spiritual, emotional, and mental lives. Many writers throughout the last two centuries have contributed to the development of psychological novels (Cuddon, 2013:570).

There are several reasons why the writer chooses "Laurel's Depression in the Novel Love Letters to the Dead" as the topic for the thesis. One reason is the relevance to the issue of mental health.

Furthermore, Love Letters to the Dead is a popular and critically acclaimed novel that has been widely studied and analyzed. As such, it provides a rich source of material for a thesis, with many potential avenues for exploration and analysis.

Based on the background of the study, the writer is interested in depression fields of the novel entitled "Laurel's Depression In The Novel Love Letters To The Dead By Ava Dellaira".

## **B. Reason for Choosing the Title**

The writer chooses *Love Letters to the Dead* because it is a popular young adult novel that has garnered critical acclaim for its treatment of complex themes such as grief, loss, and mental illness.

## **C. Research Problem**

A person's mental condition plays a crucial role in shaping their overall well-being and influencing multiple aspects of their life. One of the fundamental ways it manifests is through thoughts. Mental health can impact how individuals view and interpret the world, influencing their beliefs, attitudes, and judgments.

Laurel's depression in the novel *Love Letters to the Dead* is to explore and analyze the manifestation, contributing factors, and cope mechanisms of Laurel's depression, including the social pressures and unrealistic expectations she faces, as well as the impact of the trauma of losing her sister. By delving into these aspects, the study seeks to provide insights into the experiences of individuals dealing with her depression, inform mental health understanding, and potentially contribute to the development of effective interventions and support strategies for individuals facing similar challenges.

## **D. Scope of the Research**

The study will focus on exploring the factors that influence the depression experienced by Laurel. The study seeks to understand their significance in contributing to Laurel's depression.

## E. Research Questions

Based on the identification of the problem, the formulation of the research problem for this research such as :

1. What are the factors and symptoms of depression that contribute to Laurel's depression in the novel *Love Letters to the Dead*?
2. How does Laurel employ cope mechanisms to deal with her depression in the novel *Love Letters to the Dead*?

## F. Research Objectives

Based on the formulation of the problem, the objective of the study for this research such as :

1. To identify the factors and symptoms of depression that contribute to Laurel's depression.
2. To identify and examine the specific coping mechanisms the character Laurel utilizes in the novel *Love Letters to the Dead* to deal with her depression.

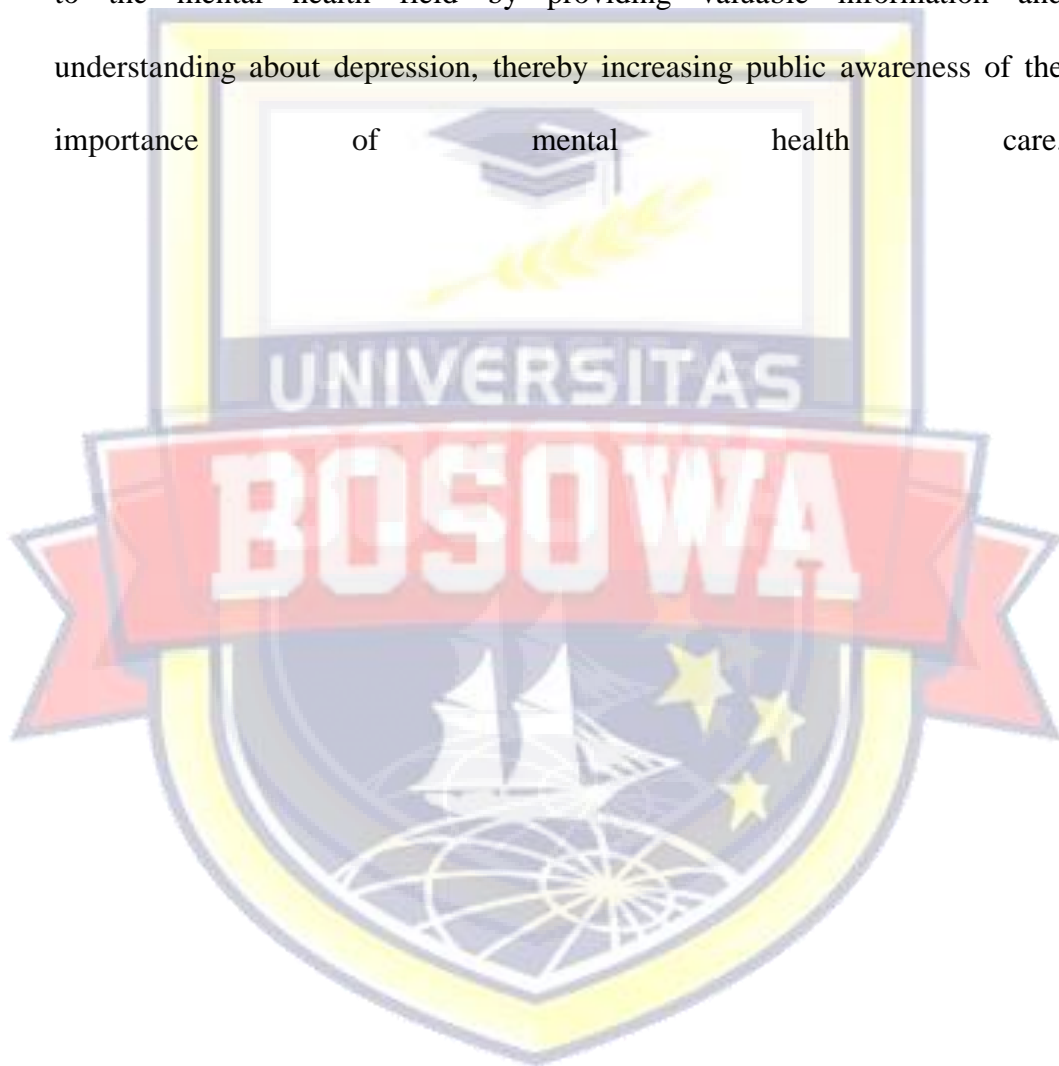
## G. Significance of the Research

### 1. Theoretical Significances

This research aims to enhance understanding of how depression is portrayed in literary works, providing new insights into psychological theories and fresh perspectives in literary studies. Additionally, the exploration of the theme of depression in a specific novel opens up possibilities for future research in both the fields of literary studies and psychology.

## 2. Practical Significances

This research can provide information and understanding about mental health issues, particularly depression, which can increase public awareness of the importance of mental health care. The potential to contribute significantly to the mental health field by providing valuable information and understanding about depression, thereby increasing public awareness of the importance of mental health care.





## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

In this chapter, the writer addressed a range of topics including prior research, related concepts, and theories.

#### **A. Previous Studies**

About this research of “Laurel's Depression In The Novel Love Letters To The Dead By Ava Dellaira”, there has been a previous study. The writer takes a review of related literature from other references as a comparison that closes relation to this research:

The research article "Psychological Analysis on the Main Character Personality in the Short Stories by Roald Dahl". The research aimed to analyze the main character's personality traits in selected short stories by Roald Dahl. The study uses a qualitative approach and collects data through a literature review of the short stories. The analysis is based on the Five-Factor Model of personality traits, which identifies traits such as openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. The findings show that the main characters in Dahl's short stories have unique and intricate personality traits that shape their behavior, actions, and relationships with other characters (Bilalia, 2018).

The research article titled "The Depression Symptoms of Virginia Woolf as the Author Portrayed in Mrs Dalloway Novel". The aim of the research was to identify the symptoms of depression in Virginia Woolf by analyzing the characters of Septimus Warren Smith and Clarissa Dalloway in the novel Mrs

Dalloway. The study uses a qualitative approach, examining biographical information about Woolf and the narrations of Septimus and Clarissa. Beck's cognitive theory of depression is used to identify the symptoms. Data is collected from Mrs Dalloway and Woolf's biographies. The findings show various depression symptoms depicted in the characters, including negative expectations, self-blame, lack of motivation, suicidal thoughts in Septimus, a dejected mood, low self-evaluation, and feelings of worthlessness in Clarissa (Margiana et al., 2020).

The research article titled "A Study of the Elements of Depression in All the Bright Places (2015)". The aim of the research was to examine the depiction of depression in Jennifer Niven's novel. The study focuses on the two main characters, Theodore Finch and Violet Markey, and utilizes a descriptive analysis approach. Through textual analysis and coding, the research identifies various elements of depression behaviors based on Beck's Cognitive Theory of Depression. These elements include cognitive distortions such as all-or-nothing thinking, overgeneralization, magnification and minimizing, personalizing, mental filter, jumping to conclusions, labeling, emotional reasoning, mind reading, and disqualifying the positive. The article concludes that Niven addresses depression and suicide in a serious and realistic manner while offering a sense of hope for the future amidst challenging circumstances (Zainol Abidin & Abu Bakar, 2020).

The research article entitled "Depression Of The Main Character Portrayed In Topdog/Underdog Play Script (2001) By Suzan Lori Parks" The research analyzed the depression of the main characters in Suzan Lori Parks' play script

Topdog/Underdog. The research used a descriptive qualitative research method with a psychoanalysis approach. The writer utilized Freud's theory of psychoanalysis and Bhowmik and Beck's theory of depression symptoms to classify the data. The study found that the play script contained 23 data of depression divided into 32 parts, with the most dominant data being Id and Cognitive symptoms. The study aimed to be useful for future researchers (Anjelia et al., 2021).

The research article titled "The Main Character's Depression in Jasmine Warga's *My Heart and Other Black Holes*" examines the depiction of depression in the novel's main character. The study aims to analyze the form of depression portrayed in the character and the coping strategies she employs. The research utilizes a descriptive analysis approach, considering character, plot, conflict, and settings. The findings indicate that the main character experiences severe depression, encompassing various physical, psychological, social, emotional, and motivational symptoms. The study also identifies the character's self-defense mechanisms to cope with her depression (Fitri et al., 2022).

The research article titled "Analysis of the Main Character's Mental Depression in *A Girl Like Her* Film Directed by Amy S. Weber Using Freud's Psychoanalytic Theory". Focuses on the depiction of mental depression in the main character of the film. The character, Jessica Burns, faces bullying, resulting in her depression and eventual suicide. The study applies Sigmund Freud's theory of defense mechanisms to understand Jessica's behavior. Data is collected from character dialogues in the film and relevant sources. The research employs a

qualitative approach, emphasizing words, images, and feelings. The findings highlight six defense mechanisms such as repression, denial, projection, displacement, regression, and sublimation that contribute to the development of depression in the character's behaviour (Pangaribuan & Halomoan, 2022).

The research article titled “Anxiety And Depressive Disorders Toward The Main Character In Paula Hawkins’ Novel The Girl On The Train”. The research analyzed the anxiety and depressive disorder in the novel *The Girl on the Train* by Paula Hawkins using a psychological approach. The main character, Rachel, had three types of anxiety caused by different factors: environment, threat, frustration, gender, and fear. Rachel also showed symptoms of depression due to infertility, infidelity, divorce, job loss, and alcohol. To cope with her anxiety and depression, Rachel used repression, displacement, and rationalization as defense mechanisms. The study concludes that anxiety and depressive disorder can occur simultaneously with different root causes (Siregar et al., 2022).

The research articles provided share similarities in their focus on analyzing mental health issues, particularly depression, in different literary works. The articles employ qualitative research methods, utilizing descriptive analysis and psychoanalysis approaches to examine the portrayal of depression and identify symptoms and coping mechanisms within the characters. However, each research article is unique, as they explore different literary works, authors, and characters and utilize different theories and frameworks. These research articles offer diverse perspectives on the depiction and understanding of depression in literature.



## **B. Literary Psychology**

### **1. Definition of Literacy Psychology**

Literary psychology is an interdisciplinary field that combines the insights and methodologies of psychology and literary studies to explore the psychological aspects of literature. At its core, literary psychology seeks to understand how literature can impact our psychological well-being and how readers engage with literary texts at a psychological level (Wimsat & Brooks, 1964:716).

One key focus of literary psychology is the emotional response that literature can elicit from readers. Literature can evoke a wide range of emotions in readers, including sadness, joy, fear, and anger. Through examining the emotional impact of literature, literary psychologists seek to understand how literature can serve as a tool for emotional regulation and provide a catharsis for readers (Guerin et al., 2005:153).

Another area of interest in literary psychology is empathy. Empathy, or the ability to understand and share the feelings of others, is a key aspect of the human experience, and literature can be a powerful tool for cultivating empathy (Cranney & Morris, 2011:251). Through reading literature, readers can develop a deeper understanding of the perspectives and experiences of others and can become more empathetic and compassionate individuals.

Characterization is also an important aspect of literary psychology. The way that characters are portrayed in literature can have a significant impact on readers' psychological responses to the text (Wellek & Warren, 1970:75).

Characters who are well-developed and relatable can evoke stronger emotional responses from readers and can provide a means of identification and connection between the reader and the text.

Finally, literary psychology examines the various literary devices that authors use to create meaning and evoke psychological responses from readers. Literary devices, such as metaphor, simile, and imagery, can have significant psychological effects on readers and help create a vivid and immersive reading experience that can evoke emotional and cognitive responses.

Therefore, literary psychology offers a unique perspective on the psychological aspects of literature. By exploring the emotional, cognitive, and behavioral responses that individuals have to literary works, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the ways that literature can impact our psychological well-being (McGovern et al., 2010:13). Through its interdisciplinary approach, literary psychology offers valuable insights into the complex interplay between literature and the human mind and provides a rich and nuanced framework for understanding the psychological significance of literature.

## **2. Aspects of Literacy Psychology**

Literacy psychology studies how people learn to read, write, and communicate (Minderop, 2011:59). It encompasses various cognitive and behavioral processes involved in language acquisition and development. Some key aspects of literacy psychology include:

- a. **Phonological Awareness:** It refers to the ability to identify and manipulate sounds in language. This skill is critical for developing reading and writing abilities.
- b. **Vocabulary Acquisition:** It involves learning the meanings of words and understanding how they are used in context. Building a strong vocabulary is crucial for effective communication and comprehension.
- c. **Reading Comprehension:** It involves understanding and interpreting written language. This skill requires the reader to integrate their background knowledge, linguistic knowledge, and cognitive abilities to extract meaning from written texts.
- d. **Writing Skills:** Writing involves not only producing coherent and grammatically correct sentences but also organizing ideas and expressing them in a clear and concise manner. Effective writing skills are essential for academic and professional success.
- e. **Metacognition:** It refers to the ability to reflect on and regulate one's own learning processes. Metacognitive skills are essential for monitoring comprehension, identifying and resolving comprehension problems, and developing self-regulation strategies.
- f. **Motivation:** Motivation plays a critical role in literacy development. Students motivated to learn are more likely to engage in reading and writing activities and persist in the face of challenges.

### 3. Psychology in Character Development

Psychology plays a significant role in understanding and developing fictional characters. When authors create characters, they often draw on psychological theories and concepts to make them more relatable and realistic (Kennedy & Gioia, 2007:43). Some ways in which psychology is used in character development include:

- a. **Personality Traits:** Characters are often defined by their personality traits, such as extraversion, conscientiousness, openness, and agreeableness. Psychological research has identified these as the "Big Five" personality traits, and they are often used as a framework for creating well-rounded characters.
- b. **Motivations:** A character's motivations are often influenced by their psychological needs and desires. For example, a character who is motivated by the need for power may behave differently from a character who is motivated by a desire for social connection.
- c. **Psychological Disorders:** Characters can also be created with psychological disorders, such as anxiety, depression, or post-traumatic stress disorder. These disorders can add depth and complexity to a character and provide insight into their behavior.
- d. **Social Influence:** Characters are often influenced by the social norms and expectations of their environment. These norms can affect a character's behavior and personality, as well as their relationships with other characters.



- e. **Developmental Psychology:** Understanding the stages of human development can also be useful in creating characters. Characters can be created to reflect different developmental stages, such as infancy, childhood, adolescence, and adulthood.

### **C. Psychoanalysis**

The psychoanalysis is one of the literary criticisms that was developed by Sigmund Freud. Psychoanalytic criticism is a form of literary criticism that uses some of the techniques of psychoanalysis in interpreting literature (Kennedy & Gioia, 2007:92). Psychoanalysis relates to the functions and development of the human mind. This field is an integral part of psychology and has made substantial contributions to understanding human psychology over time (Minderop, 2011:11).

Psychoanalysis encompasses various approaches to understanding literature through the lens of psychoanalysis. These approaches can be broadly categorized into four types (Brenner, 1996:155):

1. **Analyzing the Author:** This type of criticism focuses on the author's life, experiences, and unconscious motivations as reflected in their work. It attempts to uncover hidden meanings and psychological aspects of the author's mind that may have influenced the creation of the literary work.
2. **Examining the Work's Contents:** This approach delves into the unconscious motivations, desires, and symbols present within the literary text. It seeks to uncover the hidden meanings, conflicts, and psychological dynamics of the characters and events depicted in the work.



3. Focusing on Formal Construction: This type of criticism emphasizes the formal aspects of the literary work, such as its structure, narrative techniques, and linguistic devices. It explores how these formal elements contribute to the overall meaning and interpretation of the text.
4. Studying the Reader's Perspective: This approach shifts the focus from the author and the text to the reader's response and interpretation of the literary work. It explores how readers engage with the text, their subjective experiences, and the ways in which their own psychological and emotional processes influence their understanding and reception of the work.

At the core of psychoanalysis lies the belief that many psychological phenomena are driven by unconscious forces, which are typically inaccessible to our conscious awareness. These unconscious forces can include repressed memories, unfulfilled desires, unresolved conflicts, and primal instincts, all of which exert a profound influence on our psychological well-being. Psychoanalysis is a theory about the human mind and a practice aimed at healing those considered to suffer from mental disorders (Eagleton, 2003:138).

A central concept in psychoanalysis is the structure of the mind, consisting of three components: the id, ego, and superego. The id represents primal instincts and desires seeking immediate gratification, while the ego mediates between the id's demands and external reality, employing rationality and defense mechanisms to navigate conflicts. The superego embodies internalized societal and moral standards, guiding behavior through a sense of conscience.

## **D. Concept of Depression**

### **1. Definition of Depression**

Depression is a mental health disorder that affects a person's mood, thoughts, and behaviour. It is characterized by persistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and worthlessness, as well as a loss of interest in once enjoyable activities (Jiwo, 2012:5). In a psychological state that depression is a psychological disorder that causes a person to have a mood disorder without regard to the condition of other individuals or surroundings (Downing-Orr, 2013:26).

One of the most common symptoms of depression is a persistent feeling of sadness or hopelessness. People with depression may struggle to experience joy or pleasure from activities they once enjoyed. They may also feel guilty or worthless and negatively view themselves and their abilities. Depression can also lead to changes in appetite and sleep patterns, negatively affecting physical health (Jiwo, 2012:7).

Another common symptom of depression is difficulty concentrating or making decisions. People with depression may struggle to focus on tasks, feel overwhelmed by simple decisions, or find it challenging to remember important details. This can impact their ability to perform well at work or school and can lead to feelings of frustration or embarrassment.

Furthermore, depression is a complex mental health disorder that can significantly impact an individual's life. While it can be difficult to diagnose and manage, it is important to seek professional help if you or someone you

know is experiencing symptoms of depression. With proper treatment and support, individuals with depression can learn to manage their symptoms and live fulfilling lives.

## **2. Symptoms of Depression**

Depression is a mental health condition characterized by certain signs and symptoms. Some of the core signs and symptoms that are widely recognized and accepted include having a consistently low mood, feeling pessimistic about life, being overly self-critical, and experiencing changes in activity levels, such as feeling slowed down or agitated (Beck, 1970:10).

The symptoms of depression can be categorized into four major headings: emotional, cognitive, motivational, and physical and vegetative (Beck, 1970:16-33).

### **a. Emotional Manifestations**

Motivational manifestations in the context of depression refer to the conscious experiences of desires, strivings, and impulses that are prominent in individuals with depression.

- 1) Dejection mood: Depressed individuals often describe a dejected mood as feeling hopeless and worried.
- 2) Negative feelings towards self: Depressed individuals commonly experience negative feelings towards themselves, characterized by a strong sense of self-dislike.
- 3) Reduction in gratification: This refers to a decrease in the ability to find enjoyment or satisfaction in activities that used to bring pleasure.

- 4) Loss of emotional attachments: This involves feeling disconnected or detached from others and experiencing decreased emotional closeness or attachment.
- 5) Crying spells: This refers to episodes of frequent and uncontrollable crying.
- 6) Loss of mirth response: Mirth refers to feelings of joy, amusement, or laughter.

**b. Cognitive Manifestations**

Cognitive manifestations of depression encompass various phenomena related to a person's thinking patterns.

- 1) Low self-evaluation: This means having a negative view of oneself, feeling unworthy, or lacking confidence.
- 2) Negative expectations: This refers to expecting the worst outcomes or anticipating negative events in the future.
- 3) Self-blame and self-criticism: This involves holding oneself responsible for problems or failures, even when it may not be entirely justified.
- 4) Indecisiveness: Indecisiveness refers to having difficulty making decisions. People who struggle with indecisiveness may feel uncertain.
- 5) Distortion of body image: This refers to having a distorted perception of one's physical appearance.

**c. Motivational Manifestations**

Motivational manifestations in the context of depression refer to the conscious experiences of desires, strivings, and impulses that are prominent in individuals with depression.

- 1) Paralysis of the will: This refers to a feeling of being unable to take action or make decisions.
- 2) Avoidance, escapist, and withdrawal wishes: These are desires to avoid or escape from certain situations, responsibilities, or interactions.
- 3) Suicidal wishes: These are thoughts or desires about ending one's own life.
- 4) Increased dependency: This refers to a greater reliance on others for support, reassurance, or decision-making.

**d. Physical and Vegetative Manifestations**

Physical and vegetative manifestations of depression are symptoms that relate to the body and its functioning.

- 1) Loss of appetite: This means a significant decrease in the desire to eat.
- 2) Sleep disturbance: This refers to difficulties with sleeping patterns.
- 3) Loss of libido: Loss of libido refers to decreased sexual desire or interest.
- 4) Fatigability: Fatigability means feeling easily tired or exhausted, even with minimal physical or mental exertion.



### 3. Factors that Cause Depression

The causes of depression are complex or multifactorial. Depression is not solely caused by an imbalance of chemicals in the brain that can be treated with medication.

According to (Jiwo, 2012:9), several risks or factors contribute to depression, including:

- a. Genetics and family history: Having a family history of depression increases the likelihood of an individual experiencing depression, although it does not guarantee that children or siblings will develop depression.
- b. Psychological vulnerability: Personality traits and how individuals cope with life's challenges can also play a role in the onset of depression.
- c. Stressful environment and life events: Various studies indicate that childhood trauma, such as abuse, as well as events in adulthood, like divorce, loss of a parent, job loss, retirement, and financial difficulties, can trigger the onset of depression.
- d. Biological factors: Depression can sometimes occur after childbirth or as a result of viral infections or other infections.

It is important to note that there is no single cause of depression and that it is often the result of a combination of factors. Additionally, not everyone with risk factors will develop depression; some individuals without risk factors may still develop the condition. Seeking professional help from a mental health provider is important for accurate diagnosis and effective treatment of depression.

## **E. Defense Mechanisms**

According to (Freud, 1926:163), defense mechanisms are unconscious psychological processes that serve to protect the ego from anxiety arising from conflicting thoughts, desires, or emotions. These defense mechanisms operate on an unconscious level, meaning that individuals are typically unaware of their presence or influence on their thoughts and behavior.

Defense mechanisms occur when there is a redirection of impulses or emotions toward finding a substitute object. For example, aggressive impulses that are intended for someone considered threatening are redirected towards another individual perceived as safer to attack (Minderop, 2011:29).

The primary function of defense mechanisms is to reduce or redirect the experience of anxiety or distress by distorting or transforming reality in some way. They serve as psychological strategies to help individuals manage conflicting thoughts, emotions, or desires and maintain a sense of psychological equilibrium.

Freud in (Feist et al., 2018:39-42) identified several primary defense mechanisms, including repression, reaction formation, displacement, fixation, regression, projection, introjection, and sublimation. These mechanisms serve as psychological strategies employed by individuals to cope with anxiety or distressing thoughts and emotions.

### **1. Repression**

Repression is the fundamental defense mechanism, as it plays a role in all other defense mechanisms. When the ego perceives undesirable impulses from

the id that could be threatening, it employs repression to protect itself. Repression involves pushing these threatening thoughts, emotions, or desires into the unconscious mind, effectively keeping them hidden from conscious awareness.

## **2. Reaction formation**

Reaction formation is a defense mechanism in psychology that involves behaving in a manner that is opposite or contrary to one's true feelings, impulses, or desires. It is a way of repressing or denying unacceptable thoughts, emotions, or urges by expressing exaggeratedly opposite attitudes or behaviors.

## **3. Displacement**

Displacement is a defense mechanism in which individuals redirect their unacceptable impulses, emotions, or desires from their original target onto a substitute target. Unlike reaction formation, which involves adopting opposite attitudes or behaviors towards a specific person or object, displacement allows for a broader range of targets for the redirected emotions.

## **4. Fixation**

According to Freud, fixation is a defense mechanism that occurs when the ego becomes stuck or remains attached to a particular stage of psychosexual development. It involves the permanent fixation or lingering of the libido (sexual energy) at an earlier, more primitive stage, preventing the individual from progressing smoothly to the next stage of development.

## 5. Regression

According to Freud's psychoanalytic theory, regression is a defense mechanism that temporarily reverses an earlier stage of psychosexual development in response to stress, anxiety, or other challenging situations. It is a way for individuals to retreat to a previous stage where they feel more comfortable and secure.

## 6. Projection

Projection is a defense mechanism described by Freud in psychoanalytic theory. It involves attributing unacceptable or unwanted impulses, feelings, or thoughts to others, usually another person. In projection, the individual reduces their anxiety by externalizing or seeing in others what actually resides within their unconscious.

## 7. Introjection

Introjection, as described by Freud in psychoanalytic theory, is a defense mechanism in which individuals incorporate positive qualities, values, or characteristics of another person into their ego. It involves internalizing aspects of another person as a way to enhance self-worth and minimize feelings of inferiority.

## 8. Sublimation

According to Freud's psychoanalytic theory, sublimation is a defense mechanism that serves both the individual and society by redirecting the energy of the sexual drive (Eros) toward socially acceptable and culturally

valued activities. It involves repressing the genital aim of Eros and substituting it with a cultural or social aim.

### CHAPTER III

#### RESEARCH METHOD

This chapter consist of type of the research, source of the data, procedure of collection data and method of analyzing data.

##### A. Type of the Research

The research was conducted using qualitative descriptive research. According to (Ratna, 2015:53), descriptive analysis is done by describing words which were then followed by analysis. Qualitative descriptive research aimed to provide a detailed and in-depth description of a phenomenon or event. In the context of the novel *Love Letters to the Dead* by Ava Dellaira, qualitative descriptive research was utilized to describe the depression experienced by the main character, Laurel. This research involved collecting data through content analysis of the novel and subsequently interpreting the data to gain a comprehensive understanding of Laurel's depression.

The results of this qualitative descriptive research offered a detailed and comprehensive description of the depression experienced by Laurel. The novel portrayed Laurel's feelings and thoughts of isolation, sadness, and worthlessness in various instances.



Furthermore, this research examined the factors influencing Laurel's depression. Some potential factors that were discussed included social pressures, such as high parental expectations, as well as the traumatic experiences encountered by the main character. In the novel, Laurel underwent significant trauma following her sister's death, which was identified as one of the contributing factors to her depression.

Thus, through descriptive qualitative research, a deeper understanding of the depression experienced by the main character in the novel *Love Letters to the Dead* was achieved. This research made a valuable contribution to our comprehension of how depression can impact an individual both physically and emotionally, as well as shed light on the potential factors contributing to such an experience.

#### **B. Source of The data**

The study utilized two sources. The first source was the novel *Love Letters to the Dead* by Ava Dellaira, published by Hot Key Books in 2014, consisting of 327 pages. This novel served as the primary source of data, providing first-hand information about the depression experienced by the main character, Laurel.

The second source included literary books, previous studies, and relevant articles, which were used as references to support and enrich the research. These secondary sources offered valuable information and insights that contributed to a comprehensive understanding of the topic. They were used to provide background information on depression, explore relevant theories and concepts, and offer comparative analysis with other works in the field.

The study gathered primary and secondary data by incorporating these two sources, ensuring a well-rounded and evidence-based approach. The novel *Love Letters to The Dead* served as the primary source, providing details and context about Laurel's depression. Meanwhile, the secondary sources offered a broader perspective and supported the primary data analysis.

### **C. Procedure of Collection Data**

In this research, the data collection process involved several steps. Firstly, the novel was read multiple times to gain a deep understanding of its meaning and themes. This provided a comprehensive foundation for the analysis of depression in the novel.

Secondly, relevant information related to the topic of analysis was gathered. This included books, theses, journals, and literary theories that focused on depressive disorders from a psychoanalytic perspective. These sources served as secondary references to support the analysis of the primary data obtained from the novel.

Lastly, the selected text was read and highlighted, with key information and insights extracted that contributed to the analysis of depression in the novel. This meticulous approach ensured that important details were identified and utilized to develop a comprehensive understanding of the topic.

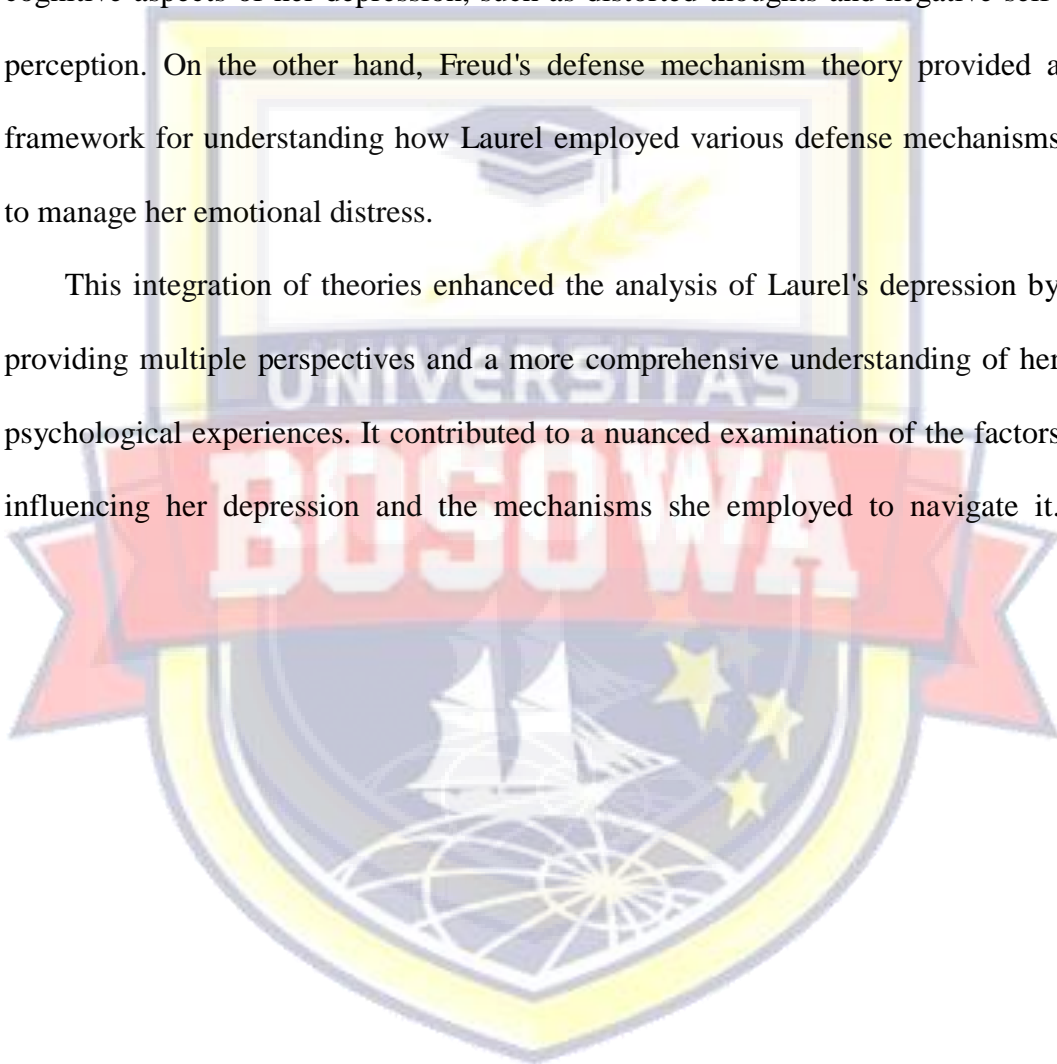
### **D. Method of Analyzing Data**

The research was applied with a comprehensive approach by integrating Beck's depression symptoms theory and Freud's defense mechanism theory to analyze the factors contributing to Laurel's depression and cope mechanisms.

Laurel's negative thinking pattern was examined using Beck's theory, while how she managed her depression was provided by Freud's defense mechanisms.

By integrating these theories, a deep understanding of Laurel's depression was gained through the study. Beck's theory allowed for an exploration of the cognitive aspects of her depression, such as distorted thoughts and negative self-perception. On the other hand, Freud's defense mechanism theory provided a framework for understanding how Laurel employed various defense mechanisms to manage her emotional distress.

This integration of theories enhanced the analysis of Laurel's depression by providing multiple perspectives and a more comprehensive understanding of her psychological experiences. It contributed to a nuanced examination of the factors influencing her depression and the mechanisms she employed to navigate it.



## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presented two sub chapters they were the depression of the main characters and defense mechanism used to cope with the main character's depression.

#### A. Findings

##### 1. Factors and Symptoms of Depression

The writer discovered 6 data that contributed to Laurel's depression, divided into 5 data of stressful environment and life events and 1 data psychological vulnerability.

##### a. Factors that cause depression

###### *Data 1*

“After May died last April, it’s like my brain just shut off. I didn’t know how to answer any of the questions my parents asked, so I basically stopped talking for a little while. And finally we all stopped talking, at least about that. It’s a myth that grief makes you closer. We were all on our own islands—Dad in the house, Mom in the apartment she’d moved into a few years before, and me bouncing back and forth in silence, too out of it to go to the last months of middle school.” (Dellaira, 2014:6)

In the phrase **After May died last April, it’s like my brain just shut off** in the first line of Data 1 above, it could be seen *stressful environment and life events* depression factors because of Laurel's response to her sister's death, including shutting down emotionally, withdrawing from communication, and feeling isolated from her parents and her surroundings. The phrase **it was like my brain just shut off** suggests that she may have experienced a high level of



emotional distress and psychological shutdown in response to this traumatic event, which is indicative of the potential for depression. Laurel was indicative of emotional distress and potential depressive symptoms.

*Data 2*

“The next thing I remember is that his hand is in my rain forest shirt. Underneath, I mean. I swallow the Jolly Rancher whole, and it hurts stuck in my throat, so I think I can’t breathe. The frog is unsnapped, I remember, because I remember it in my hand, the plastic of it, and I remember thinking about the frog and wishing I could put it back on my shirt, because that is its home. Only now I never can. I would never be able to wear that shirt another time, and it wouldn’t be safe for the frog. He would always be lost.” (Dellaira, 2014:244).

In the phrase **The next thing I remember is that his hand is in my rain forest shirt** in the first line of Data 2 above, it indicated as *stressful environment and life events* that factors contributing to depression. The phrase **his hand in my rain forest shirt** unmistakably portrayed an invasion of Laurel's personal space and physical boundaries by Billy. It was evident that Billy had intruded upon her without her consent or permission. The violation of personal boundaries could have been emotionally distressing and uncomfortable for her, as an individual's hand had ventured inside her rain forest shirt without her consent. This intrusion into her personal space denoted a blatant violation. The encounter could have evoked a range of emotional reactions, from immediate discomfort and unease to a lingering sense of violation that extended beyond the moment itself. Such incidents stirred distress and contributed to the overall stressors that had shaped Laurel's emotional landscape.



### Data 3

“With just Dad and me at our house, it’s full of echoes everywhere. I go back in my mind to when we were all together. I can smell the sizzle of the meat from Mom making dinner. It sparkles. I can almost look out the window and see May and me in the yard, collecting ingredients for our fairy spells.” (Dellaira, 2014:10).

In the phrase **With just Dad and me at our house, it’s full of echoes everywhere** in the first line of Data 3 above, it indicated a *stressful environment and past life events* that contributing factors to depression. The phrase suggested a pervasive sense of emptiness and loneliness within the household. The echoes within the house symbolized the absence of May and the profound sense of her not being there, which intensified feelings of grief and isolation commonly associated with depression. The mention of **echoes everywhere** implied a lack of warmth and activity in the home, which could have contributed to feelings of isolation and sadness. The absence of loved ones due to past life events such as separation or loss could have been a significant factor in experiencing depression or other emotional difficulties.

### Data 4

“Yeah, but I think he’s really sad. He and my mom split up a couple years ago. And then after, you know, May ... my mom left for a ranch in California.” I paused. “I guess I’m kind of mad at her, you know? It’s like, it’s not truly fair. Why should she be the only one to get to go away? As if taking care of horses could change anything. It’s supposed to be clearing her head. But I wish she would come home.” (Dellaira, 2014:124).

In the phrase **Yeah, but I think he’s really sad. He and my mom split up a couple years ago** in the first line of Data 4 above, it indicated that

Laurel's observation of her father's sadness following her parents' separation a couple of years ago contributing factor to the *stressful environment and life events* that might have triggered her experience of depression. The divorce or separation of parents often created a tumultuous emotional atmosphere for children, leading to feelings of sadness, confusion, and instability. Laurel's acknowledgment that this event had also affected her father suggested that the emotional consequences for the family might have been significant.

*Data 5*

“I told Evan I wanted the top, but he put me on the bottom. I kept saying, “I don’t feel good,” and he kept saying, “It’s okay,” and rubbing me all over. When I tried to sit up, he pushed me back. I was swimming through the thickest fog. Everything that was happening seemed already to have happened before. He was rubbing everywhere, under my clothes. Under my skirt. What he was doing felt all wrong. I said no, but he wouldn’t listen. All I could hear was my heartbeat and the cars outside. Evan kept doing what he was doing, and the cars got so loud, as if I were lying down on the highway. And I thought May would come in one of those cars. She would pick me up and take me away.” (Dellaira, 2014:237).

Laurel had communicated her preference to Evan, expressing her desire to be on top, yet he disregarded her wishes and positioned her at the bottom. As she continually voiced her discomfort with utterances like **I don't feel good** in the second line of Data 5 above, Evan's repeated response of **It's okay**, and his physical contact further intensified her unease. Even when she attempted to sit up, he pushed her back down. The situation escalated when Evan's actions extended beyond her comfort zone, intruding into personal boundaries, including under her clothes and skirt. Laurel's discomfort and distress were further exacerbated by the realization that what Evan was doing

felt entirely inappropriate. Her vocalizations of **no** in line sixth of data 5 above were disregarded as Evan failed to listen or acknowledge her objections. This incident not only disrupted her sense of security but also contributed to the creation of an emotionally burdensome atmosphere for Laurel.

*Data 6*

“But I’m not starting at the beginning. This was Sky and me breaking up. His voice kept getting carried off by the wind. I was looking at the birds in their trees, thinking of how fast their hearts beat and wondering if their fast-beating hearts keep them warm. I might sneak out right now just to get to cry out loud” (Dellaira, 2014:180).

In the phrase **This was Sky and me breaking up. His voice kept getting carried off by the wind** in the first line of Data 6 above, it depicted the depression factor of *psychological vulnerability*. Laurel delved into the intricacies of how the breakup with Sky had affected her emotional landscape. From her perspective, the emotional turbulence stemming from the breakup became palpable, revealing a depth of emotional sensitivity. The mention of **Sky's voice being carried away by the wind** in the second line of Data 6 above, it suggested feelings of disconnection and symbolically portrayed the emergence of emotional distance. At the same time, Laurel's attention shifted to the birds in the trees, an observation that may seem trivial but held symbolic significance. As she contemplated their rapid heartbeats and wondered whether their quick pulses kept them warm, there was an interplay between Laurel's inner emotional turmoil and the external world around her.

In conclusion, Laurel grappled with emotional distress stemming from various stressors and life events. Her sister May's death prompted emotional withdrawal,

which possibly led to depression. A boundary violation with Billy added to her emotional burden. Laurel's home, devoid of her mother and sister, amplified her loneliness, possibly contributing to depression. Her father's post-divorce sadness underscored the emotional impact of family separation. An unsettling encounter with Evan disrupted her security and added to her emotional stress. Lastly, her tumultuous breakup with Sky symbolized emotional distance. These incidents collectively painted a picture of the stressors and life events that shaped Laurel's emotional landscape, potentially contributing to her experience of depression and emotional distress throughout the narrative.

#### b. Symptoms of depression

The writer discovered 28 data points of depressive symptoms Laurel experienced, divided into 12 data emotional manifestations, 5 data cognitive manifestations, 8 data motivational manifestations, and 2 data physical manifestations.

##### 1) Emotional Manifestations

###### *Data 7*

“But the thing about May is that she was beautiful, in a way that stays in your mind. Her hair was perfectly smooth, and she walked like she belonged in a better world, so the outfit made sense on her. I put it on and stared at myself in front of her mirror, trying to feel like I belonged in any world, but on me it looked like I was wearing a costume. So I used my favorite outfit from middle school instead, which is jean overalls with a long-sleeve tee shirt and hoop earrings.” (Dellaira, 2014:3).

In the phrase **I put it on and stared at myself in front of her mirror, trying to feel like I belonged in any world, but on me it looked like I was wearing a costum** in the third line of Data 7 above, showed as *negative*



*feelings towards self* of emotional manifestation depression symptom because Laurel compared her appearance and outfit choices to those of her sister, May. She felt a deep sense of inadequacy and not fitting in, especially when measuring against May's perceived beauty and confidence showed in the phrase **Her hair was perfectly smooth, and she walked like she belonged in a better world, so the outfit made sense on her** in the second line of Data 7.

#### *Data 8*

“After May died last April, it’s like my brain just shut off. I didn’t know how to answer any of the questions my parents asked, so I basically stopped talking for a little while. And finally we all stopped talking, at least about that. It’s a myth that grief makes you closer. We were all on our own islands—Dad in the house, Mom in the apartment she’d moved into a few years before, and me bouncing back and forth in silence, too out of it to go to the last months of middle school.” (Dellaira, 2014:6).

In the phrase **After May died last April, it’s like my brain just shut off** in the first line of Data 8 above, showed as *dejection mood* of emotional manifestation depression symptom because, it suggested a cognitive and emotional disconnection, which is indicative of the Laurel’s dejection and feeling of being emotionally overwhelmed after May's death. Laurel's description of her brain **shut off** implied that she experienced a significant cognitive and emotional impact in response to May's death. This is a common response to a traumatic event like the loss of a loved one, where individuals may find it difficult to effectively process their emotions and thoughts.

#### *Data 9*

“Eventually Dad turned up the volume on his baseball games and went back to work at Rhodes Construction, and Mom left to go away to a ranch in



California two months later. Maybe she was mad that I couldn't tell her what happened. But I can't tell anyone." (Dellaira, 2014:6).

In the phrase **Maybe she was mad that I couldn't tell her what happened. But can't tell anyone** in the third line of Data 9 above, showed as *negative feelings toward herself* of emotional manifestations depression symptoms. Laurel was considering the possibility that her mother's decision to leave could be attributed to her inability to communicate and share the details of her sister's death. In the phrase **But I can't tell anyone** showed as self-imposed silence or inability to confide in anyone may have contributed to Laurel's negative feelings toward herself. She might have experienced guilt, shame, or a sense of inadequacy for not being able to share her feelings and experiences, which was common in individuals dealing with difficult emotions and trauma.

*Data 10*

"I'm thinking of a feeling right now," I said to Mom.  
 "A feeling that's more happy or more sad?" Mom asked.  
 "More sad," I said." (Dellaira, 2014:94).

It categorized as *dejection mood* of emotional manifestation depression symptom because it reflected a prevailing sense of sadness or melancholy. In this context, Laurel was engaged in a conversation with her mom, who had asked her to describe the feeling she was currently experiencing. When Laurel responded with **More sad** it suggested that she was then grappling with an intensified sense of sadness or emotional distress. The phrase implied that Laurel might have been experiencing some level of sadness before that

moment, but at that point, it had deepened, leading to a heightened sense of dejection or unhappiness.

*Data 11*

“And then I was so angry that everything in my body clenched together. I didn’t know what “road” she thought May went down, or if she was trying to say that’s why she died. She wouldn’t know. No one did. She wasn’t there. No one was, no one but me. I was so angry that if my throat hadn’t been clenched too tight, I might have screamed at her. If she felt so bad about it and all, why didn’t she just give me an A? Grownups can be such fakes, I thought. They are always acting like they are trying to help you, and like they want to take care of you, but really they just want something from you. I wondered what exactly Mrs. Buster wanted. Finally I just nodded and forced myself to mumble something about I’m fine, just that one assignment was really hard.” (Dellaira, 2014:109).

In the phrase She **wouldn’t know. No one did. She wasn’t there. No one was, no one but me** in the third line of Data 11 above, it is categorized as *dejection mood* of emotional manifestation symptoms of depression. The phrase highlighted Laurel isolation and loneliness, suggesting she felt alone in her experience and understanding of the situation. The repetition of **no one** underscored her sense of being misunderstood and her emotional distance from others. Additionally, the phrase that depicted a dejected mood for Laurel was found in the fourth line of Data 11, **I was so angry that if my throat hadn't been clenched too tight, I might have screamed at her**, In this phrase, Laurel's intense anger and frustration were evident, indicating a *dejected mood* for her. The presence of the feeling that Laurel could not effectively express her anger only added to her sense of dejection and powerlessness in the situation.

*Data 12*

“I had taken Sky’s hands again, and since I had them, I said, “Spin with me.” I think that’s the kind of thing that boys like to do but won’t do unless a girl asks them to. We spun and spun and spun until we fell down in a heap, laughing. But for some reason, on the perfect cold night grass next to the geese, my laugh just turned to crying.” (Dellaira, 2014:126).

It was categorized as a *dejection mood* of emotional manifestation symptoms of depression because Laurel's emotions suddenly shifted from joy to sadness. The phrase **my laugh just turned to crying** in the fourth line of Data 12 above, it is indicated that Laurel's laughter had abruptly transformed into tears without an apparent reason stated. In that passage, Laurel had described a moment of joy and playfulness with Sky. She had taken Sky's hands and had suggested, **Spin with me** in the first line of Data 12 above. They had spun and spun together until they fell down in a heap, laughing. However, for some reason, on that perfect cold night grass next to the geese, Laurel's laughter had just turned to crying.

*Data 13*

“When we pulled up outside my house, I asked, “Do you think I’m too messed up?”  
 “For what?” Sky replied.  
 “For you.”  
 “No.” (Dellaira, 2014:152).

In the phrase **Do you think I’m too messed up?** In the first line of Data 13 above, it is could have been seen as *negative feelings towards self* of emotional manifestation symptoms of depression. The phrase suggested that Laurel was questioning her worth or adequacy, expressing doubt about her state of being. The term **messed up** implied a belief that they were flawed or broken somehow. Sky's response, **No** in the fourth line of Data 13 above,

suggested his reassurance and support, indicating that he did not see her as **too messed up** and valued her for who she was. This moment highlighted the theme of self-esteem and self-worth, as Laurel had grappled with her own insecurities and had sought validation from someone she cared about.

*Data 14*

“Please don’t leave me.”

“I’m tired,” he said.

“Sky,” I said, “Sky, May wasn’t like that. She didn’t do it on purpose. She was good. She wasn’t like me.”

He just nodded. “All right, Laurel.” (Dellaira, 2014:171).

In the phrase **She wasn't like that** in the third line of Data 14 above, could be seen as *negative feelings toward self* of emotional manifestation symptoms of depression because, Laurel had seen May in a more positive light than herself. She had described May as someone who did not do things on purpose, implying that May had admirable qualities and intentions. Laurel's initial plea, **Please don't leave me** in the first line of Data 14 above, it is suggested that she was emotionally vulnerable and did not want Sky to distance himself from her. This was possibly because she had been grappling with feelings related to May's situation in the past.

*Data 15*

“But I’m not starting at the beginning. This was Sky and me breaking up. His voice kept getting carried off by the wind. I was looking at the birds in their trees, thinking of how fast their hearts beat and wondering if their fast-beating hearts keep them warm. I might sneak out right now just to get to cry out loud.” (Dellaira, 2014:180).

In the phrase, **I might sneak out right now just to get to cry out loud** in the fourth line of Data 15 above, it is could be seen as *dejection mood* of



emotional manifestation symptoms of depression. As Sky's voice was carried away by the wind, Laurel reflected on the birds in the trees and wondered about their fast-beating hearts, Laurel using nature as a metaphor for her contemplative and reflective state. The overwhelming need for emotional released was evident as she considered sneaking out just to cry out loud, highlighting the depth of her sadness and pain.

*Data 16*

“There was something between me and the world right then. I saw it like a big sheet of glass, too thick to break through. I could make new friends, but they could never know me, not really, because they could never know my sister, the person I loved most in the world. And they could never know what I’d done. I would have to be okay standing on the other side of something too big to break through.” (Dellaira, 2014:201).

In the phrase, **And they could never know what I’d done** in the fourth line of Data 16 above, it showed as *negative feelings toward self* of emotional manifestations symptoms of depression because, Laurel had engaged in actions or made choices that they believed others would not understand or accept. The phrase suggested a sense of guilt, regret, or shame over their actions. The use of **never know** implied secrecy or concealment, emphasizing a disconnection between the speaker's actions and the perceptions of others.

*Data 17*

“It’s been five weeks and two days since Sky dumped me. I would like to say that I am getting over him, but obviously I am not. Sometimes after school I walk the long way to the parking lot around the track and I see him making out with Francesca near the bleachers, or getting into her car. I want to run and scream at him. I want to pound my fists against his chest as hard as I can, and I want him to put his arms around me and hold me so that I stop. I want him to kiss me again and make it clean. But now he’s behind the thickest glass wall,



like no matter how hard I ran at it I couldn't break it. I could only shatter myself." (Dellaira, 2014:203).

In the phrase **But now he's behind the thickest glass wall, like no matter how hard I ran at it I couldn't break it. I could only shatter myself** in the seventh line of Data 17 above, it can be interpreted as *dejection mood* of emotional manifestation depression of symptoms because its imagery and language portrayed feelings of helplessness, isolation, and self-inflicted pain. The phrase, **no matter how hard I ran at it I couldn't break it**, emphasized the frustration and powerlessness of their attempts to overcome this barrier. The phrase **I could only shatter myself** underscored the self-destructive nature of these efforts, contributing to the prevailing *dejection mood*.

#### Data 18

"I thought May was what she wanted to be. I thought she was free and brave and the world was hers, but I'm not sure anymore. Jim, I want people to know me, but if anyone could look inside of me, if they saw that everything I feel is not what it's supposed to be, I don't know what would happen." (Dellaira, 2014:203).

Laurel reflected on her previous fear and insecurity regarding the possibility of others discovering her true emotional state. She contemplated a scenario where someone could metaphorically see inside her, revealing her innermost thoughts and feelings. The phrase **if anyone could look inside of me** in the third line of Data 18 above indicated *negative feelings toward self* of emotional manifestation symptom of depression, stemming from Laurel's past vulnerability and fear of emotional transparency. Laurel's concern intensified when she contemplated that others might have seen that **everything I feel is not what it's supposed to be** in the third line of Data 18 above. It reflected

Laurel's perception that her emotions were somehow not in alignment with societal or personal expectations in the past. Laurel might have felt that her feelings were unconventional or deviated from what was considered normal or appropriate back then. This realization created a sense of past self-doubt and worry about how she would have been perceived by others.

## 2) Cognitive Manifestations

### *Data 19*

“Would they still go to hell? Or what about a grown-up person, who wasn't a bad person, but just didn't know about Jesus because he never learned? Would they go to hell?” Aunt Amy never really answered. She'd just get sad and say that she wanted us to know Jesus' love. She'd say see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil. She'd try to make it like a game, with us covering our eyes and ears and mouths. May hated that. Now Aunt Amy is scared, I guess, that May never got saved. She wants to make sure that doesn't happen to me. But she doesn't know how guilty I am. I can't ever tell.” (Dellaira, 2014:50).

In the phrase **But she doesn't know how guilty I am. I can't ever tell**, on the eighth line of Data 19 above, reflects *self-blame and self-criticism* of cognitive manifestations symptoms of depression stemming from internal guilt that she kept from others. The phrase **how guilty I am. I can't ever tell** in the last line of Data 19 above, it indicated that Laurel expressed feelings of guilt in the past and her inability to speak about this guilt to Aunt Amy. The phrase suggested that Laurel had blamed herself for something, likely related to religious beliefs or salvation, and had felt burdened by this guilt but could not speak to anyone about it in the past. The inability to openly communicate this guilt implied the suppression of her feelings of guilt and self-criticism.

### *Data 20*

“I explained living with Aunt Amy part-time by saying that my mom is on some sort of big retreat-type thing. I know that it’s strange that I haven’t talked to any of them about May, but it’s like I have a chance now to forget the bad stuff. To be someone else, someone like her. If I’d gone to Sandia, everyone would be watching me, wanting an answer. But at West Mesa, her identity is my secret. Besides Mrs. Buster, if anyone happened to read the story in the paper all those months ago, or heard of it, they don’t say anything about it. More likely, they didn’t pay attention, or forgot.” (Dellaira, 2014:51).

In the phrase **If I’d gone to Sandia, everyone would be watching me, wanting an answer** in the fourth line of Data 20 above, it can be seen as *negative expectations* of cognitive manifestations symptoms of depression because, L In the discussion of the research findings, the writer analyzed the mental health condition of the main character, focusing on factors and symptoms of depression, as well as defense mechanisms. Factors contributing to depression encompassed psychological vulnerabilities like low self-esteem and external stressors like life events, particularly the loss of a sister. The character exhibited emotional and cognitive manifestations of depression, including dejected mood, negative self-feelings, low self-evaluation, and negative expectations. Motivational manifestations such as avoidance and escapist tendencies were used as coping mechanisms. The character's use of defense mechanisms included repression, displacement, reaction formation, and sublimation, which aided in dealing with her emotional challenges and trauma. This analysis provides insight into the character's emotional journey and coping strategies in the novel. aurel reflected on her decision to attend West Mesa High School instead of Sandia High School, emphasizing the relief of not having everyone watch her and expect answers about May's circumstances. The negative expectations stemmed from the idea that if she

had attended Sandia High School, people would have expected her to provide explanations or details about May, which she wished to avoid. This suggested that Laurel's desire to distance herself from the past and the emotional burden associated with her sister's situation.

*Data 21*

“He looked like he already regretted asking me to the dance, but he tried to cover for it. “Are you ready?” He linked his arm in mine and we walked in. I felt bad for him, having to go with someone who is so not good at this stuff, and I thought I’d try to make the best of it for us both. But I just couldn’t make myself say the right things. When he said, “You look pretty,” I mumbled, “No, I don’t.” What I meant, I guess, was that he didn’t understand. It was my sister’s dress.” (Dellaira, 2014:82).

In the phrase, **When he said, “You look pretty,” I mumbled, “No, I don’t”** in the fifth line of Data 21 above, it can be seen as *low self-evaluation* of cognitive manifestations symptoms of depression because, Laurel's response suggested a tendency to dismiss or downplay a compliment. This behavior reflected a negative self-perception, where Laurel could not acknowledge positive qualities about herself. The act of mumbling **No, I don’t** reflected an internalized belief of not being worthy of praise or lacking confidence in her appearance. This self-deprecating behavior aligned with the characteristics of repressed *low self-evaluation*, where individuals struggled to recognize their self-worth and often negated positive feedback from others.

*Data 22*

“There was something shattered in me, and now he saw it. No one could fix it. I had tried to be brave like May, to be bright and free and a bolt of stars, but I couldn’t. I wasn’t. He’d seen it. He had opened the door to the underneath part of it where I was just her little sister, who couldn’t save her or anything. Bad and wrong and it was all my fault.” (Dellaira, 2014:183).



In the phrase **I had tried to be brave like May, to be bright and free and a bolt of stars, but I couldn't. I wasn't** in the first line of Data 22 above, it represented as *low self-evaluation* of cognitive manifestations symptoms of depression because, Laurel's comparison to May, highlighted qualities like bravery and being bright and free, implied a sense of inadequacy within herself. The admission that Laurel could not achieve these attributes suggested a lack of self-esteem and a perceived failure to meet her standards. This self-deprecating reflection aligned with repressed low self-evaluation, where Laurel struggled to see her positive qualities and instead focused on perceived shortcomings.

*Data 23*

“Dad never pushed me, but Mom asked all the time, wanting to know what we'd been doing at the bridge, why we had gone there, why weren't we at the movies like we were supposed to be. I think Mom was mad at me for not being able to explain. I think that could be why she moved to California and stopped being my mother. I think she thought it was my fault. And I think she's right. If she knew the truth, she'd never come back.” (Dellaira, 2014:189).

In the phrase **I think she thought it was my fault** in the fifth line of Data 23 above, it could be seen as *self-blame and self-criticism* of cognitive manifestations symptoms of depression because, Laurel's expression suggested that she believed the other person attributed the blame to her. This implied a potential internalization of guilt, where Laurel might have harbored feelings of responsibility for the situation. The phrase **my fault** reflected a sense of self-blame that was not openly acknowledged or expressed.



### 3) Motivational Manifestations

#### *Data 24*

“It’s been a week, and I still don’t know anyone here. All the kids from my middle school went to Sandia High, which is where May went. I didn’t want everyone there feeling sorry for me and asking questions I couldn’t answer, so I came to West Mesa instead, the school in Aunt Amy’s district. This is supposed to be a fresh start, I guess.” (Dellaira, 2014:4).

In the phrase, **I didn’t want everyone there feeling sorry for me and asking questions I couldn’t answer, so I came to West Mesa instead, the school in Aunt Amy’s district** in the second line of Data 24 above, repressed *avoidance, escapist, and withdrawal wishes* of motivational manifestations symptoms of depression because, Laurel’s decision to attend West Mesa instead of the school, her peers followed illustrates her desire to avoid potentially uncomfortable interactions and inquiries. Choosing a different school reflects her wish to escape situations where she might had to confront sympathy and answer challenging questions.

#### *Data 25*

“When Mrs. Buster asked us to pass our letters up at the end of class today, I looked at my notebook where I wrote mine and folded it closed. As soon as the bell rang, I hurried to pack my stuff and left. There are some things that I can’t tell anyone, except the people who aren’t here anymore.” (Dellaira, 2014:5).

In the phrase **I looked at my notebook where I wrote mine and folded it closed** in the second line of Data 25 above, Laurel intentionally avoided sharing the contents of her letter by folding it closed. This action reflected her desire to keep certain thoughts or feelings to herself. Additionally in the phrase **As soon as the bell rang, I hurried to pack my stuff and left** in the

second line of Data 25 above, it could be seen as *avoidance, escapist, and withdrawal wishes* of motivational manifestations symptoms of depression because, this action implied her desire to quickly distance herself from the environment, potentially to avoid confronting uncomfortable situations or interactions. The swiftness with which she packed up and departed might reflect her wish to create a sense of separation from a context that could had been emotionally challenging or undesirable.

*Data 26*

“For a moment, I went somewhere else. I remembered how it felt, those nights with May, when we were supposed to be at the movies. I got scared suddenly, and I tried not to let Sky know that I was breathing too fast. I stared straight ahead at the road and imagined I was above the earth, looking down through the window of a plane. The road would look like a streak of lightning laid across the land. Sky’s truck would be a tiny toy car.” (Dellaira, 2014:62).

In the phrase **For a moment, I went somewhere else. I remembered how it felt, those nights with May, when we were supposed to be at the movies** in the first line of Data 26 above, it repressed as *avoidance, escapist, and withdrawal wishes* of motivational manifestations symptoms of depression because, the phrase **For a moment, I went somewhere else** indicated her temporary mental escape from the immediate reality. Her recollection of past moments with May reflects a desire to retreat into memories of happier times.

*Data 27*

“What are you thinking?” he asked.  
 “Nothing...” (Dellaira, 2014:62).

In the phrase, **Nothing**, Laurel's repressed *avoidance, escapist, and withdrawal wishes* of motivational manifestations symptoms of depression. Laurel was having a conversation with Sky, and she was asked, **What are you thinking?** Sky was likely trying to engage her in a conversation or understand her thoughts and feelings better. However, Laurel responded with a curt and evasive answer, **Nothing**. This response suggested that Laurel was avoiding sharing her inner thoughts and emotions with the person. She might have been feeling withdrawn or unwilling to engage in a deeper discussion at that moment, choosing instead to keep her thoughts and feelings to herself. This behavior could have been indicative of a desire to escape or avoid discussing certain topics or emotions, reflecting a reluctance to open up and share.

*Data 28*

“Suddenly I wanted to let it all come spilling out, but when I thought of saying May’s name, I froze up. If I tried to tell them, they’d want to know what happened, and I wouldn’t know what to say. They’d feel bad for me, and when you are guilty, there is nothing worse than pity. It just makes you feel guiltier.” (Dellaira, 2014:66).

In the phrase **Suddenly I wanted to let it all come spilling out, but when I thought of saying May’s name, I froze up** in the first line of Data 28 above, it repressed as *avoidance, escapist, and withdrawal wishes* of motivational manifestations symptoms of depression because, Laurel was grappling with her inner turmoil and emotions related to her sister May's death. Suddenly, she felt a strong urge to open up and talk about her feelings, possibly seeking support or a release for her pent-up emotions. However, when she considered mentioning May's name, she **froze up**. This hesitation

stemmed from the fear of delving into the details of May's death and the associated guilt and pain. Laurel knew that if she were to start discussing May, people would want to know what happened, and she believed she would not know how to explain it.

*Data 29*

“I thought, Oh no, not again. I walked up to her desk and didn’t look up and hoped she wouldn’t pretend to know anything about my sister or ask what’s wrong with me. She ran her fingers through her ironed-flat blond hair and paused for a moment. Then she said, “You never did turn in your letter assignment, even after I gave you an extension.” It felt weird that Mrs. Buster was bringing this up. I mean, that was nearly a month and a half ago. Why did she care?” (Dellaira, 2014:69).

In the phrase **I walked up to her desk and didn’t look up and hoped she wouldn’t pretend to know anything about my sister or ask what’s wrong with me** in the first line of Data 29 above, it repressed *avoidance, escapist, and withdrawal wishes* of motivational manifestations symptoms of depression because, Laurel is entering her classroom and approaching Mrs. Buster's desk. She has a history of avoiding conversations about her sister and her emotions, as discussing these topics makes her uncomfortable. When Mrs. Buster brings up the fact that Laurel did not turn in her letter assignment with an extension, Laurel finds it strange that Mrs. Buster is mentioning this now, considering it happened nearly a month and a half ago. Laurel is hoping that Mrs. Buster would not inquire further about her personal life or emotions. The avoidance of eye contact **didn’t look up** and the hope to avoided a conversation about her sister or her issues indicated a desire to evade uncomfortable topics.



*Data 30*

“Honestly, I don’t want him to pick me up, because I couldn’t stand him coming to our quiet house. I don’t want him to see inside it. And I don’t want Dad feeling like he should have to pretend and pull out the camera. We don’t take pictures anymore.” (Dellaira, 2014:73).

In the phrase **Honestly, I don’t want him to pick me up, because I couldn’t stand him coming to our quiet house** in the first line of Data 30 above, it rep In the discussion of the research findings, the writer analyzed the mental health condition of the main character, focusing on factors and symptoms of depression, as well as defense mechanisms. Factors contributing to depression encompassed psychological vulnerabilities like low self-esteem and external stressors like life events, particularly the loss of a sister. The character exhibited emotional and cognitive manifestations of depression, including dejected mood, negative self-feelings, low self-evaluation, and negative expectations. Motivational manifestations such as avoidance and escapist tendencies were used as coping mechanisms. The character's use of defense mechanisms included repression, displacement, reaction formation, and sublimation, which aided in dealing with her emotional challenges and trauma. This analysis provides insight into the character's emotional journey and coping strategies in the novel.ressed as *avoidance, escapist, and withdrawal wishes* of motivational manifestations symptoms of depression because, the phrase was depicted as avoidance because Laurel was avoiding a potentially uncomfortable situation. She did not want Sky to pick her up because she did not want to see him coming to their **quiet house**. She may have been trying to protect herself from having to confront these feelings by



avoiding the situation altogether. This attitude reflected a desire to avoid situations or feelings that might have caused distress or discomfort.

*Data 31*

“Mrs. Buster called me over to her desk after class today and asked why I hadn’t done the letter assignment, even after she gave me two extensions. She said I should be an A student. And I tried to explain that I did do it, I just couldn’t show her. But she said the point of an assignment is to turn it in. I tried to explain that I thought that letters were actually very private.” (Dellaira, 2014:108).

In the phrase **I tried to explain that I did do it, I just couldn’t show her** in the third line of Data 31 above, it could be seen as *avoidance, escapist, and withdrawal wishes* of motivational manifestations symptoms of depression because, Laurel did not want to submit the assignment given by Mrs. Buster. This was because she considered the content of the letter to be very private and personal. Mrs. Buster had called Laurel over to her desk after class and inquired why Laurel hadn't completed the letter assignment, despite having received two extensions. Laurel's avoidance of turning in the assignment was likely due to the sensitive or emotionally charged information contained in it. This avoidance was a way of sidestepping the expectation to share deeply personal thoughts and feelings, indicating a sense of reluctance or hesitation on Laurel's part.

#### **4) Physichal and Vegetative Manifestations**

*Data 32*

“May’s room at my dad’s house is just like it always was. Exactly the same, only the door stays closed and not a sound comes out. Sometimes I’ll wake up from a dream and think I hear her footsteps, sneaking back home after a night

out. My heart will beat with excitement and I'll sit up in bed, until I remember." (Dellaira, 2014:15).

In the phrase **Sometimes I'll wake up from a dream and think I hear her** footsteps, **sneaking back home after a night out** in the second line of Data 32 above. Laurel's description of waking up from a dream and believing she had listened to her sister's footsteps illustrated as *sleep disturbance* of physical and vegetative manifestations symptoms of depression. The momentary excitement and subsequent realization upon waking indicated a disruption in her sleep patterns, likely influenced by the emotional weight of her sister's absence. This vivid imagery of May's presence in the house disrupted Laurel's sleep. She explained that her heart would beat with excitement when she thought she heard these footsteps, as if she momentarily believed that her sister was still alive and returning home.

*Data 33*

"I am back in bed now, but I still can't sleep. My hands have splinters. They smell like something stolen from the forest. I keep thinking about the day that May's wings broke." (Dellaira, 2014:174).

In the phrase **but I still can't sleep** in the first line of Data 33 above, it repressed as *sleep disturbance disturbance* of physical and vegetative manifestations symptoms of depression because, the phrase conveyed the ongoing issue she faced regarding her ability to fall asleep or maintain a regular sleep pattern. This aligns with the concept of sleep disturbances commonly associated with depression, where changed in sleep patterns were considered one of the vegetative symptoms. The phrase **I keep thinking about the day that May's wings broke** indicates that Laurel's sleep

disturbance was linked to a specific event—the breaking of May's wings. This event likely held emotional significance for Laurel, and her thoughts about it prevented her from finding restful sleep.

In conclusion, Laurel's emotional was marked by a complex interplay of emotions and cognitive processes. She grappled with feelings of inadequacy, self-doubt, and guilt, particularly in comparison to her late sister, May. Laurel's self-perception was often negative, and she struggled to communicate her emotions, leading to self-blame and a sense of isolation. Her cognitive manifestations included avoidance of uncomfortable situations, escapist tendencies through reminiscing about the past, and a withdrawal from sharing her inner thoughts and feelings. Additionally, Laurel experienced physical and vegetative manifestations, such as sleep disturbances, which were reflective of her emotional turmoil. Overall, Laurel's emotional and cognitive journey throughout the novel portrayed a complex and deeply personal exploration of grief, self-identity, and the quest for understanding and acceptance.

## 2. Defense Mechanisms

### *Data 34*

“Then what happened is this—I was nibbling a Nutter Butter and staring at Sky through the raining leaves. That’s when he saw me. He was turning to talk to someone. He went into slow motion. Our eyes met for a minute, before mine darted away. It felt like fireflies lighting under my skin. The thing is, when I looked back up, Sky was still looking. His eyes were like your voice—keys to a place in me that could burst open.” (Dellaira, 2014:8).

In the phrase phrase **Our eyes met for a minute, before mine darted away** in the third line of Data 34 above, it depicted a defense mechanism of

*repression* in Laurel's reaction when she encountered Sky. Laurel's and Sky's eyes briefly met before Laurel quickly looked away. Laurel experienced a surge of emotions, describing it as a feeling of **fireflies lighting under my skin** in the fourth line of Data 34 above. This moment was significant because it marked the beginning of a connection or attraction between Laurel and Sky, where their eye contact triggered something within Laurel. Although she initially avoided it by looking in another direction, she later realized that Sky was still gazing at her, deepening their connection further. This shift in focus and the potential suppression of certain emotions or thoughts could reflect a form of repression, where she completely avoided expressing her feelings directly in favor of a more symbolic description.

*Data 35*

“I didn’t tell them that Janey and I had spent the night at each other’s houses every weekend when we were kids, or that we used to put on Wizard of Oz performances with May and charge our parents quarters to see them. I didn’t tell them that the last time I’d seen Janey was at May’s memorial six months ago, or that over the summer she’d called and left messages a couple of times to see if I wanted to spend the night. I didn’t tell them that I never called back. Because I didn’t know how to explain that after May died, all I wanted was to disappear. That my sister was the only person I could disappear into.” (Dellaira, 2014:65).

Laurel was reflecting on her past experiences with her childhood friend Janey and her feelings following the death of her sister, May. She remembered the strong bond they shared with Janey during their childhood, spending weekends at each other's homes along with May. However, in the phrase **I didn’t tell them that I never called back** in the first line of Data 35 above, it depicted a defense mechanism of *repression* because Laurel didn't mention



these memories to Hannah and Natalie when they asked about her relationship with Janey. Laurel also reflected on how the last time she had seen Janey was at May's funeral, six months earlier, and how Janey had tried to reach out to her during the summer. The phrase **I didn't know how to explain that after May died, all I wanted was to disappear** in the seventh line of Data 35 above, explained that Laurel had never returned Janey's calls, and she explained that this was because she didn't know how to convey her overwhelming desire to disappear after May's death. May had been the person she felt closest to, and losing her had left Laurel with a profound sense of loss and the need to distance herself from others.

*Data 36*

“When I got close to the table, I sort of just stood there, a few feet away. They were in the middle of leaning in and trading Capri Suns, so they each got a new flavor, when they felt a body and looked up. I think they thought it would be another soccer boy, and Natalie looked annoyed at first. But her face turned nice when she recognized me. I tried so hard to think of something to say, but I couldn't. The voices rushed around me, and I started to blank out.” (Dellaira, 2014:19).

In the phrase **I tried so hard to think of something to say, but I couldn't** in the fifth line of Data 36 above, it portrayed the defense mechanism of displacement because Laurel's difficulty in finding words and expressing herself to Natalie and her friends indicated a manifestation of displacement. Instead of directly facing the potentially strong emotions related to May's death and her own struggles, it appeared that she redirected her emotional energy into the effort to come up with something to say in that moment. Furthermore, in the phrase **The voices rushed around me, and I**

**started to blank out** in the last line of Data 36 above, Laurel described feeling overwhelmed by the voices and the situation as she approached the table where Natalie and Hannah were sitting. She couldn't find something to say, and her mind started to go blank. The intense emotions that Laurel experienced regarding the death of her sister May might have been displaced onto the situation with Natalie and Hannah, causing her to feel empty and unable to speak.

*Data 37*

“It’s been a week, and I still don’t know anyone here. All the kids from my middle school went to Sandia High, which is where May went. I didn’t want everyone there feeling sorry for me and asking questions I couldn’t answer, so I came to West Mesa instead, the school in Aunt Amy’s district. This is supposed to be a fresh start, I guess.” (Dellaira, 2014:4).

The phrase **This is supposed to be a fresh start** in the fourth line of Data 37 above indicated the defense mechanism of *reaction formation* because in the phrase, Laurel expressed the idea of starting anew at West Mesa High School, suggesting a desire for a fresh beginning and the potential for a change in her life. However, beneath this statement, she might have experienced mixed emotions and anxieties about her new school. However, the phrase **I guess** in the last line of Data 37 suggested that perhaps she wasn't entirely certain or confident about this fresh start. There might have been underlying doubts or anxieties that she didn't honestly express. The phrase hinted at the possibility of her having experienced mixed emotions and not having been entirely truthful with herself about her reasons for choosing West

Mesa. This could be seen as a form of *reaction formation*, where she presented a positive or hopeful outlook on the surface while potentially harboring more complex feelings underneath.

*Data 38*

“Since I don’t really want to spend all forty-three minutes of lunch in the bathroom, once I finish my kaiser roll I go outside and sit by the fence. I turn myself invisible so I can just watch. The trees are starting to rain leaves, but the air is still hot enough to swim through. I especially like to watch this boy, whose name I figured out is Sky. He always wears a leather jacket, even though summer is barely over. He reminds me that the air isn’t just something that’s there. It’s something you breathe in. Even though he’s all the way across the school yard, I feel like I can see his chest rising up and down.” (Dellaira, 2014:4).

In the phrase **He reminds me that the air isn’t just something that’s there. It’s something you breathe** in the sixth line of Data 38 above, It showed as defense mechanism of *sublimation* because Laurel's act of observing the boy named Sky and appreciating her surroundings could have been interpreted as a way to channel her emotions or thoughts into a more positive and acceptable activity. Instead of directly expressing her feelings or emotions, she redirected her focus to observing and appreciating the environment around her, including how Sky's presence affected her perception of the air. This might have enabled Laurel to cope with her emotions or desires by channeling them into a less overt expression.

*Data 39*

“Maybe you can help me figure out how to find a door to a new world again. I still haven’t made any friends yet. I’ve actually hardly said a single word the whole week and a half I’ve been here, except “present” during roll call. And to ask the secretary for directions to class. But there is this girl named Natalie in my English class. She draws pictures on her arms. Not just normal hearts, but

meadows with creatures and girls and trees that look like they are alive. She wears her hair in two braids that go down to her waist, and everything about her dark skin is perfectly smooth. Her eyes are two different colors—one is almost black, and the other is foggy green. She passed me a note yesterday with just a little smiley face on it. I am thinking that maybe soon I could try to eat lunch with her.” (Dellaira, 2014:7).

In the phrase **But there is this girl named Natalie in my English class.**

**She draws pictures on her arms. Not just normal hearts, but meadows with creatures and girls and trees that look like they are alive** in the fourth line of Data 39 above, it repressed as defense mechanism of *sublimation* because, Laurel's interest in making a new friend, particularly with Natalie, could be seen as a form of sublimation. Instead of dwelling solely on her grief and isolation, she redirected her emotional energy into forming a connection with someone new. Her description of Natalie's unique traits and desire to reach out for friendship highlighted her efforts to channel her emotions in a healthier and more positive direction.

In conclusion, Laurel exhibited various defense mechanisms as she navigated the complexities of her emotions and experiences. One instance of repression was evident when her eyes briefly met Sky's, sparking an intense connection and a rush of emotions. However, she quickly looked away, symbolically suppressing her immediate feelings. Her avoidance of sharing her childhood memories with Janey, especially her inability to explain her overwhelming desire to disappear after May's death, demonstrated another form of repression. Additionally, she displaced her emotional struggles onto the difficulty of finding words to say when approaching Natalie and her friends, which served as a displacement of her deeper



emotional turmoil. Laurel's choice to start anew at West Mesa High School while expressing some uncertainty could be interpreted as a form of reaction formation, where she presented a positive outlook while potentially concealing more complex emotions underneath. Finally, her sublimation was evident in her observation of Sky and her appreciation of her surroundings to channel her emotions into a more positive and acceptable activity. These defense mechanisms collectively illustrated her coping strategies and how she managed her internal conflicts and desires.

## **B. Discussion**

Based on the research findings conveyed by the writer above, components were discussed in the research findings. These components included the mental health condition of the main character. Based on the data above, the writer found data that influenced the main character's depression, symptoms of depression experienced by the main character, and defense mechanisms used to cope with the depression.

### **1. Factors and Symptoms of depression**

#### **a. Factor that cause depression**

The factors that contributed to the development of depression were complex and could vary from one individual to another. Psychological factors such as low self-esteem, pessimism, and a history of trauma could also have contributed. Stressful life events, such as loss, financial issues, and significant changes, served as environmental triggers for depression. In this study, a stressful environment and life events were found to have been the most

significant contributors to Laurel's depression, with 5 data supporting this and 1 data instance of psychological vulnerability.

### **1. Stressful environment and life events**

Stressful environment and life events were significant occurrences or experiences in an individual's past that were emotionally challenging and potentially disruptive. These events could range from personal losses and traumas to significant life changes, and they had the potential to cause emotional distress and impact mental well-being.

Stressful environment and life events were recognized as environmental factors that could contribute to the development of depression. The stress and emotional toll associated with Stressful environment and life events could trigger changes in brain chemistry, hormonal responses, and psychological functioning, all of which could contribute to depression. Many different events can be classified, such as stressful, such as facing sexual abuse, divorce, and mourning.

### **2. Psychological vulnerability**

Psychological vulnerability as a contributing factor to depression was related to an individual's tendency or susceptibility to develop depressive symptoms due to inherent psychological characteristics, traits, or experiences. This vulnerability was rooted in various psychological attributes, traits, or experiences and could significantly influence how a person responded to stressors, challenges, and negative life events.

Social isolation and support A lack of meaningful relationships and social support networks could heighten psychological vulnerability, leaving individuals with fewer resources to confront stressors and making them more susceptible to depression.

## **b. Symptoms of depression**

Symptoms of depression were divided into several categories, including emotional manifestations, cognitive manifestations, motivational manifestations, and physical manifestations.

### **1. Emotional manifestations**

Emotional manifestations encompassed changes in feelings and behavior stemming from emotional states. These included dejection mood, negative feelings toward self, reduction in gratification, loss of emotional attachments, crying spells, and loss of mirth response. The writer found 6 data of dejection mood and 6 data of negative self-feelings, but no data related to reduction in gratification, crying spells, and loss of mirth response.

#### **a. Dejection mood**

Mood dejection was an emotional symptom commonly observed in individuals who experienced various emotional conditions, particularly those related to depression or dysphoria. This term refers to a significant decrease in a person's emotional well-being, resulting in sadness, grief, or a general sense of emotional burden. It was characterized by noticeable changes from a relatively stable or positive mood to a more negative and subdued emotional state.

Dejection mood was evident through changes in emotional expressions and Laurel's overall demeanor. The writer identified 6 data of this dejection mood in Laurel, primarily from her deep connection to her sister May's death. Whenever Laurel experienced a dejection mood, her demeanor seemed more subdued, lethargic, or inclined to withdraw from social interactions that used to bring her joy.

#### **b. Negative feelings toward self**

Individuals grappling with negative feelings toward self might consistently make unfavorable comparisons with others, set unattainable standards, and consistently fixate on their perceived inadequacies. This thinking pattern could foster a cycle of self-defeating thoughts and behaviors, further exacerbating emotional distress.

Negative feelings towards herself in Laurel were depicted in various ways. Laurel often felt incapable of reaching the standards she believed she should achieve, especially considering her comparisons with her deceased sister, May. For example, she might have felt that May was more confident, successful, or liked than her. Laurel may have also felt she was not good enough in various aspects of her life. Perhaps she felt unworthy or undeserving of love and affection from others.

## **2. Cognitive manifestation**

Beck had referred to cognitive manifestations, which included, among others, low self-evaluation, negative expectations, self-blame, and self-criticism, indecisiveness, and distortion of body image. The writer found 2



data related to self-blame and self-criticism, 2 data related to low self-evaluation, and 1 data related to negative expectations. However, there was no data on indecisiveness and body image distortion.

**a. Low self-evaluation**

Low self-evaluation was defined as an individual's negative assessment of their abilities, attributes, and qualities, encompassing a diminished sense of self-worth. Within the framework of cognitive manifestations, low self-evaluation was a common cognitive distortion frequently observed in individuals undergoing emotional distress, especially in conditions like depression.

Low self-evaluation in Laurel is apparent through her internal thoughts, behaviors, and interactions. Laurel consistently doubted her values and abilities. She rejected compliments she received from others, indicating a lack of self-worth.

**b. Negative expectations**

Negative expectations were cognitive patterns characterized by anticipating unfavorable outcomes and rejecting the possibility of improvement or positive change. Negative expectations significantly shape an individual's emotional experiences, particularly in depression. This cognitive distortion could lead to heightened anxiety, self-doubt, and hopelessness.

Negative expectations were depicted in Laurel's character, for example, Laurel approached new experiences or social interactions with a sense of fear, expecting rejection or failure. She might have assumed that she would not

meet her late sister May's standards or that people would not accept her for who she was. These negative expectations could have led to heightened anxiety, self-doubt, and reluctance to engage in opportunities.

### **c. Self-blame and self-criticism**

Cognitive manifestations referred to observable expressions of Laurel's thought processes and mental patterns. Cognitive manifestations encompassed behaviors or statements that revealed how Laurel thought about herself and her experiences.

Self-blame and self-criticism were depicted in Laurel's for example, Laurel often automatically assumed that she was at fault or that she could have done something differently to prevent the situation. She tended to magnify the mistakes and shortcomings she perceived, often punishing herself for not meeting her expectations or the expectations of others. In interactions with others, Laurel sometimes apologized excessively or took on unnecessary responsibility for situations beyond her control.

## **3. Motivational manifestations**

Motivational manifestations were divided into paralysis of the will, avoidance, escapist and withdrawal wishes, suicidal wishes, and increased dependency. The writer found 8 data related to avoidance, escapist, and withdrawal wishes. However, no data was related to paralysis of the will, suicidal wishes, and increased dependency.

### **a. Avoidance, escapist, and withdrawal wishes**

Individuals might have displayed avoidance tendencies, seeking to escape from situations or tasks they perceived as demanding or overwhelming. They could have exhibited escapist tendencies, desiring to detach themselves from the reality of daily life and responsibilities. Additionally, withdrawal wishes could have manifested as a preference for solitude or isolation, avoiding interactions or activities that required social engagement.

Laurel tended to avoid situations or emotions that made her uncomfortable or anxious. This was evident in her avoiding specific topics, places, or people associated with negative memories or feelings. For instance, if Laurel always tried to avoid discussing the death of someone significant, that could be considered an example of avoidance.

#### **4. Physical manifestations**

Physical manifestations were divided into lost in appetite, sleep disturbance, loss of libido, and fatigue. The writer had found 2 data related to sleep disturbance. However, there were no data related to lost in appetite, loss of libido, and fatigue.

##### **a. Sleep disturbance**

Sleep disturbances were a common symptom of depression and had been extensively studied by experts. One aspect of sleep disturbances in depression is reduced total sleep time. This meant that people with depression had difficulty staying asleep for the recommended duration, leading to shorter overall sleep.

Laurel's sleep patterns were disrupted due to the emotional instability she experienced, primarily related to the loss of her sister, May. The loss of her sister and the various challenges she faced led to racing thoughts, anxiety, and sadness, all of which disrupted her ability to achieve peaceful sleep. These disturbances impacted her overall well-being and contributed to the overall portrayal of her struggle with depression and grief.

## **2. Defense Mechanism**

Defense mechanisms were psychological strategies that individuals unconsciously used to cope with anxiety, protect their self-esteem, and navigate their emotions. Defense mechanisms were divided into several parts, such as repression, reaction formation, displacement, fixation, regression, projection, introjection, and sublimation.

The writer found 6 data of defense mechanisms that Laurel used to cope with her depression, 2 data repression, 2 data sublimation, 1 data displacement, and 1 data reaction formation, but no data related to another defense mechanism.

### **a. Repression**

Repression was a psychological defense mechanism involving suppressing particular thoughts, emotions, memories, or impulses from conscious awareness into the subconscious. This mechanism aims to shield the mind from emotional distress by evading confrontation with unfavorable or unacceptable experiences. Repression was a coping strategy to navigate intense negative emotions, traumatic encounters, guilt, or anxiety. By



repressing these emotions from conscious awareness, individuals could temporarily evade the distress linked with them.

Repression was evident in sections where Laurel avoided or neglected intense feelings related to her sister's death, May. Additionally, Laurel might have avoided or neglected thoughts or feelings that were too disturbing about herself or her relationship with May.

#### **b. Displacement**

Displacement was a psychological defense mechanism where individuals transferred or redirected their emotional reactions from one object or person to another. This shift in emotional focus often occurred when the source of emotions was perceived as threatening or uncomfortable. By redirecting emotions, individuals could avoid directly confronting the initial cause of their feelings.

Displacement was portrayed in Laurel when she had complex feelings towards someone or a particular situation, but she did not feel comfortable confronting them directly. Instead, she might channel these emotions into different activities or interactions that were safe and separate from the situation that triggered those feelings. If Laurel felt anger or frustration towards someone but found it difficult to confront them directly, she might redirect those emotions into creative activities like writing. Thus, her emotions were redirected from the actual object to a safer expression.

### **c. Formation Reaction**

Reaction formation was a psychological defense mechanism wherein individuals responded to their unacceptable or conflicting thoughts, feelings, or impulses by demonstrating behaviors opposite to what they genuinely felt. When individuals perceived or were implied to have undesirable or socially unacceptable traits or feelings, they might have reacted by displaying behaviors that were the exact opposite of those traits.

Reaction formation was depicted in Laurel's behavior through visible displays of confidence and happiness, even though she was struggling with feelings of sadness and internal insecurity. The contrast between her outward behavior and her genuine feelings was a manifestation of reaction formation, where she unconsciously adopted behaviors that contradicted her true emotions as a way to cope with internal conflicts and anxieties.

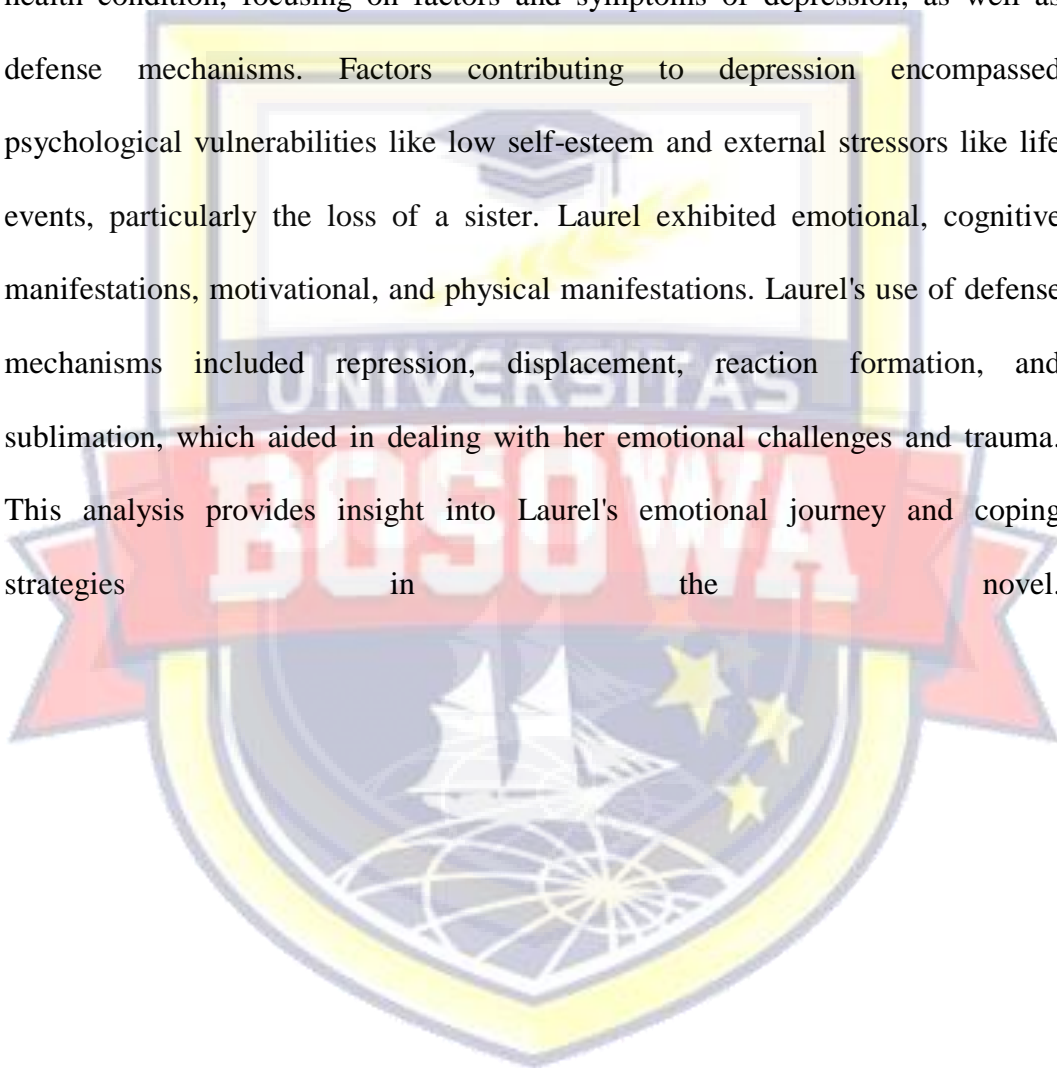
### **d. Sublimation**

Sublimation was a psychological defense mechanism where individuals channeled their unwanted or socially unacceptable impulses, desires, or emotions into activities that were considered socially acceptable and constructive. It involved transforming potentially negative energies into positive and productive outlets. Sublimation was considered a healthier and adaptive defense mechanism, allowing individuals to channel their inner conflicts and emotions into creative, productive, or constructive endeavors.

Sublimation, as depicted through Laurel's involvement in her English class project to write letters to deceased individuals, would have showcased

her efforts to establish connections and friendships. This would have served as a way for her to connect with others who had experienced loss and engage in a creative collective effort.

In the discussion of the research findings, the writer analyzed Laurel's mental health condition, focusing on factors and symptoms of depression, as well as defense mechanisms. Factors contributing to depression encompassed psychological vulnerabilities like low self-esteem and external stressors like life events, particularly the loss of a sister. Laurel exhibited emotional, cognitive manifestations, motivational, and physical manifestations. Laurel's use of defense mechanisms included repression, displacement, reaction formation, and sublimation, which aided in dealing with her emotional challenges and trauma. This analysis provides insight into Laurel's emotional journey and coping strategies in the novel.



## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

In this chapter, the writer presented the research conclusions along with recommendations for future studies and references.

#### A. Conclusion

After analyzing this research, the writer reached several conclusions. Laurel had two primary factors that contributed to her experience of depression: the first was stressful environment and life events, the second was psychological vulnerability resulting factors, including her sister May's death, her parent's divorce, and the abuse she suffered from her friends. Alongside these depression-triggering factors, the writer also identified four types of depressive symptoms that Laurel experienced: emotional, cognitive, motivational, and physical manifestations. Emotional manifestations became the dominant symptoms experienced by Laurel in this novel and emerged as natural responses to traumatic events and her growth journey. They played a significant role in depicting the depth of her emotions, the internal conflicts she underwent, and the evolution of her character as the story unfolded. Laurel consistently maintained negative self-perceptions and underwent a decline in mood after losing her sister, May. Laurel experienced constant and profound sadness after losing her sister, May.

To cope with her depression, Laurel employed various defense mechanisms, including repression, displacement, reaction formation, and sublimation. Repression involved pushing uncomfortable emotions and memories out of her



conscious awareness. Displacement was evident in redirecting emotions from their sources to more manageable targets. Reaction formation manifested in Laurel displaying behaviors contrary to her underlying feelings. Sublimation allowed her to channel emotional energy into socially acceptable activities.

## **B. Suggestion**

After completing this research, the writer hoped that this study would prove beneficial and contribute to a deeper understanding for future researchers, especially those interested in psychoanalysis. Additionally, the writer had aimed for this research to offer value to readers by enhancing their comprehension of how an individual could experience depression and coping strategies.

The research was far from achieving perfection. As such, the writer was open to accepting and considering all constructive criticisms regarding this study to enhance its quality. Additionally, for future research, exploring the author's writing style and narrative techniques used to convey the story could provide valuable insights into the novel's artistic elements.

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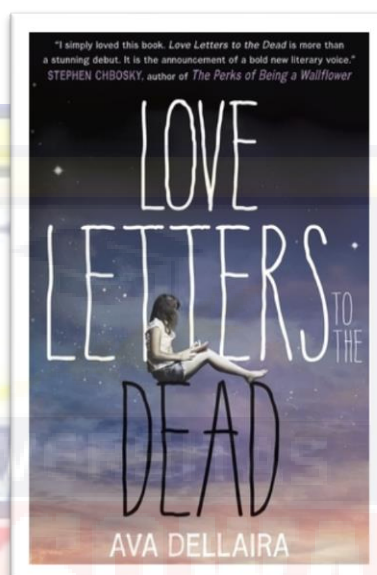




## APPENDICES

### Appendix I

#### SYNOPSIS OF THE NOVEL



*Love Letters to the Dead* by Ava Dellaira is a coming-of-age novel exploring grief, loss, and mental health. The novel tells the story of Laurel, a high school student who is struggling to come to terms with the death of her sister, May. As Laurel grapples with her grief, she also experiences depression, which adds to her emotional turmoil. Laurel's depression not only affects her emotional state but also has tangible impacts on her daily life. Her academic performance suffers as she struggles to concentrate and complete her schoolwork.

Laurel begins writing the letters as an assignment in her English class, but she never turns in her letter to Kurt Cobain, the lead singer of Nirvana, who committed suicide. Instead, she continues to write to different dead people she admires as a way to cope with the loss of her sister, May.

Moreover, Dellaira portrays depression as a condition that affects not only Laurel's emotional state but also her relationships with others. Laurel's depression strains her relationships with her family and friends, leading to misunderstandings and conflicts. It also impacts her academic performance and daily life, making it difficult for her to concentrate on schoolwork or find joy in everyday activities.

*Love Letters to the Dead* offers several advantages for readers. It establishes a deep emotional connection through its exploration of themes like love, loss, and coping with grief. The characters are relatable and deal with the challenges of growing up, personal struggles, and complex relationships, making them engaging for many. The novel delves into significant themes like family dynamics, friendship, self-discovery, and healing, offering readers valuable insights.

On the flip side, *Love Letters to the Dead* may have disadvantages. The slow pacing prioritizes character development and introspection over fast-paced action, which might not be suitable for those seeking an action-packed story. Additionally, the book contains content related to trauma and mental health issues that could be triggering for individuals with personal experiences in these areas. Given these factors, the book may not be suitable for all age groups due to its mature themes, and parents and guardians should be cautious when recommending it to younger readers.

Despite the challenges of living with depression, Dellaira offers a message of hope through the character of Laurel. Throughout the novel, Laurel uses various coping mechanisms to manage her depression, including writing letters to her deceased sister, talking to her friends, and seeking therapy. These strategies

enable her to work through her feelings of grief and depression and emerge stronger and more resilient.

The novel explores themes such as grief, guilt, identity, sexuality, abuse, and forgiveness. It is set in Albuquerque, New Mexico, in 2014. The novel is inspired by the author's experience of losing a close friend when she was young.

(Goodreads, 2014).



## Appendix II

**BIOGRAPHY OF AVA DELLAIRA**

Ava Dellaira is a renowned author who graduated from the Iowa Writers' Workshop, where she had the honor of being a Truman Capote Fellow. Her roots trace back to Albuquerque, New Mexico, where she spent her formative years.

Originally hailing from Los Angeles, she embarked on her journey as a writer at a young age, with her earliest memory of writing dating back to her second-grade days. She shares her life with her husband and finds solace and inspiration in their companionship.

Dellaira's literary accomplishments are marked by creating several impactful books, two of which stand out prominently: *Love Letters to the Dead* and *In Search of Us*. In her unique storytelling style, Ava Dellaira invites readers to delve into richly woven narratives that transcend time, offering insights into the complexities of human experiences and emotions (Dellaira, 2017).



## Appendix III

**AUTOBIOGRAPHY**

Fajar Islam, born on January 30, 1999, in Minasatene, Pangkep. His father, Firdaus, has a career as an employee in a private office located in Makassar, while his mother, Nurmiati, is dedicated to education as a teacher. The writer holds the position of the second child in the family, with an older sister named Dini Firdayanti. His early life has been influenced by the support and guidance of his family.

Growing up in Minasatene, he had the privilege of being raised in a nurturing environment. His parents, with their distinct professions, instilled in him a strong work ethic and a passion for learning. His father's commitment to his job in a private office and his mother's dedication as a teacher profoundly impacted him.

Being the younger of two siblings, he always looked up to his older sister, Dini Firdayanti. Her accomplishments and guidance motivated him to strive for excellence in everything he did. Their supportive bond had played a pivotal role in shaping his aspirations and character.

The writer completed their studies in 2023. Now, after successfully finishing his education, he is ready to embark on a bright career path in the professional world. With the knowledge and skills acquired during their college years, the author hopes to make a meaningful contribution in his chosen field and continue to develop themselves for even greater success in the future.