



**ANALYSIS OF REPRESSION IN JOHN GREEN AND
DAVID LEVITHAN'S *WILL GRAYSON WILL
GRAYSON***

EXTENDED ESSAY

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement

For S-1 Degree in Literature

In English Department, Faculty of Humanities

Diponegoro University

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PRONOUNCEMENT

I hereby states that this project is composed solely by my own devices without pilfering from other research in any university in any degree (S1, S2, S3, nor Diploma degree). No materials are taken illegally from any published works from any author except to be used as literary references and properly credited in bibliography.

Semarang, 18 April 2018

Proto Spica Syaelendra Ismail

MOTTO AND DEDICATION

“Do what you love, love what you do”

- Deutro Edelweisa

I dedicate this Extended Essay to my beloved family

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I realize that this extended essay is still far from perfect, I, therefore, will be glad to receive any constructive criticism and recommendation to make this extended essay better.

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ABSTRACT

This extended essay entitled “Analysis of Repression in Will Grayson Will Grayson by John Green and David Levithan” has purpose to analyze the repression of characters Will Grayson (WG1) by John Green and Will Grayson (WG2) by David Levithan. The method that the writer uses in the research is descriptive qualitative, by analyzing the extrinsic and intrinsic elements of the story through library research. The theory that will be used to analyze the extrinsic element is Sigmund Freud’s theory about repression and the writer add explanation about anxiety relating to the development of the repression which also a theory from the same author. The intrinsic elements that the writer use are character, characterization, and plot.

Keywords : Repression, Will Grayson, Sigmund Freud’s Repression

ABSTRAK

Penelitian terhadap novel Will Grayson Will Grayson dalam extended essay berjudul “*Analysis of Repression in Will Grayson Will Grayson by John Green and David Levithan*” ini ditujukan untuk menganalisa unsur-unsur intrinsik dan ekstrinsik di dalam novel. Extended essay ini merupakan penelitian deskriptif kualitatif yang menganalisa alur cerita, tokoh dan penokohan serta analisa tokoh dengan teori represi menggunakan pendekatan pustaka dari data yang didapat melalui cerita yang tersedia di dalam novel. Teori ekstrinsik yang digunakan adalah teori represi milik Sigmund Freud dengan tambahan teori kecemasan yang berhubungan dengan perkembangan represi.

Kata kunci : Will Grayson, Represi, Sigmund Freud

1. INTRODUCTION

There will be two parts of the introduction, there is background of study which explain further about why the corpus is chosen and purpose of the study which explains further about the purpose why the essay is made.

1.1 Background of Study

Novels, like other literary works, are one of the literatures that are really popular today, especially the popular novel genre of romance and friendship. The novel is a work of narrative literature that has existed since so long that contains the story of the life of characters and the events they experienced. According to Walter Scott in the book *Stirring Age : Scott, Byron, and the Historical Romance*, the novel is "The events that are accommodated to the ordinary train of human events and the modern state of society." (McColl, 2015: 159). In this case, an analysis of a novel is required to know the meaning of the story of the characters in the novel and what purpose the novel presents to the readers.

The writer is interested in discussing and learning about the aspects of repression that can be found in the novel *Will Grayson Will Grayson* to understand what is perceived by the characters in the story. *Will Grayson Will Grayson* has interesting points where two characters experiencing inner pressures in their life and how they strive to overcome the difficulties they face.

In this extended essay, the writer uses library research in order to analyze the psychological issue in the novel. The authors of the novel, John Green and David Levithan are both popular novelists whose works are very interesting and almost uncommon even quite unique. Both novelists belong to the author of

young adult books which are currently popular. The writing style is quite unique also because the odd chapters were written by John Green while the even chapters were written by David Levithan. There is also a different way of writing. John Green uses the good and proper writing style for the first Will Grayson or WG1, but for Will Grayson owned by David Levithan—that would later be called the second Will Grayson or WG2—all writings are written in lowercase words. The story of Will Grayson alone is sufficient to attract writer to make an analysis. Based on this novel, there are two characters with the same name—Will Grayson and Will Grayson, and both have many similarities in which the two characters experiencing personal stress associated with emotions. With the problems that arise on the two characters are related to emotion, thus the theory belongs to Sigmund Freud about repression was used.

1.2 Purpose of Study

The purpose of this essay is to analyze the characters of Will Grayson using a repression approach in *Will Grayson Will Grayson* and to provide information about the characters in the novel, of which both Will Graysons (WG1 and WG2) and Tiny Cooper. There are also additional aspects of anxiety theory which is also added to support the analysis of both characters which leads anxiety arising from repression. It shows how the theory is related and can be used to the novel based on how the progress of the characters doing from the beginning of the novel to the end.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

In order to understand the novel, there are two main elements that can define what is presented in the novel. Those are intrinsic and extrinsic elements. Intrinsic elements can be defined as the elements that are developed and constructed in the literary works itself. In other words intrinsic elements are what build the literature, whereas the extrinsic elements are elements from outside the literary works but may subjectively viewing the literary works from reader's point of view.

2.1. Intrinsic Elements

The intrinsic elements that will be used are plot, character and characterization. According to Holman (1980: 74), character is one of the necessary elements in literature which may be a person, figure, animate and or inanimate objects or even animal. It is a brief descriptive sketch of a personage who typifies some define quality. Meanwhile Characterization is how the characters (may be figures of person, animate objects and or inanimate objects) are represented and explained their detail in the narrative and dramatic works in literature. I addition plot will also be used in this intrinsic elements. According to Meyer (2010: 44), plot is the author's arrangement of incidents in a story. It means that plot is the organizing principle that controls the order of the events and it consists of exposition, rising action, climax, falling action and resolution or denouement.

2.2. Extrinsic Elements

According to Freud, the ego defense mechanisms is the most powerful and extensive among other repressions. "Freud himself said that the concepts of the unconscious mental activity, repression, resistance and transference were the fundamental pillars of psychoanalysis "(Clark, 1997: 44). Repression is the foundation of all the workings of the ego defense mechanisms. The purpose of all ego defense mechanism is to suppress (repress) or push impulses that threaten to get out of consciousness. Repression itself is an attempt to avoid the feelings antitaxes (anxiety). As quoted in the book *Psychology of literature* belonging to Albertine Minderop, "Someone who has the impulse homosexual, through repression was not aware of the condition." Anxiety happens as a response from someone when they sense danger in an environment, which is mentioned Freud that this condition is the same as fear. He also mentions that anxiety is the source of the repression.

As it is taken from Alwisol's book titled *Psikologi Keribadian* from UMM Press, repression can be very strong; pressing toward the unconscious becomes complex suppressed (repressed complexes). But if the ego is not capable enough pressing the complex impulse. The impulse will find a way out through opposing cracks of anticathexis, or appearing in the form of displacement that is hidden in the form of sublimation, substitution or compensation with most suitable symbol. The mixture dynamics of repression and displacement can be divided as follows: Repression + displacement, Repression + histrionic symptoms, Repression + psychological disorder, Repression + phobias, and Repression + nomadism.

Although repression is responsible for many abnormal conditions, its normal role in personality development should not be minimized. When the ego has acquired sufficient strength to cope with danger by more rational methods, repression is no longer necessary and its persistence constitutes a drain upon the ego's energy.

The longer the repression that occurs can cause anxiety when people who suffered repression is unprepared for the threat. According to Hall (1979: 86), Freud made three types of anxiety that are Realistic anxiety; neurotic anxiety; and moral anxiety. Realistic anxiety is fear of real dangers exist in the outside world. Neurotic anxiety is the fear of punishment that would be received from a parent or other authority figure if someone satisfying the instinct in his own way, which is believed to be his will reap punishment. Moral anxiety and neurotic anxiety appear similar, but have differences of principle; namely; level of control ego. On the moral concerns remain rational in thinking the problem is due to the energy of the superego, whereas the people in a state of neurotic anxiety distress—sometimes panicked that they cannot think clearly and energy id neurotic anxiety inhibit patients distinguish between fantasy and reality. Neurotic anxiety itself is the result of an unconscious conflict between id impulses (especially sexual and aggressive) with the constraints set by the ego and superego.

3. SUMMARY OF THE NOVEL

The story begins with Will Grayson (WG1), an ordinary high school student who had two rules in his life: do not care too much and shut up. He is befriending

Tiny Cooper, a gay teenager whom he said is very big and very gay. Recalling from his two rules of his life, therefore he does not care if there was a rumor of him and Tiny being in a romantic relationship. Invited to watch their favorite band one night, WG1 then met Jane-Tiny's Gay Straight Alliance member. In another part of the city, named a gloomy teen who was so negative about life with the same name, Will Grayson (WG2). He did not have any real friends except Maura whom is considered as inmates he inevitably became friend. WG2 was a shut-closed gay who fell in love with a guy named Isaac where he met online.

WG1 had just been told that Tiny planned to hold a stage play called Tiny Dancer and needed his help. This was where WG1 Began resentful towards Tiny because of anything he did he endlessly match making him with Jane. WG1 did not like her at all, or at least that was he thought until Tiny asked Jane to make him a fake ID so that they could watch Maybe Dead Cats. It was unfortunate that the ID of WG1 looked so fake that then he was stranded alone and decided to go to the porn shop across the pub just to buy a gay porn magazine which he intended to fool around with Tiny later. It was there when he met the other Will. The other Will (WG2) later introduced himself as Grayson and he supposed to meet with a guy named Isaac in Frenchy's. It was unfortunate that the named placed turned out was a porn shop name. They later sat on the pavement and had a little chit chat until their phone rang. WG2 was heartbroken as he found out Isaac was actually Maura and she was just messing with him. Knowing that WG1 knew a guy who might help him so he told Tiny that he had a little surprised for him. The night ended as the gloomy WG2 met Tiny while WG1 walked Jane home. That night,

both Will felt what was kissing felt like. At that moment, WG1 knew he fell for Jane, while the other Will found that the couch sized body Tiny was a figure he was looking for.

Tiny's Dancer would still go and it became Tiny's priority, other than his new boyfriend. WG1 was really tired of Tiny and his musical drama, and not to mention that Tiny was still matchmaking him with Jane, moreover commenting something a little rude when he said that WG1 was a coward for not reaching his girl. WG1 knew he was a coward, but then he made a move and asked Jane to go out with him after the Schrodinger cat talk.

WG2's life since Tiny had come was turned 180 degree. He was not a shut closet gay anymore. He told his mother that he was gay and met a guy named Tiny Cooper. He was a bit worried about how would his mother react to that, but it turned out she accepted it and even inviting Tiny to come for a dinner together. Everything was going smoothly. He thought it was perfect until his little happiness deemed false when he felt his anxiety crawled back and he felt that he was someone who did not deserve Tiny, also he thought that he did not really like Tiny or just made him a runaway. Tiny and WG2 later broke up one evening after Tiny told Maura to stop interfering with WG2's life. At that exact moment, WG2 knew he was truly fallen in love with Tiny and he had just shattered it.

Tiny Dancer which was now changed its name to Hold Me Closer would be held in a minutes, but Tiny was still vomiting in the bathroom. WG1 and Jane knew what Tiny would need right now. Tiny needed His Will Grayson (WG2). WG2 who was reluctant to come to Tiny's musical drama was encouraged by

Gideon—who he met at school after WG2 revealed that he was gay—and now met WG1 and he needed his help as he had something in mind. Both Will agree and by the end of the play, WG2 raised his hand and said that he appreciated Tiny. It was later followed by several people named Will and closed with Jane and WG1. Loud applauses echoed in the theater room and people cheered.

4. ANALYSIS OF CHARACTERS IN THE NOVEL

4.1 Intrinsic Elements

In analyzing a novel, intrinsic elements are needed to be understood first because it is the foundation that makes a novel. In this part there will be three intrinsic elements used, that are plot, character and characterization. The first thing that will be explain further is the character and characterization of three major characters—two Will Grayson and Tiny Cooper, and then will be followed by plot.

4.1.1 Will Grayson (WG1)

The first Will that is written with capitalized letters in each word is a protagonist written by John Green. It is told that he is a character who has two principles in his life that are to not too care and to shut up. At the very least he is having a teenager phase where he feels emotional—how he is interested and disinterested at the same time towards Jane and how angry or rather irritated when Tiny ignored him even though he thought Tiny is ended up with him because he cannot choose a friend. As the story continues, WG1 is kept being pushed by Tiny to date Jane. Actually, WG1 is quite interested in Jane, but he does not think he is sufficient enough to be her boyfriend. Not long until Jane told him about her ex-boyfriend who is described as prick, he finally realizes he do likes Jane. At the end of the novel he finally tells the other will (WG2) that there is a method where it goes 'try-error-try-error' until finally he can find 'it' in their life, and that WG1 is no longer the old Will Grayson before he met the WG2. What makes this

remarkable character is that he can conquer his own cowardice behavior as he asks Jane out as his girlfriend and apologizes to Tiny for being such a rude person to him.

4.1.2 Will Grayson (WG2)

The second Will Grayson (WG2) with all lowercase letters—ignoring the proper writing techniques and punctuations was written by David Levithan. This character is a high schooler whom feeling depressed and a closet gay. He thinks that he would be better if he died. He ended up befriending Maura who is despised by him because she tells the biggest lie, dare to mock him and put him in his lowest point in his life. He likes a figure named Isaac whom he met online—which is actually Maura acting as him because she wants to know if WG2 is really gay or not. He later meets Tiny's WG1 after met on the night he and Isaac should be met. He and Tiny become couple and later dating for a short while. His relationship with Tiny do not last long because his anxiety and depression crawls back and he said to himself whether he do likes Tiny or just makes him a runaway for the need of someone he can hold. He finally realize that he do likes Tiny after breaking up with him and later he can open himself up more to his mother and his new best friend who might be his later love interest, Gideon.

4.1.3 Tiny Cooper

A character who is described as a very large gay man, according to WG1, and a sofa man, according to WG2. He becomes the center of the attention wherever he likes or not, although actually he likes being the center of the attention. From the very beginning of the novel it can be seen that Tiny wants to make a musical drama called Tiny Dancer which later in the middle of the story he turned it into Hold Me Closer that tells about love—which precisely tells story about him and his ex -boyfriends. He was already become friend with WG1 since they are in fifth grades and become pals because they are in the same baseball team. He dates WG2 on the night WG1, Jane and he want to watch a Neutral Milk Honey concert. He is brilliant when he breaks a broken heart, said WG1, and it is a fact. From the first he is making his appearance, this character is rather a pushover if not a little egocentric as he wanted everything works in his way, but later this character develops into a lovable character that may be realized or not is one character making both Will Graysons changed.

4.1.4 Plot

Before analyzing the plot, it is important to mention that this novel is divided into the odd chapters where the first Will Grayson (WG1) is written and the even chapters where WG2 is written even though there are some chapters that both Will Grayson are in the same chapters. To make it different, WG1 use the proper grammatical order and punctuations meanwhile WG2 use all lowercase letters. It is later explain in the conversation of John Green and David Levithan in

the back part of the novel that WG2 is all written in lowercase because it is how WG2 sees himself, that he is the person that more active online where he can be anonymous rather than in real life and that makes him more comfortable that way.

The first part of plot is the introduction of characters or exposition. The first exposition of this novel comes in the odd chapters where WG1 is introduced together with Tiny Cooper. Tiny wants to hold a stage play and ask WG1 to join his Alliance so that the stage play can be funded by the school where WG1 later meets with Jane there. While the exposition of even chapters is when WG2 is introduced with Maura as they both are going to school and WG2 that hopes he does not go to school anymore because he prefer to stay with his computer and chat with his online friend Isaac.

The rising actions are where both Will Grayson start to feel pressure where in WG1's case it is his father suddenly talks with him in the matter of his future where he will go to college, and Tiny that starts to irk him because of the matchmaking between WG1 and Jane, another problem shown is that WG1 a little annoyed by Tiny's stage play because he starts to get more busier to his drama and his new boyfriend—which is WG2, rather than be there with WG1. In WG2's case his rising actions are where Maura keep pestering him whether he is gay or not and he finally find out that his friend online named Isaac is actually Maura. Another problems he encounters is where his anxiety is rising because he has Tiny as his boyfriend where seems to have everything and he has nothing, thus making him insecure and unworthy.

The climaxes of these problems are WG1 gets mad to Tiny and later told his father that he is not confident enough to fulfill his father's expectation. Meanwhile in WG2's part he cannot bottle up his feeling and vent up to both Maura and Tiny and ends up in his break up with Tiny. From the climaxes the character Jane and Gideon then take their role in falling actions. Jane is confessed by WG1 and accepted his feeling, in addition she also tells WG1 to make up with Tiny, meanwhile WG2 is asked by Gideon to come to Tiny's stage play and accept whatever may happen even though WG2 closes his heart and does not want to listen to people anymore but after his mother and Gideon convince him he later becomes soft and goes to Tiny's stage play.

The resolution of the story is that both Will Grayson finally accepted that Tiny is an important person to them. He is best friend of WG1 and ex-boyfriend of WG2 whom he cares so much. They both appreciate Tiny for existing in their life and make them both change.

4.2 Extrinsic Elements

In analyzing this novel, it is important to point out that the novel takes place in nowadays setting where the characters are still in high school. Although the characters are in high school, it is important to point out that the problems the characters are facing is what actually happened in real life, thus analyzing characters with psychological analysis using the theory of repression is the focus

of this essay that further discussion will have relation with the theory of anxiety which was also a theory by Sigmund Freud.

4.2.1 The first Will Grayson (WG1)

The first Will Grayson (WG1) is told as a character who is more or less apathetic, he is not in despair, but it is felt he has no wish to expect much for everything. Being an obedient child, he only nods in agreement as his father talk about a program that WG1 will go to after high school.

“You know how people are always saying your parents are always right? “Follow your parent’s advice; they know what’s good for you... They know what’s good for me. I’ll listen to anyone, frankly. Almost everyone knows better than I do.

Andbutso little does my dad know, but all his explanation of this future is lost on me, I’m already fine with it.

... And I say, “Yeah, it sounds really cool, Dad” and he’s talking about how he knows people here, and I’m just nodding nodding nodding.” (Green and Levithan, 2010: 74)

In the sentences above, it proves how much WG1 actually an apathetic character where mostly will agree to people’s saying without further questions. As his father, who rarely make direct contact with him will suddenly talks about how WG1 will have future and college days theme every time they speak. But at chapter 15, WG1 has “the talk” again with his father when WG1 take a day off after his confrontation with Tiny. At that moment WG1 knew that his father is not that cold figure as he tells story that WG1 is the precious son of him. his father says “I’m so proud of you that it makes me proud of me. I hope you know that”, even after WG1 told his father the possibility of him not getting to the program

his father recommend him before. It relieves him a little as his worries are decreasing.

Similarly, he begins experiencing crashes with Tiny because Tiny is more preoccupied with the drama that he created. Their friendship started a little crumbled apart and WG1 gradually assume if he is not a good friend for Tiny, but he also does not want Tiny leaves him and feels better care of his drama. Other pressures that he faced was that he was in a condition between a yes or no in liking a woman named Jane who he met in Tiny Gay And Not Gay Alliance. He knew Jane currently has a boyfriend, but he is quite keen and growing interest after Tiny and Jane asked her to watch the concert. WG1 was not sure like Jane after tiny keep pushing him with Jane, but on the other hand he also knows he has a feeling towards Jane and does not want to see her with her boyfriend. From the pressures mainly from the outside that he experienced, at its peak he took out everything in front of Tiny, just a day before the rehearsal and thus making him a better person for realizing what worries him the most and the point where he finally felt a breakdown.

“ ...I’m waiting for him. To come out and apologize. Or else to come out and yell at me for being a pussy. I’m waiting for him for those dark wood double doors to open and for Tiny to blow through them and start talking.

I know it’s immature, but I don’t care. Sometimes you need your best friend to walk through the door. And then he doesn’t.”(Green and Levithan, 2010: 215).

In this part, WG1 is feeling left out as his best friend is not coming after him when they have a quarrel, but after he sat on the bench of the Little League field where he and Tiny first met and became friend from the time being and he cried,

he realized how much he was the one who gets into him, not the other way around or mutually. It was a breakdown moment for WG1. A time where his anxiety rises and makes him crying alone in the bench, but slowly, with the help of his father and Jane he comes to the resolution to make up with Tiny and admit that it was his fault and Tiny's fault too as he has leaving him before. "But with friendship, there's nothing like that. being in a relationship, that's something you choose. Being friends, that's just something you are" (Chapter 17: 258) said Tiny after they made up at the end of their quarrel.

4.2.2 The Second Will Grayson (WG2)

The second Will Grayson (WG2) has deeper characterization more than WG1. WG2 from the beginning of the story has been described as a depressive character who has a good development within himself with repression and hide his feelings from his parent, and slowly experience anxiety after being lied to by Maura and met Tiny. But little by little he became more open, and eventually wants to become a better person after the peak of anxiety felt after he splits with Tiny. The second Will is already depressed when Tiny comes to his house and hang out in his room, Tiny finds the antidepressant pills next to aquarium fish.

“ tiny : you feed them prescription drugs?

me: oh, no. these are mine.

It's the only way I'll remember to feed the fish and take my meds, if I keep them together...

me: it's antidepressant thing.

...it was like the depression was the core of me, of every part of me, from my mind to my bones? That if he got blue, I got black? That I hated those pills so much, because I know how much I relied on them to live?" (Green and Levithan, 2010: 208-209)

From the citation above, WG2 proves himself that he has already have depression for a while, and that it also helps him to live but at the same time he also hates it for relying on it too much. It worries him that it can make any more problems as he is getting anxious about how will Tiny respond to that. even after Tiny change the subject to talk about WG2's fish he is back to being uncertain.

“ i argue with myself.

stop.

stay here.

talk.

tiny is waiting, tiny is looking at me. tiny is being kind, because he hasn't realized yet who i am, what i am. i will never be kind back. the best i can do is give him reasons to give up.” (Green and Levithan, 2010: 211)

His anxiety was rising in time and unilaterally said that he did not need Tiny. From the development of the story, WG2 intends to experience repression displacement where he then vent his anger against Maura whom he still ignored after what she lied to WG2 in chapter 8 about she is actually Isaac—but then Tiny chooses to interfere with WG2's problem, nonetheless WG2 vent up his anger even more to both of them that will lead to his break up with Tiny in chapter 16. There is also the anxiety that arose after he meets Tiny, with him that did not have anything and Tiny who seem to have everything. “I am used to bringing out the pain people. But Tiny refuses to play that game” at the end of chapter 14, WG2 said that he was referring himself as a nuisance to people, and he sure Tiny will be one of those people whom just fed up with him.

In addition Maura is too curious about his sexual orientation until approaching him by the name of Isaac on messenger and acts as man just to prove that WG2 is really gay and it later contributes in adding pressure after her role as

Isaac and deceiving WG2 to meet in a place that turns out is a porn shop. At the moment he was on his lowest point, he then meets with Tiny Cooper and for a moment his repressed feelings can be overcome, but his anxiety begins to emerge when he feels he is unworthy of a Tiny Cooper and how he suddenly being arbitrarily confronting Maura at his school.

The resolution for WG2 is becoming even better after character Gideon has appeared who then helps to resolve the issue with Tiny by coming to Tiny's stage play. The night before the play, WG2 and WG1 have chatted and tells story about how they will get better after they can little by little managing their failure they face until at the end they find "that's it!"

5. CONCLUSION

With a subtheme lift the psychological condition of characters who are depressed and feel anxiety, this novel is intrigued the writer's interest to make an extended essay from this novel titled *Will Grayson, Will Grayson*. The writer discussed it with psychological theory of self-defense Repression and Anxiety owned by Sigmund Freud. After the writer analyzed the characters Will Grayson (WG1) and will grayson (WG2), it can be concluded that both Will Grayson are experiencing pressure that leads to anxiety where in WG2's case the repression that he has is shown textually. The resolution of both Will Grayson is laying on the acceptance. WG1 accepts that he love Jane and Tiny as his best friend and that he is not disappointing his father for doubting himself to go college meanwhile WG2 accepts that he loves Tiny and even though they break up he realizes that appreciating people and asking for help are needed.

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