

Madani: Jurnal Ilmiah Multidisiplin

Volume 3, Nomor 8, September 2025, P. 1-9

E-ISSN: 2986-6340

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17083069>

Self-Defending towards Bullying in the Novel *The Nerd can Fight*

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Abstract

Lack of affection from both parents and also the loss of someone who is deeply loved can cause someone to withdraw from social interactions. Someone who withdraws from social interactions, especially teenagers, can result in them becoming victims of bullying. The consequences of this bullying can have an impact on the victim's mental health. This study aims to describe the types of bullying experienced by Cassandra, the main character in the novel *The Nerd Can Fight*. This study uses the theory of personality structure by Sigmund Freud and a psychoanalytic/psychological approach. Due to the death of her brother, Cassandra feels lost, guilty, traumatized, and upset, so she withdraws more from her friends. The results of the study concluded that three types of bullying in the novel *The Nerd Can Fight*, namely verbal bullying, physical bullying, and mental or psychological bullying experienced by the main character, Cassandra; she can defend herself against it by avoiding conflict, not responding to the bullying, not caring, and being indifferent. This attitude arises because she has a role model, namely her brother, and the presence of her best friend, Adam, makes the main character, Cassandra, able to defend herself from bullying.

Keywords: Self-defending, bullying, personality structure, psychoanalysis approach.

Abstrak

Kurangnya kasih sayang dari kedua orang tua, dan juga kehilangan seseorang yang sangat dicintai dapat menyebabkan seseorang menarik diri dari interaksi sosial. Seseorang yang menarik diri dari interaksi sosial, terutama remaja, dapat mengakibatkan mereka menjadi korban bullying. Konsekuensi dari bullying ini dapat berdampak pada kesehatan mental korban. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan jenis-jenis bullying yang dialami oleh Cassandra, tokoh utama dalam novel *The Nerd Can Fight*. Penelitian ini menggunakan teori struktur kepribadian oleh Sigmund Freud dan pendekatan psikoanalisis/psikologis. Karena kematian saudara laki-lakinya, Cassandra merasa kehilangan, bersalah, trauma, dan kesal, sehingga dia lebih banyak menarik diri dari teman-temannya. Hasil penelitian menyimpulkan bahwa tiga jenis bullying dalam novel *The Nerd Can Fight*, yaitu bullying verbal, bullying fisik, dan bullying mental atau psikologis yang dialami oleh tokoh utama, Cassandra; Dia dapat membela diri dengan menghindari konflik, tidak menanggapi bullying, tidak peduli, dan acuh tak acuh. Sikap ini muncul karena ia memiliki panutan, yaitu kakaknya, dan kehadiran sahabatnya, Adam, membuat tokoh utama Cassandra mampu membela diri dari perundungan.

Kata Kunci: Pertahanan diri, perundungan, struktur kepribadian, pendekatan psikoanalisis.

Article Info

Received date: 20 August 2025

Revised date: 27 August 2025

Accepted date: 08 September 2025

INTRODUCTION

Literary works are the process of one's ideas and thoughts expressed in such a way that they are significant to anyone who reads them. Literary works can be classified into prose (fiction), poetry, and drama (Suwardi, 2011). The researcher focuses only on fiction prose among the three forms of literature (Hilgard & R, 1983). Characterization is one of the crucial qualities in writing, especially novels, that decide whether or not a work is good. According to Siswandarti (2009) characterization refers to the author's description of the characters' traits and personalities. The study focuses on the analysis of literary works, specifically fiction prose, through a psychological lens. Literature is a medium for expressing ideas and thoughts, and characterization plays a vital role in creating engaging and meaningful stories. Literary works, especially novels, often depict complex characters with psychological dimensions, which can be analyzed using psychological theories. In this context, the novel "*The Nerd Can Fight*" by Jean Angeline Michelle Julianto serves as the primary data, illustrating themes such as bullying, trauma, and resilience. The background emphasizes the importance of

understanding characters' psychological states and behaviors, particularly in relation to bullying and self-defending, which are critical social issues.

The theoretical framework of this study is based on the psychology of literature and Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory. Freud's concepts of the Id, Ego, and Superego are used to analyze the psychological development and defense mechanisms of the main character, Cassandra. The psychology of literature involves analyzing literary characters' traits and motivations, as well as the author's intention and the reader's perception. Additionally, the study references studies related to bullying, its types (physical, verbal, psychological/social), and the psychological effects on victims. The psychoanalytic approach helps in understanding the internal conflicts and responses of characters facing bullying.

The main thing discussed in this research is how the main character Self-Defending of bullying happens in the novel *The Nerd Can Fight* (2016) by Jean Angeline Michelle Julianto. This novel was chosen by the researcher because it portrays themes including bullying, trauma, and struggles of Self-Defending from the main character. The author of this book, Jean Angeline, tells the tale of Cassandra, a girl who experiences bullying at school but, with the support of her friends and martial arts training, turns from a nerdy victim into a fighter. The loss and suffering Cassandra endured after her brother died in a car accident are also discussed in this novel, and they affected her character development and psychological state. Based on the main character problems, researcher used Freud's psychoanalysis theory to analyze the Self-Defending of bullying on the main character (Ariesto, 2009).

This research aims to investigate and analyze the psychological self-defending of the main character, Cassandra, in the novel "*The Nerd Can Fight*" through Freudian psychoanalytic theory. Specifically, it examines how Cassandra's internal conflicts, self-defending strategies, and psychological resilience are depicted in response to bullying experiences. The study seeks to fill the gap in literary psychological analysis of Indonesian fiction, contributing to both literary and psychological fields.

METHOD

This research employs qualitative methods, which, as noted by George (2005) do not rely on statistics or measurements but instead gather data in the form of words or images (Banister et al., 1994). To appreciate a piece of literature, one can apply the psychology of literature (Hatfield, 2002). According to Suwardi (2011) literary psychology studies literature as a psychological activity. There are three approaches to understanding the relationship between psychology and literature: analyzing the psychology of the author as a writer, investigating the psychology of fictional characters, and studying the psychology of readers (Ratna, 2004). Therefore, literary psychology can be defined as a study that focuses on the psychology of literary characters, the author who created the work, and even the audience of literary works. In analyzing the psychology of the characters in this story, the researcher uses a psychology approach to analyze the character Cassandra in the novel *The Nerd can Fight* (2016) by Jean Angeline Michelle Julianto and uses Sigmund Freud Psychoanalysis theory (Ardiansyah et al., 2022).

The research utilizes a psychoanalytic approach grounded in Sigmund Freud's theory. This approach is particularly suitable for examining how the id, ego, and superego interact in the main character's self-defense against bullying. The data for this research consists of textual narratives and dialogues that illustrate the speech behaviors and situations involving the main character, Cassandra, as she navigates the self-defending against bullying, analyzed through the lens of Freud's theory. The primary source of data is the novel *The Nerd Can Fight* by Jean Angeline Michele Julianto, first published in 2016. The following steps were taken to collect data from *The Nerd Can Fight*; The researcher read the entire novel multiple times to gather comprehensive data, the researcher engaged with literary works and supplementary materials that relate to and support the research issues, important details were noted that were anticipated to emerge from the research, particularly concerning the psychological Self-Defending relevant to the novel (Sari et al., 2020).

RESULT

In the part of finding, it explains about four points, namely ; Cassandra's Character, The causes of Cassandra's being targeted for bullying, The Kinds of Bullying Experienced by Cassandra, and Cassandra Self-Defending against the bullying.

Cassandra's Character and characterization

Cassandra Rylie Johnson is the main character and narrator of *The Nerd Can Fight*. She is a high school student. At school, Cassandra is a smart and introverted girl who prefers to spend time reading books and doing academic activities rather than socializing with her friends. Thus becomes the target of bullies at school due to her nerdy appearance and interests. Cassandra is a student who consistently earns excellent grades across nearly all subjects. However, her exceptional intelligence sometimes leads her friends to feel frustrated as they perceive her as being in a dominant position. This dynamic also fosters feelings of jealousy among them. Despite her overall academic success, Cassandra has a strong aversion to Mathematics, evident in her frequent placement in the corner of the classroom where she is often subjected to teasing by her peers. It can be seen from the quote below describing Cassandra's experience of academic pressure and social exclusion at school.

"It's no secret that all my test scores are good, except for Math. I hate this subject. My friends always forced me to sit alone in the corner of the class. Likewise, when the Math lesson ends and the next lesson changes, it seems like fate doesn't change. There would be shouts and taunts directed at me." (*The Nerd Can Fight*, p.9).

Cassandra actually enjoys her academic pursuits, as she mentions that she is a high-achieving student with good grades in most subjects except for Math, which she dislikes. She expresses a clear distaste for Math, but her overall attitude towards her studies is positive. However, despite her interest and success in academics, she cannot accept the teasing and ridicule from her friends. The story describes how her friends force her to sit alone and taunt her, especially around her dislike for Math. This teasing makes her feel frustrated and insecure, but she chooses not to fight back or respond aggressively. Instead, she prefers to withdraw and remain silent to avoid further trouble.

The causes of Cassandra's being targeted for bullying

This Part is important because it helps to identify and analyze the underlying reasons why Cassandra becomes a victim of bullying. Understanding the causes provides insight into her vulnerabilities, such as her emotional state, social interactions, and personal background, which contribute to her being targeted. It also sheds light on broader social and psychological factors, such as her academic performance, personality traits, and traumatic experiences like the loss of her brother, that make her susceptible to bullying. Explaining this sub-title allows readers to grasp the root causes of her victimization and opens the discussion about how certain behaviors, characteristics, or circumstances can lead to a person being bullied, thus fostering empathy and awareness.

a. The tragic Death of Cassandra's Brother

The loss of Bryant, Cassandra's older brother, significantly impacts her emotional state and behavior. Bryant's death occurs in a car accident caused by a truck that hits their vehicle while Bryant is trying to save Cassandra. Following this tragedy, Cassandra experiences feelings of being lost, guilty, and traumatized. She blames herself for not listening to Bryant's advice and regrets her decision to persuade him to attend a party, which ultimately led to the accident. This traumatic event causes her to withdraw socially, develop recurring nightmares about the incident, and become a target for bullying at school. Her grief and guilt dominate her emotional landscape, highlighting how the tragedy deeply affects her mental health and social interactions.

Cassandra is portrayed as a girl who is neglected and subjected to bullying. She battles loneliness at home and faces relentless challenges at school. After her brother's accident, she begins to distance herself from her friends, developing a deep sense of guilt. However, Cassandra chose to further withdraw from her friends, a decision that had no impact on her emotional state. She simply refrained from making friends, which eventually led to bullying by her peers. However, this situation did not have a negative impact on her psychology, and she showed her resilience in overcoming these challenges (Emir, 2016). Here is a quote from Cassandra about herself choosing to withdraw from her friends because the accident made her easy to bully.

"I closed my eyes as the wind greeted me. I let the wind play with my hair and tickle my face. Why did my life turn out like this? My life was peaceful when Bryant was around. No one dared to get in my way and no one tried to bother me. Even Maddison was free to threaten girls who tried to bother me. Maddison was so protective of me. She was powerful. So it was natural that her words were obeyed by all the kids in the school. Then the fatal accident happened. And look at my fate after that turning into a girl who is easily to bullied." (*The Nerd Can Fight*, p.206).

b. Impact of the death

The impact of Bryant's death describes the profound emotional and psychological impacts on Cassandra. Following the tragic accident, Cassandra feels lost and guilty, believing that her actions such as persuading Bryant to attend the party were responsible for his death. She expresses remorse and blame herself, feeling that if she had been different, her brother would still be alive. This guilt leads her to experience trauma, manifested through nightmares and feelings of regret. Her grief is so intense that she isolates herself from friends, which results in her becoming a target for bullying. Furthermore, her trauma and emotional distress significantly influence her behavior and mental state, illustrating how the death of her brother has a lasting and deep impact on her life. It can be seen in this quote.

Bryant died in a car accident that was hit by a truck. In the car were Cassandra and Bryant but only Cassandra survived. That night Cassandra wanted to go to a party, Cassandra forced Bryant to go because she wanted to try to blend in with the party crowd. But it was all in vain she regretted not listening to Bryant which led to the accident. Cassandra felt guilty and blamed herself for not listening to her brother. It can be seen in the situation when Cassandra wakes up from her dream and confides in Monic. Monic is her cousin she trusts so she can tell her regrets, after that reunion night she slept at Cassandra's house so she immediately told her. Below is a quote from Cassandra about her feeling of loss and guilt, which she told her cousin, Monic.

"I was mean, Mo. I was selfish. If I had stayed home, Bryant would still be alive. You and Dom wouldn't have had to leave and everything..." I paused to catch my breath and choked. My breathing was uneven. "Everything would have been perfect. I would still have my big brother to protect me. We would still have that fierce big brother. It's all my fault, Mo. It's all my fault. I'm sorry." (The Nerd Can Fight, p.54).

Cassandra always has nightmares about her brother's death, which traumatizes her. Bryant died in a car accident while trying to save Cassandra, there is a moment where Cassandra warns Bryant of possible danger, but Bryant ignores her. This accident happened while Bryant was trying to avoid a dangerous situation, and tragically, he did not survive. This incident left a deep emotional impact on Cassandra who felt trauma. It can be seen in the following sentence, in which Cassandra often dreams of the events of that night, thus traumatizing her. Some of the sentences are italicized, these sentences are written by the author to give the impression that the incident only happened in Cassandra's dreams. Bryant calls her Casey in the text because it was Bryant's favorite name for Cassandra. Here is a quote from Cassandra about how the trauma of losing Bryant resulted in her having frequent nightmares.

"Don't strain Casey. Relax... he said with a laugh "I looked around me and there we both were in his car. I remember! This was right before the accident. "Bry, listen to me, don't speed, we'll crash and you won't survive!" Good point, Casey. But I guess I'm immune to that trick scenario you just said." I banged my head on the dashboard in frustration. I didn't want to see him die again. "Bryant!!!" I shouted "Casey!" I woke up. Sweat soaked my body and my chest rose and fell irregularly. This was just a dream. Not reality." (The Nerd Can Fight, p.25-26).

When a loved one or someone you care about passes away, it's normal and understandable for individuals to feel sad or disturbed because they know the truth. People may experience more sadness and grief when they learn about the circumstances behind their demise. The death represents the irreversible and permanent removal of a person from our lives. It is a profound and intensely emotional event that is frequently followed by emotions of emptiness, longing, and grief. It is acceptable and typical to feel furious or sad when someone passes. Cassandra was upset to learn that Dom was behind the planned accident. Dom was the one who ordered the truck driver to hit our car during the incident that night that took Bryant's life. She was very upset and could not control herself because she heard that fact, because she knew that Dom was her close friend and was like a brother. Here is a quote from Cassandra about her feelings of upset at Dom for knowing that it was the person closest to her who planned Bryant's murder.

"Dom acted like an ignorant bastard who hired another bastard to kill his own best friend, the thought made me feel very disgusted with Dom." (The Nerd Can Fight, p.252).

This sentence illustrates the strong emotional conflict between Cassandra and Dom. Dom's act of betrayal not only destroys their relationship but also exposes the dark side of humanity—betrayal, and evil. Cassandra is disgusted, not only at Dom's actions, but also at the nature of humans who are capable of such evil.

The Kinds of Bullying Experienced by Cassandra

1. Physical Bullying: Slapping

Physical bullying is bullying that occurs because of physical contact between the perpetrator and the victim of bullying. Maddison is one of the bullies in the story who often harasses and physically mistreats Cassandra. She is depicted as someone who uses both verbal and physical aggression to intimidate others, including slapping Cassandra and calling her derogatory names. Maddison's behavior reflects her role as an antagonist who perpetuates bullying within the school environment. Maddison slaps Cassandra as a form of physical bullying and an attempt to assert her dominance and control over Cassandra. The slap signifies Maddison's frustration and anger, likely because Cassandra is being silent or unresponsive to her provocation. Maddison's action is meant to intimidate and punish Cassandra, demonstrating her power and willingness to use violence to get her way. This act of slapping reflects the broader context of bullying behavior, where physical violence is used to assert superiority or to hurt the victim emotionally and physically. Physical bullying in the novel *The Nerd Can Fight* can be seen in the quote below:

"Suddenly Maddison grabbed my arm. 'Why are you silent, huh?' Plakk!!! 'That's a lesson for you!' She shouted" (The Nerd Can Fight, p.10).

This quote depicts a situation of physical violence carried out by Maddison to intimidate Cassandra. In a tense atmosphere, Cassandra went to the Canteen, and Maddison suddenly grabbed Cassandra's arm roughly. Her gaze was sharp, as if demanding an answer that never came. Because Cassandra's silence and lack of response made Maddison angry, who interpreted it as a form of resistance. In a tense moment, Maddison, one of Cassandra's bullies, confronts her with a sharp question about her silence. Before Cassandra has a chance to respond, Maddison violently slaps her, silencing her completely. Following this act of physical aggression, Maddison loudly asserts that it serves as a lesson for Cassandra, demonstrating her uncontrollable anger and dominance over her.

2. Verbal Bullying: Mocking with Bad words

Cassandra becomes a victim of verbal abuse through hurtful language. In the novel, Cassandra is called derogatory names such as "bitch," "trashy chick," and "nerdy girl" by Maddison and her gang, especially during social gatherings like parties. This form of verbal bullying involves mocking and insulting her with offensive words, which aim to belittle and humiliate her publicly. Such aggressive language not only harms Cassandra's self-esteem but also emotionally destabilizes her, demonstrating how verbal bullying, characterized by the use of harmful words, can have severe psychological effects over time. In the novel *The Nerd can Fight*, researchers found a form of verbal bullying which can be seen in the quote below:

"I'm getting annoyed now, because Maddison suddenly joined us. I'm very annoyed by their presence. I'm very annoyed by their presence. Is one jerk in this mortal world not enough? I moved closer to Monic, She gave me a sharp look and then looked at me. 'Why are you here, bitch, don't talk to this nerdy girl, you trashy chick!' Maddison squeezed my cheeks and pushed me." (The Nerd Can Fight, p.46).

Bullying in the sentence above was done by Maddison. Verbal bullying is bullying that is done through words such as insulting or mocking someone. The word "mocking" can be seen when Maddison calls Cassandra: "Bitch, Nerdy girl, and trashy chick". Maddison's treatment worsened, this time Maddison even invited her gang to bully Cassandra. At a party, she was called a bitch, a nerd, and a piece of trash by them because of her presence at the party, as written in the sentence. The quote shows when Cassandra experienced non-physical bullying with verbal bullying. In the quote above, verbal bullying is characterized by bad words.

3. Psychological/Social Bullying: Spreading rumors, Threatened from her friends

Psychological or social bullying have been identified, according to Farrington and Ttofi (2010, p. 8): aimed at causing someone else to be humiliated or have their social reputation damaged, such as lying and spreading rumors, hurtfully imitating behavior, playing nasty jokes that cause embarrassment and humiliation, encouraging others to socially exclude someone else, mobbing, and making negative facial or physical gestures, menacing or contemptuous looks, towards someone else.

Spreading rumors refers to when Cassandra becomes fearful that her friend Penelope, who initially pretended to be her close confidant, actually betrayed her by spreading false information. Penelope spread rumors claiming that Cassandra could fight, which led Cassandra to feel anxious and worried about her social reputation. The rumor threatened her social standing and made her fear that her social life might be negatively affected, demonstrating how damaging rumors can create emotional distress and undermine a person's confidence. It can be seen in the following quote below.

"She will probably tell Sonia that I can fight. Then there might be some weird gossip that will end my (non-existent) social life." (The nerd can fight, p.174).

This quote reflects Cassandra's fears about the potential consequences of rumors and gossip spreading about her. She worries that Penelope, having betrayed her trust, will tell Sonia, another girl at school, that Cassandra has fighting skills. This could lead to rumors circulating among her peers, which Cassandra perceives as weird gossip that could damage her reputation. Her concern is that such gossip might lead to the deterioration of her social life, which she describes as non-existent implying her feelings of loneliness and social isolation. This highlights how social bullying through rumor spreading can threaten Cassandra's social standing, increase her anxiety, and impact her mental health, reinforcing her fear of social rejection and ostracism.

In this novel Cassandra doesn't have a friend at school, but eventually, someone approaches her and tries to be her friend, namely Penelope. This can be seen from the following situation when Cassandra's first introduction to Penelope was during a futsal match, when Cassandra was sitting alone then Penelope approached her (Hancock et al., 2009).

"After feeling comfortable, she extended her hand. "My name is Penelope. I smiled even though my inner voice planted doubts in my mind. Why would anyone want to be your friend? Isn't it too late for them to change their feelings? This is a dangerous trick, idiot. I shook off all thoughts and shook his hand. "Cassandra." I replied before withdrawing my hand. smiled and I saw the sincerity in it. I smiled inside my heart." (The Nerd Can Fight, p.114).

This quote illustrates the inner conflict between the desire for social relationships and the fear or doubt that arises from past experiences or insecurities within Cassandra. Despite her doubts and fears, there is a change that occurs within her after seeing the sincerity in Penelope's actions, which opens up the possibility for a better relationship in the future.

Cassandra Self-Defending against the bullying

Adam's presence as supporting Cassandra

Although Cassandra was bullied there was one person who protected her, even though he was also a new student at the school. His name was Adam, he was the one who always defended Cassandra when Cassandra was bullied. Adam acts as a friend who supports Cassandra during difficult times in her life. After the death of her brother, Bryant, Cassandra feels isolated and lonely. Adam is present as a caring figure and tries to understand Cassandra's feelings. When Cassandra was being bullied by Maddison, at that time Adam came and saw it Adam defended Cassandra can be seen from the line, *"Stop Maddison, you can't bully like this, don't bully the weak!" (The Nerd Can Fight, p.11).* In the sentence above, Adam defends Cassandra by stopping Maddison from continuing to bully Cassandra.

Not Giving Any Response

"Give no response" is a courageous attitude that shows strength in silence. It's not about being weak, it's not about being afraid — it's about controlling yourself and refusing to give power to those who want to bring you down. In this novel, it is shown that Cassandra defends herself by not responding to them as one form of resistance that she carries out. In the beginning, it was her classmates who looked down on Cassandra. They often teased her, made fun of her appearance, and even tried to make her feel uncomfortable in disrespectful ways. However, Cassandra never responded to their treatment with hatred or anger. She chose to remain silent, preferring to focus on her studies and live her days without getting involved in unnecessary trouble. It can be seen in the following Cassandra quote.

"I always give in to avoid trouble and keep quiet when they make fun of me, I've been preoccupied with other problems all my life". (The Nerd Can Fight, p.10).

The quote describes Cassandra who tends to give in and keep quiet when treated unfairly or ridiculed by them. She chooses this attitude not because she agrees with the treatment, but to avoid bigger problems. Her decision not to fight back is also influenced by the fact that throughout her life, her mind has been filled with other heavier or more pressing problems, so people's ridicule feels like a small thing compared to the burden he bears.

Ignoring

When someone chooses to ignore the taunts, insults, or other negative treatment from a bully, it's not because they don't feel the pain. It's because they know that not everything is worth paying attention to. Bullies feed off reactions they want to see us angry, crying, or afraid. But when we choose not to care, when we move forward without wavering, we take back control of our self-worth. In this novel Cassandra shows ignoring her bullies as a form of self-defense and resistance. Cassandra was

thrown with paper balls angrily continuously by her friends in class who were ordered by Sonia, Cassandra felt very angry and held back emotions when they did that, which almost made her out of control but in that situation she chose to ignore and did not want to add to the problem because she knew that she could retaliate against them but she still thought the risk was high and she did not want to get involved in trouble. It can be seen in Cassandra's quote below.

"My eyes watched each person, one by one. Some were looking down, minding their own business, forgetting what they had just done. Then my eyes fell on Sonia who was grinning. I turned around and my face turned bright red. I think the monster inside me woke up from its slumber. No, don't. Your time is too precious. There's no need to engage her. The risk is high. I repeated that sentence like I was chanting a mantra" (The Nerd Can Fight, p.207).

In the sentence above, the use of the word "precious" reflects the self-awareness of the value of her time and energy, and choosing to be ignorant about what Sonia is doing.

Indifference

This attitude is not about suppressing emotions, but about controlling yourself, organizing your heart, and standing on a solid foundation of self-confidence. In a world where the voices of ridicule are often louder than the voices of support, being indifferent to bullying is the quietest form of courage, yet the most painful for those who seek to bring us down (Ningrum & Bahri, 2020). In this situation where Casey faced challenges or pressure from Sonia who tried to belittle or ridicule her. However, she always remembered her brother's words which motivated Case to not let ridicule or negativity influence her decisions or steps to stay strong, not fight back with words, and keep moving forward despite the temptation to react in an unkind way. In the end, Case felt proud that she was able to restrain herself and chose to be indifferent and not get caught up in negative behavior. The following quote is based on her mind, and Casey here is the favorite name her brother gave to Cassandra.

"You made the right choice, Case. Make Bryant proud. That's the goal. Don't move on just because someone makes fun of you. Just keep going. Keep going. And I did. I kept going and I didn't talk back. I felt proud of myself. I didn't let the devil in me win and rule me." (The Nerd Can Fight, p.207).

The quote shows that Cassandra is giving herself a mental push to stay focused on the bigger goal of making Bryant proud. She realizes that if she reacts to their taunts by getting angry or retaliating - it will only satisfy the devil in her and potentially undermine her achievements. So, Cassandra motivates herself the way she does because she prefers to win inwardly and win in purpose, not just win in a fight.

DISCUSSIONS

Based on the findings, Cassandra is the main character who is told a lot and builds the storyline the most. Cassandra as the main character is told of losing the role of her parents and an accident to her brother that made her experience bullying at her school (Olweus, 2010). Cassandra experiences bullying based on dimensional aspects such as physical, social, and psychological but she can defend it because of the presence of a friend, Adam, and she avoids conflict to not retaliate against those who have bullied her (Coloroso, 2005). Using the framework of Sigmund Freud's personality psychoanalysis theory, we can see that Sigmund Freud's psychological perspective states that the id, ego, and superego are the three components that make up a person's character or personality (Asmanah et al., 2020). These three interconnected personality systems shape human behavior and totality, which is nothing but the result of their interaction (Sigmund, 1949). The biological component is the id, the psychological component is the ego, and the social component is the superego (Gerald, 2013).

In the discussion, researchers found three personality structures possessed by the main character, Cassandra, namely **Id, Ego, and Superego**. According to Freud, the unconscious soul's layer contains the id. The principle of pleasure, which is constantly pursuing pleasure and avoiding inconvenience, is related to how the id functions. The id is the initial system of personality; a person is entirely id at birth, claims (Gerald ; 62). First, The Id discusses about Cassandra is a character who lost her parents' love since childhood, so she sought fulfillment of her affection needs from her older sibling. Her older sibling's death left Cassandra's Id wounded by the loss of her primary source of affection. However, through the memory of her older sibling's loving and affirming words, Cassandra strives to fulfill her Id's urges by holding on to her promise to always be strong. This shows that Cassandra's Id, filled with

emotional needs and an instinct to be loved, drives her to find strength in the memory of her older sibling's love, despite her fear or sadness. The following is a quote that shows Cassandra's Id;

"He tried to calm the little girl down, "Shh, calm down. Casey. You'll be fine as long as I'm here. Nothing bad will happen. Calm down my little Casey, everything is fine. You have to promise me you'll always be strong. Be strong for me and don't cry, Casey." I agreed with every word he said and promised to always be strong no matter what." (The Nerd can Fight, p.22)

Second, The ego discusses about Cassandra showed her self-defending by choosing to follow Bryant's moral message and resist her emotional impulses toward Sonia. The decision to walk to class without giving in to her anger reflects the ego's role in successfully balancing the urges of the id and the demands of the superego, allowing Cassandra to remain consistent with her moral principles, The following is a quote that shows Cassandra's ego;

"I remembered Bryant's message to remain a good person and not become evil. "I had promised Bryant and I would not break that promise because of a lowlife like Sonia. She didn't deserve that honor. I obeyed his orders and walked down the corridor to English class". (The Nerd can fight, p.287).

And the last, Superego is part of the personality structure according to Sigmund Freud's theory that functions to regulate individual behavior based on moral values and social norms learned throughout life. The Superego discusses about Cassandra chooses to follow Bryant's moral teaching that evil should not be repaid with evil (Feist et al., 2010) . This demonstrates the role of the superego, which guides her to adhere to ethical values, even though the id urges her to seek revenge (Lapsley & Stey, 2011). The ego then balances this urge by recognizing her martial arts skills, but uses them only for protection, not revenge, thus enabling Cassandra to become a better person. The following is a quote that shows Cassandra's Superego;

When I used to get bullied in class, Bryant always encouraged me and said never to repay evil with evil. But he taught me martial arts and used it only when I was in danger not for revenge. And I chose not to beat up Sonia and taunt her like she did all these years. Not to keep my secret, but to make me a better person. (The Nerd can Fight, p.299.)

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings and discussions, carried out thru the analysis of the main character in the novel *The Nerd Can Fight* (2016) by Jean Angeline Michele Julianto, it is concluded that the main character, Cassandra, faces various types of bullying, including verbal, physical, and psychological violence, which impacts her mental health and emotional well-being. Her experiences are influenced by her past trauma, particularly the loss of her older brother, Bryant, which exacerbated her feelings of guilt and trauma. Thru the application of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, it was proven that Cassandra's personality is shaped by the interaction of the id, ego, and superego, which influences her responses and self-defending toward bullying.

Cassandra's personality structure reveals that her unconscious desires, morals, and internal conflicts play a significant role in her defense strategies. Her id, driven by emotional needs and a desire for affection, was wounded by her brother's death, but her superego, guided by her brother's moral advice, urged him to avoid revenge and conflict. This internal balance leads them to adopt non-confrontational behaviors such as not giving any responses, ignoring, and indifference, which serves as a form of psychological self-defense. Additionally, the presence of supportive figures, such as Adam's friend, was very helpful for Cassandra's self-defense. Adam served as a positive role model and provided emotional support, helping her appreciate herself and develop inner strength to face her challenges. This support is crucial in enabling Cassandra to manage her trauma and control her environment more effectively, promoting emotional recovery and well-being.

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