# Laurel's Depression in the Novel Love Letters by Ava Dellaira

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## Abstract

*A person's mental condition played a crucial role in shaping their overall well-being and influenced multiple aspects of their life. The study aimed to provide insights into the complex experiences of individuals dealing with depression, enhancing our understanding of mental health. Focusing on the character Laurel in Love Letters to the Dead, the research explored depression symptoms, factors, and coping mechanisms. Data was obtained by repeatedly reading the novel, taking notes, and then categorizing data related to this study. The results of this study show that the factors contributing to Laurel's depression were categorized into two main categories they were: firstly, a stressful environment and life events, and secondly, psychological vulnerability. Laurel also exhibited depression symptoms, including emotional, cognitive, motivational, and physical depression symptoms. Laurel used four types of the defense mechanisms they were repression, displacement, reaction formation, and sublimation to cope her depressive disorder.*

**Keywords:** Psychoanalysis, Depression, Defence Mechanism, Factors Depression

## 1. INTRODUCTION

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.

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). According to Pradopo (2017), 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).

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).

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".

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Previous Studies

The writer takes a review of related literature from other references as a comparison that closes relation to this research:

Pangestu & Sunardi (2016) in their journal conducts a psychoanalytical analysis of John Green's "The Fault in Our Stars" (2012), with a focus on identifying the self-defense mechanisms and core issues of the main character, Hazel Grace Lancaster. Utilizing Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis theory as the analytical framework, this literary research employs a descriptive qualitative method involving a thorough examination of the novel, specifically Hazel Grace's character and characterization, in conjunction with relevant theories. The findings reveal the presence of self-defense mechanisms in the main character and provide insights into potential causes, particularly rooted in her development and childhood. However, the novel lacks substantial evidence or clues to fully explain the origins of her core issues. Consequently, it is concluded that while the novel offers insights into Hazel Grace's psychological aspects, it falls short of being a comprehensive psychological novel.

Aziz, (2018)in their journal use a descriptive method with a psychological approach to describe the psychological profile of the character Alif in the novel Negeri Lima Menara by Ahmad Fuadi. The research findings reveal that the character Alif exhibits traits such as being easily angered, anxious, fearful, depressive, doubtful, and conflicted. This portrays the psychological complexity of the character within the story. Thus, through psychological analysis, we can gain a deeper understanding of Alif's emotional journey and thoughts in the novel, adding a richer dimension to the literary work.

Bilalia (2018)in their journal 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.

Juniarti et al., (2018) In theirjournal focused on the psychological analysis of prominent characters in Sundari Mardjuki's novel Genduk. It aimed to examine the id, ego, and superego aspects related to the main character, as well as the implementation plan at school. Employing a qualitative descriptive method, the study used the novel Genduk as its data source through documenter study, with the researcher as the primary data collection tool. The analysis revealed 32 instances related to the main character's id, 40 related to the ego, and 39 related to the superego. This research provided insights into the character's values in relation to God, others, self, nature, and school implementation plans within the novel.

Margiana et al., (2020)in their journal 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.

Abidin & Bakar (2020) studied of the Elements of Depression in All the Bright Places (2015). The study examined 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 behaviours 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, labelling, 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

Anjelia et al., (2021) 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.

Widyaningrum & Darni (2021) the novel "Kupu Wengi Mbangun Swarga" by Tulus Setiyadi, STP, delves into the theme of mental health issues, specifically depression, exhibited by the main character, Raminten. The data analyzed through psychological problem within the novel, B.F. Skinner's literary psychology theory. The research aims to explore the stimuli of depression, its manifestations, depressive responses, and positive reinforcements contributing to depression as a behaviour disorder in the novel KWMS by Tulus S. This qualitative study utilizes a literature review approach for data collection. The findings reveal that Raminten's mental health problem of depression in KWMS can be explained through (1) internal and external stimuli, (2) various forms of depression such as daydreaming, sadness, crying, and suicidal thoughts, (3) depressive responses encompassing both positive and negative reactions, and (4) positive reinforcements that can alleviate depression, including financial stability and spreading kindness. In summary, this research sheds light on the multifaceted aspects of depression as a behaviour disorder within the novel KWMS by Tulus.

Badi'ah (2022) the research on severe depression in the main character of the novel al-Jāḥid by al-Ḥasan al-Bukhārī aims to uncover the severe depression experienced by the main character, including its symptoms and causes. The theoretical framework employed in this study is literary psychology theory, and the research method used is literary psychological analysis. Based on the analysis, it was found that the main character in the novel "al-Jāḥid" by al-Ḥasan al-Bukhārī is Hadi, a man with a tragic past of growing up in an orphanage, having an introverted personality, and being pessimistic. As a result of these experiences, severe depressive symptoms emerge in Hadi. There are seven major depressive episode symptoms present in Hadi, lasting for more than two weeks, leading to a diagnosis of severe depression. These seven symptoms include mood symptoms of depression, diminished interest or pleasure, disrupted eating patterns, insomnia or hypersomnia, psychomotor agitation or retardation, feelings of worthlessness or guilt, and suicidal ideation. The underlying cause of these symptoms is an imbalance between Hadi's id,

ego, and superego. Hadi's ego constantly yields to the impulses of the id, with the superego failing to inhibit these impulses. In response, the ego employs various defence mechanisms to reduce the tension from the id, such as reaction formation, aggressive reaction, and asceticism or the rejection of all needs.

Fitri et al., (2022) in their journal 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.

Maresty et al., (2022) in their journal, this research aims to describe the depressive behavior exhibited by the character Amanda in the novel "A for Amanda" by AnnisaIhsani, focusing on the analysis of depressive symptoms based on Aaron Beck's framework. The method used in this research is qualitative descriptive method, with the primary data source being the novel "A for Amanda" by AnnisaIhsani. Data collection in this research utilized documentation techniques, involving the analysis of a literary work, namely the novel "A for Amanda". The data analysis technique used was content analysis. The findings of the research conducted based on her depressive symptoms. There are four depressive symptoms found namely emotional symptoms, cognitive symptoms, motivational symptoms, and physical symptoms. These findings can contribute to readers' understanding of the field of depression and how the symptoms manifest in individuals experiencing depression.

Pangaribuan & Halomoan (2022) analyzed the Main Character's Mental Depression in A Girl Like Her Film Directed by Amy S. Weber Using Freud's Psychoanalytic Theory which focused on the depiction of mental depression in the main character of the film. The character, Jessica Burns, faced bullying and resulting in her depression and eventual suicide. The study applies Sigmund Freud's theory of defence 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.

Sintami et al., (2022) explored the impact of depression on the main character in the movie "Her." Depression is a common mental health issue characterized by feelings of helplessness, self-dislike, and shame. Recognizing depression signs through media like movies can aid in managing mental and emotional well-being. Using a qualitative descriptive approach involving observation and content analysis, the research focuses on Theodore's depression in the film, revealing five effects: self-blame, low self-esteem, loss of appetite, difficulty concentrating, and trouble sleeping. Theodore's depression is primarily linked to his divorce and the unsupportive environment that frequently ridicules him, highlighting the profound impact of depression on his life.

Siregar et al., (2022) in their journal 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.

## 2.2. Literary 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 it is 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. Literary psychologists seek to understand how literature can serve as a tool for emotional regulation and provide a catharsis for readers Joshi (2014).

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 Davey et al., (2016). 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.

## 2.3. Psychoanalysis

The psychoanalysis is one of the literary criticisms that were 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 encompasses various approaches to understanding literature through the lens of psychoanalysis. These approaches can be broadly categorized into four types, Analyzing the Author, examining the work's content, focusing on formal construction, and studying the reader's perspective Brenner (1996:155).

## 2.4. Depression

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 Malhi& Mann (2018).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 Jesulola et al., (2018).

Depression can be caused by a combination of biological, genetic, environmental, and psychological factors Hodgson & McGuffin (2013).

## 2.5. Theories

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

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 behaviour Freud (1926:163).

## 3.    METHOD

The research was conducted using qualitative descriptive research. According to NG et al., (2021) 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. The results of this qualitative descriptive research offered a detailed and comprehensive description of the depression experienced by Laurel

## 4.    RESULTS

Based on the objectives of this study, the writer divided the data into three part as follows:

### 4.1    Factors That Cause Depression

**Stressful Environment and Live Events**

"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 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.

**Psychological Vulnerability**

"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 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 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.

### 4.2   Symptoms of depression

**Emotional Manifestations**

"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 it 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.

**Cognitive Manifestations**

"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 it 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 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.

**Motivational manifestations**

"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. 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 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.

**Physical and vegetative manifestations**

"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. 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.

### 4.3 Defence Mechanism

**Repression**

"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 it depicted a defence mechanism of repression because Laurel did not 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 it 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.

**Displacement**

"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 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. 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.

**Reaction Formation**

"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 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 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.

**Sublimation**

"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 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.

## 5. 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 defence mechanisms used to cope with the depression.

## 5.1. Factors that cause depression

**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.

**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.

## 5.2. Symptoms of Depression

**Emotional Manifestations**

Emotional manifestations encompassed changes in feelings and behavior stemming from emotional states.

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.

b)   Dejection mood

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.

**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.

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.

b)   Negative expectations

Negative expectations were cognitive patterns characterized by anticipating unfavourable

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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.

c)    Self-blame and self-criticism

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

## 5.2.  Motivational Manifestations

Motivational manifestations were divided into paralysis of the will, avoidance, escapist and withdrawal wishes, suicidal wishes, and increased dependency.

### 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.

## 5.3.  Physical manifestations

Physical manifestations were divided into lost in appetite, sleep disturbance, loss of libido, and fatigue.

### 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.

## 5.4.  Defense mechanism

### Repression

Repression was a psychological defence mechanism involving suppressing particular thoughts, emotions, memories, or impulses from conscious awareness into the subconscious. This mechanism aimed to shield the mind from emotional distress by evading confrontation with unfavourable 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.

### Displacement

Displacement was a psychological defence 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.

**Reaction Formation**

Reaction formation was a psychological defence mechanism wherein individuals responded to their unacceptable or conflicting thoughts, feelings, or impulses by demonstrating behaviours 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 behaviours that were the exact opposite of those traits.

**Sublimation**

Sublimation was a psychological defence mechanism where individuals channelled 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 defence mechanism, allowing individuals to channel their inner conflicts and emotions into creative, productive, or constructive endeavours.

In conclusion, the findings of this study provide in-depth insights into the influence of factors that triggered depression, the symptoms experienced by individuals, and the defense strategies used to address it, enriching our understanding of mental well-being.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

Laurel had two primary factors that contributed to her experience of depression: these factors included a stressful environment and life events, such as the death of her sister May, as well as psychological vulnerability, such as her emotional response to a breakup. Laurel exhibited symptoms of depression, including emotional manifestations like a dejection mood, cognitive manifestations involving self-blame and self-criticism, motivational manifestations like avoidance and withdrawal, and physical and vegetative manifestations such as sleep disturbances. Additionally, Laurel employed defense mechanisms, such as repression to avoid discussing painful memories, displacement to redirect emotional energy, reaction formation to present a positive outlook, and sublimation to channel her emotions into forming new connections. These findings provided valuable insights into the complex nature of depression and coping mechanisms, enriching our understanding of mental health experiences.

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