

# Psychological Trauma of Alice Hart as the Main Character in Glendyn Ivin's *The Lost Flowers of Alice Hart* (2023)

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## Abstract

*This research aims to analyze: 1) the traumatic experiences affect Alice Hart's psychological condition in the film *The Lost Flowers of Alice Hart* (2023), and 2) the psychological reconciliation the character of Alice Hart in the film *The Lost Flowers of Alice Hart* (2023). This research uses a descriptive qualitative method to analyze the film of *The Lost Flowers of Alice Hart* (2023) directed by Glendyn Ivin as the objective research. The data collection methods include watching, reading, identifying, classifying, and selecting. The researcher utilized Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis to analyze the data through steps of displaying, explaining, and interpreting. The result of this research shows that: 1) the traumatic experiences affect Alice Hart's psychological condition are traumatic memory, traumatic reaction of grief, panic attack as a reaction to Alice's trauma, Alice's anger, and Alice's emotional reaction, 2) the psychological reconciliation the character of Alice Hart in film *The Lost Flowers of Alice Hart* (2023) are group support, art therapy, nature therapy.*

**Keywords:** *psychological trauma, reconciliation, The Los Flowers of Alice Hart*

## Introduction

Films serve as a medium for conveying messages and information, as well as for critiquing societal issues. Writers and directors frequently employ films to address societal issues, including the prevalent theme of violence. Films provide a platform through which diverse experiences of violence can be interpreted and communicated.

Inu Wicaksono (2008: 73) characterizes family violence as the infliction of physical and emotional harm that results in suffering and anguish for the affected individual. Such behavior may occur within marital relationships, intimate partnerships, parent-child dynamics, among other familial connections including

household staff. The perpetrator of domestic violence is typically a familiar and closely related member of the victim's family, often a blood relative in these instances. Therefore, it is very likely that violence against partners will also involve violence against children. Children who witness or even experience violence in their families may develop emotional, mental, or physical health issues (Bair-Merritt, Blackstone & Feudner, 2006).

The field of trauma psychology constitutes a crucial area of research and practice aimed at comprehending and addressing the psychological impacts of traumatic experiences. It investigates how individuals respond to and cope with trauma, as well as the strategies that can aid their healing process. Research in this field offers profound insights into the complexities of traumatic experiences and provides guidance on how individuals can navigate life after experiencing trauma.

## **Literary Review**

### **Psychology of Literature**

Literary works are reflections of the human condition from a variety of social and individual perspectives. Authors can use literature to communicate the emotions, sights, and experiences they have in social situations involving other people. Wiyatmi (2011:28) assumes that literary psychology is an interdisciplinary research paradigm that prioritizes literary works. In this instance, the focus of literary psychology is on the behavior or personality of characters who suffer from mental illnesses that have an impact on their lives. As a result, one can comprehend the range of psychological manifestations that characters in a work of literature get through. As claimed by Wellek and Warren (1949: 75) literary psychology is classified into four categories. First, examine the author's psyche as an individual. Second, the study of the creative process. Third, the study of psychological laws which apply to literature. Fourth, the study of how literary works affect their readers.

### **Freud's Psychoanalysis**

Sigmund Freud originally formulated the theory of psychoanalysis, known as Freudian psychoanalytic theory, aimed at delving deeper into understanding the human psyche. On the authority of Freud (1910:196), psychoanalysis serves as a therapeutic approach for addressing psychic conflicts among hysterical and neurotic patients, emphasizing the importance of bringing repressed desires from the unconscious into conscious awareness. Max Milner (1992:10) asserts that Freud applied the term "psychoanalysis" specifically to the talk therapy he conducted with his patients. Therefore, psychoanalysis represents a treatment for mental illnesses or psychic disorders, focusing on the unconscious as the focal point of attention.

### **The Structural Theory of Personality**

#### **1. The Id**

Freud (1923:47) posits that the id constitutes the segment of human personality encompassing primordial and irrational impulses and desires. Functioning on the pleasure principle, the id seeks immediate satisfaction of its urges without regard for reality or repercussions. This component of the personality is the repository of innate instincts and fundamental desires present from birth.

#### **2. Ego**

Freud (1923:17) articulates that the ego constitutes the structured aspect of the personality, which integrates consciousness and mediates the outward expression of internal drives. Furthermore, the ego operates as a regulatory entity overseeing cognitive functions, maintaining its role in moderating and censoring dream content even during the sleep state.

#### **3. Superego**

The superego embodies the concept of the 'inner realm' or 'elevated state' within human psychology, shaped by the child's parental interactions and the assimilation of their ethical teachings during upbringing. This aspect of

personality profoundly shapes the moral compass, values, and conduct of individuals across their lifespan (Freud, 1923: 36).

### **Anxiety**

Sigmund Freud (1936: 69) contends that anxiety is an effective, unpleasant emotion accompanied by physical sensations that alert the individual to a potential risk. Freud distinguished three types of anxiety, such as:

1. Reality Anxiety

This kind of anxiety develops in response to the presence of actual threat in the outside world. This anxiety is a reaction to a genuine threat and acts as a deterrent, motivating people to take action. Mollinger (1981: 40) posits that anxiety functions as a mechanism that safeguards the ego by alerting individuals to impending danger.

2. Neurotic Anxiety

As defined by Freud (1910:37), neurotic anxiety is the dread that one's instincts may lead them to do wrong and face punishment.

3. Moral Anxiety

Moral anxiety is when a person with a high level of consciousness tends to feel bad when he does actions that were against his moral code (Andriana and Kasprabowo 2020:27).

### **Ego Defense Mechanism**

According to Schultz (2017:19), Freud posits that in order to manage the intense threats posed by the Id and the resultant anxiety, the ego employs various defense mechanisms, there are:

1. Repression is an internal mechanism in which the ego prevents unpleasant or threatening feelings from accessing our subconscious mind.
2. Sublimation is a method of distraction. The idea is to replace sensations of dread and anxiety with socially beneficial activity.
3. Projection is the transfer of one's uncomfortable or unpleasant feelings to another person or item.
4. Displacement is a method of transferring hate toward someone or something else.
5. Rationalization entails providing reasonable explanations for one's behavior.

6. Reaction Formation occurs when a person behaves in opposition to their experiences or feelings.
7. Regression occurs when a person engages in uncontrollable conduct or acts like a child.
8. Aggression is the act of expressing dislike or displeasure toward another thing or person in a way that causes discomfort or aggravation.
9. Fantasy is the act of fantasizing about something in order to relieve worry and find solutions.

### **Trauma**

Trauma is a psychological condition that develops as a result of a traumatic incident in the past, such as an accident, physical abuse, bullying, or a natural disaster. According to Herman (1992: 47), traumatic events disrupt the emotional and cognitive regulatory mechanisms essential for managing stress and maintaining psychological equilibrium. Psychological trauma entails experiences marked by profound helplessness and a sense of overwhelming loss of control, where individuals feel powerless to avert or surmount the threats they face.

### **Trauma Recovery**

As stated by Judith Herman (1992: 155), trauma rehabilitation is about more than just physical healing; it also involves total recovery from significant psychological repercussions. This trauma healing process aids in understanding how an individual recover from a traumatic event. Herman described that recovery consists of three stages, which are:

1. Safety  
This stage focuses on building a sense of security in survivors. This includes ensuring physical and emotional health, as well as protecting survivors from further assault.
2. Remembrance and Mourning  
At this point, the survivor begins to remember and describe his traumatic event. This process is often painful and upsetting, but it is necessary for rehabilitation
3. Reconnection

The final step involves survivors re-establishing relationships with themselves, others, and the world. It's the process of regaining control of their lives and setting new goals.

## **Research Methodology**

As defined by Denzin and Lincoln (2005: 3), qualitative research encompasses studies that explore phenomena within their natural contexts to interpret their meanings. Through qualitative research, one can thoroughly examine a phenomenon in its entirety. The main data used as the source of objects is the subtitles in the drama titled *The Lost Flowers of Alice Hart* (2023) by Glendyn Ivin published by Amazon Studio from August 4 to September 1, 2023 on Prime Video which is a streaming service application. The film has 7 episodes with each episode duration between 51 to 63 minutes. Researchers use all episodes in conducting the analysis. Each episode contributes to the overarching narrative and character interactions, offering a comprehensive perspective on how trauma influences the psychological development of characters from childhood through adulthood, alongside their coping mechanisms depicted throughout the series.

The data collection method in this research involves observation. This includes watching the movie and reading the scripts, identifying data from the scripts and subtitles, classifying and selecting the relevant data. Once the data have been gathered, the subsequent step is data analysis, which involves displaying, explaining, and interpreting the data.

## **Findings and Discussion**

In this chapter, the researcher attempts to answer the problem statement as stated in the first chapter. It is about the psychological state of the main character

affected by her traumatic experiences and the reconciliations that are carried out to heal her trauma in the film *The Lost Flowers of Alice Hart* (2023).

### **1. The Main Character's Psychological State Affected by the Traumatic Experience**

Researchers discovered some indication that Alice Hart's psychological state was influenced by traumatic events. The psychological state of Alice's character is examined using Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory of personality components, which include id, ego, and superego, in order to gain a better understanding of the character's psyche following a traumatic event. The evidence for the structure of Alice's identity, ego, and superego is shown in dialogue-based sequences. The following is a dialogue that describes the interaction between the three personality structures that give rise to anxiety and give rise to ego defense mechanisms.

#### **1.1 The Traumatic Memory of Alice and the Emotional Feelings Associated with Her Mother's Death that Result in Feelings of Guilt**

When an individual experiences trauma, such as the loss of a loved one, the three components of the personality (id, ego, and superego) can interact in complex ways. Hallucinations, in the context of psychology and psychoanalysis, are often seen as manifestations of conflicts within a person's personality structure, particularly in the interactions between the id, ego, and superego.

Below is a dialogue illustrating the interaction of the id, ego, and superego in the character Alice, who experiences hallucinations.

June : "Alice? Alice?" [Sobs quietly]

June : "It's OK." [Sobs]

June : "It's Ok, Alice. It's OK" [Sobs]

June : "It's OK."

(*The Lost Flowers of Alice Hart: 2023, episode 1, 46.32-47.11*)

When June notices Alice crying on the street, she initiates the conversation above. June approaches Alice, attempting to win her over. Alice, still in tears, tried to touch June's face and held her. Alice was lying on the street and crying since she had previously heard Agnes' voice calling her name. He followed the

speaker and noticed her mother's appearance. Alice follows her mother, and her memories shift to the moment she sees her mother going to drown herself in the water. Alice yelled her mother's name, imploring her to come back.

When Alice hears Agnes' voice calling her name and follows it, it depicts the id's primitive desire for comfort and connection with the mother figure. According to Sigmund Freud's theory, the id operates on the principle of comfort, which drives Alice to pursue what she perceives to be her mother. Alice's ego tries to carry out the id's suggestion by following her mother's figure, and her memories shift to the moment when her mother tries to drown her. Alice's ego attempts to handle and comprehend this scenario. Her ego likewise attempts to discriminate between truth and illusion, but in this state, her ego is tricked by a powerful desire induced by the id. However, Alice's ego maintains authority over her id. Her superego feels guilty over the fire that killed her mother. In this case, Alice develops moral anxiety because she feels responsible for her mother's death as a result of the fire she started. Alice learns it is only the shadow of her mother dying from the fire she started. He appeared to have refused to accept her mother's death, causing him to hallucinate. As discussed in the previous literature study, this process is a sort of ego protection strategy known as denial.

## **1.2 The Alice's Panic Attack as a Reaction to Her Trauma from Physical Torture**

Panic attacks can be viewed as a complex psychological response to past trauma, where the interaction between id, ego, and superego is crucial in understanding the manifestation of psychological symptoms such as panic attacks.

Below is a dialogue illustrating the interaction of the id, ego, and superego in the character Alice, who experiences panic attack.

June : "Do you know where she is or not?"  
Candy : "I'm sorry."  
Candy : "She's at the river."  
June : "You let her go to the river by herself? We don't even know If she can swim!"  
June : "Alice.."  
Twig : "Alice, It's Ok, baby girl. It's OK."

*Twig* : "I'm not going to hurt you."  
*June* : "Shh..."  
*Twig* : "It's ok alright. It's OK."  
*June* : "Get a blanket. Shh, shh."  
*June* : "It's OK."

*(The Lost Flowers of Alice Hart: 2023, episode 2, 17.25-17.59)*

The conversation started when June and Twig trying to question Candy about Alice's location. Candy initially claims not to know, but eventually admits that Alice is in the river. When the talk began, Alice noticed something outside the door, and the three of them discovered her whereabouts. June and Twig immediately phone Alice, and Alice imagines her mother telling her to run.

Familiar with having been abused by her father for carelessness, one of which was secretly going to the library, she was also afraid when she secretly went to the river. She expected a similar incident. Alice's superego makes her feel guilty for covertly going to the river. Alice experiences neurotic anxiety as a result of internal fear triggered by memories of her father's abuse anytime she is involved in a dangerous act. As a result, the id generates a strong drive to avoid the situation. Ego Alice contributes to the realization of her id by running away from Twig, June, and Candy. Twig and June, on the other hand, make an effort to calm Alice. Twig says she will not harm Alice. However, Alice remained scared and refused to be touched. When Alice feels threatened or scared, her ego's defensive mechanism seeks to minimize the tension, namely by producing regression. As a form, the individual returns to a stage or state in which she feels safe by avoiding their touch.

### **1.3 Alice's anger**

Anger emerges as a reaction to the tension between unmet desires of the id and the ethical expectations of the superego, which are moderated by the ego's function. The way individuals articulate and handle their anger can illustrate the intricate interplay among the id, ego, and superego, shaping the framework and operational dynamics of their personality.

Below is a dialogue illustrating the interplay of the id, ego, and superego in the character Alice, who experiences anger.

Boy : "Should have guessed she was one of those Thornfield retards."

Oggi : "Here we go."

Boy : "So, is your mother a jungle, a whore, or a lesbian like Oggi."

Children : "Ooh!"

Children : "Oh!"

All chant : "Fight, Fight, Fight!"

*(The Lost Flowers of Alice Hart: 2023, episode 2, 38.33-38.58)*

The above conversation shows that Alice was ridiculed and then she was thrown something by her friend. Oggi tries to retaliate by pushing him and he falls because his friend hits Oggi. Seeing that made Alice angry and immediately hit her friend using the lunch box.

The scene when Alice Hart beats up a friend who mocks her can be read as a symbol of her emancipated identity. Her Id triggered a strong desire to fight and avenge in order to quickly resolve the hurt and discrimination she felt. Alice developed neurotic anxiety as a result of her dislike of her friend's beating and insult. When Alice sees Oggi being beaten by her friend, her ego tries to satisfy id's wishes by mindlessly attacking him. Alice's ego contributes to the resolution of this stress by activating an ego protection mechanism. The mechanism that appears is displacement. According to previous theoretical studies, displacement is a defense mechanism in which unwanted impulses or feelings toward one item or person are transferred to another, safer object or person. In this scenario, Alice transfers her anger and actual pain, which may have been aimed towards earlier experiences of insult or maltreatment, to people who mock her.

## **2. The Psychological Reconciliation the Character of Alice Hart**

Kelman (2010) defines reconciliation as the act of resolving conflicts. In this study, the conflict under consideration is an internal conflict individuals face as a result of a traumatic incident. This analysis will explore Alice's efforts toward self-healing in addressing her trauma, with a specific focus on Judith Herman's concept of reconnection.

## 1.2 Group Support

Trauma frequently results in social isolation and feelings of detachment from others or society at large. In this context, group support plays a pivotal role in facilitating individuals' sense of being listened to, comprehended, and reintegrated into their community.

The ensuing dialogue underscores the critical importance of group support in psychological reconciliation processes.

*June : "what do you see?"*

*Sally : "Flowers."*

*June : "Women. Only women. Thornfield is a flower farm. It's also a safe place for women to come and heal."*

*Sally : "This is a refuge."*

*June : "Mm-hm. And all of your poking about with police or lawyers puts all of it at risk. Every woman here. We love Alice. We're looking after her. It's what we do here. Now, do you really want to jeopardize all of this, and Alice for our own needs?"*

*Sally : "We're both on that will. Agnes trusted me. I respect what you're doing, but you really think that a refuge is full of damage. Traumatized people. Is this the best place for her? Maybe we should ask Alice what she wants. Not you. Not me. Alice."*

*(The Lost Flowers of Alice Hart: 2023, episode 3, 35.55-37.20)*

Through the conversation above, it is known that Alice is in Thornfield, a place for women who have been traumatized and live together. Living with a group with the same trauma can be one of the sources of healing for the trauma. Because the same background encourages us to create a safe place together. Alice also gets support from them in healing her trauma. This is evidenced by the flowers who try to help her to practice making her voice. Group support is included in the concept of reconnection because, as Herman explained, rebuilding relationships with her new family is an effort to heal Alice's trauma to gain strength.

## 2.2 Art Therapy

Trauma frequently impedes individuals' ability to verbally articulate their experiences. Art therapy provides an alternative expressive medium, enabling individuals to convey and process their traumatic experiences through artistic

creativity, such as painting, drawing, or other artistic forms. This therapeutic approach facilitates the exploration and expression of emotions and experiences that are challenging to access or verbalize. Consequently, it aids in the integration and healing of traumatic experiences embedded in the subconscious.

The following dialogue demonstrates the role of art therapy in the main character's trauma recovery process.

June : "So, I wanted to give you this. It's the Thornfield Language of Flowers. It was started by your great-great grandmother, Ruth. And then every generation has added to it. It's our very own secret language. Here. You pick out a flower, something special to you.  
June : Wattle "Always with you."  
(*The Lost Flowers of Alice Hart*; 2023, episode 2, 30.48-31.58)

From June's words above, it is known that Alice was given a book "The Thornfield Language of Flowers". The book is a hereditary heritage. Through the book, Alice learned to interpret the meaning of flowers and she also added pictures of flowers to the book. It is evident that when Alice grew up she took the book with her when she decided to go to Agnes Bluff. Drawing in the hereditary book can be interpreted as a form of art therapy that he does in healing his trauma. This art therapy supports the concept of reconnection according to Judith Herman as a medium to build a connection with herself.

### **2.3 Nature Therapy**

Trauma frequently leads to a sense of disconnection from oneself, others, and the surrounding environment. Nature therapy, which encompasses interactions with natural settings like forests, parks, or other outdoor environments, can facilitate the restoration of these connections and foster emotional and psychological healing.

The following dialogue illustrates and supports this assertion.

Moss : "So, why did you pick here?"  
Alice : "Um, same name as my mum's 'Agnes'. I kind of took it as a sign."  
(*The Lost Flowers of Alice Hart*: 2023, episode 4, 30.47-30.56)

The conversation occurred when Alice and Moss were sitting in a café and Moss asked Alice about her reason for choosing to move to Agnes Bluff. Alice chose to go to Agnes Bluff because the name of the place was the same as her mother's, Agnes. Alice decides to leave Thornfield because she is angry and disappointed by the lies her grandmother created. She goes to a desert named Agnes Bluff to start a new life. He keeps himself busy by being a ranger and accompanying visitors on sunset tours.

## Conclusion

This research shows that psychological trauma can affect a person's psychological condition, as depicted in the film *The Lost Flowers of Alice Hart* (2023), which depicts the trauma she experiences affecting the condition of the main character and the healing carried out by the main character in the film. This film depicts a traumatic experience that affects three aspects of personality, namely id, ego, and superego. The interaction that occurs in these three components gives rise to anxiety and the ego's defense mechanism that functions to overcome the anxiety that arises.

In this research, it was found that there was an interaction of id, ego and superego as a form of reaction from traumatic experiences. Her traumatic experience encourages her id to act as she wishes and Alice's ego seeks to carry out the impulse of her id, in this case Alice's id is more dominant while Alice's superego makes her feel guilty. The conflict between the three components creates moral anxiety, neurotic anxiety, and realistic anxiety. In response to this anxiety, Alice's ego uses various defense mechanisms to protect herself in the form of denial, regression, displacement, reaction formation, and rationalization. The study also found that the main character, Alice, seeks to heal her trauma through support groups, art therapy, and nature therapy.

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