

ABSTRACT

This research examines the defense mechanisms of Holden Caulfield, the primary character in J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*, particularly denial and rationalization. The aim of this research is to identify the factors that encourage him to use these defense mechanisms, analyze the types of denial and rationalization, and discuss their relationship to adolescent psychological characteristics. Anna Freud's theory of defense mechanisms forms the basis of the psychoanalytic method used in this research. The research findings suggest that Holden's defense mechanisms arise from academic failure, loneliness, social alienation, trauma of loss, and distrust of the adult world. Denial is used to reject painful realities; rationalization justifies behaviors and feelings that are actually triggered by internal conflict. Denial and rationalization are relevant to the characteristics of adolescence, which include difficulties in finding self-identity, a tendency to avoid realities, and unstable emotional struggles. Through this research, it can be understood that not only functioning as a form of self-protection, defense mechanisms also have a significant impact on adolescence by preventing psychological processes necessary for maturing.

Keywords: adolescence, character, defense mechanisms, denial, rationalization.