

CHAPTER 2

THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

In accordance with the research purpose, I employ many concepts and theories to analyze the novel's meaning and construction. To do this, there are two techniques to analyzing the novel's character: intrinsic and extrinsic approach. My intrinsic approach is based on characterization, plot, and setting. Extrinsic approach include psychological theories of personality, trauma, anxiety, and defense mechanism. This chapter provides a more in-depth description of the concepts and theories discussed in the preceding chapter, as well as an explanation of the theoretical framework.

2.1 Intrinsic Approaches

The intrinsic approach involves analyzing and explaining features of some words that connect to characterization, plot, and setting. The literature is really worthwhile to study. There are words in the language that convey a specific meaning, and this is a form of literature that should be appreciated and evaluated in order to discover and explain the meaning contained in this story. In evaluating this novel, the writer employs the intrinsic approach to analyzing the elements of literature.

2.1.1 Characterization

The connection between plot and character is both crucial and necessary. Without characters, there is no plot, and therefore no story. Characters are often defined by their relationship to the plot, the level of development given by the author, and whether they undergo substantial changes. Characterization refers to how an author reveals a character's personality. This process can occur during discusses and can be represented via the character's actions, language, and thoughts. It entails offering details that educate the audience about the characters. (Pickering and Hoeper, 1981: 23).

Pickering and Hoeper (1981) state that fiction provides an infinite variety of experiences and memories. Characters in these stories can entertain or fail to fascinate us, leaving us perplexed, captivated, or even scared. Fiction allows us to sympathize with the characters' feelings and hardships. Some characters exude delight, while others struggle with doubt, hardships, loneliness, and a never-ending search for purpose and meaning. On the other hand, certain personalities terrify

us with their avarice, fury, and thirst for vengeance, as well as their ability to suppress these emotions. Others may appear cold and distant for selfish reasons.

2.1.1.1 Telling Method

Pickering and Hoeper (1981:27-28) define the storytelling approach as a technique in which the author openly describes and comments on the characters. This method, often used by classic fiction writers, allows the author to clearly direct the reader's vision. With this approach, the viewer can only see what the author wants to reveal. Characterization presented directly and explicitly through the story is part of the telling approach, including the following:

a.) Characterization Through the Use of Names

According to Pickering and Hooper, names often serve as significant tools for conveying important clues that aid in character development. Certain characters are assigned names that reflect their dominant or authoritative traits. Additionally, names can carry literary or historical references, enhancing characterization by drawing associations with those allusions. (Pickering & Hoeper, 1981:28)

b.) Characterization Through Appearance

The appearance of a character plays a crucial role in analyzing characterization. Through details in the novel, such as how a character dresses and their physical appearance, readers can gain insights into their traits. A character's clothing or style can provide clues about their background, economic standing, and social status. (Pickering & Hoeper, 1981:29)

c.) Characterization by the Author

The method involves the author directly conveying information about the characters by interrupting the narrative with editorial commentary. Through this approach, the author explicitly reveals the characters' nature, personalities, thoughts, and emotions. By doing so, the author maintains complete control over the characterization process, guiding the reader's focus to specific characters and shaping their attitudes toward them. (Pickering & Hoeper, 1981:30)

2.1.1.2. Showing Method

According to Pickering and Hoeper (1981:27-28), the indirect, dramatic style of characterization allows the author to step back, enabling characters to reveal themselves through their speech and actions. In this approach, the responsibility of analyzing and interpreting the characters is shifted to the reader, who must infer their traits based on the details presented in the narrative. However, the methods of "telling" and "showing" are not entirely distinct; most authors combine the two, even if exposition is limited to brief descriptive passages to set the scene. Examples of indirect characterization through showing include the following techniques:

d.) Characterization Through the Dialogue

Some light fiction presents dialogue as it might naturally occur in real life. However, skilled authors refine dialogue by removing anything insignificant, leaving only meaningful and impactful content that reflects the speaker's attitudes, values, and beliefs. Such dialogue captures our attention because it is engaging and purposeful. When analyzing the speaker's intentions, we may discover that their words, whether deliberately or unintentionally, reveal deeper aspects of their character and personality. (Pickering and Hoeper, 1981:32)

a. What is Being Said

Firstly, the reader needs to focus on the dialogue's actual content. Is it just banter, or does the topic play a significant role in the plot's unfolding action? (Pickering & Hoeper, 1981:32).

b. The Identity of the Speaker

The dialogue delivered by a main character is often more significant than that of a minor character. However, the information provided by a minor character can sometimes be crucial and closely tied to the development of other characters. (Pickering & Hoeper, 1981:32)

c. The Occasion

The location or situation of a conversation can also influence a person's character. Typically, individuals reveal more of their true nature when speaking to those closest to them, and by observing how they interact with others, we can gain further insight into their character. Additionally, dialogue that takes place at night is often more serious, while daytime conversations tend to be more revealing and provide more information. (Pickering & Hoeper, 1981:33)

d. The Identity of the Person the Speaker Addressing

This narrative is conveyed through the characters in the story, where one character speaks about another. Additionally, dialogue between friends tends to be more open and extended compared to that between strangers. The nature of the conversation often depends on the level of comfort between the characters. (Pickering & Hoeper, 1981:33)

e. The Quality of the Exchange

The flow of a conversation is also significant. When a discussion involves a genuine exchange of ideas, it suggests that the characters are open-minded. On the other hand, if the conversation lacks such give and take, one or more characters may be perceived as opinionated, rigid, or close-minded. Additionally, a character may come across as secretive, implying that they have something to hide. (Pickering & Hoeper, 1981:33)

e.) Characterization Through the Action

Character and action are often seen as two interconnected aspects. Pickering refers to Henry James' book, where he suggests that conduct and behavior are logical and necessary extensions of psychology and personality. The inner reality of a character can be reflected through external events. To establish character based on action, it is crucial to carefully examine various events in the plot, looking at what they reveal about the characters—both

their unconscious emotional and psychological states, as well as their conscious attitudes and values. (Pickering and Hoeper, 1981:34)

According to Minderop (2013) in her book *Metode Karakterisasi Telaah Fiksi*, the characterization of a character in a story can be examined through various perspectives, one of which is the first-person perspective, or the "I" perspective.

The first-person perspective includes two variations. The first is the "first-person participant," where the narrator is actively involved as the main character, recounting the story from their own point of view ("I") and serving as the central focus of the narrative. The second is the "first-person observant," where the narrator, although present in the story, takes on the role of an additional character. In this case, the narrator observes or listens actively but is not directly involved in the main events, merely conveying the story to the reader from their "I" perspective.

2.1.2. Plot

Plot refers to the sequence of interconnected events that form the core narrative structure of a novel or short story. Since events always involve characters, it's difficult to separate plot from character. Most plots feature multiple conflicts, and some of these conflicts may not be directly stated by the author or revealed through the characters' actions or dialogue as the story progresses. Conflict is the fundamental tension or opposition that initiates the plot, drawing the reader in, creating suspense or mystery, and building anticipation for what will happen next. (Pickering and Hoeper, 1981:16)

The plot typically follows a five-stage structure, such as:

a.) Exposition

The exposition is the opening section in which the author presents the scenario, sets the scene, gives important background information, and presents the action's timeline. Along with introducing the people, it might also allude to the conflict or its potential. In a novel, the exposition may take up a whole chapter or more, or it may be included in a single sentence or paragraph. (Pickering & Hoeper, 1981:16)

b.) Raising Action

The individuals and the main or motivating conflict are introduced in the raising action. After then, the quarrel is developed and progressively made more

intense. The conflict gradually develops and intensifies throughout the narrative. (Pickering & Hoeper, 1981:17)

c.) Climax

The climax is the moment when the plot reaches its highest emotional intensity; it serves as the turning point that directly leads to the resolution of the story. (Pickering & Hoeper, 1981:17)

d.) Falling Action

Following the crisis, or crucial moment, the plot gets closer to its predicted resolution and the tension decreases. (Pickering & Hoeper, 1981:17)

e.) Resolution

The resolution is the last section of the story, where the conflict's conclusion is disclosed and a new sense of stability or balance is created. The conclusion is another name for the resolve. (Pickering & Hoeper, 1981:17)

2.1.3 Setting

Fiction is characterized by the actions of characters in a particular period and location. This phrase generally refers to the time of day or year, the weather, and the historical era in which the events take place, in addition to the actual site where the action takes place. In addition to helping readers picture the action, the environment serves to create and preserve the appearance of genuine life. Numerous settings exist that operate in different ways. (Pickering and Hoeper, 1981:37) Settings are separated into various sections, such as:

a.) Setting as Background for Action

Setting may include elements such as costume, manners, events, and institutions that are tied to a particular time and place. It must be inferred from the dialogue and actions of the characters. When we refer to setting as background, we are considering a type of setting that exists primarily for its own sake, without a direct connection to the action or characters, or at most, a relationship that is only minimal or incidental. (Pickering & Hoeper, 1981:39)

b.) Setting as Antagonist

Setting can also function as an antagonist, acting as a causal agent that helps establish the plot's conflict and influences the outcome of events. (Pickering & Hoeper, 1981:39)

c.) Setting as a Means of Creating Appropriate Atmosphere

A lot of authors use the setting to set the tone for the events that are about to occur and to capture the reader's interest. (Pickering & Hoeper, 1981:40)

d.) Setting as a Means of Revealing Character

Frequently, a character's perception and response to the environment tell us more about their character and mental condition than the actual environment does. By creating a symbolic or metaphorical representation of the character's inner life, the author can also use the location to help us better comprehend the character. (Pickering & Hoeper, 1981:41)

e.) Setting as a Means of Reinforcing Theme

The environment may also be utilized to enhance and explain the idea of a novel or short story. (Pickering & Hoeper, 1981:42)

2.2 Extrinsic Approaches

In this analysis of Stephanie Foo's *What My Bones Know*, an extrinsic approach is employed to examine the external psychological factors that impact the protagonist's development, particularly focusing on trauma, anxiety, and defense mechanisms. This approach integrates key psychological theories to better understand how these elements manifest in the protagonist's behavior and interactions. The theories discussed in this chapter, rooted in psychoanalysis and modern psychology, provide a robust framework for unpacking the protagonist's complex psychological landscape.

By employing these psychological approaches, this chapter will delve into the interplay between trauma, anxiety, and defense mechanisms, helping to illuminate how these forces shape the protagonist's psychological responses in the narrative. Sigmund Freud's theories, particularly those concerning trauma, anxiety, and defense mechanisms, offer the primary lens through which these psychological issues can be analyzed. Additionally, Bowlby's attachment theory, along with post-traumatic growth theories, will be incorporated to provide a broader understanding of the protagonist's healing journey and the developmental aspects of her emotional responses.

2.2.1 Psychology of Literature

The psychology of literature is a key concept when analyzing literary works through a psychological lens. Literature, particularly fiction, often acts as a reflection of human psychology, emotions, and interpersonal dynamics. Sigmund Freud, a pioneer in psychology, viewed literature as a vehicle for expressing unconscious drives, fears, and repressed emotions (Freud, 1917). Literary characters, according to Freud, may serve as symbolic representations of deeper human psychological conflicts. In *What My Bones Know*, the protagonist's journey is reflective of unconscious forces driving her actions and emotions, particularly as she confronts and represses the trauma she experienced.

Freud's (1917) notion of the unconscious mind, and how it influences conscious thoughts and actions, is crucial for understanding the protagonist's behaviors throughout the novel. The protagonist's struggle with repressed memories and her attempts to maintain a sense of normalcy, despite the underlying turmoil, exemplify Freud's theory of repression and the psychological impact of unacknowledged trauma. In this sense, literary characters can act as case studies for psychoanalysis, allowing us to interpret their struggles through a psychological lens. Freud's theory suggests that what is repressed in the unconscious eventually finds expression through behaviors, dreams, or symptoms, which is clearly visible in the protagonist's mental and emotional reactions to her unresolved trauma.

Additionally, Freud's notion of catharsis, the release of repressed emotions, plays a critical role in understanding the protagonist's eventual healing process. According to Freud (1917), repressed memories and emotions will surface eventually, and artistic expression—such as literature—can be a mechanism through which these emotions are released. The protagonist's internal journey in the novel represents this process of catharsis, as she confronts the long-buried memories of trauma and begins to navigate her emotional response to them.

Moreover, Jungian archetypes also play a significant role in literary psychology. Carl Jung, a contemporary of Freud, introduced the concept of archetypes, which are universal symbols and motifs found across cultures and literature (Jung, 1953). The protagonist in *What My Bones Know* can be seen through the lens of the "Wounded Healer" archetype, as she must confront and heal from her trauma in order to help others understand and cope with their emotional wounds. This concept of healing through personal suffering aligns with Freud's theory of the unconscious, where painful memories surface in symbolic forms.

2.2.2 Psychology of Personality

The psychology of personality explores the different traits and characteristics that define an individual's behavior, emotions, and thoughts. Freud's model of personality, which consists of the id, ego, and superego, is particularly relevant when analyzing the protagonist's internal conflicts in *What My Bones Know*. Freud (1920) posited that human behavior is driven by the interplay between these three psychic structures: the id, which represents our primal, instinctual desires; the ego, which mediates between the id and reality; and the superego, which embodies societal norms and moral standards.

The protagonist's internal struggle between these forces is evident in her battle to cope with her trauma while maintaining social appearances. Her id desires an escape from the pain and fear caused by trauma, but her superego enforces societal expectations, such as the demand to appear "normal" or "functional." The ego, caught in between, attempts to reconcile these conflicting demands, which often results in psychological defense mechanisms. Freud's theory of personality development provides an essential framework for understanding the protagonist's behavior as an effort to manage her conflicting internal desires and external pressures.

Furthermore, Freud's theory of childhood development and the importance of early experiences is central to understanding the protagonist's personality. Freud (1917) believed that early relationships and experiences shape an individual's psychological development. The protagonist's troubled childhood, marked by neglect and emotional trauma, is a key element in her adult personality formation. Her sense of identity, as well as her ability to trust and form relationships, is deeply influenced by her early experiences of emotional neglect and abuse. Freud's theory of psychosexual stages also offers insight into how unresolved conflicts during these stages may influence adult behavior, particularly in cases of trauma (Freud, 1917).

Freud's ideas on fixation in the psychosexual stages of development could be applied to the protagonist's emotional stunting, where her inability to move past the trauma of her early childhood causes her to regress emotionally and psychologically. This fixation is reflected in her ongoing struggles with self-worth and emotional regulation, both of which are central to her internal conflict throughout the novel. Her experience of trauma is not merely a past event, but a continuous force that shapes her identity in profound and complicated ways.

2.2.2.1 Trauma

Trauma, according to Freud, is a critical concept in understanding the human psyche. Freud (1920) posited that traumatic experiences, particularly those that are repressed, can have profound effects on an individual's behaviour, mental health, and emotional responses. In *What My Bones Know*, the protagonist's early trauma, which includes neglect and emotional abuse, creates lasting effects on her personality and coping mechanisms. Freud's (1926) theories on inhibition, symptoms, and anxiety are particularly relevant when analyzing the protagonist's responses to her trauma.

The traumatic events the protagonist experienced during childhood are repressed, a key concept in Freud's (1920) work on trauma. In the novel, the protagonist's flashbacks, nightmares, and dissociative episodes are manifestations of the trauma, which Freud (1926) suggests are attempts by the unconscious to bring the repressed material to the surface.

Additionally, Bowlby's attachment theory (1969) provides another important perspective on trauma. Bowlby suggested that early attachments between children and their caregivers shape their ability to form secure relationships in adulthood. In the case of the protagonist, her insecure attachment to her caregivers, marked by neglect and emotional unavailability, contributes to her difficulties in forming healthy adult relationships. This attachment trauma manifests as anxiety and emotional instability throughout her life. Bowlby's work on attachment also highlights the importance of early caregiving experiences in shaping a person's emotional resilience or vulnerability.

Furthermore, Tedeschi and Calhoun's (2004) concept of post-traumatic growth (PTG) offers an alternative perspective on trauma. While trauma can lead to psychological distress, Tedeschi and Calhoun (2004) argue that it can also result in positive psychological change. PTG is the process by which individuals, after experiencing traumatic events, can find new meaning in life, develop greater emotional resilience, and experience a deeper sense of personal strength. The protagonist's journey in the novel reflects elements of PTG as she confronts her trauma and begins to heal, eventually finding meaning in her suffering and using her experience to help others.

2.2.2.2 Anxiety

Albertine Minderop (2018) explains that anxiety arises when a situation threatens an organism's sense of comfort. Anxiety can be caused by various conflicts and frustrations that impede an individual's ability to achieve their goals. These threats can be physical, psychological, or related to various pressures that lead to anxiety. As a result, this condition is accompanied by uncomfortable emotions such as worry, fear, and unhappiness, which can manifest in different intensities.

Anxiety is a central theme in Freud's psychoanalytic theory. Freud (1926) argued that anxiety arises when the ego is faced with an internal or external conflict, particularly when repressed feelings or unresolved trauma surface. Anxiety signals that something is wrong within the psyche and serves as a defense mechanism to protect the individual from psychological harm. In *What My Bones Know*, the protagonist's anxiety is a direct result of the unresolved trauma and repressed emotions she experiences. Her anxiety often takes the form of panic attacks, nightmares, and intrusive thoughts, which are symptomatic of deeper unconscious fears and traumas.

Freud (1926) described three types of anxiety: reality anxiety, neurotic anxiety, and moral anxiety. Reality anxiety stems from real, external threats; neurotic anxiety arises from fear of losing control over unconscious impulses; and moral anxiety results from conflicts between the ego and the superego. The protagonist's anxiety is primarily neurotic in nature, as it stems from the unresolved conflicts within her psyche, including her repressed memories of trauma. Her anxiety also reflects moral anxiety, as she struggles to reconcile her past actions and behaviours with her societal expectations and personal values.

Cognitive-behavioural theories of anxiety, such as those proposed by Aaron Beck (1976), offer another perspective on the protagonist's anxiety. According to Beck, cognitive distortions—irrational or exaggerated thoughts—contribute to anxiety disorders. The protagonist's constant fear of reliving her trauma, along with her tendency to catastrophize, mirrors Beck's model of anxiety, where negative thought patterns exacerbate emotional distress.

2.2.2.3 Defense Mechanisms

Albertine Minderop (2018) explains that defense mechanisms are unconscious psychological processes that protect individuals from anxiety, emotional conflict, or distress. These mechanisms help maintain psychological balance by distorting or denying reality to avoid the emotional discomfort caused by unresolved conflicts. Common examples include repression, denial, and projection, all of which allow individuals to cope with inner turmoil without directly confronting the underlying issues. However, while these mechanisms offer short-term relief, they may hinder personal growth or prevent full emotional resolution.

Freud's theory of defense mechanisms provides a comprehensive understanding of how individuals cope with anxiety and trauma. Freud (1936) identified various defense mechanisms, including repression, denial, projection, and rationalization, which are used by the ego to protect the individual from psychological pain. In *What My Bones Know*, the protagonist's frequent use of defense mechanisms is crucial to understanding her emotional state.

The protagonist uses denial to avoid acknowledging the full extent of her trauma. She refuses to confront her past, which allows her to function in her daily life but prevents her from processing her emotions. This denial is a classic Freudian defense mechanism, which keeps painful memories at bay, allowing the individual to temporarily avoid distress (Freud, 1936). However, denial also prevents the protagonist from healing and prevents her from moving forward emotionally.

Repression is another defense mechanism employed by the protagonist. Freud (1926) argued that repressed memories are stored in the unconscious, often leading to symptoms such as anxiety or neuroses when they are triggered. The protagonist's memories of trauma are repressed, surfacing only in nightmares and flashbacks. Her use of repression reflects the unconscious effort to protect herself from the emotional pain of remembering.

Rationalization is another defense mechanism that the protagonist employs. Freud (1936) explained that rationalization involves offering logical but incorrect explanations for one's behaviors or feelings to avoid confronting the true reasons behind them. The protagonist often rationalizes her actions and experiences, particularly when interacting with others. She downplays the severity of her trauma to maintain the appearance of normalcy, even though her inner world is in turmoil.

According to Freud (1923), projection is a defense mechanism in which an individual unconsciously attributes their own unacceptable thoughts, feelings, or impulses to someone else. This allows the person to avoid acknowledging aspects of themselves that cause anxiety or guilt. Freud introduced the concept as part of his psychoanalytic theory, explaining that projection helps manage internal conflict by externalizing distressing emotions.

Reaction formation is a defense mechanism where an individual unconsciously replaces unacceptable thoughts, feelings, or impulses with their opposites. This occurs as a way to reduce anxiety caused by internal conflicts. For example, a person with repressed anger toward someone may behave in an overly kind and affectionate manner toward them. Freud (1926) introduced this concept as part of his psychoanalytic theory, explaining that reaction formation helps individuals manage distressing emotions by exaggerating the opposite behaviour.

Displacement, according to Freud (1895, 1926), is a defense mechanism in which an individual unconsciously shifts their emotions, impulses, or reactions from the original source of distress to a safer or more acceptable substitute. This process helps reduce anxiety by redirecting feelings that might be socially unacceptable or threatening. Freud initially discussed displacement in *Studies on Hysteria* (1895) and later elaborated on its role in dream analysis and neurotic behavior in *The Problem of Anxiety* (1926).

In summary, the extrinsic approaches of psychology, particularly Freud's psychoanalytic theory, help to illuminate the protagonist's emotional struggles in *What My Bones Know*. The interplay of trauma, anxiety, and defense mechanisms demonstrates the complexity of her character and provides a deeper understanding of the psychological forces that shape her journey toward healing.

2.3 Previous Related Studies

In supporting this research, there are several related previous studies that have similarities and differences with this study. These studies prove the existence of research using psychological theories to analyze literature, specifically focusing on trauma, anxiety, and defense mechanisms in literary characters.

The first research, titled "The Relationship Among Traumatic Experience, Anxiety, and Defense Mechanism as Portrayed in Yanagihara's Novel *A Little Life*," by Huwaida Zulfatus Syarifah, published in 2022, analyzes the relationship between traumatic experiences, anxiety, and defense mechanisms experienced by the protagonist, Jude St. Francis, in *A Little Life* by Hanya Yanagihara. Using Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, the study finds that Jude experiences three types of anxiety: realistic, neurotic, and moral, as a result of physical, psychological, and sexual trauma he has endured. To cope with these anxieties, Jude employs six defense mechanisms: repression, suppression, projection, sublimation, denial, and rationalization.

The second research, titled "Character's Analysis in Ego Defense Mechanism due to Trauma and Revenge on *Hannibal Rising*," by Demarmega Galuh Anggraeni and Agnes Widyaningrum, published in 2024, explores the ego defense mechanisms displayed by the main character in the film *Hannibal Rising* directed by Peter Webber, particularly in response to trauma and revenge. Based on psychoanalytic theory, this analysis highlights how Hannibal Lecter uses defense mechanisms such as repression, denial, and sublimation to cope with his past traumatic experiences, which then shape his personality and motivate his actions in seeking revenge.

The third research, titled "Anxiety and Defense Mechanism in Jeannette Walls' *The Glass Castle*" by Arimbi Putri Dewanti, published in 2023, highlights the themes of anxiety and defense mechanisms in the memoir *The Glass Castle* by Jeannette Walls, with a focus on the main character, Jeannette. Using Freud's psychoanalytic approach, this study identifies that Jeannette experiences three types of anxiety: neurotic, moral, and realistic. To protect her ego from anxiety and uncomfortable situations, Jeannette uses various defense mechanisms such as denial, suppression, reaction formation, repression, projection, displacement, sublimation, regression, and rationalization.

The fourth research, titled "An Analysis of Judith's Anxiety Based on Traumatic Experience Portrayed in Judy Westwater's *Street Kid: A Freudian Psychoanalysis*," by Adhi Pranata, published in 2015, examines the child abuse experienced by the main character in the novel *Street Kid* by Judy Westwater. Using Freud's psychoanalytic theory, this study finds that the trauma experienced by Judith leads to various forms of anxiety in her life. To cope with this anxiety, Judith uses defense mechanisms such as repression and sublimation.

The fifth research, titled "*Pengaruh Trauma Masa Kecil terhadap Kepribadian Tokoh Marie dalam Cerpen Utakata no Ki Karya Mori Ogai*" by Weni Nur Andriani, published in 2018, discusses the impact of childhood traumatic experiences on the personality of the character Marie in the short story *Utakata no Ki* by Mori Ogai. Using descriptive analysis and Freud's psychoanalytic theory, this study finds that Marie's personality change is heavily influenced by the traumatic experiences she underwent. To protect herself from anxiety, Marie uses the ego defense mechanism known as reaction formation.

Based on the previous related studies, it is evident that trauma, anxiety, and defense mechanisms are recurring themes in literary analysis. While some studies focus on specific defense mechanisms or analyze other psychological aspects of characters, this research is distinguished by its focus on the interaction between trauma and anxiety, leading to the formation of specific defense mechanisms in Stephanie Foo's "What My Bones Know." By integrating these psychological concepts with the novel's portrayal of trauma, this study seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of how defense mechanisms operate in literary characters who experience profound psychological distress.