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Childhood Trauma and The Defence Mechanism of Denial in Barry Allen From The Flash (2023)

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Abstract: *This study aims to analyze the portrayal of childhood trauma and the manifestation of the defense mechanism of denial in the character of Barry Allen in the film The Flash. This study employs a qualitative descriptive method with a psychoanalytic approach that integrates Sigmund Freud's structural model of the psyche, specifically the relationship between the Id, Ego, and Superego, as well as Anna Freud's concept of ego defense mechanisms. Primary data, consisting of dialogue transcripts and cinematic visual elements, were collected through in-depth observation and systematically analyzed using an interactive analysis model. The results indicate that Barry Allen's unresolved trauma stemming from his mother's tragic murder triggers severe neurotic anxiety. Unlike typical passive coping mechanisms, this study highlights the presence of "denial in action," manifested through the elements of superhero science fiction. Barry's rejection of reality evolves into an active and destructive obsession as he continues to manipulate space and time to prevent the tragedy from occurring. This extreme form of denial reaches its peak through the emergence of his alter ego, Dark Flash, who represents an irrational attempt to alter the past to the point of threatening the stability of the multiverse. Ultimately, this study concludes that the manipulation of time in the film functions as a cinematic metaphor for the avoidance of unresolved experiences and trauma, while affirming that true psychological healing can only be achieved through the process of accepting painful reality.*

INTRODUCTION

Childhood trauma is a psychological phenomenon that has a profound and long-lasting impact on an individual's mental health well into adulthood. Traumatic events can trigger intense, neurotic anxiety and leave emotional scars in an individual's subconscious. Research on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) indicates that a significant number of individuals worldwide have experienced at least one traumatic event during childhood, suggesting that childhood trauma is a widespread and highly impactful psychological phenomenon (Lee et al., 2022). If this trauma is not properly resolved, individuals tend to develop various defense mechanisms in an effort to

protect the ego from excessive emotional pressure. One of the most fundamental defense mechanisms is denial, a condition in which an individual refuses to accept a painful reality in order to maintain psychological stability. The phenomenon of individuals trapped in the past due to unresolved trauma has become an increasingly relevant social reality in modern society. In the context of popular culture, psychological issues such as trauma and defense mechanisms are often portrayed through various media, particularly film. As a part of popular culture, film exerts a significant influence on shaping the public's understanding of social and psychological realities. However, in many superhero-themed movie narratives, the characters' psychological conflicts are often overshadowed by elements of action, technology, and science fiction concepts such as time travel or the multiverse. Consequently, the psychological messages embedded in the story are often overlooked by the audience, leading to the characters' extreme actions being perceived merely as entertainment without an understanding of the underlying emotional context.

Previous studies have examined defense mechanisms in fictional characters using a Freudian psychoanalytic approach. Defense mechanisms function as instruments of repression that help individuals cope with extreme psychological stress (Hardian, 2025). Other research indicates that the mechanism of denial is generally used as a passive and unconscious strategy to avoid feelings of guilt resulting from past tragedies (Setyo & Nugroho, 2024). Furthermore, inner conflict resulting from loss often triggers emotional expressions such as anger or rejection of social reality (Wijaya & Kurniawati, 2025). Although these studies make important contributions to understanding the mechanism of denial, most literary and film research still positions denial predominantly as a passive emotional response limited to an individual's internal psychological reactions. Based on previous research, there remains a research gap in the study of denial mechanisms in the superhero film genre, particularly those involving the manipulation of space and time. Classical psychoanalysis, as proposed by Anna Freud (1936), explains that denial does not only manifest through thoughts or speech but can also be expressed through actions. However, previous literary studies have rarely discussed how such active forms of denial are represented in science fiction narratives. Therefore, this study is necessary to explore how denial mechanisms are visualized through extreme actions in superhero stories, so that psychological escape from trauma is not merely emotional but is also manifested through grand actions that have the potential to cause harm.

This study focuses on the character of Barry Allen in the film *The Flash* (2023), directed by Andy Muschietti. This film was chosen as the subject of this study because it depicts complex psychological conflicts, particularly the childhood trauma experienced by the main character due to the tragic death of his mother. This trauma drives Barry Allen to deny the reality of his loss by traveling through time to change the past. This action demonstrates how behavioral denial significantly influences the plot. Based on this background, this study is structured around two main research questions:

1. How is Barry Allen's childhood trauma portrayed in the movie The Flash (2023)?
2. How does Barry Allen demonstrate denial resulting from the trauma as a defense mechanism in the movie?

In line with these research questions, the primary objective of this study is to analyze the representation of childhood trauma and examine the manifestations of denial mechanisms in the character of Barry Allen using Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic approach. This study is expected to provide a theoretical contribution to the development of psychoanalytic studies of literature and film, particularly in understanding how defense mechanisms can serve as the primary drivers of narrative conflict. Furthermore, on a practical level, this study is expected to raise public awareness regarding the destructive impact of unresolved trauma and the importance of understanding defense

mechanisms as part of mental health.

The uniqueness of this study lies not in the discovery of a new psychological concept, but rather in the application of the classical psychoanalytic concept of "denial in action" to modern science fiction narratives. Unlike previous studies, which have largely discussed denial as a passive response, this study demonstrates that the film The Flash utilizes the concept of time travel as a cinematic metaphor to depict active denial. Barry Allen's act of time travel not only represents a heroic act but also serves as a form of psychological escape from the reality of a loss he has not been able to accept. Therefore, this study demonstrates that classical psychoanalytic theory remains relevant for analyzing contemporary popular cultural phenomena.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Freud's Psychoanalysis, Neurotic Anxiety, And Modern Psychological Critiques

This study is grounded in Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, which divides the structure of the human personality into three main components: the id, the ego, and the superego. The id operates according to the pleasure principle; the superego acts as the moral regulator; and the ego is responsible for reconciling the two with reality (Freud, 1923). These three components continuously interact within a complex psychological dynamic, thereby influencing an individual's behavior. In this context, the ego plays a crucial role as it must satisfy the id's impulses without violating the moral values of the superego or existing reality. When the ego is unable to balance these internal demands or faces severe traumatic experiences, the individual may experience intense anxiety. In the context of trauma, Freud categorized one form of anxiety as neurotic anxiety. Neurotic anxiety arises from an unconscious fear that the impulses of the id will spiral out of control and drive the individual to commit acts that could result in punishment or adverse consequences. In the case of traumatic childhood loss, painful memories are often pushed into the unconscious through the mechanism of repression. However, this repression does not completely eliminate the source of trauma within the individual. On the contrary, repressed trauma can actually give rise to hidden neurotic anxiety that continues to disrupt the stability of the ego into adulthood, causing the individual to frequently exhibit obsessive or abnormal behavior as a manifestation of unresolved psychological tension.

However, Freud's classical psychoanalytic theory of defense mechanisms has also faced criticism and undergone further development in modern psychology, particularly in cognitive psychology and developmental psychology. From a cognitive psychology perspective, denial is understood not only as an unconscious conflict between the id and the ego, but also as a form of cognitive distortion and an attempt to avoid traumatic experiences (Turiaco et al., 2025). Cognitive theory explains that individuals use denial to maintain the belief that the world remains safe and orderly when faced with traumatic experiences that shake the foundations of their reality. In addition, modern psychoanalytic research shows that primitive defense mechanisms, such as denial and impulsive behavior, are still considered normal in childhood. However, if these mechanisms continue to be overused into adulthood, as seen in the character of Barry Allen, this may indicate the presence of psychological disorders and difficulties in regulating emotions(Tanzilli et al., 2021).Therefore, integrating Freud's theory with modern cognitive psychology approaches can provide a more comprehensive understanding of how Barry's childhood trauma influences his thinking and behavior in adulthood.

Childhood Trauma and the Defense Mechanism of Denial

Childhood trauma occurs when a child experiences a life-threatening or emotionally overwhelming event that exceeds their psychological capacity to cope. Recent clinical studies show

that Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), such as the sudden and traumatic loss of a parent, have long-term neurobiological and psychological effects that permanently alter a person's stress response system and increase vulnerability to mental health disorders in adulthood (Wiese et al., 2020). To protect the ego from total collapse due to the pain and neurotic anxiety caused by trauma, the subconscious mind automatically activates defense mechanisms. One of the most fundamental defense mechanisms in psychoanalysis is denial. Denial is understood as a way for individuals to avoid reality that is difficult to accept. Initially, denial was viewed as a passive form of emotional avoidance. However, Anna Freud (1936) expanded this concept through the idea of "denial in word and deed," that is, a form of denial manifested through actual behavior. Modern psychopathological research also supports this view by demonstrating that sudden traumatic loss can drive individuals to deny reality in more extreme ways, such as through dissociation or an obsessive urge to alter reality (Jafarpour et al., 2020). In superhero narratives, this form of active denial is often depicted literally. When trauma is not properly processed, individuals are driven to engage in irrational and high-risk actions to alter the reality that has already occurred. In the film The Flash, this condition is manifested through Barry Allen's time-traveling to change his past.

Previous Studies

A number of previous studies have thoroughly explored the use of psychoanalytic theory in analyzing trauma and defense mechanisms in fictional characters, demonstrating that film is an effective medium for depicting human psychological dynamics. Ramadhani (2023) demonstrates that childhood trauma significantly shapes destructive behavior in adulthood in the film *Cruella*. Setyo & Nugroho (2024) identify ego defense patterns, including denial, in the main character of *No Longer Human* as a response to deep-seated guilt. Hardian (2025) found that defense mechanisms function as survival strategies in the high-pressure environment of *The Hunger Games.* Additionally, Syarif & Purnomo (2025) examined the character of Bruce Wayne in *The Batman*, describing how the ego attempts to mediate childhood trauma amidst moral conflicts that compel him to fulfill his role as a vigilante. Moving beyond psychoanalytic literary criticism, modern psychological research has begun to highlight how individuals use imagination and "fantastic reality" to cope with severe trauma.

The ability to immerse oneself in fantasy, such as the concept of time manipulation in science fiction, can serve as a psychological mechanism to reduce extreme stress and avoid feelings of loss (Rubinstein et al., 2023). In superhero cinema, this condition is often depicted literally through supernatural elements and time travel, which serve as cinematic metaphors for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and dissociative coping mechanisms. Although previous research has provided a strong theoretical foundation, there remains a research gap that warrants further investigation. Most prior studies still view denial as a form of passive emotional escape that occurs solely within a character's internal conflict. Therefore, this study seeks to broaden that perspective by analyzing the mechanisms of denial within the context of science fiction. This study views Barry Allen's manipulation of space and time in The Flash not merely as a superhero trope, but as an active and extreme form of behavioral denial. These actions demonstrate an irrational attempt to reject reality, which aligns with Freudian psychoanalytic concepts as well as modern cognitive psychology's critique of experiential avoidance..

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive design with a literary psychoanalytic approach. Qualitative methods were chosen because they provide a deeper understanding of the meanings underlying social and psychological phenomena (Creswell, 2014). In this study, the qualitative

descriptive method is used to analyze the psychological issues experienced by the character Barry Allen in the film The Flash, specifically regarding how childhood trauma gives rise to a defense mechanism in the form of behavioral denial or "denial in action." The primary approach used is Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, which emphasizes the relationship between the Id, Ego, and Superego (Freud, 1923). Additionally, this study employs Anna Freud's (1936) concept of ego defense mechanisms to analyze the forms of behavioral denial exhibited by Barry Allen. The data in this study consists of two types: primary data and secondary data. Primary data was obtained directly from the film *The Flash*, directed by Andy Muschietti. Primary data focuses on cinematic visual elements, such as body language, facial expressions, and character actions, as well as dialogue that depicts Barry Allen's emotional and psychological state. Meanwhile, secondary data was obtained from various supporting sources, such as classic psychoanalytic texts by Sigmund and Anna Freud, modern psychology journals on trauma and avoidance of experience, as well as other relevant academic articles to support the analysis of primary data.

The research procedure was conducted systematically using non-participatory observation techniques through in-depth observation. The first stage involved repeatedly watching the film *The Flash* to understand the plot, cinematic metaphors, and the characters' emotional states. The second stage involved identifying scenes and dialogues that revealed Barry Allen's childhood trauma resulting from his mother's death, as well as the emotional reactions that emerged following that event. Next, data were collected and classified based on psychoanalytic theory indicators, particularly the concept of "denial in words and actions" proposed by Anna Freud (1936). The analysis focused on forms of behavioral denial manifested through the manipulation of time within the film's science fiction elements. The final stage involved documenting the data in the form of screenshots and transcriptions of key dialogues as supporting evidence for the analysis.

The data analysis phase of this study employed the interactive analysis model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014). The analysis process began with data reduction, which involved selecting and filtering visual scenes and dialogues directly related to unresolved trauma and the active denial mechanisms exhibited by Barry Allen. Subsequently, the data is presented in the form of structured narratives and dialogue excerpts to facilitate understanding of the character's psychological state. The next stage involves drawing conclusions by linking the analyzed data to psychoanalytic theory. To ensure data validity, this study employs theoretical triangulation. Visual data and dialogue are analyzed by comparing Freud's classical psychoanalytic concepts with modern psychological findings regarding trauma and defense mechanisms. Through this approach, conclusions regarding time manipulation as a form of psychological denial in the film The Flash can be explained in a more scientific and comprehensive manner.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

This Results and Discussion section outlines the main findings of the analysis of the film *The Flash* (2023). Based on the established research questions and the theoretical framework developed from Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis, Anna Freud's defense mechanisms, and modern cognitive psychology, this analysis is divided into three main subsections. The first section will examine how the film depicts the childhood trauma and neurotic anxiety experienced by Barry Allen. The second section will explore in depth how this trauma triggers highly active and destructive defense mechanisms in the form of denial through action. The third section discusses the destructive consequences of this denial and the emergence of an alter ego. This discussion will also be linked to findings from various previous studies to highlight the theoretical contributions of this research. Before conducting an in-depth analysis, the primary data, comprising cinematic visual elements and dialogue excerpts that reflect Barry Allen's psychological state, were first

reduced and categorized using an interactive analysis model. Table 1 below presents a summary of the main findings based on psychoanalytic indicators, namely childhood trauma, neurotic anxiety, and behavioral denial mechanisms.

Table 1. Classification of Dialogue Based on Freudian Psychoanalytic Indicators

No.	Character	Dialogue	Time Stamp	Psychoanalytical Indications
1.	Barry Allen	"I lost my mom to a tragedy, and I lost my dad to the failures of the justice system."	00.29.14	Childhood Trauma (A dual loss that creates an emotional void in one's psychological character).
2.	Bruce Wayne	"Barry, these scars we have, make us who we are. We're not meant to go back and fix them."	00.26.54	The Function of the Superego (The voice of reason and morality in coming to terms with traumatic reality).
3.	Barry Allen	"What if it's supposed to define me? Your tragedy made you a hero."	00.27.17	Neurotic Anxiety (The ego's rejection of rationality due to traumatic stress).
4.	Barry Allen	"I could fix things. I could save her. I could save both of them."	00.26.42	Active Denial (An obsession with twisting the facts rather than accepting the loss).
5.	Barry Allen	"This is just quick in, quick out, back to the present, like I was never even there. That's how I fix it."	00.30.28	Ego Rationalization (A logical attempt to justify and cover up denial).
6.	Past Bruce Wayne	"If a person is stupid enough to mess with time, what you eventually end up with is this. The multiverse."	01.04.18	Destructive Consequences (The tangible effects of extreme denial of reality).
7.	Past Barry Allen	"Well, guess what! It's too late! I am the Flash. And I can save everyone. Nobody dies!"	01.59.26	The Dominance of the Id (Uncontrolled primitive desires that reject the reality of the mother's death).
8.	Dark Flash	"It stops once I've fixed it! How do you like our endless paradox?"	02.04.20	The Peak of Denial (The physical manifestation of an endless cycle of traumatic denial).
9.	Barry Allen	"Barry, not every problem has a solution. Sometimes we just have to let go."	01.59.32	Acceptance (The breakdown of the denial mechanism and the restoration of ego balance).

Manifestations of Barry Allen's Childhood Trauma and Neurotic Anxiety

The childhood trauma experienced by the character Barry Allen stems from two tragic incidents that occurred simultaneously in his past. Referring to 1st data in Table 1, this is explicitly expressed by Barry through the dialogue:

Barry Allen: "*I lost my mom to a tragedy, and I lost my dad to the failures of the justice system"* (00.29.14).

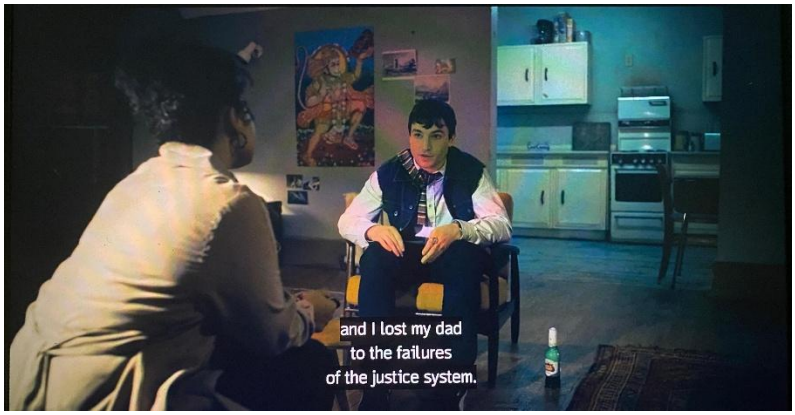


Figure 1. Barry Allen's expression of sadness as he discusses his family's tragedy

The sudden death of his mother due to murder and the loss of his father due to baseless legal charges created immense pain within Barry's psychological makeup. According to classical psychoanalytic theory, these deeply traumatic experiences do not simply disappear, but are instead strongly repressed into the unconscious. This process of repression ultimately triggered severe neurotic anxiety that continued to haunt Barry into adulthood, indicating developmental delays in emotional regulation. This neurotic anxiety left his ego in a state of instability, as he was constantly haunted by a sense of despair regarding a past he could not change. Barry's ego's inability to process this childhood trauma is clearly evident when he argues with Bruce Wayne about the past. Bruce, who also has similar childhood trauma, tries to offer a rational perspective that represents the superego through his statements:

Bruce Wayne: *"Barry, these scars we have, make us who we are"* (00.26.54)

Bruce Wayne: "*We're not meant to go back and fix them"* (00.26:56)



Figure 2. Bruce Wayne's statement reflects the rational demands of the superego

However, the part of Barry driven by a primal desire to regain his mother's affection vehemently rejected that reality. Instead, Barry refuted it by arguing,

Barry Allen: *"What if it's supposed to define me? Your tragedy made you a hero"* (00.27.17).

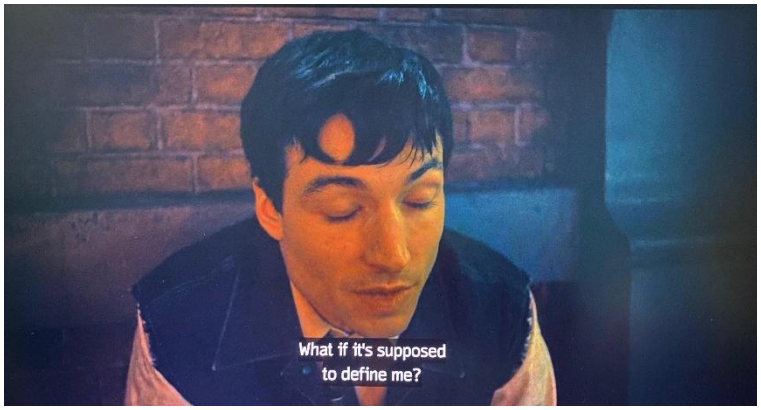


Figure 3. A remark by Barry Allen that suggests neurotic anxiety.

Barry's rejection of Bruce Wayne's advice indicates that his ego has failed to function as a rational mediator. As a result, his neurotic anxiety gradually began to take control of his consciousness and drive him toward extreme defense mechanisms.

The Manipulation of Space and Time as a Form of Active Denial

The defense mechanism of denial became evident when Barry realized he could run faster than the speed of light and manipulate time. Unlike most people who engage in passive denial by daydreaming or avoiding conversations, Barry instead planned structured physical actions. This aligns with Anna Freud's (1936) concept of "denial in word and deed" (behavioral denial) as well as modern cognitive theories regarding experiential avoidance. He disregarded Bruce's warnings about the butterfly effect and the fatal consequences of altering history by insisting:

Barry Allen: *"I could fix things. I could save her. I could save both of them"* (00.26.42).

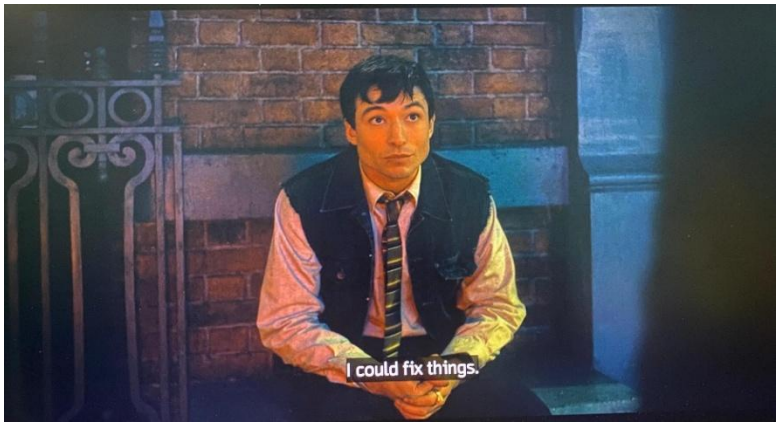


Figure 4. An expression of Barry Allen's obsession that represents active denial

This statement confirms that Barry's denial has turned into a deep-seated obsession. He no longer merely denies reality in his mind; he is determined to distort the physical reality of the universe to align with the deepest desires of his id. In an effort to justify his irrational actions, Barry's ego engages in a highly detailed rationalization of the events of the day his mother was murdered. He reduces the tragedy to a trivial matter involving a can of tomato sauce, as seen in his monologue:

Barry Allen: *"If my mom doesn't forget the tomatoes in the first place, then he never leaves and she never dies"* (00.30.22)

Barry Allen: "This is just quick in, quick out, back to the present, like I was never even there. That's how I fix it" (00.30.28).



Figure 5. Barry Allen's rationalization of his defense mechanism.



Figure 6. Active time manipulation (Chronobowl) as a manifestation of denial

This mindset indicates the presence of ego manipulation in the form of cognitive distortions used to avoid feelings of guilt resulting from violations of the laws of nature. This rationalization demonstrates that denial of behavior is often accompanied by flawed logical justifications so that the individual continues to believe their actions are correct, even if they risk distorting reality. In this context, the concept of time travel in science fiction serves as a cinematic metaphor for an extreme form of psychological escape.

The Destructive Consequences of Denial and the Emergence of the "Dark Flash"

Barry's obsession with constantly denying reality ultimately triggered a major catastrophe that threatened the stability of the multiverse. Bruce Wayne from the past clearly described this chaos with a warning:

Past Bruce Wayne*: "If a person is stupid enough to mess with time, what you eventually end up with is this. The multiverse... What it is, is a hot mess"* (01:04:18 - 01:04:20).



Figure 7. Bruce Wayne's warning about the destructive consequences of manipulating time.

Instead of acknowledging his mistake, this denial actually brought out the dark side of Barry himself, namely the emergence of the character Past Barry Allen (Barry from the past) and the entity known as Dark Flash. Past Barry represents the pure and uncontrolled id, which stubbornly refuses to accept his mother's death by screaming,

Past Barry Allen: *"Well, guess what! It's too late! I am the Flash. And I can save everyone. Nobody dies!"* (01.59.26).



Figure 8. The past Barry Allen, who embodies the absolute dominance of the Id

This dialogue illustrates how excessive self-defense mechanisms can actually erode a person's empathy and rationality, turning them into a selfish and destructive individual. The appearance of Dark Flash serves as the most brilliant visual and narrative metaphor for depicting the psychological devastation caused by unresolved denial. Dark Flash is the future manifestation of Past Barry, who has tried to change destiny millions of times, as evidenced by his dialogue:

Dark Flash: *"It stops once I've fixed it! How do you like our endless paradox?"* (02.04.20).



Figure 9. The Dark Flash as an endless cycle of denial.

The findings of this study align with the research by Ramadhani (2023) and Syarif and Purnomo (2025), which confirms that unresolved childhood trauma can influence a character's psychological development into adulthood. Ramadhani's analysis of the Cruella character demonstrates that childhood wounds develop into a destructive and antisocial personality, while Syarif and Purnomo's study explains that Bruce Wayne's trauma in The Batman is sublimated through acts of vigilantism. Just like these two characters, the trauma and grief experienced by Barry Allen serve as the primary drivers of his extreme actions. However, this study has a different focus from the research by Setyo and Nugroho (2024). In their analysis of *No Longer Human*, denial is viewed as an internal and passive defense mechanism to avoid guilt and emotional pressure. Conversely, this study demonstrates that denial in the character of Barry Allen evolves into a form of "denial in action," as proposed by Anna Freud. Barry's rejection of reality occurs not only internally but is also manifested through the manipulation of space and time, which has significant consequences for the structure of the multiverse in the film *The Flash.*

Ultimately, such psychological conflict can only be resolved when an individual stops avoiding the experience and begins to accept painful realities. This state is known as acceptance. Barry Allen reached this realization when his cognitive distortions collapsed after witnessing the destruction of various alternate realities and confronting the Dark Flash, a figure representing an endless denial of reality. Through that experience, Barry realized that trauma and loss are not something that can be fixed or erased through time manipulation, but rather a part of life that must be accepted and integrated into himself. That psychological realization was then reinforced through the following emotional dialogue.

Barry Allen: *"Barry, not every problem has a solution. Sometimes we just have to let go"* (01.59.32).

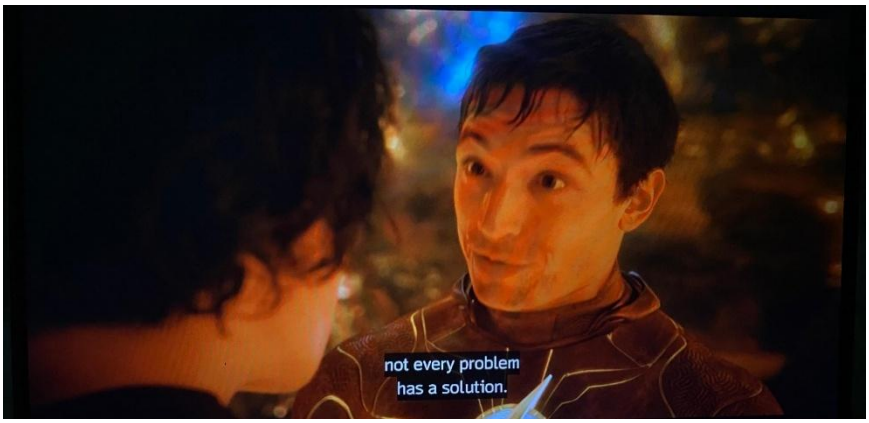


Figure 10. Barry Allen's realization that his defense mechanisms have broken down.

The decision to "let go" of his mother signaled the collapse of the defense mechanism that had long protected his ego. This realization restored the balance between the id and the superego, alleviated his neurotic anxiety, and proved that the only true way to heal childhood trauma is to consciously dare to embrace the pain of reality itself.

Limitation of The Study

Although this study identified significant forms of behavioral denial in superhero narratives, there are several limitations that should be noted. First, the qualitative descriptive approach in literary psychoanalysis involves a high degree of subjectivity, as the interpretation of

dialogue and visual metaphors relies heavily on the researcher's perspective in understanding psychoanalytic theory. Second, this study has not employed inter-researcher validation (inter-rater reliability), so the analysis results have not been independently verified by other researchers in the fields of psychology or literature. This situation has the potential to introduce interpretive bias. Third, this study focuses only on a single cinematic text, namely the film The Flash. Therefore, the findings regarding the manipulation of time as a metaphor for "denial in action" cannot yet be generalized to all science fiction films or superhero films in general.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis and discussion, this study concludes that the childhood trauma experienced by Barry Allen due to his mother's tragic death triggered the emergence of deep neurotic anxiety. This condition arises when the Ego is unable to balance the Id's drive to restore past happiness with the Superego's demand to accept the reality of his mother's death. To protect his fragile psychological state, Barry employs a defense mechanism known as denial in action. The primary contribution of this study lies in explaining how the classical psychoanalytic concept of active denial is expanded within the framework of modern science fiction. The denial experienced by Barry is not merely a passive emotional escape but is manifested through active actions involving the manipulation of space and time. Actions that initially appear as minor changes eventually develop into a destructive paradox marked by the emergence of the Dark Flash and the instability of the multiverse. Thus, time travel in the film *The Flash* functions as a cinematic metaphor for the dangers of avoiding unresolved experiences and trauma.

In addition to making a theoretical contribution to the study of literary psychoanalysis, this research also has practical benefits as a psychoeducational tool to raise public awareness of the impact of unresolved trauma. This study demonstrates that escapism or the desire to continually flee from reality, can develop into psychologically destructive behavior, even when such actions appear to be heroic. Therefore, this study underscores the importance of the process of acceptance in confronting traumatic experiences. For future research, it is recommended to conduct a comparative psychological analysis of other characters within the same cinematic universe, for example, by comparing the destructive denial mechanisms employed by Barry Allen with the sublimation mechanisms utilized by Bruce Wayne in addressing their past traumas. Additionally, future research could expand the study by utilizing Carl Jung's analytical psychology theory, particularly the concepts of the Shadow and the Persona, to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of the destructive alter-ego and psychological paradoxes in modern superhero characters.

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