



Identity Ambiguity in Harry Potter and Sirius Black: A Freudian Psychoanalytic Analysis of Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban

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Article Info	Abstract
Received: 2026-07-23 Revised: 2026-08-04 Accepted: 2026-08-22 Keywords: <i>Identity ambiguity, Freud's tripartite theory, Harry Potter, Sirius Black, psychoanalytic criticism</i> DOI: 10.24256/ideas.v14i1.11945 Corresponding Author: Safnidar Siahaan safnidar@fkip.unrika.ac.id English Language Education Study Program, University Riau Kepulauan, Batam, Kepulauan Riau	<i>This study explored the identity ambiguity experienced by Harry Potter and Sirius Black in *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* using Sigmund Freud's tripartite theory of the psyche, comprising the id, ego, and superego. In this study, **identity ambiguity** refers to the psychological condition in which a character negotiates multiple and sometimes conflicting identities resulting from the interaction of the id, ego, and superego, as reflected in the tension between personal motivations and social perceptions. The objective of this study was to examine how the interaction among these three psychic structures contributes to the representation of identity ambiguity in the two characters. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, this study conducted a textual analysis of fourteen selected scenes, consisting of seven scenes featuring Harry Potter and seven featuring Sirius Black. These scenes were purposively selected because they explicitly portray psychological conflicts that demonstrate the interaction of the id, ego, and superego and are central to the representation of identity ambiguity. The findings indicate that the dynamic interaction among these psychic structures contributes to the portrayal of identity ambiguity in both characters. Harry Potter's identity ambiguity is reflected in his internal conflict between his instinctive desire for revenge and his growing commitment to truth and moral responsibility. Meanwhile, Sirius Black's identity ambiguity is represented through the contrast between his private identity as a victim, protector, and parental figure and his public identity as a dangerous murderer. This study contributes to psychoanalytic literary and film criticism by demonstrating how Freud's tripartite theory provides a useful analytical framework for interpreting the psychological complexity and identity construction of literary and cinematic characters.</i>

1. Introduction

Identity has long been regarded as a dynamic developmental construct rather than as a fixed personal attribute (Marcia, 1966). In literary and cinematic studies, identity can also be understood as a narrative construction that is continuously shaped and reconstructed through experiences and storytelling. Within this perspective, identity ambiguity refers to a condition in which a character negotiates multiple and sometimes conflicting identities, resulting in an unstable or contested sense of self that is open to different interpretations. This understanding is consistent with (Marcia, 1966) view that identity develops through an ongoing process of exploration and commitment rather than existing as a fixed state. Identity ambiguity should therefore be distinguished from internal conflict, moral struggle, uncertainty, or social misrecognition. While these phenomena may contribute to identity ambiguity, they do not constitute the concept itself. Instead, identity ambiguity emerges when psychological conflict influences how a character understands, performs, and reconstructs identity throughout the narrative.

Sigmund Freud's tripartite theory of the psyche, consisting of the id, ego, and superego, provides a valuable framework for explaining this process because the interaction among these three psychic structures generates internal tensions that shape characters' decisions and identity construction. In this study, identity ambiguity is therefore understood as the narrative manifestation of psychic conflict, in which the interaction among the id, ego, and superego creates identity tension that subsequently influences characters' actions and identity reconstruction.

The film *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* presents a compelling narrative in which identity ambiguity is experienced by two major characters, Harry Potter and Sirius Black. Harry negotiates his evolving identity amid the legacy of his parents, the revelation of hidden truths, and his increasing sense of moral responsibility. At the same time, Sirius Black is perceived publicly as a dangerous murderer while privately remaining a loyal friend, protector, and innocent victim of betrayal. These contrasting identities create persistent identity tension throughout the narrative. Viewed through Freud's structural model, both characters demonstrate how conflicts among instinctive desires (id), rational judgment (ego), and moral values (superego) influence narrative decisions that ultimately reconstruct their identities. Accordingly, the film provides an appropriate corpus for examining how psychic conflict is represented through identity ambiguity within cinematic narrative.

Previous psychoanalytic studies have investigated psychological conflicts within the *Harry Potter* series from various perspectives. (Choudhary & Rao, 2025) examine trauma and psychological healing by emphasizing the influence of unconscious forces on characters' behaviour through Freudian psychoanalysis, while (Beare et al., 2024) demonstrate how psychological trauma, suppressed emotions, and unconscious impulses contribute to character development. Similarly, (Pramana & Haryanti, 2024) discuss the relationship between Freud's structural psyche and identity rediscovery by explaining how the interaction among the id, ego, and superego contributes to psychological growth and balance. Collectively, these studies establish the significance of Freudian psychoanalysis in interpreting literary characters; however, they primarily emphasise trauma, unconscious motivation, and psychological development rather than examining how psychic conflict contributes to the representation of identity ambiguity.

Other scholars have approached identity development from different theoretical perspectives. (Shiong & Wang, 2022) examine identity formation through Erikson's psychosocial theory by emphasizing adolescent psychosocial development rather than unconscious psychological conflict. Likewise, (Ganesh, 2025) discusses trauma and identity within the *Harry Potter* series but addresses these issues from a broader psychoanalytic

perspective without specifically examining how the interaction among the id, ego, and superego contributes to identity ambiguity in *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*. Taken together, these studies demonstrate that identity has been widely discussed in previous scholarship; however, the relationship between Freud's structural psyche and the representation of identity ambiguity remains underexplored.

Despite these valuable contributions, several limitations remain. Existing studies primarily examine trauma, unconscious motivation, or identity development as separate psychological phenomena. Consequently, limited attention has been given to explaining how psychic conflict among the id, ego, and superego generates identity tension, influences characters' narrative decisions, and ultimately contributes to the reconstruction of identity. Furthermore, many previous studies investigate the *Harry Potter* series as a whole rather than focusing specifically on the psychological dynamics represented in the film *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*. This leaves an important opportunity to examine identity ambiguity through a more focused application of Freud's structural model.

Accordingly, this study proposes a conceptual framework in which conflicts among the id, ego, and superego produce psychic conflict, which subsequently creates identity tension. This tension shapes the characters' narrative decisions which ultimately contribute to the reconstruction of their identities throughout the film. Within this framework, identity ambiguity is understood not as a fixed personality trait but as a dynamic narrative condition emerging from continuous psychological negotiation. By applying this framework to *Harry Potter and Sirius Black*, the study seeks to explain how Freud's structural model can be used to interpret the representation of identity ambiguity in literary and cinematic narratives.

Based on these research gaps, this study addresses the following research question: How does the interaction among the id, ego, and superego contribute to the representation of identity ambiguity in *Harry Potter and Sirius Black* in the film *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*? Accordingly, this study aims to examine how the interaction among these three psychic structures shapes the identity ambiguity experienced by both characters through a qualitative analysis of selected scenes from the film. The study contributes to psychoanalytic literary and film criticism by offering a focused application of Freud's tripartite theory to a single film adaptation and by demonstrating how psychic conflict can be interpreted as a process leading to identity tension and identity reconstruction. Rather than claiming a more comprehensive explanation than previous studies, this research extends earlier discussions by specifically examining the relationship between Freud's structural psyche and the representation of identity ambiguity in *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*.

2. Method

psychoanalytic approach, particularly the tripartite theory of the psyche consisting of the id, ego, and superego, as the primary analytical framework. A descriptive qualitative design is appropriate for literary and film analysis because it enables researchers to interpret meanings, psychological representations, and narrative experiences embedded within textual and visual data rather than relying on numerical measurement. Qualitative research emphasizes the in-depth interpretation of textual data to understand complex social, psychological, and cultural phenomena (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Accordingly, this approach is considered suitable for examining how identity ambiguity is represented through the psychological conflicts experienced by *Harry Potter* and *Sirius Black* in the film *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*.

The object of this study is the film *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (2004), directed by Alfonso Cuarón and adapted from J.K. Rowling's novel of the same title. The primary data consist of fourteen selected scenes, comprising seven scenes involving *Harry*

Potter and seven scenes involving Sirius Black, together with their dialogues, character actions, facial expressions, and contextual interactions that represent identity ambiguity. The scenes were selected purposively because they explicitly portray psychological conflicts related to the interaction among the id, ego, and superego, resulting in identity tension experienced by the two main characters.

A scene was included when it met the following criteria: (1) it presented a significant psychological conflict experienced by Harry Potter or Sirius Black; (2) it demonstrated the interaction or dominance of one or more components of Freud's tripartite model of the psyche; and (3) it reflected identity ambiguity through conflicting roles, values, beliefs, or self-perceptions. Identity ambiguity was identified when a scene depicted conflicting identities, competing values, or inconsistent self-perceptions that created tension in the character's understanding or performance of self. This operational definition guided the selection of scenes and ensured consistency throughout the coding and interpretation processes. Secondary data were obtained from books, journal articles, and other scholarly publications related to Freudian psychoanalysis, literary and film criticism, and identity ambiguity to support the interpretation of the findings (Choudhary & Rao, 2025 ;Sami, 2023)

The data were collected through documentation and close viewing techniques by repeatedly watching the film *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*. The researcher carefully observed the film several times to identify scenes, dialogues, character behaviours, and visual expressions relevant to identity ambiguity. Each scene was documented together with its timestamp and supporting dialogue to preserve the contextual meaning of the narrative. Fourteen scenes that fulfilled the inclusion criteria were then selected as the primary data, consisting of seven scenes representing Harry Potter and seven scenes representing Sirius Black. All selected data were recorded in a coding sheet developed according to Freud's tripartite theory.

As is common in qualitative research, the researcher served as the primary research instrument responsible for data selection, coding, interpretation, and thematic analysis. The classification was based on the dominant psychological function reflected in each scene rather than assuming that the three psychic structures operate in fixed or sequential stages. Instead, the analysis considered the dynamic interaction among the id, ego, and superego as represented within each narrative context.

The collected data were analysed using qualitative thematic analysis. First, each selected scene was coded according to Freud's tripartite categories by identifying whether the dominant psychological tendency reflected instinctive impulses (id), reality-oriented mediation (ego), moral and ethical considerations (superego), or the interaction among these three psychic structures. The coding process was guided by the contextual meaning of each scene rather than by predetermined sequential stages of psychological development. Second, the coded scenes were analysed to identify broader themes related to identity ambiguity. While the categories of the id, ego, and superego were predetermined deductively from Freud's psychoanalytic theory, themes such as repression, guilt, loyalty, betrayal, and moral dilemma emerged inductively from repeated examination of the selected scenes. Third, each theme was interpreted to explain how psychic conflict contributed to identity tension, narrative decision-making, and identity reconstruction experienced by Harry Potter and Sirius Black. To enhance the credibility of the findings, theoretical triangulation was conducted by comparing the interpretations with previous studies and relevant psychoanalytic literature (Sami, 2023 ;Pramana & Haryanti, 2024).

In addition, peer checking was carried out through discussion with a fellow researcher in literary studies to review the coding process, thematic categorisation, and interpretation of the findings. The final stage synthesised the relationship between Freud's structural model of the psyche and the representation of identity ambiguity in the film *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*.

3. Result

The findings of this study were obtained through a qualitative analysis of the film *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (2004) using Freud's tripartite theory of the psyche as the analytical framework. The analysis focuses on fourteen purposively selected scenes involving Harry Potter and Sirius Black to examine how identity ambiguity is represented through the dynamic interaction of the id, ego, and superego. Rather than assuming that these three psychic structures operate in a fixed or sequential manner, the analysis considers how their relative influence varies across different narrative situations, contributing to the characters' identity tensions and identity reconstruction. The findings are presented according to each character to illustrate how identity ambiguity is represented through different forms of psychological and narrative conflict.

Table 1 Summary of Identity Ambiguity Analysis.

Scene	Character	Key Evidence	Psychological Tendency	Identity Conflict	Interpretation
1	Harry Potter	Inflates Aunt Marge	Id-related	Grieving son vs. responsible wizard	Emotional impulse creates identity tension.
2	Harry Potter	Learns Sirius' alleged betrayal	Id-related	Revenge vs. moral judgement	Conflicting emotions shape identity negotiation.
3	Harry Potter	Confronts Sirius	Id-related	Justice vs. rational judgement	Emotional assumptions influence identity.
4	Harry Potter	Learns Pettigrew is the traitor	Ego-related	Previous beliefs vs. new reality	Identity begins to be reconstructed.
5	Harry Potter	Pettigrew confesses	Ego-related	Old beliefs vs. truth	New evidence reshapes identity.
6	Harry Potter	Prevents Pettigrew's killing	Superego-related	Revenge vs. justice	Moral responsibility guides behaviour.
7	Harry Potter	Saves Sirius with Patronus	Superego-related	Grief vs. compassion	Identity reconstruction through ethical action.

Scene	Character	Key Evidence	Psychological Tendency	Identity Conflict	Interpretation
1	Sirius Black	Escapes Azkaban	Id-related	Criminal image vs. innocent victim	Social and psychological conflict coexist.
2	Sirius Black	Secretly watches Harry	Ego-related	Fugitive vs. guardian	Reality regulates emotional desire.
3	Sirius Black	Takes Ron to the Shrieking Shack	Id-related	Revenge vs. justice	Emotional motivation shapes behaviour.
4	Sirius Black	Explains his innocence	Ego-related	Public accusation vs. factual innocence	Rational explanation reconstructs identity.
5	Sirius Black	Confronts Pettigrew	Id-related	Victim vs. avenger	Trauma intensifies identity conflict.
6	Sirius Black	Accepts Harry's decision	Ego-related	Revenge vs. responsibility	Emotional restraint supports identity negotiation.
7	Sirius Black	Offers Harry a home	Superego-related	Fugitive vs. guardian	Care and responsibility reconstruct identity.

4.1 Identity Ambiguity of Harry Potter

The analysis identified seven significant scenes representing Harry Potter's identity ambiguity throughout the film *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*. These scenes illustrate how Harry's identity is continuously negotiated through the dynamic interaction among Freud's three psychic structures: the id, ego, and superego. Rather than operating in a fixed or sequential order, these psychic structures interact differently across particular narrative situations, influencing Harry's emotional responses, judgments, and moral decisions. Accordingly, the analysis focuses on how these changing psychological interactions contribute to the representation of identity ambiguity rather than suggesting a linear progression of psychological development.

Across the selected scenes, Harry experiences a series of psychological conflicts triggered by grief, anger, uncertainty, and moral responsibility. These conflicts can be interpreted as generating identity tension because Harry must continually negotiate competing roles and values, including his identity as a grieving son, a loyal friend, and a responsible young wizard. As the narrative develops, different scenes reflect varying degrees of instinctive impulse, rational evaluation, and moral regulation associated with Freud's structural model of the psyche. Consequently, Harry's identity ambiguity is represented not as a fixed psychological condition but as a dynamic process of identity negotiation and reconstruction throughout the film.

The first scene (Timestamp: 00:06:30–00:08:00) depicts Harry inflating Aunt Marge after she repeatedly insults his parents. Harry shouts, *“Don't you dare talk about my parents like that!”* before unconsciously performing magic. At the narrative level, this scene portrays Harry's immediate emotional reaction to remarks that threaten his personal and family identity. From a psychoanalytic perspective, Harry's impulsive behaviour can be interpreted as reflecting a stronger influence of the id, as his emotional response overrides rational self-control and consideration of the consequences of using magic outside school. However, the scene represents more than an emotional outburst alone. Harry's identity ambiguity emerges because he must negotiate two competing identities: his identity as a grieving son who feels compelled to defend the memory of his parents and his identity as a young wizard who is expected to regulate his emotions and use magic responsibly. The psychological conflict between these competing identities creates identity tension, illustrating how emotional impulses contribute to the ongoing negotiation of Harry's sense of self rather than constituting identity ambiguity solely through anger.

The second scene (Timestamp: 00:48:00–00:50:00) occurs when Harry learns that Sirius Black allegedly betrayed James and Lily Potter. Upon hearing the statement, *“He was their friend,”* Harry experiences intense emotional distress and anger. At the narrative level, this revelation challenges Harry's long-held understanding of his parents' past and his relationship with Sirius Black. From a psychoanalytic perspective, Harry's immediate desire for revenge can be interpreted as reflecting a stronger influence of the id, as his emotional reaction initially limits his ability to evaluate the information critically. Nevertheless, the significance of the scene extends beyond emotional conflict. Harry begins to negotiate competing identities: on the one hand, he sees himself as a son seeking justice for his parents, while on the other, he is expected to respond thoughtfully before reaching a moral judgment. This psychological tension illustrates identity ambiguity because Harry's understanding of himself is shaped by conflicting emotional commitments and moral expectations rather than by a single, stable identity.

The third scene (Timestamp: 01:31:20–01:33:10) takes place when Harry confronts Sirius Black in the Shrieking Shack. Believing Sirius to be responsible for his parents' deaths, Harry accuses him by shouting, *“You killed my parents!”* At the narrative level, the confrontation reflects Harry's conviction that Sirius is the source of his family's suffering. From a psychoanalytic perspective, Harry's reaction can be interpreted as reflecting a stronger influence of the id, as grief, anger, and the desire for revenge shape his immediate response before he considers alternative explanations. However, the significance of this scene lies not only in Harry's emotional reaction but also in the identity tension it creates. Harry struggles to reconcile his identity as a son seeking justice for his parents with his emerging identity as a young wizard who is expected to evaluate situations fairly and exercise self-control. The scene therefore illustrates how identity ambiguity develops through competing emotional commitments and moral responsibilities rather than through emotional conflict alone.

A significant shift in Harry's understanding occurs in the fourth scene (Timestamp: 01:35:00–01:41:00), when Sirius Black and Remus Lupin explain that Peter Pettigrew is the actual traitor. At the narrative level, this revelation challenges Harry's previous beliefs about the events surrounding his parents' deaths. Rather than reacting immediately with anger, Harry begins to consider the explanations and evidence presented to him. From a psychoanalytic perspective, this response can be interpreted as reflecting a stronger role of the ego in mediating between Harry's emotional impulses and the newly revealed reality. Instead of acting solely on his desire for revenge, Harry begins to reassess his earlier assumptions. This process generates identity tension because Harry must reconstruct his understanding of Sirius Black while simultaneously redefining his own identity as a son

seeking justice in light of newly discovered truth. Accordingly, the scene illustrates how identity ambiguity develops through the negotiation between previously held beliefs and emerging evidence rather than through emotional conflict alone.

The fifth scene (Timestamp: 01:40:00–01:42:00) further develops Harry's changing understanding after Peter Pettigrew admits his betrayal. At the narrative level, Pettigrew's confession fundamentally alters Harry's interpretation of the circumstances surrounding his parents' deaths and Sirius Black's imprisonment. From a psychoanalytic perspective, the scene can be interpreted as reflecting a stronger process of ego-related mediation, as Harry reassesses the newly revealed evidence instead of relying solely on his earlier emotional assumptions. More importantly, the confession initiates a process of identity reconstruction. Harry is required to abandon a long-held belief that had shaped both his perception of Sirius Black and his own understanding of justice. Consequently, his identity ambiguity is represented through the negotiation between previous convictions and newly established truths, demonstrating that identity is reconstructed as new knowledge reshapes his interpretation of past experiences.

Harry's moral conflict becomes particularly evident in the sixth scene (Timestamp: 01:43:30–01:45:30), when he prevents Sirius Black and Remus Lupin from killing Peter Pettigrew by stating, *"We can't kill him."* At the narrative level, Harry rejects immediate revenge and insists that Pettigrew should face justice through appropriate legal authority. From a psychoanalytic perspective, this decision can be interpreted as reflecting stronger superego-related moral regulation, as Harry's ethical principles and sense of responsibility increasingly influence his judgment despite his personal anger toward Pettigrew. Rather than simply representing a moral victory over emotional impulses, the scene illustrates Harry's continuing negotiation between competing identities. He remains a son who has suffered profound personal loss while simultaneously embracing the responsibilities associated with justice, compassion, and moral accountability. Accordingly, Harry's identity ambiguity is represented through his effort to reconcile personal emotions with broader ethical commitments, demonstrating that identity is continuously negotiated rather than permanently resolved.

The final scene (Timestamp: 01:56:00–01:59:00) depicts Harry casting the Patronus Charm while shouting, *"Expecto Patronum!"* to protect Sirius Black from the Dementors. At the narrative level, Harry's decision to save Sirius reflects a significant transformation in his understanding of both Sirius' identity and his own responsibilities. Although Harry initially believed Sirius to be responsible for his parents' deaths, he chooses to protect him after learning the truth. From a psychoanalytic perspective, this action can be interpreted as reflecting stronger superego-related moral regulation, as compassion, justice, and responsibility outweigh his earlier desire for revenge. Nevertheless, the scene should not be understood as indicating that Harry's psychological conflict has completely disappeared. Instead, it represents a moment of identity reconstruction in which Harry redefines himself not only as a grieving son but also as an individual capable of making ethical decisions despite personal loss. Consequently, the representation of the representation of identity ambiguity is partially resolved through Harry's ability to integrate emotional experience, rational understanding, and moral responsibility within a new sense of self.

Overall, the findings indicate that Harry Potter's identity ambiguity is represented through the dynamic interaction among the id, ego, and superego across different narrative situations. Rather than functioning as sequential stages of psychological development, these psychic structures interact in varying ways depending on the emotional, social, and moral demands of each scene. Harry's responses to grief, revenge, truth, and justice illustrate how instinctive impulses, rational evaluation, and moral considerations continuously influence one another throughout the narrative. Harry continuously

negotiates competing identities across different narrative situations, a loyal friend, and a responsible young wizard. This ongoing process of psychological negotiation contributes to identity tension and ultimately to identity reconstruction. Accordingly, the findings suggest that Harry's identity ambiguity is best understood as a dynamic narrative process shaped by the continuous interaction of Freud's structural model of the psyche rather than as a linear progression from one psychic structure to another.

4.2 Identity Ambiguity of Sirius Black

The analysis identified seven significant scenes representing the psychological and social dimensions of Sirius Black's identity throughout the film *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*. Across these scenes, Sirius is portrayed as a character whose identity is shaped not only by internal psychological conflict but also by the contrast between his public reputation and his actual intentions. Publicly, he is widely believed to be a dangerous murderer, whereas privately he remains a loyal friend, an innocent victim of betrayal, and a protective father figure to Harry Potter. This contrast creates a form of social identity conflict that interacts with Sirius' internal psychological struggles. From a psychoanalytic perspective, the varying interaction among the id, ego, and superego influences how Sirius responds to revenge, justice, loyalty, and responsibility throughout different narrative situations. Accordingly, the analysis focuses on how these psychological processes contribute to the representation of identity ambiguity while recognising that some conflicts arise from social misrepresentation rather than solely from intrapsychic tension.

The first scene, presented during the opening sequence of the film, depicts Sirius Black's escape from Azkaban after years of wrongful imprisonment. At the narrative level, Sirius is introduced as a dangerous escaped prisoner who is believed to be responsible for the murder of James and Lily Potter. This portrayal establishes a strong contrast between his public identity as an alleged criminal and his private identity as an innocent victim seeking justice. From a psychoanalytic perspective, Sirius' determination to find Peter Pettigrew can be interpreted as reflecting a stronger influence of the id, as years of suffering, anger, and the desire to confront the true betrayer shape his immediate motivation. However, the significance of the scene extends beyond emotional impulse alone. Sirius' public misrepresentation creates a social identity conflict, while his personal awareness of his innocence intensifies his internal psychological struggle. Together, these social and psychological dimensions contribute to the representation of identity ambiguity by placing Sirius in a position where his outward identity sharply contrasts with his lived sense of self.

The second scene (Timestamp: approximately 01:00:00) depicts Sirius secretly observing Harry from a distance without revealing his presence. Although the interaction is largely non-verbal, Sirius consistently watches over Harry to ensure his safety while avoiding direct contact. At the narrative level, this scene highlights the tension between Sirius' desire to protect Harry and the practical necessity of remaining hidden as a wanted fugitive. From a psychoanalytic perspective, Sirius' restraint can be interpreted as reflecting a stronger role of the ego in mediating between his emotional desire to approach Harry and the reality of his social circumstances. Rather than acting impulsively, Sirius adjusts his behaviour according to the risks surrounding him. This situation also illustrates the negotiation of competing identities: despite being publicly perceived as a dangerous criminal, Sirius continues to act as a loyal guardian and protector. Consequently, the scene demonstrates how social identity conflict and internal psychological regulation interact to shape the representation of identity ambiguity.

The third scene (Timestamp: 01:28:00–01:30:00) depicts Sirius dragging Ron Weasley into the Shrieking Shack in an attempt to confront Peter Pettigrew and reveal the truth behind his imprisonment. At the narrative level, Sirius' actions appear aggressive and reinforce the widespread belief that he is a dangerous criminal. From a psychoanalytic perspective, his determination can be interpreted as reflecting a stronger influence of the id, as years of wrongful imprisonment, anger, and the desire for justice intensify his emotional response. However, his behaviour should not be understood solely as an expression of uncontrolled aggression. Rather, it reflects the complex interaction between emotional impulses and his determination to expose the truth. This scene therefore illustrates the coexistence of social identity conflict and intrapsychic conflict. While Sirius is publicly perceived as a violent fugitive, his personal motivation is to clear his name and protect Harry by revealing Pettigrew's betrayal. Consequently, the representation of identity ambiguity emerges through the tension between Sirius' public image and his privately understood moral purpose.

The fourth scene (Timestamp: 01:35:00–01:40:00) depicts Sirius explaining to Harry that Peter Pettigrew is still alive and was the actual betrayer of James and Lily Potter. At the narrative level, this scene marks a significant shift from confrontation to explanation, as Sirius attempts to present factual evidence rather than relying on emotional reactions. From a psychoanalytic perspective, his behaviour can be interpreted as reflecting a stronger role of the ego, which mediates between emotional impulses and reality-oriented reasoning. Instead of responding through anger or revenge, Sirius seeks to reconstruct the narrative surrounding his past by providing an alternative account supported by evidence. This process also challenges the socially constructed image of Sirius as a murderer and gradually reveals the discrepancy between his public identity and his lived experience. Consequently, the scene illustrates how identity ambiguity is represented through the interaction between psychological regulation and the gradual reconstruction of identity within the narrative.

The fifth scene (Timestamp: 01:42:00–01:45:00) portrays Sirius confronting Peter Pettigrew after years of wrongful imprisonment. During the confrontation, Sirius emotionally declares, "I did my waiting! Twelve years of it! In Azkaban!" At the narrative level, this dialogue reveals the depth of his accumulated suffering and his determination to seek justice. From a psychoanalytic perspective, Sirius' intense emotional expression can be interpreted as reflecting a stronger influence of the id, as years of repression, anger, and frustration become openly expressed.

However, the scene represents more than an emotional outburst alone. Sirius simultaneously negotiates his identity as an innocent victim seeking justice and as a man whose actions may appear driven by revenge. Rather than portraying these identities as mutually exclusive, the scene illustrates how unresolved psychological conflict complicates the representation of Sirius' identity. Consequently, identity ambiguity is represented through the interaction between emotional impulses, traumatic experience, and Sirius' continuing effort to reclaim his moral identity.

The sixth scene (Timestamp: 01:45:00–01:46:00) depicts Sirius responding to Harry's request to spare Peter Pettigrew despite his long-standing desire for revenge. At the narrative level, Sirius initially remains emotionally invested in confronting Pettigrew but ultimately accepts Harry's decision not to take his life. From a psychoanalytic perspective, this response can be interpreted as reflecting a stronger regulatory role of the ego, which negotiates between Sirius' emotional impulses and the practical and moral realities of the situation. Rather than suggesting that revenge disappears completely, the scene demonstrates Sirius' willingness to restrain his immediate desires in response to Harry's judgement. This moment also highlights a shift in Sirius' identity negotiation, as he begins

to prioritise his role as Harry's protector over his personal desire for retribution. Consequently, identity ambiguity is represented through the ongoing tension between Sirius' identity as a victim seeking justice and his emerging identity as a responsible guardian capable of self-restraint.

The final scene (Timestamp: 01:47:00–01:49:00) depicts Sirius offering Harry a new home by saying, "If you wanted a different home... some place maybe you could come and stay...". At the narrative level, this moment represents a significant shift from confrontation toward care and emotional support. Rather than focusing on revenge or his own suffering, Sirius expresses his willingness to assume a parental role and provide Harry with protection, stability, and affection. From a psychoanalytic perspective, this behaviour can be interpreted as reflecting stronger superego-related moral regulation, as ethical responsibility and concern for Harry's well-being become more prominent than his earlier desire for retribution.

However, this does not imply that Sirius' emotional pain or traumatic experiences disappear completely. Instead, the scene illustrates how competing psychological tendencies continue to coexist while moral responsibility increasingly guides his actions. Consequently, the representation of identity ambiguity reaches a stage of identity reconstruction, in which Sirius begins to redefine himself not only as an innocent victim of injustice but also as a compassionate guardian whose identity is shaped by care, responsibility, and hope for the future.

Overall, the findings suggest that Sirius Black's identity ambiguity is represented through the dynamic interaction among the id, ego, and superego rather than through the dominance of a single psychic structure at different stages of the narrative. Across the selected scenes, Sirius negotiates competing psychological tendencies associated with anger, trauma, justice, loyalty, and moral responsibility while simultaneously responding to the social perception of him as a dangerous criminal. From a psychoanalytic perspective, different scenes can be interpreted as reflecting stronger influences of particular psychic structures depending on the narrative context; however, these structures operate interactively rather than sequentially.

Furthermore, Sirius' identity ambiguity is shaped not only by intrapsychic conflict but also by the tension between his publicly constructed identity as an escaped murderer and his privately understood identity as an innocent victim, loyal friend, and protective guardian. As the narrative progresses, this ongoing negotiation contributes to an ongoing process of identity reconstruction of Sirius' identity, illustrating how psychological conflict and social identity conflict together influence the representation of identity ambiguity in the film.

4. Discussion

This study examined the representation of identity ambiguity experienced by Harry Potter and Sirius Black in *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* through Freud's tripartite theory of the psyche, consisting of the id, ego, and superego. The findings suggest that identity ambiguity is represented as a dynamic process shaped by the interaction among instinctive impulses, rational mediation, and moral regulation rather than as a fixed psychological condition. Importantly, Freud's structural model is used in this study to interpret the psychological dynamics underlying the characters' behaviours, while identity ambiguity is understood as emerging from the interaction between these psychological processes and the characters' changing narrative experiences. Throughout the film, both characters continuously reconstruct their understanding of themselves in response to emotional conflict, trauma, new information, and changing social circumstances

The findings further demonstrate that identity ambiguity is represented differently in the two main characters. Harry Potter's ambiguity primarily emerges from internal psychological conflict associated with grief, trauma, revenge, and moral responsibility (Bauer, 2015). By contrast, Sirius Black's ambiguity arises from the interaction between internal psychological conflict and external social misrecognition, as he is publicly labelled a dangerous criminal despite perceiving himself as an innocent victim and loyal protector. These differences indicate that psychological conflict and identity ambiguity should not be regarded as identical concepts. Psychological conflict reflects tension among emotional, rational, and moral processes, whereas identity ambiguity emerges when these tensions create uncertainty or instability in the character's understanding and performance of self. In Sirius' case, identity ambiguity is further intensified by social misrecognition, demonstrating that identity reconstruction is influenced by both internal psychological processes and external social judgement.

A. Identity Ambiguity of Harry Potter

The findings reveal that Harry Potter's identity ambiguity is progressively reconstructed throughout the narrative as the dominance of the id gradually shifts toward the ego and finally the superego. Rather than remaining psychologically static, Harry continuously reconstructs his identity in response to new experiences and information. This progression demonstrates Freud's argument that personality develops through the interaction of the three psychic structures rather than through the control of only one component (Bauer, 2015).

The findings demonstrate that Harry's identity ambiguity is closely associated with unresolved grief and childhood trauma. Rather than functioning merely as emotional background, these experiences shape the interaction among the id, ego, and superego throughout the narrative. Harry's instinctive responses toward perceived threats to his parents' memory illustrate how traumatic experiences intensify emotional impulses before rational evaluation becomes possible. In this sense, trauma does not simply explain Harry's behaviour; instead, it influences how the three psychic structures interact during moments of psychological conflict. According to Freud, the id operates according to the pleasure principle, seeking instant emotional satisfaction without considering reality or morality (Bauer, 2015). Therefore, Harry's behavior illustrates how unresolved emotional trauma may temporarily override rational judgment and contribute to identity ambiguity. Harry's psychological conflict becomes more intense after learning that Sirius Black allegedly betrayed his parents.

This psychological conflict is closely related to Harry's unresolved childhood trauma caused by the loss of his parents. Previous studies have also reported that traumatic experiences significantly influence Harry's emotional responses, identity development, and decision-making throughout the series (Ganesh, 2025; Shiong & Wang, 2022). The findings indicate that Harry immediately constructs his identity as a son seeking revenge rather than as an individual searching for the truth. This response demonstrates how emotional assumptions influence his understanding of reality before objective evidence is available. (Burke, 2016) argues that traumatic experiences significantly influence the formation of personal identity because individuals tend to interpret new experiences through unresolved emotional memories. This perspective supports the present findings, which show that Harry's identity ambiguity is initially shaped by grief and emotional pain rather than by logical reasoning.

A significant transformation occurs when Harry listens to Sirius Black and Remus Lupin explain that Peter Pettigrew was the actual betrayer. At this stage, the ego begins to mediate between Harry's emotional impulses and external reality. Instead of maintaining

his previous assumptions, Harry evaluates the new evidence and gradually reconstructs his understanding of Sirius Black and his parents' deaths. This finding is consistent with (Sami, 2023), who explains that Freudian psychoanalysis reveals how literary characters negotiate internal conflicts through the interaction of unconscious desires and conscious reasoning. In Harry's case, identity ambiguity becomes a dynamic process of psychological reconstruction rather than a permanent state of confusion.

These actions can be interpreted as reflecting stronger superego-related moral regulation is demonstrated when he prevents Sirius Black and Remus Lupin from killing Peter Pettigrew and later rescues Sirius from the Dementors. Although he has personal reasons to seek revenge, Harry ultimately chooses justice, compassion, and moral responsibility. These actions illustrate the dominance of the superego, which encourages individuals to prioritize ethical values over instinctive desires. The findings therefore demonstrate that Harry's identity develops from emotional impulsiveness toward moral maturity through the balanced interaction of the id, ego, and superego.

The present findings are consistent with previous psychoanalytic studies that emphasize the importance of Freud's structural model in explaining literary characters' psychological conflicts (Bauer, 2015; Sami, 2023). However, unlike previous studies that mainly focused on personality traits or internal conflict, this study specifically demonstrates that Harry Potter's identity ambiguity develops progressively through the interaction of the id, ego, and superego during different stages of the narrative. This finding highlights identity ambiguity as a process of identity reconstruction rather than merely a psychological condition, thereby providing a broader understanding of character development in literary works.

B. Identity Ambiguity of Sirius Black

The findings suggest that Harry Potter's identity ambiguity is represented through changing interactions among the id, ego, and superego across different narrative situations. Rather than indicating a fixed progression from one psychic structure to another, these interactions reflect how emotional, rational, and moral processes become more or less prominent depending on the psychological demands of each situation. The findings indicate that his identity is simultaneously shaped by psychological processes and social labelling. Publicly, Sirius is constructed as a dangerous criminal, whereas privately he understands himself as an innocent victim seeking justice. This discrepancy demonstrates that identity ambiguity in Sirius operates through the interaction between intrapsychic conflict and social misrecognition. Freud's structural model helps explain Sirius' emotional regulation and decision-making, while the concept of social identity provides additional insight into the gap between external perception and personal identity (Burke, 2016).

At the beginning of the narrative, Sirius' actions are primarily dominated by the id. His escape from Azkaban and determination to confront Peter Pettigrew are motivated by anger, frustration, and a strong desire for revenge after twelve years of wrongful imprisonment. The prolonged experience of imprisonment and injustice may also be understood as a form of psychological trauma that shapes the interaction among Sirius' emotional impulses, reality-oriented judgement, and moral considerations throughout the narrative. Likewise, his aggressive actions toward Ron Weasley in the Shrieking Shack demonstrate instinctive emotional responses that reflect the characteristics of the id (Bauer, 2015). However, these actions should be understood as an expression of accumulated emotional suffering rather than purely criminal behavior.

As the story progresses, Sirius increasingly demonstrates the role of the ego. His decision to secretly watch over Harry while remaining hidden from the authorities illustrates his ability to balance personal desires with reality. Similarly, when explaining his innocence to Harry, Sirius relies on logical reasoning and factual evidence instead of emotional impulses. These findings are consistent with Freud's view that the ego functions as a mediator between instinctive desires and external reality (Bauer, 2015). Furthermore, Sirius' willingness to respect Harry's decision not to kill Pettigrew and his offer to provide Harry with a can be interpreted as reflecting stronger superego-related regulation, which emphasizes responsibility, compassion, and moral commitment.

Overall, Sirius' identity ambiguity develops through the coexistence of multiple identities, including victim, avenger, protector, and parental figure. These findings support (Burke, 2016) who argues that identity is continuously shaped by personal experiences and social perception. Therefore, Sirius' character demonstrates that identity ambiguity is not solely the result of internal psychological conflict but is also influenced by external judgments and changing social realities.

C. Discussion of Freud's Tripartite Theory and Identity Ambiguity

Overall, the findings indicate that Freud's tripartite theory provides a useful framework for interpreting the psychological dynamics underlying the characters' identity-related conflicts. Nevertheless, Freud's structural model should not be regarded as a comprehensive theory of identity itself. Rather, it explains how instinctive impulses, rational mediation, and moral regulation influence behaviour, while identity ambiguity emerges through the interaction between these psychological processes and the characters' changing narrative and social experiences. Therefore, Freud's theory complements, rather than replaces, broader perspectives on identity development. In particular, (Burke, 2016) argues that identity is constructed through continuous interaction between self-perception and social roles, providing an additional perspective for understanding how identity ambiguity develops in the two characters.

The findings are also consistent with previous psychoanalytic studies, which emphasize that literary characters' psychological development can be understood through Freud's structural model of personality (Sami, 2023; Burke, 2016). However, unlike previous studies that mainly examined internal conflict or personality traits, this study specifically highlights identity ambiguity as the result of the dynamic interaction between the id, ego, and superego in two different characters within the same narrative. This contributes to psychoanalytic literary and film criticism by providing a broader understanding of how identity is reconstructed through psychological conflict and moral development. Consequently, the findings may serve as a useful reference for future studies examining identity formation and character development through psychoanalytic approaches in literary works.

Compared with previous psychoanalytic studies on *Harry Potter*, this study offers three main contributions. First, it comparatively examines Harry Potter and Sirius Black to demonstrate that identity ambiguity may arise through different psychological and social configurations within the same narrative. Second, rather than treating identity ambiguity as merely a consequence of internal psychological conflict, this study shows that it develops through the interaction between Freud's psychic structures and, in Sirius Black's case, external social misrecognition. Third, the study interprets identity ambiguity as a dynamic process of identity reconstruction rather than as a fixed psychological condition. These contributions extend previous psychoanalytic studies by providing a more nuanced

understanding of how personality dynamics interact with identity representation in literary and film narratives.

Overall, the present study contributes theoretically by demonstrating that identity ambiguity in Harry Potter and Sirius Black emerges from different configurations of psychological and social processes. Harry's identity ambiguity is primarily generated through internal psychic conflict associated with trauma, grief, and moral negotiation, whereas Sirius Black's identity ambiguity develops through the interaction between internal psychological conflict and external social misrecognition. Accordingly, Freud's tripartite theory is most useful for explaining the psychological dynamics underlying these identity-related conflicts, while the representation of identity ambiguity itself is shaped by both intrapsychic processes and social labelling within the narrative

5. Conclusion

This study examined the identity ambiguity of Harry Potter and Sirius Black in Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban through Sigmund Freud's Tripartite Theory of the psyche, consisting of the id, ego, and superego (Bauer, 2015 ;Albin, 2026). The findings indicate that both characters experience identity ambiguity as a result of continuous psychological conflicts involving instinctive desires, rational judgment, and moral values. Harry Potter's identity ambiguity develops through his internal struggle between revenge, justice, and truth, whereas Sirius Black's ambiguity arises from the contradiction between society's perception of him as a criminal and his true identity as an innocent individual seeking justice.

These findings suggest that identity is continuously reconstructed through psychological conflict and personal development, demonstrating the relevance of Freud's Tripartite Theory in explaining identity ambiguity in literary characters (Burke, 2016). These findings further support previous studies arguing that trauma functions as an important factor in shaping identity development and psychological reconstruction within literary narratives (Ganesh, 2025; Shiong & Wang, 2022).

This study is limited to the analysis of two main characters in Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban using Freud's Tripartite Theory. Therefore, the findings are limited to the context of this literary work and should not be generalized to all literary texts or other psychological perspectives. In addition, this study focuses only on textual analysis and does not compare other psychoanalytic approaches that may provide different interpretations of identity ambiguity.

Based on these limitations, future researchers are encouraged to examine identity ambiguity in other literary works using different psychoanalytic theories or interdisciplinary approaches to obtain broader perspectives on character development and identity formation. Comparative studies involving different literary texts or characters are also recommended to enrich psychoanalytic literary and film criticism. It is expected that the findings of this study will contribute to future research on identity ambiguity and provide a useful reference for the application of Freud's psychoanalytic theory in literary studies.

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