

CHAPTER IV

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of chapter is to answer the research problems which are stated in the first chapter. There are two objectives of research. Therefore, the analysis of the research is presented as follows.

4.1 The forms of focalization employed in Anthony Reynolds' *Ruin*.

4.1.1 Internal Focalization

"Isolde's fear was valid, and Kalista shared it. Viego had a good heart, but he was unpredictable, driven by his whim and ego. I can help guide him, but it is Isolde who brings him balance. She tempered the worst of his arrogance and impulsiveness. With her gone, Kalista feared what would become of Viego, and Camavor. She could imagine him spiraling dangerously out of control, flailing blindly like a drowning man, dragging everything he clung to down with him." (Reynolds, 2022, p. 80)

This passage demonstrates the use of internal focalization through Kalista's perspective. The narration grants readers direct access to Kalista's thoughts, fears, and personal judgments regarding Viego's character and future. Rather than presenting an objective description, the narrator filters information through Kalista's consciousness, allowing readers to perceive events as she understands them. Expressions such as *"Kalista feared"* and *"She could imagine him spiraling dangerously out of control"* reveal psychological processes that are inaccessible to other characters. According to Bal (2009), internal focalization occurs when narrative information is presented through the perception and awareness of a focalizing character. In this case, Kalista functions as the focalizer through whom readers interpret Viego.

The passage also contributes significantly to the portrayal of negative childism. Through Kalista's internal perspective, Viego is repeatedly positioned as emotionally unstable, irrational, and incapable of self-governance. Although Kalista's concerns appear protective, they simultaneously reinforce assumptions that Viego requires constant supervision and control. Young-Bruehl (2012) argues that childism often emerges when younger individuals are perceived as lacking

competence and autonomy, leading adults to justify intervention and domination. Kalista's belief that Viego may lose control without Isolde reflects this prejudicial attitude. Instead of being trusted to develop resilience independently, Viego is viewed as someone whose actions inevitably threaten social order.

Furthermore, the imagery of Viego "dragging everything he clung to down with him" constructs him as a potential danger not only to himself but also to the kingdom of Camavor. Such representation strengthens the narrative perception that his agency should be limited for the greater good. Through internal focalization, readers are encouraged to adopt Kalista's anxieties and concerns, thereby participating in the same perspective that questions Viego's capability. Consequently, the novel employs internal focalization not merely to reveal Kalista's emotional state but also to expose the prejudicial assumptions underlying negative childism. The narrative demonstrates how adult authority figures often interpret younger individuals through a lens of deficiency, instability, and dependence, ultimately denying them full autonomy and trust.

"Kalista watched him go, feeling like she was slowly drowning. 'You made a promise,' she reminded herself, a promise sworn to a dying king. He stood among the pantheon of Ancestors now, watching and judging. Protect Viego. Protect Camavor. 'I'm trying,' she whispered." (Reynolds, 2022, p. 64)

This passage demonstrates the operation of internal focalization through Kalista as the focalizer. According to Bal (1997), internal focalization occurs when events are filtered through the consciousness, thoughts, emotions, and perceptions of a character. Rather than presenting the situation from an objective narrative position, the narrator grants readers direct access to Kalista's inner emotional state. Expressions such as *"feeling like she was slowly drowning"* and *"I'm trying"* reveal her psychological burden and personal struggle regarding her responsibility toward Viego and the kingdom.

The focalization is significant because readers do not encounter Viego directly in this scene. Instead, Viego is represented through Kalista's perspective. Consequently, readers' understanding of Viego is shaped by Kalista's thoughts and concerns rather than by Viego's own voice. Bal argues that focalization influences

the distribution of information within a narrative because readers only perceive what the focalizer perceives. In this case, Kalista's internal perspective positions Viego as someone who constantly requires supervision, protection, and guidance.

From the perspective of Young-Bruehl's theory of childism, this passage reflects an adult-centered assumption regarding Viego's incapability. Although Viego is already the king, he continues to be treated as someone who cannot govern himself independently. The dying king's command to Kalista to "*Protect Viego*" symbolizes a broader social attitude that denies the child's agency and autonomy. Instead of allowing Viego to develop through experience and self-determination, authority figures assume that he must remain under the control of others. Such attitudes correspond to childism because children and young people are perceived as inherently incapable of making responsible decisions.

The internal focalization intensifies this childist representation. Since readers are limited to Kalista's thoughts, they are encouraged to share her anxieties regarding Viego's competence. The narrative does not provide immediate access to Viego's feelings, reasoning, or perspective. As a result, his subjectivity is partially silenced while Kalista's concerns become dominant. This imbalance mirrors the mechanism of childism itself, where adults speak for children and define what is best for them without granting them equal authority to express themselves.

Furthermore, the symbolic phrase "*Protect Viego. Protect Camavor.*" places Viego and the kingdom within the same statement, suggesting that Viego is viewed not merely as a person but as a potential political risk. His existence becomes linked to national stability, increasing the pressure placed upon those responsible for controlling him. Through Kalista's focalization, readers witness how institutional expectations construct Viego as a problem that must be managed rather than as an individual capable of independent growth. This reflects one of the central principles of negative childism identified by Young-Bruehl, namely the tendency to subordinate children's autonomy to the interests of authority figures and social institutions.

Therefore, this passage demonstrates how internal focalization functions as a narrative strategy that reveals the operation of negative childism. By filtering

events through Kalista's consciousness, Reynolds highlights the persistent adult distrust surrounding Viego while simultaneously limiting readers' access to his own perspective. The result is a portrayal of a young individual whose autonomy is overshadowed by the expectations, fears, and control exercised by adults around him. "It should never have come to this. She cursed herself for acting too slowly. She cursed herself for not seeing the assassins earlier, for not shouting out sooner. She cursed herself for not being fast enough, or strong enough, or clever enough to have forestalled this tragedy.

She was lauded for saving the king's life, but she didn't feel like a hero; she felt like a failure. Her spear might have deflected the assassin's blade from its true target, but that deflection had caused the queen's affliction. It haunted her, and she kept going over the assassination attempt in her mind, thinking about what she could have done differently, how she could have better protected Viego and Isolde."* (Reynolds, 2022, p. 61)

This passage demonstrates the use of internal focalization through Kalista as the focalizer. According to Bal (1997), internal focalization occurs when narrative information is filtered through the consciousness of a character, allowing readers to access the character's thoughts, emotions, and interpretations of events. In this excerpt, readers are not presented with an objective account of the assassination attempt; instead, the event is reconstructed through Kalista's feelings of guilt, regret, and self-blame. Expressions such as "*she cursed herself*", "*she felt like a failure*", and "*it haunted her*" reveal her psychological condition and indicate that the narrative is closely aligned with her internal perspective.

The passage is particularly significant because it illustrates how readers are encouraged to understand Viego's situation through Kalista's perception. Although the event directly concerns Viego and Isolde, the narrative does not provide access to Viego's emotions or thoughts. Instead, readers encounter Kalista's interpretation of the tragedy and her belief that she failed in her responsibility to protect the royal family. As Bal argues, focalization determines not only what readers see but also how they interpret narrative events. Consequently, Viego is positioned as an object of concern whose welfare must be secured by others.

From the perspective of Young-Bruehl's theory of negative childism, this passage reveals an important pattern of adult authority and protection. Throughout the novel, Kalista repeatedly assumes responsibility for Viego's safety and well-being. Although her intentions are benevolent, the narrative consistently constructs Viego as someone who requires protection and supervision. Such representation reflects a childist assumption that younger individuals lack the capacity to manage their own circumstances and therefore depend on more experienced authority figures. Furthermore, the phrase *"how she could have better protected Viego and Isolde"* emphasizes Kalista's role as guardian and caretaker. Her concern extends beyond physical safety and reflects a broader belief that Viego's future depends on external guidance. Within Young-Bruehl's framework, this tendency can be understood as a form of paternalistic control in which adults define what is best for younger individuals while limiting their autonomy. Although the narrative does not portray overt abuse, it nevertheless reinforces a hierarchy in which authority remains concentrated in the hands of older and more experienced figures.

The use of internal focalization strengthens this representation by centering Kalista's emotional response rather than Viego's own experience. Readers are invited to sympathize with Kalista's burden and responsibility, which simultaneously marginalizes Viego's subjectivity. His perspective remains absent, and his role within the narrative becomes that of a vulnerable individual who must be protected by others. This narrative structure mirrors the operation of childism itself, where adults often speak on behalf of children rather than allowing children to articulate their own experiences.

Therefore, this passage demonstrates how internal focalization functions as a narrative strategy that reinforces the portrayal of negative childism. Through Kalista's thoughts and emotions, readers are encouraged to perceive Viego as dependent upon adult guidance and protection. The absence of Viego's own perspective highlights the unequal distribution of narrative authority and reflects broader social assumptions regarding youth, competence, and autonomy.

**"Viego's hollow smile faded. 'Without her, I'm not sure I can be either,' he whispered. 'I cannot live without her, Kalista. And I don't think I would want to.'*

Kalista stared at Viego with a mix of horror and pity. He had always been somewhat obsessive, but there was a darkness in him that she had not seen before. This is just his grief talking, she told herself. He'll recover.

But what if he didn't?" (Reynolds, 2022, p. 78)*

This excerpt also exemplifies internal focalization, as the narrative presents Viego through Kalista's observations, judgments, and internal reflections. According to Bal (1997), internal focalization occurs when narrative information is restricted to what a particular character perceives, thinks, or feels. In this scene, readers are granted access to Kalista's emotional and cognitive response to Viego's statement regarding Isolde. The phrases "*a mix of horror and pity*", "*she told herself*", and "*what if he didn't?*" clearly indicate that the narrative is filtered through Kalista's consciousness.

Although Viego speaks directly in the passage, readers do not gain access to his internal thoughts beyond his verbal expression of grief. Instead, the narrative immediately shifts toward Kalista's interpretation of his behavior. She characterizes him as "*obsessive*" and perceives a "*darkness*" within him. Consequently, readers' understanding of Viego becomes mediated through Kalista's perspective rather than through his own subjective experience. This narrative technique demonstrates Bal's argument that focalization determines whose perception dominates the construction of meaning.

From the perspective of negative childism, Kalista's reaction reveals assumptions about Viego's emotional incapacity and instability. Rather than interpreting his grief as a natural response to loss, she immediately associates it with irrationality, obsession, and potential danger. Young-Bruehl argues that childism often involves viewing younger individuals as emotionally immature and incapable of exercising appropriate judgment. Such assumptions frequently justify increased control and surveillance by authority figures.

The phrase "*He had always been somewhat obsessive*" is particularly important because it suggests that Kalista's concern is not limited to the present moment. Instead, she interprets Viego's grief through a pre-existing perception of his character. This perspective reinforces the notion that Viego requires monitoring and guidance because he cannot be trusted to regulate himself. In this way, the

narrative reflects one of the central mechanisms of childism: the tendency to define young individuals according to perceived deficiencies rather than recognizing their capacity for independent agency.

Moreover, Kalista's internal question, "*But what if he didn't?*", reveals her fear that Viego may never recover from his grief. This fear positions her as a responsible observer evaluating Viego's emotional condition. The relationship between focalizer and focalized character therefore reflects a hierarchy of authority in which Kalista assumes the role of rational guardian while Viego becomes the object of concern and assessment.

The use of internal focalization significantly contributes to this dynamic because readers are encouraged to trust Kalista's interpretation. Since the narrative provides limited access to Viego's inner world, her perspective becomes the dominant framework through which his behavior is understood. As a result, Viego's grief is not simply presented as personal suffering but as evidence supporting concerns about his emotional instability. This narrative imbalance mirrors the broader logic of childism, in which adults claim interpretive authority over children's experiences and define what those experiences mean.

Therefore, this passage demonstrates how internal focalization contributes to the portrayal of negative childism in *Ruin*. By privileging Kalista's perspective and limiting access to Viego's subjectivity, the narrative reinforces perceptions of Viego as emotionally vulnerable, dependent, and in need of supervision. Through Bal's theory of focalization, it becomes evident that narrative perspective plays a crucial role in shaping readers' understanding of power relations between younger and older characters within the novel.

"Kalista silently applauded. He knew how to manipulate a crowd, and she didn't think that a bad thing, not in the slightest. It was a necessary trait in a successful monarch." (Reynolds, 2022, p. 44)

This excerpt demonstrates the use of internal focalization through Kalista as the focalizer. According to Bal (1997), internal focalization occurs when narrative events are filtered through the perceptions, judgments, and consciousness of a character. In this passage, the narrator does not simply describe Viego's public

speech objectively. Instead, readers receive information through Kalista's personal interpretation of the event.

The phrase "*Kalista silently applauded*" immediately reveals an internal reaction rather than an observable action. Similarly, the statement "*He knew how to manipulate a crowd*" reflects Kalista's judgment regarding Viego's abilities as a public speaker. Readers cannot independently verify whether Viego is truly manipulating the audience; they only know that Kalista perceives his behavior in that way. This subjective evaluation is a key characteristic of internal focalization because information is mediated through a character's mental perspective.

Furthermore, Kalista's assessment that such manipulation is "*a necessary trait in a successful monarch*" provides insight into her personal values and political beliefs. The narrative moment therefore serves two functions simultaneously. First, it provides information about Viego's public performance. Second, it reveals Kalista's worldview regarding leadership and governance. Bal argues that focalization not only determines what is seen but also shapes how events are interpreted. In this case, readers are encouraged to evaluate Viego's actions through Kalista's political understanding.

The passage illustrates how internal focalization allows readers to access the focalizer's thoughts rather than merely observing external actions. Although Viego remains the central figure in the scene, the narrative emphasis rests on Kalista's interpretation of his behavior. As a result, the event becomes a reflection of her perception rather than a neutral description of reality.

Therefore, this passage exemplifies internal focalization because the narrative filters the event through Kalista's subjective judgment, allowing readers to experience the scene from her perspective and understand her interpretation of Viego's conduct.

"How long has our noble questing culture been corrupted? How long did it take for our quests to become little more than convenient and transparent excuses to plunder and raid? To kill, claim fertile lands, and steal from our neighbors?"

"At her most generous, Kalista guessed it had taken a handful of generations for Camor's questing ideal to be tainted irrevocably. At her

most cynical, she wondered if it had started with Camor himself." (Reynolds, 2022, p. 45)

This passage clearly illustrates internal focalization because the narrative presents Kalista's private reflections regarding Camavor's cultural traditions. According to Bal (1997), internal focalization occurs when the narrative grants readers direct access to a character's internal thought process. In this excerpt, the questions regarding corruption, conquest, and violence emerge from Kalista's own contemplation rather than from an external narrator.

The series of rhetorical questions demonstrates the operation of Kalista's consciousness. These questions are not directed toward another character but represent her internal evaluation of Camavor's historical practices. Through this technique, readers gain insight into her skepticism toward the kingdom's celebrated questing culture. The narrative thus moves beyond observable events and enters the realm of personal thought, which is one of the defining features of internal focalization.

The statement "*Kalista guessed*" further confirms the focalized nature of the passage. Rather than presenting historical facts, the narrator communicates Kalista's speculation and interpretation. Likewise, the phrase "*she wondered*" explicitly signals an internal mental process. Readers encounter history as it is perceived and questioned by Kalista, not as an objective reality.

This focalization also contributes to characterization. Kalista emerges as a reflective and critical thinker who is willing to challenge dominant cultural narratives. Instead of unquestioningly accepting the kingdom's ideology, she interrogates the morality of conquest and expansion. Through internal focalization, readers are able to understand the complexity of her political and ethical concerns.

Therefore, this passage demonstrates internal focalization because it grants direct access to Kalista's thoughts, doubts, and interpretations. The narrative perspective allows readers to experience her critical reflection on Camavor's history and cultural values.

"Nevertheless, Kalista was also deeply pragmatic. She knew today had nothing to do with claiming Mikael's Chalice. Who beyond the priests had even heard of that artifact before this invasion was announced? It had little to do with claiming Santoras, either, though its wealth was a welcome

addition to Camavor's coffers—even if peaceful trade alliances would be more lucrative in the long run." (Reynolds, 2022, p. 46)

This excerpt is another example of internal focalization because the narrative presents Kalista's personal interpretation of political events. According to Bal (1997), internal focalization occurs when narrative information is filtered through a character's consciousness, allowing readers to access thoughts, assumptions, and evaluations that are unavailable through simple observation. The phrase "*Kalista was also deeply pragmatic*" introduces her perspective as the foundation of the passage. The subsequent statements reveal her reasoning process regarding the invasion of Santoras. Rather than accepting official explanations, Kalista questions the legitimacy of the kingdom's motives. Her rhetorical question, "*Who beyond the priests had even heard of that artifact before this invasion was announced?*", reflects skepticism and analytical thinking.

This passage demonstrates that readers receive information not from an omniscient narrator but from Kalista's interpretation of events. The narrative does not objectively confirm whether the invasion was truly motivated by political or economic interests. Instead, it presents Kalista's belief that the official justification serves as a pretext for broader ambitions. Consequently, the focalization shapes how readers understand the political situation.

Moreover, the statement regarding trade alliances being "*more lucrative in the long run*" further reveals Kalista's strategic mindset. Through internal focalization, readers gain access to her practical assessment of state affairs. This perspective contributes significantly to her characterization as a military leader who values rational planning and long-term stability.

Bal emphasizes that focalization determines the relationship between perception and narration. In this passage, the narrative does not merely recount events but presents those events as filtered through Kalista's reasoning. The result is a highly subjective representation that allows readers to understand both the political context and the focalizer's intellectual perspective.

Therefore, this excerpt exemplifies internal focalization because it privileges Kalista's thoughts and judgments, enabling readers to experience the

political situation through her personal interpretation rather than through an objective narrative voice.

Based on the analysis of the five data above, it can be concluded that internal focalization is the dominant narrative technique employed in *Ruination* through the character of Kalista. According to Mieke Bal (1997), internal focalization occurs when events, characters, and situations are presented through the perceptions, thoughts, feelings, and judgments of a particular character. In the selected passages, readers consistently gain access to Kalista's subjective experiences, including her physical sensations, emotional responses, personal evaluations, and reflections on political and social issues.

Furthermore, internal focalization plays an important role in character development. Through access to Kalista's inner thoughts, readers recognize her as a responsible, reflective, and politically conscious character. Her observations and interpretations shape the reader's understanding of other characters, particularly Viego, whose actions are frequently viewed through her perspective. As a result, the narrative establishes a close relationship between the reader and Kalista, encouraging empathy and deeper engagement with her experiences.

From a narratological perspective, the use of internal focalization also contributes to the thematic depth of the novel. By presenting political conflicts, personal responsibilities, and social concerns through Kalista's subjective viewpoint, the narrative highlights the complexity of decision-making and leadership within Camavor. Therefore, internal focalization not only functions as a storytelling technique but also serves as a means of revealing character psychology and shaping the reader's interpretation of the novel's central events.

4.1.2 External narrator

"The king's research had been moved into the drawing room next to the royal bedchamber, laid out across desks and side tables. Viego stood in the doorway, looking back and forth between his sleeping wife, in the royal bedchamber, and Kalista and Nunyo, who were studying the various accounts, maps, diaries, and histories spread out before them." (*Ruination*, 2022, p. 84)

This excerpt demonstrates the use of **external focalization** because the narrator only reports what can be observed from the outside without providing direct access to Viego's inner thoughts or emotions. According to Mieke Bal (1997), external focalization occurs when the focalized object is presented through observable actions and physical descriptions rather than through a character's internal consciousness. In this passage, readers are informed that Viego is standing in the doorway and looking alternately toward his unconscious wife and toward Kalista and Nunyo, who are examining documents related to the Blessed Isles. However, the narrator does not explicitly reveal what Viego is thinking or feeling at that moment.

The narrative perspective is limited to visible actions and spatial positioning. Readers can see that Viego's attention is divided between two important concerns: Isolde's deteriorating condition and the ongoing search for information that may save her life. The act of "looking back and forth" suggests hesitation, uncertainty, and emotional conflict, yet these interpretations must be inferred by readers rather than directly stated by the narrator. This characteristic aligns with Bal's concept of external focalization, where psychological meaning is conveyed indirectly through behavior and observation.

Furthermore, the arrangement of the scene creates a visual contrast between the private and public dimensions of Viego's struggle. On one side lies Isolde, representing his personal attachment and emotional suffering. On the other side are the maps, diaries, and historical records that symbolize his desperate search for a solution. The narrator does not explain which side Viego prioritizes, nor does the text provide direct insight into his emotional state. Instead, readers are invited to interpret the significance of his movements and gaze. This narrative restraint strengthens the external focalization because the story remains outside Viego's consciousness.

The passage also illustrates how external focalization can generate dramatic tension. Since readers do not know exactly what Viego is thinking, his motivations remain partially concealed. The absence of internal commentary encourages readers to focus on his observable behavior and the symbolic meaning of the setting. The

drawing room becomes a space where personal grief and political responsibility intersect, while Viego's silent presence between these two spheres highlights the difficult choices he faces.

From a narratological perspective, this external focalization creates a degree of narrative distance between the reader and the character. Unlike internal focalization, which allows direct access to a character's thoughts and emotions, external focalization limits information to what can be externally perceived. As a result, readers must construct meaning from gestures, actions, and contextual clues. In this scene, Viego's repeated glances toward both Isolde and the research materials suggest anxiety and determination, but these emotional states are never explicitly articulated. Therefore, the passage serves as a clear example of external focalization, where characterization is achieved through observation rather than psychological exposition.

"Kalista sprinted across the deck of the sleek Camavoran ship, spear in hand. The vessel was named the Daggerhawk, and Kalista ran straight for its port railing, as if to launch herself over the side—but as she stepped up onto the ornate carved edge, she twisted, pushing off hard to reverse her direction. She hurled her spear mid-leap, and it sliced across the aftercastle deck to impale a hanging sack of sand ballast. She landed lightly, before straightening and rolling her shoulders. As she moved to retrieve her weapon from the wildly spinning target, someone nearby clapped their hands in applause." (Ruin, 2022, p. 104)

This passage exemplifies external focalization because the narrator presents the event exclusively through observable actions and physical descriptions without revealing Kalista's inner thoughts, emotions, or motivations. According to Bal (1997), external focalization occurs when the narrative perspective remains outside the consciousness of the character, limiting the information available to what can be perceived from an external viewpoint. In this scene, readers witness Kalista's movements and actions in great detail, yet they are given no direct access to her mental state. The narration functions much like a camera recording events from the outside, emphasizing visible behavior rather than subjective experience.

The passage begins with a dynamic description of Kalista sprinting across the deck of the *Daggerhawk* while carrying her spear. The narrator carefully records each stage of her movement, from running toward the railing to abruptly changing direction and launching her weapon at a target. These descriptions create a vivid visual sequence that highlights her agility, precision, and martial expertise. However, despite the detailed portrayal of her actions, the narrative does not disclose what she is thinking while performing the exercise. Readers can observe her skill, but they cannot directly access her intentions, emotions, or personal reflections. This limitation of information is a key characteristic of external focalization.

Furthermore, the narrative constructs Kalista's characterization indirectly through action rather than introspection. The precision of her spear throw and the confidence displayed in her movements suggest that she is a highly disciplined warrior. Her ability to execute a complex maneuver successfully demonstrates extensive training and physical mastery. Nevertheless, these qualities are inferred by readers from observable behavior rather than explicitly explained by the narrator. The narrative avoids psychological exposition and instead allows actions to speak for themselves. Consequently, Kalista's competence emerges through performance rather than internal narration.

Another important feature of external focalization in this passage is the absence of emotional commentary. After completing the maneuver, Kalista retrieves her weapon while someone nearby applauds her performance. Although this reaction indicates admiration from another character, the narrator does not reveal how Kalista responds emotionally. Readers do not know whether she feels pride, satisfaction, indifference, or embarrassment. Her internal reaction remains inaccessible because the narration continues to focus solely on externally observable details. This reinforces the narrative distance characteristic of external focalization.

From a narratological perspective, the scene resembles a cinematic action sequence. The narrator emphasizes movement, physical space, and visual detail while withholding psychological information. Bal (1997) argues that external

focalization often encourages readers to interpret characters through their behavior rather than through direct access to their consciousness. This is precisely what occurs in this passage. Readers develop an understanding of Kalista's character based on her actions, posture, and demonstrated abilities rather than through explicit statements about her personality.

Moreover, the use of external focalization contributes to the heroic image of Kalista within the narrative. By focusing on her physical accomplishments and martial prowess, the passage reinforces her role as one of Camavor's most capable warriors. At the same time, the lack of psychological access creates a degree of distance between the reader and the character, maintaining an element of mystery regarding her personal thoughts and feelings. As a result, the narrative balances admiration for her abilities with a certain emotional restraint.

Therefore, this excerpt serves as a clear example of external focalization in *Ruination*. The narrator restricts information to visible actions and external observations while withholding access to Kalista's internal consciousness. Through this technique, Reynolds constructs characterization indirectly and allows readers to interpret Kalista's qualities through her behavior. The passage demonstrates how external focalization can effectively reveal a character's abilities and social role while maintaining narrative distance and objectivity.

"Kalista sprinted across the deck of the sleek Camavoran ship, spear in hand. The vessel was named the Daggerhawk, and Kalista ran straight for its port railing, as if to launch herself over the side—but as she stepped up onto the ornate carved edge, she twisted, pushing off hard to reverse her direction. She hurled her spear midleap, and it sliced across the aftercastle deck to impale a hanging sack of sand ballast. She landed lightly, before straightening and rolling her shoulders. As she moved to retrieve her weapon from the wildly spinning target, someone nearby clapped their hands in applause." (*Ruination*, 2022, p. 104)

This passage is an example of external focalization because the narrator limits the description to Kalista's observable movements and physical actions. The narrative records what she does running across the deck, throwing her spear,

landing gracefully, and retrieving her weapon but does not reveal her internal thoughts, feelings, or motivations during the training exercise. Readers only witness her actions from an external perspective, much like spectators observing a performance.

According to Mieke Bal (1997), external focalization occurs when the focalized object is presented without access to the character's inner consciousness. In this scene, the narrator functions as an outside observer who reports visible behavior without interpreting Kalista's mental state. Although the scene highlights Kalista's extraordinary martial abilities and discipline, readers are not told whether she feels confident, frustrated, determined, or distracted. Any interpretation regarding her emotional condition must be inferred from her actions rather than directly provided by the narrative.

The detailed description of Kalista's movements creates a cinematic effect that emphasizes her physical competence and military training. By focusing on bodily actions instead of psychological reflection, the narrative reinforces the impression of Kalista as a skilled warrior whose abilities can be objectively witnessed. The applause at the end of the passage further supports the external perspective because it presents a visible reaction from another character rather than revealing Kalista's personal response to her performance.

Therefore, this passage demonstrates external focalization because the narrative presents events through observable actions and external details while withholding direct access to Kalista's thoughts and emotions. The reader's understanding of the scene is constructed through behavioral observation rather than psychological insight.

"Viego stood in the doorway, looking back and forth between his sleeping wife, in the royal bedchamber, and Kalista and Nunyo, who were studying the various accounts, maps, diaries, and histories spread out before them." (Ruinaton, 2022, p. 84)

This excerpt illustrates external focalization because the narrator only describes Viego's visible behavior without entering his consciousness. The passage portrays him standing in the doorway and directing his gaze alternately toward

Isolde and the research materials being examined by Kalista and Nunyo. However, the narrative does not explicitly reveal what Viego is thinking, feeling, or intending at that moment. From the perspective of Mieke Bal's theory of focalization, external focalization occurs when information is restricted to what can be observed externally, preventing readers from directly accessing a character's inner world (Bal, 1997). In this scene, the narrator provides only outward details, leaving readers to infer Viego's emotional condition. His repeated glances between his unconscious wife and the ongoing investigation may suggest concern, desperation, uncertainty, or hope, but these possibilities remain interpretations rather than confirmed psychological facts.

The narrative distance created by external focalization encourages readers to analyze Viego's behavior independently. Instead of explaining his emotions, the text allows his physical actions to communicate the tension of the situation. The contrast between Isolde's condition and the extensive research materials surrounding Kalista and Nunyo visually conveys the urgency of finding a solution without explicitly stating Viego's feelings. As a result, the scene becomes more objective and observational in nature.

Furthermore, the absence of direct psychological commentary enhances suspense because readers cannot fully determine what Viego believes or plans. They can only observe his behavior and infer meaning from the context. This narrative strategy reflects one of the primary functions of external focalization: presenting characters from the outside while limiting psychological access.

Therefore, this passage exemplifies external focalization because the narrator records only Viego's observable actions and surroundings, withholding direct insight into his thoughts and emotions.

"The vessel was named the Daggerhawk, and Kalista ran straight for its port railing, as if to launch herself over the side—but as she stepped up onto the ornate carved edge, she twisted, pushing off hard to reverse her direction. She hurled her spear midleap, and it sliced across the aftercastle deck to impale a hanging sack of sand ballast. She landed lightly, before straightening and rolling her shoulders. As she moved to retrieve her

weapon from the wildly spinning target, someone nearby clapped their hands in applause.” (Ruinaton, 2022, p. 104)

This passage demonstrates external focalization because the narrator focuses exclusively on Kalista’s observable actions and physical performance. The description details her movements as she runs across the deck, changes direction in mid-motion, throws her spear with remarkable precision, and retrieves it after striking the target. The narrative provides no access to Kalista’s inner thoughts, emotions, or motivations. Instead, readers are positioned as spectators who witness her actions from the outside.

According to Mieke Bal (1997), external focalization occurs when the focalized character is observed externally and the narrative does not enter that character’s consciousness. In this excerpt, the narrator reports only what can be seen physically. The sequence of movements emphasizes Kalista’s discipline, athleticism, and mastery of combat skills, yet readers are not informed whether she enjoys the exercise, feels pressure from her mission, or is distracted by personal concerns. Any interpretation regarding her emotional state must be inferred from her actions rather than explicitly stated by the narrator.

The detailed depiction of motion creates a visual and cinematic effect, allowing readers to appreciate Kalista’s capabilities through performance rather than psychological explanation. The applause from another character serves as an external confirmation of her skill, further reinforcing the objective nature of the narration. Because the narrative remains confined to observable behavior and excludes direct mental access, this passage clearly represents external focalization.

The analysis of external focalization in *Ruinaton* demonstrates that the narrator frequently presents characters through their observable actions, gestures, and interactions without revealing their internal thoughts or emotions. In the selected data, characters such as Viego and Kalista are portrayed from an external perspective, requiring readers to interpret their psychological states through visible behavior rather than direct narrative explanation.

Following Mieke Bal’s theory, external focalization creates a narrative distance between the reader and the focalized character. This distance encourages

readers to actively construct meaning from actions, dialogue, and situational context. Rather than providing explicit access to a character's consciousness, the narrator functions as an observer who records events objectively. As a result, the narrative often resembles a visual observation of events, allowing readers to draw their own conclusions about the characters' emotions and motivations.

Furthermore, external focalization contributes to the development of suspense and interpretive engagement within the novel. By withholding direct psychological information, the narrative invites readers to analyze characters based on their behavior and interactions with others. This technique is particularly effective in scenes involving Viego and Kalista, where visible actions often communicate tension, responsibility, determination, or uncertainty without direct exposition.

Therefore, external focalization in *Ruination* serves as an important narrative strategy that shapes readers' understanding of characters through observation rather than introspection. Through this technique, Anthony Reynolds creates a more objective narrative perspective while encouraging readers to participate actively in interpreting the meaning behind characters' actions and experiences.

4.2 Focalization contributes to the portrayal of negative childism in *RuinationBoys*

4.2.1 Narcissistic Childism

According to Young-Bruehl (2012), narcissistic childism occurs when adults perceive children not as autonomous individuals but as extensions of themselves or as instruments for fulfilling adult expectations, ambitions, and interests. In this form of childism, children's identities, desires, and capacities for self-determination are often overshadowed by adult-centered concerns. Adults prioritize their own goals and values, expecting children to conform to predetermined roles that support familial, social, or political objectives. As a result, children's autonomy is restricted, and their individuality is frequently ignored or suppressed.

"Promise me," he croaked, burning with a desperate fire. "The boy does not have the temperament to rule. I blame myself, but it is you who must bear the weight, granddaughter. Promise me you will guide him. Counsel him. Control him, if needed. Protect Camavor. That is now your duty."
(*Ruin*, 2022, Prologue)

This passage represents narcissistic childism because it demonstrates how adult authority defines Viego's identity, abilities, and future before he is given the opportunity to establish himself as an independent individual. The dying king's statement, *"The boy does not have the temperament to rule,"* functions as an authoritative judgment that fixes Viego's character according to adult perceptions rather than allowing his identity to develop naturally through experience. Instead of recognizing that maturity is a process requiring time, guidance, and personal growth, the grandfather immediately labels Viego as fundamentally unsuitable for kingship. This premature evaluation reflects an adult-centered assumption that adults possess the authority to determine a child's potential and limitations.

According to Young-Bruehl (2012), narcissistic childism occurs when adults fail to recognize children as autonomous individuals and instead impose adult expectations, fears, and desires upon them. Rather than acknowledging children's capacity for development, adults interpret them according to standards that serve adult interests. In this passage, the dying king's primary concern is not Viego's personal growth or emotional well-being but the stability and survival of Camavor. His request to Kalista reveals that Viego is viewed primarily as a political responsibility whose value depends upon his ability to fulfill the expectations associated with the throne. Consequently, Viego's individuality is overshadowed by adult concerns regarding political succession and the future of the kingdom.

The series of imperative verbs—*"guide him," "counsel him,"* and especially *"control him, if needed"*—further reinforces the unequal relationship between adults and children that Young-Bruehl identifies as a defining feature of childism. These commands establish a hierarchical power structure in which adults are granted complete authority over the child's decisions and behavior. While guidance and counsel may suggest supportive forms of supervision, the instruction to

"control him" explicitly authorizes intervention whenever adults believe Viego's actions conflict with their expectations. This language assumes that adult judgment is inherently superior to the child's own judgment and therefore legitimizes restricting his autonomy for what adults perceive to be the greater good.

Moreover, the passage illustrates how narcissistic childism transforms children into instruments of adult objectives rather than recognizing them as individuals with independent agency. The dying king transfers responsibility for Viego's future to Kalista by declaring, *"you must bear the weight."* In doing so, Viego effectively becomes an object to be managed rather than a subject capable of directing his own development. The focus shifts away from empowering Viego to become a competent ruler and instead emphasizes the responsibility of adults to shape, supervise, and, when necessary, control him. This reflects Young-Bruehl's argument that narcissistic childism frequently positions children as extensions of adult responsibilities and ambitions instead of respecting their capacity for self-determination.

Furthermore, the command *"Protect Camavor"* demonstrates that the ultimate priority is the preservation of the kingdom rather than the development of the child. Viego's identity is constructed in relation to his political function instead of his individuality. His worth is measured by whether he can secure the future of Camavor, and because the grandfather doubts his ability to do so independently, authority is immediately delegated to another adult. Such reasoning exemplifies narcissistic childism because adult political interests become more significant than the child's right to develop confidence, competence, and autonomy through his own experiences.

From the perspective of internal focalization, this passage is also significant because readers encounter the dying king's command through Kalista's perspective, making it the central principle that shapes her subsequent perceptions of Viego. Throughout the novel, Kalista repeatedly interprets Viego's behavior according to this inherited belief that he requires supervision and control. As a result, the narrative demonstrates how adult assumptions about a child's inadequacy continue to influence later interactions, reinforcing the unequal power relationship between

adults and children. Internal focalization therefore enables readers to observe not only the initial expression of narcissistic childism but also the way this prejudice becomes internalized and reproduced by another adult character.

Overall, this passage reveals that narcissistic childism is not expressed through overt hostility toward Viego but through an apparently protective discourse that nevertheless denies his autonomy. Although the dying king's intentions appear motivated by concern for both his grandson and the kingdom, his words ultimately establish an adult-centered framework in which Viego's identity, abilities, and future are defined by others rather than by himself. In accordance with Young-Bruehl's (2012) theory, the passage demonstrates how adult authority can suppress children's individuality by assuming that adults possess both the right and the responsibility to determine what children should become.

"Protect Viego. Protect Camavor." (Ruin, 2022, p. 64)

This passage reflects narcissistic childism because it portrays Viego as an object of adult responsibility rather than an autonomous individual capable of shaping his own future. Although the command appears to express concern for Viego's safety, its repeated use throughout Kalista's reflections establishes an adult-centered belief that his life and decisions must remain under continuous supervision. Rather than encouraging Viego to develop independence as the future king, the instruction reinforces the assumption that his role is to be managed by adults who are believed to possess greater wisdom and authority.

According to Young-Bruehl (2012), narcissistic childism occurs when adults deny children's autonomy by assuming responsibility for directing their lives according to adult expectations and interests. In this passage, the command does not encourage Kalista to help Viego cultivate his own judgment or leadership abilities. Instead, she is entrusted with the responsibility of protecting and overseeing him. This expectation reflects an unequal power relationship in which adults are positioned as decision-makers while the child remains dependent upon their guidance and control. Consequently, Viego's opportunities to exercise agency are limited because adults assume that they know what is best for him.

The parallel construction of the command, "*Protect Viego. Protect Camavor,*" also carries symbolic significance. By placing Viego alongside the kingdom in identical grammatical structures, the narrative implicitly links his personal existence to the political stability of Camavor. Viego is therefore represented less as an individual with his own aspirations and emotions than as a political asset whose value depends upon his importance to the state. His identity becomes inseparable from the expectations placed upon him as the future ruler, and his personal development is subordinated to the broader interests of the kingdom.

Furthermore, the repetition of this command throughout the narrative demonstrates how adult assumptions become internalized by Kalista. Rather than questioning whether Viego should be allowed greater independence, she repeatedly measures her own success according to her ability to fulfill the dying king's instruction. This internalization illustrates how narcissistic childism extends beyond individual acts of control and becomes embedded within adult perceptions of childhood. The narrative suggests that Viego's dependence is continually reproduced because those around him have accepted the belief that his autonomy must remain secondary to adult responsibility.

From the perspective of internal focalization, readers experience this command through Kalista's consciousness, allowing them to understand how the dying king's words continue to shape her perception of Viego. The narrative therefore reveals not only the existence of narcissistic childism but also the psychological process through which adult authority is perpetuated across generations. Although Kalista genuinely believes she is acting in Viego's best interests, her perspective simultaneously reinforces the unequal power structure identified by Young-Bruehl (2012), in which adult protection becomes a justification for limiting children's independence and agency.

"Isolde's fear was valid, and Kalista shared it. Viego had a good heart, but he was unpredictable, driven by his whim and ego. I can help guide him, but it is Isolde who brings him balance." (Ruinaton, 2022, p. 80)

This passage demonstrates narcissistic childism because Viego is evaluated primarily through adult judgments that emphasize his perceived weaknesses rather

than his potential for growth. Kalista acknowledges that Viego possesses "*a good heart*," yet this positive assessment is immediately overshadowed by descriptions of him as "*unpredictable*" and "*driven by his whim and ego*." The narrative therefore frames Viego's identity according to adult interpretations of his personality instead of allowing his own actions and experiences to define who he is. Such evaluations reinforce the assumption that adults possess the authority to determine the child's character and developmental needs.

Young-Bruehl (2012) explains that narcissistic childism emerges when adults construct children's identities according to adult expectations rather than recognizing their individuality and capacity for self-development. In this passage, Kalista does not consider that Viego may gradually mature through experience or learn from his mistakes. Instead, she concludes that his personality requires external correction, declaring, "*I can help guide him, but it is Isolde who brings him balance*." This statement positions adult intervention as the primary mechanism through which Viego can function successfully, implying that he is incapable of achieving emotional or political maturity on his own.

The passage also illustrates how adult perceptions become a form of control over children's autonomy. Rather than encouraging Viego to make independent decisions and develop leadership through experience, Kalista and Isolde assume responsibility for regulating his behavior. Their role extends beyond offering advice; they become the individuals expected to compensate for what they perceive as his deficiencies. Consequently, Viego's opportunities to exercise independent judgment are diminished because adults consistently interpret his actions through a framework of inadequacy and dependence.

Moreover, this passage reflects Young-Bruehl's argument that narcissistic childism transforms children into extensions of adult responsibility. Kalista's confidence that she can "*guide*" Viego and Isolde can "*bring him balance*" suggests that his development depends primarily upon adult management rather than his own agency. Instead of recognizing him as an autonomous individual capable of emotional growth, the adults surrounding him assume responsibility for shaping his identity according to their understanding of what a successful ruler should become.

Internal focalization further strengthens this portrayal because readers access these judgments through Kalista's internal perspective. The narrative does not initially present Viego's own understanding of himself but instead filters his character through the thoughts of an adult who sincerely believes she is acting for his benefit. As a result, readers witness how adult assumptions about children's inadequacy become normalized within the narrative. Although Kalista's intentions are protective, her perspective nevertheless reinforces the unequal power relationship identified by Young-Bruehl (2012), demonstrating how narcissistic childism can operate through guidance and care as effectively as through explicit domination.

"The changes the queen spoke of in Viego disturbed her, and she cursed herself for not having seen them earlier. She felt the weight of responsibility pushing down on her." (Ruin, 2022, p. 81)

This passage demonstrates narcissistic childism by portraying Kalista as assuming responsibility for monitoring and directing Viego's personal development. Her immediate response is not to recognize Viego's experiences as part of his own emotional growth but to blame herself for failing to supervise him adequately. Rather than viewing Viego as an individual capable of navigating his own challenges, Kalista interprets his behavioral changes as evidence of insufficient adult oversight. Consequently, his development becomes an object of adult responsibility instead of a process shaped by his own agency.

According to Young-Bruehl (2012), narcissistic childism occurs when adults perceive children as extensions of their own responsibilities, expectations, or identities rather than as autonomous individuals. This perspective encourages adults to assume that children's successes and failures are primarily the result of adult intervention. Kalista's feeling of guilt reflects this psychological pattern. She believes that Viego's condition should have been anticipated and managed through her guidance, implying that his development depends upon continuous adult supervision. Such an assumption diminishes Viego's capacity to act independently because responsibility for his choices is transferred to the adults surrounding him.

Furthermore, the passage reinforces the unequal power relationship between adults and children that characterizes childism. Kalista's self-reproach demonstrates how deeply she has internalized the dying king's command to guide and protect Viego. Instead of questioning whether Viego should be allowed to confront his own experiences and learn from them, she interprets every change in his behavior through the lens of adult responsibility. As a result, Viego's individuality is overshadowed by the expectation that adults must constantly regulate his emotional and political development.

This finding is consistent with Young-Bruehl's (2012) argument that narcissistic childism frequently disguises itself as care and responsibility. Adult intervention is presented as necessary for the child's well-being, yet such intervention simultaneously restricts opportunities for independence and self-determination. Similarly, scholars in childhood studies argue that paternalistic attitudes often silence children's agency because adults assume superior knowledge of what children need, thereby legitimizing unequal power relations (James & Prout, 2015; Spyrou, 2018). Through Kalista's internal reflections, *Ruination* illustrates how protective intentions may unintentionally reproduce adult-centered assumptions that marginalize children's capacity for autonomous development.

From the perspective of internal focalization, this passage is particularly significant because readers experience Kalista's feelings of responsibility directly through her consciousness. The narrative does not present an objective assessment of Viego's condition but instead filters it through Kalista's internal beliefs, allowing readers to observe how adult assumptions shape the interpretation of the child's behavior. Internal focalization therefore exposes the psychological mechanism through which narcissistic childism operates, demonstrating that adult prejudice against children can emerge not only through domination but also through seemingly benevolent forms of care and protection.

The data collectively demonstrate that narcissistic childism in *Ruination* is constructed through adult assumptions that deny Viego's autonomy and position him as an object of guidance, supervision, and political responsibility. Throughout the narrative, adult characters repeatedly define his identity, evaluate his abilities,

and determine the course of his development before he is given meaningful opportunities to exercise independent judgment. Rather than being recognized as an individual capable of growth through experience, Viego is consistently portrayed as someone whose future must be managed by more experienced adults.

Viewed through Young-Bruehl's (2012) theory, these findings reveal that narcissistic childism in the novel is expressed not through explicit hostility but through paternalistic attitudes that privilege adult authority over children's agency. The adults surrounding Viego genuinely believe that controlling and directing him is necessary to protect both him and the kingdom. However, these protective intentions simultaneously reinforce unequal power relations by restricting his opportunity to develop autonomy and self-determination. As Young-Bruehl argues, narcissistic childism often emerges when adults project their own fears, expectations, and responsibilities onto children, transforming them into extensions of adult interests rather than recognizing them as independent subjects.

Moreover, the use of internal focalization strengthens this portrayal by allowing readers to experience these adult assumptions through Kalista's consciousness. Because the narrative is filtered through her thoughts and reflections, readers observe how the dying king's command becomes internalized and continues to shape her perception of Viego. Internal focalization therefore reveals that childism is not merely expressed through external actions but also through the internal beliefs and judgments that adults hold about children. Consequently, *Ruination* demonstrates that negative childism operates both psychologically and structurally, making adult control appear natural, necessary, and even benevolent while simultaneously limiting the child's agency and individuality. This finding supports Young-Bruehl's argument that prejudice against children is often embedded within caring relationships, where protection and guidance can function as mechanisms that reproduce adult dominance over children's lives.

4.2.2 Obsessive Childism

According to Young-Bruehl (2012), obsessive childism is a form of prejudice against children that is rooted in adults' desire for order, discipline,

control, and predictability. Adults who exhibit obsessive childist attitudes tend to perceive children as inherently disorderly, irresponsible, impulsive, or incapable of regulating themselves. Consequently, they seek to impose strict rules, rigid expectations, and continuous supervision in order to shape children's behavior according to adult-defined standards. Unlike narcissistic childism, which treats children as extensions of adult identity, and hysterical childism, which is driven by fear of children as potential threats, obsessive childism is motivated by a desire to eliminate uncertainty and maintain control. As a result, children's autonomy, independence, and emotional needs are often subordinated to adult demands for obedience and conformity.

"Promise me," he croaked, burning with a desperate fire. "The boy does not have the temperament to rule. I blame myself, but it is you who must bear the weight, granddaughter. Promise me you will guide him. Counsel him. Control him, if needed. Protect Camavor. That is now your duty."
(*Ruin*, 2022, Prologue)

This passage illustrates obsessive childism because it reflects an adult's overwhelming desire to regulate and control a child's development through continuous supervision and discipline. Rather than expressing confidence in Viego's potential to mature into a capable ruler, the dying king immediately entrusts Kalista with the responsibility of directing every aspect of his future. The sequence of commands "guide him," "counsel him," and most significantly, "control him, if needed" constructs a framework in which adult intervention is viewed as both necessary and legitimate. Instead of encouraging Viego to develop his own judgment through experience, the king assumes that his behavior must be carefully managed by another adult. This assumption reflects the defining characteristic of obsessive childism, in which adults believe that children require constant regulation because they are incapable of governing themselves responsibly.

According to Young-Bruehl (2012), obsessive childism is driven by adults' psychological need to maintain order, discipline, and predictability. Adults influenced by this form of prejudice attempt to regulate children's behavior through supervision, strict guidance, and the imposition of rules designed to minimize

uncertainty. In the passage, the king's concern extends beyond offering advice or mentorship. By authorizing Kalista to "*control*" Viego whenever necessary, he establishes an unequal power structure in which adult authority overrides the child's autonomy. The instruction implies that Viego's future decisions should not be trusted independently but must remain subject to adult evaluation and correction. Consequently, his opportunities to learn through independent decision-making are restricted because adults assume responsibility for preventing mistakes before they occur.

The repeated imperative verbs further emphasize the institutional nature of this control. Each command reinforces the expectation that Kalista's role is not simply to support Viego but to monitor, direct, and regulate his behavior continuously. Guidance and counseling, which could otherwise function as educational support, become mechanisms of behavioral control because they are immediately followed by the instruction to exercise authority whenever Viego's actions deviate from adult expectations. The progression from "*guide*" to "*counsel*" and finally "*control*" demonstrates an escalating hierarchy of intervention, suggesting that if persuasion proves insufficient, direct authority should be exercised to ensure obedience. Such language exemplifies Young-Bruehl's argument that obsessive childism legitimizes extensive adult supervision as a means of preserving order.

Furthermore, the dying king's statement, "*The boy does not have the temperament to rule,*" provides the rationale for this system of control. Rather than treating Viego's youth as a stage of development in which leadership skills can gradually be acquired, the king interprets his perceived shortcomings as justification for long-term adult oversight. This reflects another indicator of obsessive childism: adults assume that children are inherently incapable of self-regulation and therefore require continuous discipline. Instead of creating opportunities for Viego to develop confidence and independence, the king establishes a governance structure in which his behavior is expected to remain under permanent adult supervision. As a result, authority is concentrated in Kalista's

hands while Viego's capacity to exercise autonomous judgment is significantly diminished.

The command to "*Protect Camavor*" also strengthens the obsessive childist perspective by linking the regulation of Viego directly to the preservation of political order. The kingdom's stability becomes the justification for controlling the child's behavior, implying that individual freedom should be sacrificed whenever it threatens institutional security. Young-Bruehl (2012) argues that obsessive childism often emerges when adults prioritize order and discipline over children's developmental needs. In this case, Viego is expected to conform to standards established by previous generations rather than being allowed to discover his own approach to leadership. His future is organized according to adult definitions of responsibility, leaving little room for experimentation, independent decision-making, or personal growth.

From the perspective of internal focalization, this passage gains additional significance because readers encounter the king's final command through Kalista's consciousness. The dying king's words become deeply embedded in her thoughts and continue to influence her perception of Viego throughout the novel. Every subsequent decision she makes concerning Viego is shaped by the belief that she has a duty to guide, supervise, and, if necessary, control him. Internal focalization therefore allows readers to observe how obsessive childism is transmitted from one generation of adults to another. Rather than existing only as an external command, the ideology of control becomes internalized within Kalista's consciousness, influencing her interpretation of Viego's actions and reinforcing the legitimacy of continuous adult supervision.

Overall, this passage demonstrates that obsessive childism in *Ruination* is expressed through the normalization of extensive adult regulation over a child's life. Although the dying king's intentions are motivated by concern for both Viego and the future of Camavor, his instructions establish a relationship founded on surveillance, discipline, and authority rather than trust in the child's developmental capacity. Consistent with Young-Bruehl's (2012) theory, the passage reveals how excessive adult control can restrict children's autonomy by presenting supervision

as an unquestionable necessity. Through this portrayal, the novel illustrates that obsessive childism does not always appear as overt oppression but often operates through seemingly responsible acts of guidance that gradually transform into mechanisms of continuous control.

"Protect Viego. Protect Camavor." (Ruinaton, 2022, p. 64)

This passage reflects obsessive childism because it demonstrates how adult authority constructs Viego as someone who requires continuous supervision in order to maintain political stability. Although the statement appears brief, its repeated occurrence throughout Kalista's reflections transforms it into a governing principle that shapes her actions and decisions. Rather than functioning merely as a reminder of the dying king's final request, the command establishes an enduring obligation that compels Kalista to monitor Viego's behavior and intervene whenever she believes his actions threaten either his own welfare or the security of Camavor. Consequently, Viego is positioned not as an autonomous individual capable of developing his own judgment but as someone whose life must remain under constant adult oversight.

According to Young-Bruehl (2012), obsessive childism is characterized by adults' excessive desire to regulate children's behavior through supervision, discipline, and continuous control. Adults influenced by this form of prejudice often believe that children cannot exercise appropriate judgment independently and therefore require ongoing guidance to prevent mistakes or disorder. The instruction *"Protect Viego"* reflects this assumption because it places responsibility for Viego's decisions in Kalista's hands rather than encouraging him to develop responsibility through experience. Instead of promoting gradual independence, the command institutionalizes dependence by implying that adult intervention should remain a permanent feature of his life.

The repetition of the imperative verb *"protect"* also reinforces the normalization of surveillance. Protection, in this context, extends beyond safeguarding Viego from physical harm. It requires Kalista to observe his emotional condition, evaluate his decisions, and intervene whenever necessary to preserve order. Young-Bruehl (2012) argues that obsessive childism often disguises

excessive control as responsible care. Adults justify restrictive supervision by claiming that it serves the child's best interests, even when such supervision limits opportunities for independent learning and decision-making. In this passage, Kalista's obligation to protect Viego gradually evolves into a broader responsibility to regulate his conduct, illustrating how protection becomes inseparable from control.

Furthermore, the parallel structure of the statement—"*Protect Viego. Protect Camavor.*"—reveals that the regulation of Viego is directly connected to the preservation of political order. The equal grammatical emphasis given to Viego and Camavor suggests that protecting the future king is synonymous with protecting the kingdom itself. As a result, Viego's personal development becomes subordinate to institutional interests. His emotions, choices, and aspirations are evaluated primarily according to whether they contribute to the stability of Camavor. This reflects one of the defining characteristics of obsessive childism, namely the prioritization of order, discipline, and institutional security over children's autonomy and developmental needs.

The command also illustrates the unequal distribution of authority between adults and children. Kalista is entrusted with determining what constitutes appropriate behavior for Viego, while he is expected to remain the object of her supervision. Such a relationship reinforces adult dominance because responsibility for decision-making is concentrated in the hands of the adult guardian rather than gradually transferred to the child. Instead of preparing Viego to become an independent ruler capable of making informed decisions, the narrative repeatedly emphasizes the necessity of adult regulation whenever uncertainty arises. This continual intervention limits his opportunities to exercise personal judgment and reinforces the perception that his actions cannot be trusted without external oversight.

From the perspective of internal focalization, this passage becomes particularly significant because readers experience the repeated command through Kalista's consciousness. The dying king's words are not presented as an objective narrative principle but as a belief that has become deeply internalized within

Kalista's mind. Every time she reflects upon her duty to "*Protect Viego. Protect Camavor,*" readers witness how the ideology of supervision shapes her interpretation of Viego's behavior. Internal focalization therefore reveals the psychological mechanism through which obsessive childism is sustained. The narrative demonstrates that excessive control does not arise solely from explicit commands but also from adults' internal conviction that constant supervision is both necessary and morally justified.

Moreover, the passage illustrates that obsessive childism operates through institutional responsibility rather than overt hostility. Kalista genuinely believes that fulfilling the dying king's command is essential for Viego's welfare and the kingdom's future. Nevertheless, her protective role simultaneously restricts Viego's opportunity to develop autonomy because every important aspect of his life is filtered through adult evaluation. As Young-Bruehl (2012) explains, obsessive childism frequently emerges when adults prioritize stability, discipline, and security over children's capacity for independent growth. Although such regulation may appear benevolent, it ultimately reinforces unequal power relations by treating children as individuals who require continuous management instead of recognizing their potential to develop self-governance.

Overall, this passage demonstrates that obsessive childism in *Ruination* is sustained through the normalization of lifelong supervision. The repeated command to protect Viego establishes a framework in which adult control becomes an unquestioned responsibility, while the child's autonomy remains secondary to the maintenance of order. Through Kalista's internal focalization, the novel reveals how seemingly protective obligations can evolve into mechanisms of continuous regulation, supporting Young-Bruehl's (2012) argument that prejudice against children often manifests through excessive control disguised as care and responsibility.

"Isolde's fear was valid, and Kalista shared it. Viego had a good heart, but he was unpredictable, driven by his whim and ego. I can help guide him, but it is Isolde who brings him balance." (Ruination, 2022, p. 80)

This passage reflects obsessive childism because it portrays adult intervention as an essential mechanism for regulating Viego's emotions, behavior, and decision-making. Although Kalista acknowledges that Viego possesses “*a good heart*,” this positive assessment is immediately qualified by descriptions of him as “*unpredictable*” and “*driven by his whim and ego*.” Rather than interpreting these traits as aspects of a young person's ongoing emotional development, Kalista regards them as characteristics that require constant guidance and correction. Consequently, Viego is positioned as someone whose personal growth depends not on his own experiences but on the continuous supervision of trusted adults.

According to Young-Bruehl (2012), obsessive childism emerges when adults believe that children are incapable of regulating themselves and therefore require persistent guidance, discipline, and behavioral control. Adults operating within this framework seek to maintain order by directing children's actions according to standards established by adult authority. Kalista's statement, “*I can help guide him, but it is Isolde who brings him balance*,” clearly reflects this perspective. Instead of expressing confidence that Viego can gradually develop emotional maturity through his own experiences, she assumes that his stability depends upon external regulation provided by responsible adults. The responsibility for controlling his emotions is therefore transferred from Viego himself to Kalista and Isolde.

The passage also demonstrates how obsessive childism limits children's autonomy by placing adult judgment above children's capacity for self-governance. Kalista does not consider that Viego may learn from failure, develop resilience, or improve his judgment independently. Instead, she immediately identifies adult guidance as the primary solution to his perceived shortcomings. Such reasoning reflects the childist assumption that children should be directed rather than trusted to navigate their own developmental processes. As Young-Bruehl (2012) argues, obsessive childism frequently manifests through excessive regulation that prioritizes discipline and predictability over children's opportunities for independent growth.

Furthermore, Kalista's evaluation of Viego illustrates how adult authority defines acceptable behavior according to adult expectations. By describing him as “*unpredictable*” and motivated by “*whim and ego*,” she frames his personality as something requiring correction rather than understanding. Although these observations may contain elements of truth, the immediate emphasis on guidance and balance reveals an underlying belief that adults possess superior emotional judgment. Consequently, Viego's behavior is interpreted through an adult-centered framework in which deviations from expected conduct become justification for increased supervision. This reflects Young-Bruehl's argument that obsessive childism often transforms ordinary developmental challenges into reasons for expanding adult control.

The statement also reinforces unequal power relations between adults and children. Kalista and Isolde occupy the roles of supervisors, while Viego becomes the object of their management. Rather than participating actively in shaping his own development, he is expected to rely upon adults to regulate his emotions and decisions. This imbalance of authority reduces his opportunity to exercise independent judgment and strengthens the perception that successful leadership can only be achieved through continuous adult intervention. As a result, Viego's agency becomes secondary to the adults' responsibility for maintaining his emotional and political stability.

From the perspective of internal focalization, the passage is significant because readers encounter these judgments through Kalista's internal consciousness. The narrator does not objectively declare that Viego requires constant supervision; instead, readers experience Kalista's belief that guidance and regulation are necessary. This narrative strategy allows readers to understand how obsessive childism operates psychologically. Kalista sincerely believes that she is acting in Viego's best interests, yet her thoughts simultaneously reveal an internalized assumption that he cannot adequately govern himself without adult assistance. Internal focalization therefore exposes the subtle ways in which excessive control becomes normalized within caring relationships.

Moreover, the passage illustrates that obsessive childism is sustained through benevolent intentions rather than overt oppression. Kalista's desire to guide Viego originates from genuine concern for his welfare and the future of Camavor. However, as Young-Bruehl (2012) explains, excessive concern can become a mechanism of prejudice when it consistently overrides children's opportunities for autonomy and self-determination. By assuming responsibility for maintaining Viego's emotional balance, Kalista unintentionally reinforces a system in which adult supervision is viewed as indispensable and the child's independent capacity for growth is underestimated.

Overall, this passage demonstrates that obsessive childism in *Ruination* is expressed through adults' conviction that Viego's emotional stability and leadership depend upon continuous regulation. Rather than encouraging him to develop confidence through independent decision-making, Kalista and Isolde assume responsibility for directing his behavior according to adult standards of balance and rationality. Through internal focalization, the novel reveals how this belief becomes embedded within adult consciousness, illustrating Young-Bruehl's (2012) argument that obsessive childism often operates through excessive guidance and supervision that appear protective but ultimately restrict children's autonomy and developmental independence.

"I can help guide him, but it is Isolde who brings him balance." (*Ruination*, 2022, p. 80)

This passage illustrates obsessive childism because it demonstrates the adult assumption that Viego is incapable of achieving emotional stability and sound judgment without continuous external regulation. Rather than expressing confidence in his ability to mature independently, Kalista immediately positions herself and Isolde as the individuals responsible for directing and stabilizing his behavior. The statement suggests that Viego's personal development is not expected to emerge through his own experiences but through constant adult guidance and intervention. Consequently, his autonomy is subordinated to adult authority, reflecting Young-Bruehl's (2012) argument that obsessive childism is characterized by excessive supervision and the belief that children require continual regulation.

According to Young-Bruehl (2012), obsessive childism arises from adults' desire to maintain order, discipline, and predictability by controlling children's behavior. Adults influenced by this form of prejudice often believe that children cannot regulate themselves effectively and therefore require persistent monitoring and correction. Kalista's statement, "*I can help guide him,*" reveals this assumption directly. The verb "*guide*" extends beyond ordinary mentorship because it implies an ongoing responsibility to shape Viego's decisions and behaviors. Likewise, the assertion that "*it is Isolde who brings him balance*" reinforces the notion that emotional stability must come from external adult influence rather than from Viego's own capacity for growth. His development is therefore presented as dependent upon adults who possess greater wisdom and self-control.

The passage also reflects one of the principal indicators of obsessive childism: the regulation of children's emotions through adult authority. Instead of viewing Viego's impulsiveness as a developmental challenge that he can gradually overcome, Kalista assumes that his emotions require continuous management by others. This belief limits opportunities for Viego to cultivate emotional resilience and independent judgment because responsibility for maintaining his stability is transferred to adult figures. Young-Bruehl (2012) explains that obsessive childism frequently transforms ordinary developmental processes into situations requiring constant intervention, thereby restricting children's ability to develop confidence in their own decision-making capacities.

Furthermore, Kalista's evaluation of Viego illustrates how adult authority establishes standards of acceptable behavior while simultaneously assuming responsibility for enforcing those standards. By describing Viego as someone who requires "*guidance*" and "*balance*," she implicitly constructs him as emotionally incomplete and in need of correction. Although her concern arises from genuine affection, the underlying assumption remains that adult supervision is indispensable for his successful development. This perspective reinforces unequal power relations because adults become the primary decision-makers, while the child occupies the role of someone who must be directed and corrected whenever necessary.

From the perspective of internal focalization, this passage reveals how obsessive childism is embedded within Kalista's consciousness. Readers do not encounter an objective narrator stating that Viego cannot govern himself; instead, they experience Kalista's internal conviction that guidance is essential for his well-being. Genette (1980) argues that internal focalization limits the narrative to the perceptions and beliefs of the focalizing character. Through this technique, readers gain direct access to Kalista's reasoning and observe how her sense of duty shapes her interpretation of Viego's character. Internal focalization therefore demonstrates that obsessive childism is not merely expressed through external actions but also through deeply internalized beliefs that justify continuous supervision.

The passage also aligns with broader discussions in childhood studies regarding adult control over children's development. James and Prout (2015) argue that childhood is socially constructed through adult assumptions about children's competence and dependence. Adults frequently underestimate children's ability to participate actively in shaping their own lives, instead assigning themselves responsibility for directing children's development. Similarly, Spyrou (2018) contends that adult-centered perspectives often silence children's agency by privileging adult interpretations of children's needs over children's own experiences. Kalista's reflection illustrates these dynamics because Viego's emotional state is interpreted entirely through her perspective, leaving little room for recognition of his own capacity to achieve maturity independently.

Moreover, this passage demonstrates that obsessive childism is often motivated by benevolent intentions rather than overt oppression. Kalista sincerely wishes to protect Viego and help him become a successful ruler. Nevertheless, Young-Bruehl (2012) emphasizes that excessive guidance may unintentionally become a mechanism of prejudice when it consistently overrides children's autonomy. By assuming that Viego requires continuous guidance and emotional balancing from adults, Kalista limits his opportunity to learn through personal experience and independent decision-making. Thus, care and control become inseparable, illustrating how protective intentions can reinforce unequal relationships between adults and children.

Overall, this passage demonstrates that obsessive childism in *Ruination* is manifested through adults' conviction that Viego's emotional stability and leadership depend upon continual adult regulation. Through Kalista's internal focalization, the narrative reveals how guidance is transformed from supportive mentorship into an enduring mechanism of supervision and behavioral control. Consistent with Young-Bruehl's (2012) theory, the passage shows that excessive adult intervention, even when motivated by care, can diminish children's autonomy by treating them as individuals who must be continuously guided rather than trusted to develop their own judgment and emotional independence.

"The changes the queen spoke of in Viego disturbed her, and she cursed herself for not having seen them earlier. She felt the weight of responsibility pushing down on her." (*Ruination*, 2022, p. 81)

This passage illustrates obsessive childism because it portrays adult responsibility as a justification for continuous regulation of a child's emotional and psychological development. Kalista's response is not merely one of concern but of self-reproach, as she believes that she has failed to monitor Viego closely enough. Instead of perceiving his emotional transformation as a personal struggle that he must eventually confront and understand for himself, she immediately assumes that the responsibility for recognizing and managing these changes belongs to her. Such a perspective reflects the central principle of obsessive childism identified by Young-Bruehl (2012), namely that adults regard children as individuals whose behavior and development must remain under constant supervision in order to preserve order and prevent undesirable outcomes.

According to Young-Bruehl (2012), obsessive childism is rooted in adults' desire for certainty, discipline, and predictability. Adults who adopt this perspective often assume that children cannot adequately regulate their own behavior and therefore require continuous observation and correction. Kalista's reaction demonstrates this mindset. Her regret for *"not having seen them earlier"* suggests that effective guardianship requires uninterrupted vigilance over Viego's emotional state. Rather than accepting that personal development inevitably involves internal changes that may not always be visible to others, she believes that careful

supervision should have detected every sign of emotional instability before it became more serious. This assumption transforms ordinary emotional development into something that adults feel obligated to monitor and control.

The statement *"She felt the weight of responsibility pushing down on her"* further reinforces the unequal relationship between adult authority and childhood autonomy. Responsibility, in this context, extends beyond offering protection or guidance. It becomes an expectation that Kalista should continually evaluate, interpret, and regulate Viego's emotional condition. Consequently, Viego is positioned not as an active participant in his own development but as the object of adult management. His growth is understood through the effectiveness of Kalista's supervision rather than through his own ability to develop resilience, judgment, and emotional maturity. This reflects Young-Bruehl's (2012) observation that obsessive childism often places adult control above children's opportunities for independent development.

Furthermore, the passage demonstrates how obsessive childism can be sustained through feelings of moral obligation rather than authoritarian domination. Kalista genuinely believes that protecting Viego requires constant awareness of his emotional state. Her guilt does not arise because Viego has disobeyed her but because she believes she has failed to fulfill her supervisory duty. This illustrates that obsessive childism frequently operates through benevolent intentions. Adults become convinced that continuous intervention is an expression of responsible care, even when such intervention limits children's opportunities to solve problems independently. In this way, excessive protection gradually evolves into a system of behavioral regulation.

The passage also reveals how adult authority becomes internalized as a permanent responsibility. The dying king's earlier command to guide and protect Viego continues to shape Kalista's thinking, leading her to evaluate every change in his behavior as something that should have been anticipated. Instead of recognizing that emotional growth often requires personal experience and self-discovery, she assumes that successful guardianship means preventing uncertainty altogether. Young-Bruehl (2012) argues that obsessive childism frequently seeks to

eliminate unpredictability by expanding adult control over children's lives. Kalista's thoughts clearly reflect this desire to reduce uncertainty through constant supervision.

From the perspective of internal focalization, the narrative enables readers to experience Kalista's guilt and anxiety directly through her consciousness. Genette (1980) explains that internal focalization limits narrative information to the perceptions and emotions of the focalizing character, allowing readers to understand how events are interpreted rather than simply what occurs. In this scene, readers are not informed objectively that Viego requires continuous supervision. Instead, they witness Kalista's personal conviction that she should have recognized every emotional change earlier. Through this narrative technique, the novel reveals the psychological mechanisms through which obsessive childism is maintained. Adult control is not presented merely as an external action but as a deeply internalized belief that responsible guardianship requires constant vigilance.

This perspective is further supported by childhood studies scholars who argue that adult-centered assumptions frequently diminish children's agency. James and Prout (2015) contend that childhood is socially constructed through adult beliefs that position children as dependent and incomplete individuals requiring ongoing direction. Likewise, Spyrou (2018) argues that adult interpretations often dominate understandings of children's experiences, leaving little room for children to express their own perspectives or exercise meaningful autonomy. Kalista's reflection illustrates these dynamics because Viego's emotional development is interpreted entirely through her sense of responsibility, while his own capacity to understand and manage his experiences remains largely unacknowledged.

Overall, this passage demonstrates that obsessive childism in *Ruination* operates through the internalization of adult responsibility as a form of continuous behavioral regulation. Kalista's guilt over failing to detect changes in Viego's character reveals her belief that effective care requires constant observation and intervention. Through internal focalization, the novel exposes how excessive responsibility can become a mechanism of control that restricts children's opportunities for independent emotional growth. Consistent with Young-Bruehl's

(2012) theory, the passage illustrates that obsessive childism is sustained not only by explicit acts of discipline but also by adults' deeply rooted conviction that children's development must remain under perpetual adult supervision.

Isolde's fear was valid, and Kalista shared it. Viego had a good heart, but he was unpredictable, driven by his whim and ego. I can help guide him, but it is Isolde who brings him balance. She tempered the worst of his arrogance and impulsiveness. With her gone, Kalista feared what would become of Viego, and Camavor. She could imagine him spiraling dangerously out of control, flailing blindly like a drowning man, dragging everything he clung to down with him." (Ruinaton, 2022, p. 80)

This passage strongly demonstrates obsessive childism because Kalista perceives Viego as someone who cannot properly regulate himself without external guidance. Her belief that she must "*help guide him*" indicates a persistent assumption that Viego lacks the ability to make responsible decisions independently. Young-Bruehl (2012) argues that obsessive childism is characterized by adults' conviction that children require continual supervision and correction because they are viewed as incapable of self-governance. Kalista's perspective reflects this tendency by emphasizing Viego's unpredictability while simultaneously positioning herself as a necessary stabilizing force.

Furthermore, the imagery of Viego "*spiraling dangerously out of control*" and "*dragging everything he clung to down with him*" reveals the extent of Kalista's fears. Her imagination transforms Viego into a potential threat not only to himself but also to the entire kingdom. Such catastrophic expectations justify further intervention and surveillance, reinforcing the belief that his actions must be continuously monitored. As a result, Viego's autonomy becomes secondary to the perceived need for protection and control.

From Mieke Bal's theory, the passage utilizes **internal focalization** through Kalista because the narrative is filtered entirely through her perceptions and judgments. Readers encounter Viego not as he understands himself but as he is interpreted by Kalista. This focalization highlights how obsessive childism is often

sustained through adult perceptions that define younger individuals primarily in terms of their weaknesses and vulnerabilities.

“Kalista watched Viego in growing alarm. He looked like a madman, dressed in little more than a night-robe, his hair disheveled, and gesturing wildly as he raved on about the Blessed Isles. ‘And you say this came to you in a dream?’ she said, trying to keep the skepticism from her voice.” (Ruin, 2022, pp. 83–84)

This passage further reflects obsessive childism through Kalista's constant evaluation of Viego's behavior. The phrase *“watched Viego in growing alarm”* indicates that she carefully monitors his actions and immediately interprets them as signs of instability. Her concern is not limited to understanding his experiences but extends to assessing whether his behavior aligns with what she considers rational and acceptable. Such continuous scrutiny reflects the obsessive desire to regulate and supervise another person's conduct.

Kalista's skepticism toward Viego's vision also reveals a tendency to prioritize her own judgment over his perspective. Rather than engaging with his experience on equal terms, she evaluates it from a position of authority and assumes responsibility for determining whether his beliefs are valid. This dynamic reflects Young-Bruehl's concept of obsessive childism, in which adults position themselves as protectors who must constantly direct and correct the younger individual.

In terms of focalization, the passage employs **internal focalization** because readers observe Viego through Kalista's perceptions. Descriptions such as *“looked like a madman”* originate from her interpretation rather than from an objective narrative voice. Consequently, readers are encouraged to share her concerns and doubts. This narrative strategy reinforces the theme of obsessive childism by demonstrating how adult perspectives dominate the representation of younger individuals and shape how their actions are understood.

4.2.3 Hysterical Childism

According to Young-Bruehl (2012), hysterical childism is a form of prejudice against children that emerges from adult fears and anxieties regarding

children's perceived unpredictability, emotional instability, and potential threat to social order. Adults who exhibit hysterical childist attitudes often view children as irrational, impulsive, immature, or incapable of making responsible decisions. As a result, children are frequently subjected to excessive supervision, restriction, and control because adults believe that their actions may lead to disorder, danger, or instability. In this form of childism, adult responses are driven not by the actual behavior of children but by exaggerated fears about what children might do if left to exercise autonomy and independence.

Young-Bruehl argues that hysterical childism is characterized by a tendency to interpret children's emotions, desires, and actions as signs of potential disruption. Rather than recognizing children as developing individuals capable of learning from experience, adults perceive them as vulnerable to poor judgment and therefore requiring constant monitoring and intervention. Consequently, children's voices, perspectives, and capacities for self-determination are often marginalized because adult anxieties take precedence over children's rights and developmental needs.

"Yet for all his juvenile failings, she knew Viego to be a good man at heart. She had faith that he would do the right thing... with the right guidance."
(*Ruin*, 2022, p. 90)

This passage illustrates hysterical childism because it reveals how adult anxiety shapes Kalista's perception of Viego's ability to act independently. Although she openly recognizes that Viego is fundamentally *"a good man at heart,"* this positive assessment is immediately qualified by her reference to his *"juvenile failings."* The juxtaposition of these two descriptions demonstrates an underlying tension within Kalista's perspective. On one hand, she acknowledges Viego's moral character; on the other, she doubts his capacity to exercise sound judgment without continuous adult intervention. Rather than allowing Viego the opportunity to develop through experience and personal responsibility, Kalista assumes that appropriate behavior can only be achieved *"with the right guidance."* This assumption reflects the psychological foundation of hysterical childism, in which adults' fears regarding children's perceived immaturity encourage restrictive forms of supervision.

According to Young-Bruehl (2012), hysterical childism develops when adults project fear, anxiety, and suspicion onto children and interpret them as potential sources of danger or instability. Unlike obsessive childism, which primarily emphasizes discipline and regulation, hysterical childism originates from adults' anticipation of what children might do if left without sufficient supervision. Adult intervention is therefore motivated by imagined future risks rather than solely by children's present behavior. In this passage, Kalista does not describe Viego as malicious or intentionally irresponsible. Instead, her concern stems from the possibility that his youthful characteristics may eventually lead him to make harmful political decisions. Her belief that he requires "*the right guidance*" reflects an expectation that independent action is inherently risky because his immaturity may prevent him from choosing correctly.

The expression "*juvenile failings*" is particularly significant because it frames Viego's shortcomings primarily through the lens of his youth. Rather than interpreting these imperfections as natural aspects of personal development, Kalista associates them with limitations that justify continued adult oversight. Young-Bruehl (2012) argues that hysterical childism often exaggerates the dangers associated with childhood by encouraging adults to focus on children's potential mistakes instead of their capacity for growth. Kalista's reasoning reflects this tendency. Although she believes that Viego possesses good intentions, she nevertheless assumes that those intentions are insufficient unless reinforced by external adult direction. Consequently, the possibility of failure becomes more influential than confidence in his ability to learn independently.

The statement also illustrates the unequal power relationship that characterizes childist attitudes. Kalista positions herself and other adult figures as the individuals responsible for ensuring that Viego reaches the correct moral and political decisions. Responsibility for successful leadership is therefore transferred from Viego himself to those who supervise him. This unequal distribution of authority reinforces adult dominance by implying that children or young people cannot be trusted to govern themselves without constant intervention. Instead of recognizing Viego as an active participant in his own development, the passage

portrays him as someone whose future depends upon the decisions of more experienced adults.

From the perspective of **internal focalization**, the significance of this passage becomes even more apparent. Readers do not observe an objective narrator declaring that Viego lacks judgment; rather, they encounter Kalista's personal thoughts and evaluations. Through internal focalization, the narrative grants direct access to her consciousness, allowing readers to understand how her anxieties influence her perception of Viego. Genette (1980) explains that internal focalization restricts narrative information to the knowledge, beliefs, and emotional responses of the focalizing character. Accordingly, readers experience Viego not through his own perspective but through Kalista's internal interpretation of his character. This narrative strategy demonstrates how childist assumptions are constructed within adult consciousness before influencing adult behavior toward children.

Furthermore, the passage supports broader discussions within childhood studies concerning adult perceptions of children's competence. James and Prout (2015) argue that children are frequently positioned as incomplete individuals whose participation in decision-making is limited because adults underestimate their capabilities. Similarly, Spyrou (2018) suggests that adult assumptions often silence children's agency by privileging adult interpretations over children's own experiences and perspectives. Kalista's reflection exemplifies these dynamics because her confidence in adult guidance overshadows the possibility that Viego might develop wisdom through his own experiences. His voice remains absent from the narrative moment, while adult interpretation becomes the dominant framework through which his character is understood.

At the same time, the passage demonstrates that hysterical childism does not necessarily arise from hostility or deliberate oppression. Kalista's concern is motivated by affection, loyalty, and responsibility rather than personal prejudice against Viego. Nevertheless, Young-Bruehl (2012) argues that childism frequently operates through benevolent intentions that unintentionally reinforce unequal power relations. Adults may sincerely believe they are protecting children while simultaneously restricting opportunities for independence, self-confidence, and

autonomous decision-making. In this case, Kalista's desire to guide Viego reflects genuine care, yet it also reveals her underlying anxiety that he cannot be trusted to navigate his responsibilities without continual adult support.

Overall, this passage demonstrates that hysterical childism in *Ruination* is expressed through adult fears regarding the potential consequences of youthful inexperience rather than through direct hostility toward children. Kalista's belief that Viego requires "*the right guidance*" illustrates how anxiety about possible future mistakes becomes a justification for limiting his independence. Through internal focalization, the novel enables readers to witness the psychological processes underlying this perspective, revealing that childist attitudes often originate within adult perceptions rather than in children's actual behavior. Consequently, the passage supports Young-Bruehl's (2012) argument that fear-based assumptions can contribute to unequal adult-child relationships by encouraging adults to privilege supervision over children's capacity for autonomous growth.

"A cold shiver of dread ran through her." (*Ruination*, 2022, p. 190)

This passage reflects hysterical childism because it illustrates how fear and anxiety influence Kalista's perception of Viego and his future. Although the quotation itself is brief, its narrative context reveals that Kalista's emotional response is triggered by growing concerns about Viego's emotional instability and the possible consequences of his decisions. Rather than responding solely to Viego's present actions, Kalista anticipates future dangers that may arise if his emotions remain unchecked. This anticipation of potential harm reflects one of the defining characteristics of hysterical childism, namely adults' tendency to project fears onto children and justify greater supervision based on imagined risks rather than immediate reality.

According to Young-Bruehl (2012), hysterical childism originates from adult anxieties that construct children as potential sources of danger or instability. Adults become preoccupied with what children might do, leading them to exaggerate possible risks and adopt increasingly restrictive attitudes toward children's independence. In this passage, the phrase "*a cold shiver of dread*"

symbolizes Kalista's psychological reaction to uncertainty. Her fear does not emerge because Viego has already committed a destructive act at this moment; instead, it reflects her growing anxiety about what his emotional condition may eventually produce. Consequently, Viego becomes an object of anticipation and concern rather than a young individual capable of developing through experience.

The passage also demonstrates how fear gradually transforms into a mechanism of adult authority. Kalista's emotional response reinforces her belief that Viego requires close observation and continued guidance to prevent future disaster. Instead of viewing uncertainty as an inevitable aspect of personal growth, she interprets it as evidence that greater adult intervention is necessary. Young-Bruehl (2012) argues that hysterical childism often encourages adults to prioritize prevention over autonomy, believing that strict supervision is justified because children are perceived as incapable of managing potential risks independently. Kalista's feeling of dread reflects precisely this psychological process, where anticipated danger becomes sufficient reason to maintain adult control.

Furthermore, the quotation illustrates how adult fears can overshadow recognition of children's agency. Rather than considering Viego's ability to learn from his experiences or adapt to difficult circumstances, Kalista's attention becomes dominated by the possibility of failure. Her emotional reaction narrows her perspective, encouraging her to evaluate Viego primarily in terms of the threats he might pose to himself and to Camavor. This aligns with Young-Bruehl's (2012) observation that hysterical childism frequently shifts attention away from children's developmental potential and toward adult fears about uncertainty and disorder.

From the perspective of internal focalization, the significance of this passage becomes particularly evident. Readers experience the feeling of dread directly through Kalista's consciousness rather than through an objective narrative voice. Genette (1980) explains that internal focalization limits readers' understanding to the thoughts, emotions, and perceptions of the focalizing character. In this scene, readers are not presented with objective proof that Viego represents an immediate danger. Instead, they encounter Kalista's subjective emotional response, which shapes their understanding of the situation. Through this

narrative technique, the novel reveals that fear is constructed within the adult character's consciousness before it becomes translated into protective or restrictive behavior toward Viego.

This internal perspective also exposes the psychological foundation of childist attitudes. Kalista sincerely believes that her fear is reasonable because she wishes to protect both Viego and the kingdom. However, internal focalization allows readers to recognize that her interpretation is influenced by anxiety rather than objective certainty. Young-Bruehl (2012) argues that childism often develops through unconscious projections, in which adults transfer their own fears and insecurities onto children. Kalista's emotional response illustrates this mechanism, as her uncertainty about the future encourages her to perceive Viego through a framework of apprehension and precaution.

The passage further resonates with broader scholarship on childhood and adult authority. James and Prout (2015) argue that adult institutions frequently construct children as vulnerable individuals whose actions require continuous regulation because adults prioritize protection over participation. Similarly, Spyrou (2018) contends that adult fears often marginalize children's agency by allowing adult interpretations to dominate understandings of childhood. Kalista's fear exemplifies these dynamics because her emotional response becomes the primary basis for interpreting Viego's future, while his own perspective remains absent from the narrative. Consequently, adult anxiety replaces children's voices as the central source of authority.

Overall, this passage demonstrates that hysterical childism in *Ruin* operates through fear-driven perceptions of uncertainty. Kalista's "*cold shiver of dread*" symbolizes the psychological process through which adult anxieties encourage heightened vigilance and protective intervention. Rather than responding solely to Viego's actual behavior, she anticipates potential dangers that may arise from his emotional instability, thereby reinforcing the belief that continuous adult supervision is necessary. Through internal focalization, the novel reveals how these fears become embedded within adult consciousness, supporting Young-Bruehl's (2012) argument that hysterical childism emerges when adults project anxiety onto

children and allow imagined risks to justify restrictions on children's autonomy and independent development.

“Viego’s hollow smile faded. ‘Without her, I’m not sure I can be either,’ he whispered. ‘I cannot live without her, Kalista. And I don’t think I would want to.’ Kalista stared at Viego with a mix of horror and pity. He had always been somewhat obsessive, but there was a darkness in him that she had not seen before. This is just his grief talking, she told herself. He’ll recover. But what if he didn’t?” (Ruinaton, 2022, p. 78)

This passage illustrates hysterical childism through Kalista’s fearful interpretation of Viego’s emotional vulnerability. Instead of viewing his words solely as expressions of grief following Isolde’s condition, Kalista immediately associates them with a deeper and more troubling darkness within his character. Her reaction reveals anxiety regarding his emotional stability and future behavior. The statement *“but what if he didn’t?”* demonstrates her fear that Viego may be incapable of recovering from his grief and could become a danger to himself and others.

According to Young-Bruehl (2012), hysterical childism emerges when adults perceive younger individuals as emotionally unstable and therefore in need of supervision or control. Kalista’s thoughts reflect this pattern because she increasingly interprets Viego’s actions through a lens of concern and suspicion. Rather than recognizing his grief as a temporary emotional response, she begins to fear that his emotions may permanently undermine his ability to act rationally.

The passage employs internal focalization because readers gain access to Kalista’s private thoughts and concerns. Through her perspective, Viego is represented not as a grieving husband but as an unpredictable figure whose emotions appear threatening. Consequently, the focalization reinforces the childist assumption that emotional vulnerability signifies incapacity and justifies external intervention.

“Kalista’s brow creased. Why is the priesthood indulging and feeding Viego’s fantasies? That won’t help him move on.” (Ruinaton, 2022, p. 84)

This excerpt reflects hysterical childism because Kalista dismisses Viego's beliefs as fantasies rather than considering them as meaningful experiences. Her concern is rooted in the assumption that Viego lacks the judgment necessary to distinguish reality from illusion. As a result, she views those who support him as encouraging irrational behavior. Young-Bruehl argues that hysterical childism is characterized by the tendency to regard younger individuals as incapable of responsible self-direction. Kalista's reaction demonstrates precisely this attitude. She assumes that Viego cannot be trusted to evaluate his own experiences and therefore requires others to correct or restrain him. His agency is consequently diminished because his beliefs are interpreted as symptoms of instability rather than expressions of personal conviction.

From the perspective of focalization theory, the passage utilizes internal focalization through Kalista. Readers are exposed directly to her skepticism and concern, causing Viego's actions to be filtered through her judgment. This narrative technique strengthens the representation of Viego as someone perceived to require supervision and control.

"With her gone, Kalista feared what would become of Viego, and Camavor. She could imagine him spiraling dangerously out of control, flailing blindly like a drowning man, dragging everything he clung to down with him." (Ruin, 2022, p. 80)

This passage provides one of the strongest examples of hysterical childism in the novel. Kalista does not merely worry about Viego's personal well-being; she imagines catastrophic consequences resulting from his inability to regulate himself. The metaphor of a drowning man who drags others down with him portrays Viego as a threat to the kingdom's stability. Young-Bruehl (2012) explains that hysterical childism is driven by fear of what younger individuals might do if left unsupervised. In this passage, Kalista's imagination transforms Viego's grief into a potential political disaster. Rather than focusing on his capacity for growth and recovery, she anticipates failure, instability, and destruction. Such assumptions reveal how fear can overshadow trust in an individual's ability to develop autonomy.

Therefore, the representation of hysterical childism in *Ruination* is closely connected to the perception that Viego is emotionally incapable of governing both himself and the kingdom. Throughout the novel, authority figures repeatedly interpret his actions through a framework of fear, anxiety, and distrust. Rather than recognizing his emotional responses as natural reactions to trauma, grief, and isolation, they increasingly regard them as evidence of instability and potential danger. This perception reflects what Young-Bruehl (2012) identifies as hysterical childism, in which younger individuals are viewed as unpredictable and threatening, thereby justifying adult intervention and control.

A significant aspect of hysterical childism in the novel is the tendency of adult characters to anticipate catastrophe whenever Viego exercises his own judgment. For example, Kalista frequently imagines disastrous consequences arising from his decisions, especially after Isolde's illness. Instead of considering the possibility that Viego may mature through adversity, she often assumes that his emotional state will inevitably lead to destructive behavior. Such assumptions reveal that the fear surrounding Viego is not based solely on his actions but also on the expectations imposed upon him by others. In this sense, hysterical childism functions through projection: adults project their anxieties onto the younger individual and then treat those anxieties as objective truths.

Furthermore, the novel demonstrates how grief becomes a central factor in the construction of hysterical childism. After Isolde's condition deteriorates, Viego's emotional vulnerability is repeatedly interpreted as weakness and irrationality. His sorrow, desperation, and refusal to accept loss are not viewed primarily as human responses to suffering but as signs that he may lose control of himself. Consequently, characters around him become increasingly concerned with managing his behavior rather than understanding his emotional pain. This pattern illustrates Young-Bruehl's argument that hysterical childism often emerges when adults interpret children's emotions as dangerous rather than meaningful.

From a narratological perspective, Mieke Bal's theory of focalization plays a crucial role in constructing this representation. Most instances of hysterical childism are presented through Kalista's internal focalization. Readers often gain

access to her fears, doubts, and judgments regarding Viego, while Viego's own perspective remains comparatively limited. As a result, readers encounter Viego largely through the lens of another character's anxiety. His actions are filtered through Kalista's interpretation, which frequently emphasizes unpredictability, instability, and risk. This focalization strategy reinforces the childist perception because the narrative repeatedly encourages readers to view Viego as a problem that must be managed.

Another important element is the relationship between power and fear. Hysterical childism does not merely portray children as vulnerable; it portrays them as potentially disruptive to existing authority structures. In *Ruination*, Viego's position as king intensifies these fears because his personal decisions have political consequences. Consequently, concerns about his emotional condition become intertwined with concerns about the future of Camavor. The adults surrounding him therefore justify intervention as a means of protecting the kingdom. However, from Young-Bruehl's perspective, this response still constitutes childism because it prioritizes adult fears and social stability over the young person's autonomy and capacity for growth.

Moreover, the repeated desire to supervise, guide, and control Viego reflects the broader social function of hysterical childism. The goal is not simply to help him but to reduce uncertainty by regulating his behavior. Such regulation implicitly assumes that Viego cannot be trusted to make decisions independently. His voice becomes secondary to the judgments of older and more experienced figures. In this way, the novel illustrates how fear can become a mechanism of domination, limiting an individual's agency while appearing to serve a protective purpose.

Overall, hysterical childism in *Ruination* is represented through a combination of adult anxiety, political concern, and narrative focalization. The adults surrounding Viego repeatedly interpret his emotions and decisions as signs of instability, leading them to seek greater control over his life. Through Kalista's internal focalization, readers witness how fear shapes perceptions of Viego and contributes to the restriction of his autonomy. Therefore, the novel demonstrates that hysterical childism operates not only through overt acts of control but also

through the assumptions, anxieties, and prejudices that cause adults to distrust a young person's ability to govern themselves.

4.2.4 The Contribution of Focalization to the Representation of Negative Childism in *Ruination*

The analysis conducted in this study demonstrates that focalization contributes significantly to the representation of negative childism in Anthony Reynolds' *Ruination*. Rather than functioning merely as a technical element of narration, focalization determines whose perspective readers privilege, whose interpretations become authoritative, and whose voices remain marginalized throughout the narrative. According to Bal (1997), focalization concerns the relationship between the observer and the observed, emphasizing that narrative meaning is always mediated through a particular consciousness. In *Ruination*, this mediation consistently occurs through adult characters, particularly Kalista, whose perspective dominates much of the novel. Consequently, readers are encouraged to understand Viego not primarily through his own experiences but through the judgments, concerns, and assumptions of the adults surrounding him. This narrative strategy becomes fundamental in constructing the representation of negative childism because it positions adult perceptions as the principal source of truth regarding Viego's character and capabilities.

One of the most significant findings of this study is that **internal** focalization functions as the primary narrative mechanism through which negative childism is represented. Throughout the novel, Kalista serves as the dominant focalizer, granting readers direct access to her emotions, reflections, fears, political judgments, and moral evaluations. Readers repeatedly witness Viego through Kalista's consciousness, while opportunities to enter Viego's own perspective remain comparatively limited. Bal (1997) argues that internal focalization restricts readers' knowledge to what the focalizing character knows, believes, or perceives. As a result, readers naturally adopt Kalista's interpretation of events because alternative perspectives are rarely available. This narrative restriction is particularly important because Kalista consistently interprets Viego as emotionally unstable,

inexperienced, impulsive, and dependent upon guidance from older authority figures.

These recurring evaluations shape readers' understanding of Viego long before he is allowed to demonstrate his own capacity for leadership. Instead of encountering an autonomous young ruler whose character develops through independent choices, readers repeatedly encounter an image of Viego filtered through adult concern and skepticism. Consequently, his identity is constructed externally by those who claim responsibility for protecting him. This narrative pattern reflects Young-Bruehl's (2012) concept of negative childism, which describes prejudice against children as a system of beliefs that underestimates children's competence while legitimizing adult authority over their lives. Through internal focalization, the novel subtly normalizes these assumptions by encouraging readers to accept adult interpretations as objective reality rather than recognizing them as subjective judgments.

The findings further reveal that focalization strengthens the portrayal of **narcissistic childism** by allowing adult characters to define Viego's identity according to their own political expectations and personal anxieties. Throughout the analyzed passages, the dying king repeatedly questions Viego's ability to rule, while Kalista and Isolde consistently evaluate his emotional condition and leadership potential. Rather than encouraging Viego to develop confidence through experience, these adult figures assume responsibility for directing his future. The repeated commands to "guide," "counsel," "protect," and "control" him illustrate that adults regard themselves as the primary decision-makers in his life.

Young-Bruehl (2012) explains that narcissistic childism emerges when adults project their own fears, ambitions, and expectations onto children instead of recognizing children's individuality. The findings strongly support this theory because Viego is consistently represented not as an independent person but as a political responsibility whose behavior must conform to adult expectations regarding kingship and national stability. His personal desires, emotional struggles, and developmental needs are repeatedly subordinated to broader concerns about Camavor's future. Consequently, adult authority becomes normalized as both

necessary and morally justified. Internal focalization reinforces this process because readers primarily experience these assumptions through Kalista's sincere belief that she is acting in Viego's best interests. Since readers have limited access to Viego's own thoughts, adult interpretations become the dominant framework through which his character is understood.

The study also demonstrates that focalization significantly contributes to the construction of obsessive childism. Whereas narcissistic childism emphasizes adult projection and identity formation, obsessive childism is characterized by excessive supervision, regulation, and behavioral control. Young-Bruehl (2012) argues that adults exhibiting obsessive childism perceive children as individuals who require continuous discipline because they are believed to lack sufficient self-control and rational judgment. This pattern is repeatedly evident throughout the novel. Kalista constantly monitors Viego's emotional condition, evaluates his decisions, and reminds herself of her responsibility to protect both him and Camavor. Even when her actions arise from genuine concern, they simultaneously reinforce the assumption that Viego cannot safely govern himself without adult intervention.

The recurring command, "*Protect Viego. Protect Camavor,*" illustrates this ideology particularly well. Although protection initially appears benevolent, its continual repetition transforms it into a principle of lifelong supervision. Kalista interprets her duty not merely as offering advice but as regulating Viego's choices whenever necessary. Such responsibility leaves little opportunity for him to exercise independent judgment because adult intervention is presented as the preferred solution whenever uncertainty arises. Internal focalization allows readers to witness how deeply this belief has become internalized within Kalista's consciousness. Rather than questioning whether Viego should be trusted with greater responsibility, she repeatedly assumes that guidance and control are indispensable. Consequently, the narrative portrays obsessive childism not as deliberate oppression but as a socially accepted form of care.

In addition to internal focalization, external focalization also contributes to the representation of negative childism, although it operates differently. Unlike internal focalization, external focalization limits readers to observable actions

without revealing characters' internal thoughts. At first glance, this narrative strategy appears more objective because it refrains from psychological interpretation. However, the findings demonstrate that external focalization indirectly reinforces childist assumptions because readers often encounter Viego's behavior without simultaneous access to his motivations. His gestures, movements, and decisions become open to interpretation by adult observers whose perspectives later dominate the narrative.

For example, scenes describing Viego standing silently beside Isolde or observing ongoing research provide no direct access to his emotional state. Readers must infer his feelings from visible behavior and surrounding circumstances. Shortly afterward, however, Kalista's internal focalization frequently interprets these same behaviors as evidence of emotional instability, dependence, or poor judgment. Consequently, external focalization does not function independently but instead prepares readers to accept adult interpretations offered later through internal focalization. This interaction between the two forms of focalization strengthens the ideological representation of childism because readers rarely receive sufficient narrative evidence to challenge adult assumptions about Viego.

Another important finding concerns the unequal distribution of narrative authority within the novel. Although Viego occupies a central role in the story, his perspective is considerably less accessible than Kalista's. This imbalance demonstrates that narrative authority does not necessarily correspond to narrative importance. Bal (1997) argues that focalization determines not only what readers know but also how they evaluate characters and events. In *Ruin*, readers consistently evaluate Viego according to adult standards because adults possess greater narrative authority. Kalista's reflections explain his actions, justify interventions, and define acceptable leadership, whereas Viego's own voice remains comparatively marginalized.

This unequal narrative distribution closely parallels the power relations described by Young-Bruehl (2012). Childism is fundamentally based upon unequal authority between adults and children, where adults assume the right to define children's identities, abilities, and future. Similarly, the novel grants interpretive

authority primarily to adult focalizers. Readers therefore encounter a literary structure that mirrors the social hierarchy underlying childism itself. Adults become both observers and interpreters, while the child becomes the object of observation. This parallel demonstrates that focalization functions not only as a literary technique but also as an ideological structure through which adult dominance is reproduced.

Moreover, the findings indicate that negative childism in *Ruination* is expressed primarily through benevolent paternalism rather than explicit hostility. None of the adult characters intend to harm Viego. On the contrary, their actions are motivated by affection, loyalty, responsibility, and political concern. Nevertheless, Young-Bruehl (2012) emphasizes that prejudice against children frequently appears in precisely this form. Adults justify controlling children's lives because they sincerely believe such control benefits the child. Kalista's constant guidance, Isolde's emotional support, and the dying king's instructions all originate from genuine care. However, these protective intentions simultaneously deny Viego opportunities to develop autonomy, self-confidence, and independent decision-making. Focalization intensifies this contradiction because readers experience these paternalistic attitudes directly through Kalista's sympathetic perspective, making them appear reasonable and morally justified.

Taken together, the findings demonstrate that focalization and childism are fundamentally interconnected within the narrative. Internal focalization constructs readers' emotional alignment with adult authority, while external focalization limits opportunities to question adult interpretations by restricting access to Viego's consciousness. These two narrative techniques work together to reinforce both narcissistic childism and obsessive childism throughout the novel. Adult authority is presented as natural, necessary, and responsible, whereas Viego's autonomy remains consistently limited by assumptions regarding his immaturity and emotional instability.

Overall, this study concludes that focalization functions as far more than a narrative perspective in *Ruination*. It operates as an ideological mechanism that shapes readers' understanding of childhood, authority, and power. By privileging adult consciousness and marginalizing the child's own perspective, the novel

reproduces childist assumptions identified by Young-Bruehl (2012), particularly those associated with narcissistic and obsessive childism. Therefore, the representation of negative childism in *Ruination* is not produced solely through dialogue or characterization but also through the narrative perspective itself. This finding demonstrates the close relationship between narratology and childhood studies, revealing that the way a story is told can significantly influence how readers perceive children's competence, agency, and autonomy. Such a conclusion confirms that Bal's theory of focalization and Young-Bruehl's theory of childism complement one another in explaining how literary narratives construct and maintain unequal power relations between adults and children.

