

Defense Mechanisms in The Character of Hardin Scott Reflected in Anna Todd's *After*

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Abstract: This thesis discusses the psychoanalytic issue of defense mechanisms in Anna Todd's novel *After*. The analysis focuses on Hardin's, the main character, defense mechanisms. The discussion covered in the analysis includes the unconscious motive of Hardin's defense mechanisms and the types of defense mechanisms exposed by Hardin. In revealing the defense mechanisms of Hardin, Freudian theories of defense mechanisms are employed. The method used in this thesis is a qualitative description method because this thesis aims to explain the defense mechanism of the main character in the novel. Moreover, this research applies a psychoanalytic approach because it discusses defense mechanisms from the point of view of psychoanalytical theories. The results of the analysis show that the unconscious motive of Hardin's defense mechanism is his unresolved conflict with his father. There are seven types of defense mechanisms exposed by Hardin, namely displacement, denial, projection, isolation, reaction formation, and identification with the aggressor. After doing the analysis the writer finds out find unresolved conflicts from unconscious motives carried out by the main character to form the self-defense mechanism found in the analysis.

Key Words: Defense mechanism, id, ego, superego, unconscious motive.

INTRODUCTION

In general, a person wants to live a calm and trouble-free life. However, in reality, humans always have problems in their lives to make them learn to face problems and survive. Some people have to deal with conflicts and problems that arise within themselves or are caused by external pressures from the surrounding environment. Problems arise from several causal factors such as family, friends, work, romance, or the environment. Problems that arise usually cause trauma and affect psychologically, which takes time to recover and appear as unconscious forms of self-defense.

Defense mechanisms refer to strategies unconsciously used to protect an individual from anxiety that is arising from unacceptable thoughts or feelings. Defense mechanisms work under the level of unconsciousness and help fend off bad feelings (McLeod, 2020). Freud in Hall (2019) states that the defense mechanism is related to the human ego. Defense mechanisms emerge when humans experience some conflicts arising from several causes, and they are unable to resolve them. In other words, some humans behave in other ways to hide from anxiety, fear, and all kinds of negative thoughts to protect themselves from unacceptable feelings.

Defense mechanisms can be found not only in people in real life but also in characters in literature. Anna Todd's *After* is an example of a literary work in which one of the characters, Hardin, is portrayed as a person who uses defense mechanisms as a strategy to protect himself from a life condition he is unable to cope with. As a child, Hardin has to witness how his drunken father has made trouble that causes her mother to be tortured by a man who is angry with his father. When his parents eventually get a divorce, he has to witness his mother struggling alone to raise him.

The writer is interested in analyzing the issue of defense mechanism reflected in Todd's *After* because it reveals that every human being has a different struggle in life but how to respond wisely and not take it out on negative things is interesting to be learned. In this research, the writer is interested in carrying out an analysis that focuses on the defense mechanisms used by Hardin in protecting himself from unpleasant thoughts or emotions. Therefore, this study is entitled "Defense Mechanisms in The Character of Hardin Scott Reflected in Anna Todd's *After*".

The writer determines in the formulation of the problem to be discussed is to find the unconscious motives and the types of defense

mechanisms carried out by the main character, A Descriptive qualitative research design is applied in this study with the aim of research to discover and explain the unconscious motives of Hardin's defense mechanisms and to elaborate defense mechanism exposed by Hardin.

There are several previous studies on defense mechanism which is represented through literary works. The first was the research conducted by Wa Ode Nia Fadhillah (2018), To find the self-defense mechanisms Fadhillah employed an intrinsic approach focused on characters, plot, setting, and themes and a psychoanalytic approach, focused on Freudian psychoanalysis. In her analysis, Fadhillah revealed the structural aspect and anxiety and the types of defense mechanisms used by the main character. Husni Mubarok (2019), In his research entitled “The Defense Mechanism of the Main Character in *The Road* Novel by Cormac McCarty”, Husni Mubarok's analyzed the types of self-defense mechanisms used by the main character in the novel. The similarity between the previous study and the present study is the topic of the discussion. That is to say that both types of research discuss defense mechanisms. Third, a previous study was conducted by Khendy in 2020. His research was entitled “*Defense Mechanism System of the Main Character in Whispering Skull Novel: a Psychological Approach*” In this study, Khendy determined the system of self-defense mechanisms used by the main character in *Whispering Skull*. The analysis focused on the types of self-defense mechanisms used by the main character in Jonathan Stroud's *The Whispering Skull*. In revealing the system of defense mechanisms, he applied the psychological theory of Freud. The analysis focused on the structural part of personality and the types of defense mechanisms used by the main character. Fourth, a previous study was conducted by Bayu Adi Saputra in 2021. His research was entitled “*Defense Mechanism of Lilly in S.A Swann's Wolfbreed and Lucy in Lynn Okamoto's Elfen Lied*” from 17 Agustus 1945 the University of Surabaya in this study, Bayu Adi Saputra Determine the defense mechanism phenomenon of the two stories and use comparative literary theory. The analysis focused on comparing two literary works from two different countries used by the main character in S.A Swann's *Wolfbreed* Novel and the main character in Okamoto's *Elfen Lied*. In uncovering the defense mechanism system, he applied Freud's psychoanalytic theory. The analysis focused on self-defense mechanisms and compare the literature from two different countries by reflecting on the culture of the people in dealing with anxiety. Finally, a previous study was conducted by Ardi Setiawan in

2022. His research was entitled “*Defense Mechanism of Laurie Strode in John Passarella’s Halloween*” from 17 Agustus 1945 the University of Surabaya in this study, Ardi Setiawan determined the system of self-defense mechanism used by the main character in the *Halloween* Novel. The analysis focused on the types of defense mechanisms used by the main character in John Passarella’s *Halloween*. In revealing the system of defense mechanisms, he applied the psychoanalytic theory of Freud.

Therefore, this study seeks to capture other dimensions so that it is different from previous research. The difference between the present study and the previous study is the focus of the analysis. In the present study, the focus of the analysis is not only on the types of defense mechanisms used by the character but also on the unconscious motives of the defense mechanisms. In addition, the present study also uses a different data source, namely Anna Todd’s *After*.

METHOD

Qualitative research methods are methods that do not involve measurement or statistics. This research deals with human behaviors reflected in a literary work and the data are in the form of nonnumerical data or qualitative data. The Researchers must be able to collect complete data. Sources of qualitative research data are spoken or written words and dialogues that are studied to get the meaning contained in the document or something being studied. The source of data in this research is the novel *After* written by American author Anna Todd which was published by Gallery Books in 2014. This novel has 500 pages, that are divided into 97 chapters.

The method used in this research is descriptive-analytic. This method is done by describing the facts which are then analyzed. Data analysis in this study was carried out by describing the interpretation of the data and the interpretation of the data presented descriptively. Therefore, this research includes descriptive qualitative research (Hancock, B. 2002). The facts referred to in this study are data on unconscious motives and types of defense mechanisms contained in Anna Todd's *After* Novel.

Data collection techniques will be done by reading, identifying, and classifying. The steps that must be taken are as follows: 1) The author reads the novel carefully and understands the novel in-depth, 2) The author identifies the types described in the novel, and 3) The author classifies the data findings from the novel. The steps for taking notes are recording the

results of the description and quoting sentences in *After Novel* which can be in the form of words or sentences.

This research is based on the psychoanalytic theory proposed by Sigmund Freud. In psychoanalysis theory, it uses the types of defense mechanisms and also unconscious motives in the theory proposed by Freud. Psychoanalysis is considered both a set of psychological theories and therapeutic strategies postulated by Freud. The main assumption of psychoanalysis is the belief that individuals possess subconscious thoughts, desires, feelings, and memories (McLeod, 2019).

Data Analysis Procedure in this study is divided into three stages. The first stage is the writer analyzes the data to figure out the way the novel elaborated on the idea of defense mechanism in terms of Freud's theory. The second step is for the writer would analyze the phrases and sentences to find out how the defense mechanisms and unconscious motives are portrayed in the novel. The last stage is the writer making a conclusion. After verification, a conclusion can be drawn based on the research results presented in the form of a description. Drawing this conclusion is the final stage of data analysis activities as well as the end of data processing.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The unconscious motive of Hardin's defense mechanisms is unresolved conflict. Hardin experiences continuous conflict with his father, who he always hated. As a child, his father drank at the bar all day and never showed his responsibility to the extent that Hardin's mother had to pay the price for his father's mistakes. He often fought with his father, and Hardin's parents ended up getting divorced. Growing up as a teenager, his father attempted to fix their relationship, but Hardin was still holding a grudge. Then when his father remarried his friend's mother, the hate Hardin felt towards him doubled. In short, the main character experiences unresolved conflict, which means that his needs or the other persons are still being ignored or neglected, increasing negative emotions. This includes ongoing problems where Hardin still harbored anger towards his father, which causes him to lash off on others to form a self-defense mechanism.

The Unconscious Motives of Hardin's Defense Mechanism

Unconscious is a better technique to discuss how the life of a person whose basic problems are not released into consciousness (Mahon & McMahon, 1986: p.488). The unsolved conflicts, scars, phobias, and traumatic memories that individuals do not want to be aware of because they believe they will make them feel too overwhelmed are all kept in the unconscious (Squires, 2012).

While these distressing psychological events are suppressed and removed from consciousness when they are very young, the unconscious is created, but suppressing negative feelings and experiences will not make them go away. Instinctively act in ways that allow us to "play out," without acknowledging conflicting thoughts about pain mechanisms because individuals who have a sense of trauma will use defense mechanisms to avoid feelings of anxiety and cover up the existing reality.

...” You don’t know him; he doesn’t give a shit about me. Do you know how many times I have talked to him in the last year? Maybe ten! All he cares about is his big house, his new soon-to-be wife, and his new, perfect son.” Hardin slurs and takes another drink. I stay quiet while he continues.

“You should see the dump that my mum lives in England. She says she likes it there, but I know she doesn’t. It’s smaller than my dad’s bedroom here! My mum practically forced me to come here for university, to be closer to him—and we see how that worked out!” (Todd, 2014:115).

Based on the text, Hardin reflexively explains how he still has not accepted the reality that his father wants to remarry. Hardin brings up that his mother's situation in London is inversely proportional to his father's never having been a father in a family. Hardin's mother believes that Hardin should study in Washington to be close and make peace with his father. However, this makes Hardin more and more open to his dark past without realizing it, and the conflict continues.

...” Hardin stares straight out onto the street for a few seconds and then sighs, deflating some of the tension. “Tessa, I don’t want to go. I don’t want to sit around with my dad’s perfect family. I avoid them for a reason” (Todd, 2014: 189).

In the quote, it is explained that Hardin remains in his position not

to come to his father and his future wife's invitation to dinner. Hardin mentions "perfect family" which means a happy family where his former father is the opposite of he is now. This makes Hardin hate him even more because of their bad relationship in the past.

...” Hardin isn’t as bad as he seems,” she tells me, though it feels sort of like she’s reminding herself. “He’s just hurt. (Todd, 2014:204).

The word "hurt" is mentioned because Hardin grows up as a child with a rough past due to an alcoholic father who likes beating other people. That factor forces Hardin's mother to take on the role of a father as well. Hardin's mother is always busy working to make ends meet, and one time, she experienced abuse after arguing with his father at the bar. This experience cannot be forgotten because Hardin felt helpless as a 7 years old boy since he could not do anything for his mother. The conflict between Hardin and his father continues in Washington as Hardin grows up.

...” Hardin and I both lie back on the bed, eyes on the ceiling as I ask him at least a hundred questions. He talks about the place he grew up, Hampstead, and how nice it was living there. He talks about the scar on his knee from the first time he learned to ride a bike with no training wheels, and how his mother passed out from the blood. His father was at the bar that day—all day long—so his mother was the one who taught him. He tells me about grade school and how he spent most of his time reading. He was never very social, and as he got older, his dad drank more and more and his parents fought more and more. He tells me about how he got kicked out of secondary school for fighting but his mother begged them to let him back. He began getting tattoos at sixteen; his friend would do them in his basement. His first tattoo was a star, and once he got one he wanted more and more. He tells me he doesn’t have a specific reason why he hasn’t tattooed his back; he just hasn’t gotten around to it yet. He hates birds, despite the two inked above his collarbones, and loves classic cars. The best day of his life was when he learned to drive, and the worst was when his parents divorced. His father stopped drinking when he was fourteen and has been trying to make up for all the terrible years, but

Hardin isn't having it" (Todd,2014: 254).

In the text, Hardin tells how the dark past makes Hardin hate so many things, and the unresolved conflict occurs and forms defense mechanisms against denial, displacement, reaction formation, projection, rationalization, isolation, and Identification with the Aggressor. This is caused unconsciously by someone with a neurotic defense mechanism due to the unresolved conflict in the past.

Displacement

Displacement is one defense mechanism transfer of feelings or behavior from the original object to another person or thing. In psychoanalytic theory, displacement is considered a defense mechanism in which individuals release tensions associated with, for example, hostility and fear by bringing them out to a less threatening target. Hardin has several types of defense mechanisms in responding to problems that arise, one of which has a displacement method. Hardin had a bad relationship at first with Landon, because he still doesn't accept him as a stepbrother, he is often used as an outlet by Hardin when they are having a debate or Hardin has problems.

...” How did you get here—” Hardin says loudly and stands up. “Landon . . . he . . .” I answer, then wish I hadn't. “You fucking called her?” he yells toward Landon, who for his part walks back inside. “You leave him alone, Hardin—he is worried about you,” I scold. He sits back down, gesturing for me to take a seat. I sit across from him and watch as he grabs the mostly empty bottle of dark liquor and puts it in his mouth. I watch Adam's apple move as he gulps it down. When he's finished, he slams the bottle down onto the glass of the patio table and it makes me jump, thinking either the bottle or the table or both might break (Todd, 2014:114).

The researcher finds a form of self-defense displacement in which a person will transfer objects by venting on other objects to vent his anger. In the text of the quote above, Hardin slammed the bottle of his father's favorite collection of drinks, at that time, the form of Hardin's mechanism

almost fell off, but he diverted it by slamming everything around him. Hardin is still filled with anger about how his father got his new life now while he abandoned Hardin and his mother in the past. The reason Hardin slams and destroys his father's scotch collection is to take revenge for what his father did to him as a child, scolding him and tearing Hardin's book just because Hardin accidentally bumped the bottle.

Denial

Denial is a state of the mechanism when people could not face reality or truth. In this state, they refuse to accept the fact or the reality that happened. Denial is mostly seen as a defense mechanism in real life. If a person is in denial, it means that he or she is struggling to accept something that seems overwhelming or stressful. However, in the short term, these defense mechanisms can be beneficial. This can allow a person to have time to adjust to sudden changes in reality. By giving oneself time, a person may be able to accept, adapt, and eventually move on.

Hardin is the main character in this story who in the researcher's point of view is a character who keeps a dark past and also grows up to be a hurt child. Because of the trauma, he got as a child, Hardin becomes a teenager who has a form of self-defense by applying a denial attitude. A person who applies this form of mechanism has a feeling to avoid things that are related to the trauma. As explained earlier, Ken, Hardin's father, throws a tantrum that causes Hardin to go through painful things. In the quote, the researcher finds that the form of self-defense does not accept the reality that exists, but in this way, someone who experiences it will have close access.

“That’s great! I remember when you were ten and you would recite passages from *The Great Gatsby* all day, every day. I knew you were a literature whiz then,” his father says.

“Do you? Do you remember that?” Hardin’s tone is harsh. I squeeze his hand, trying to signal him to calm down.

“Yeah, of course, I do,” Ken says calmly. Hardin’s nostrils flare and he rolls his eyes.

“I find that hard to believe since you were constantly drunk, and, if I remember correctly, which I do, you tore that book to pieces because I bumped your scotch and spilled it. So, don’t try to take a stroll down memory lane with me unless you know what the fuck you’re talking about.” He stands up as Karen and I both gasp. “Hardin!” Ken says as he leaves the room (Todd, 2014: 334).

Hardin does not want to explain how complicated his relationship with his father is, therefore he chooses to apply the denial form to the self-defense mechanism in the quote, someone who applies denial is choosing to close himself so that old wounds are not discussed again.

Projection

A simple definition of projection is an attempt to blame others for their failures, difficulties, or ill wishes. This form of defense mechanism is usually carried out by protecting oneself as a result of mistakes made by accusing others.

The researcher finds that Hardin's self-defense mechanism is by blaming other people even though he is the perpetrator who makes the mistake, but he does not want to admit it and this is called a form of projection.

.... “Chancellor? Of WCU?” I gasp. “Yes. Hardin never mentioned it?” Ken asks, looking over at his son.

“No . . . I didn’t.” Karen and Landon follow Ken’s eyes to Hardin and he shifts nervously. For his part, Hardin looks back at his father with a glaring hatred. He launches to his feet, shouting,

“No! Okay, no, I didn’t tell her—I don’t know why it fucking matters. I don’t need to use your name or position!” (Todd, 2014: 197).

The researcher finds that Hardin's mechanism of self-defense is by blaming others even though the perpetrator made a mistake but does not want to admit it and this is referred to as a form of projection.

Isolation

This defense mechanism works by isolating events in memory or isolating emotions from memory content or impulse. In isolation, impulses, thoughts, or actions do not deny reality.

... “What’s wrong with marriage?” I ask. “Not between us. Just in general,” I add. He shrugs.

“Nothing wrong with it, it’s just not for me.” This has taken too serious a turn. I don’t want to discuss marriage with Hardin, but it does bother me that he says marriage isn’t for him. I haven’t ever thought about actually marrying him, it’s way too early for that. Years too early. But I would like

the option eventually and want to be married by the time I'm twenty-five and then have at least two children. I have my whole future planned. Had, my subconscious reminds me. I had everything planned until I met Hardin and now my future is constantly changing and shifting (Todd, 2014:371).

In the text excerpt above, Hardin is traumatized by marriage by seeing real events experienced by his own family which ended in divorce and also left scars. According to Hardin, getting married will only hurt each other.

The researcher finds a form of emphasizing the emerging defense mechanism, namely isolation. Where a person usually isolates himself from traumatic events from the contents of memory or impulses.

Reaction Formation

Reaction Formation occurs when a person feels an urge to do or say something and then actually does or says something that is effectively the opposite of what they want. It also appears as a defense against a feared social punishment. If someone fears that they will be criticized for something, they will visibly act in a way that shows they are personally a long way from the feared position. A common pattern in reaction formation is where the person uses 'excessive behavior'

...” What am I doing here? Why do I keep thinking he will stop the endless string of insults long enough to have an actual conversation with me? Because I am an idiot, that’s why.

“It’s fine.

That’s who you are; that’s what you do. You find people’s weaknesses and you exploit them. You use it to your advantage. How long have you been waiting to say something about my father? You’ve probably been waiting for an opening since you met me!” I shout.

“Damn it! No, I haven’t! I wasn’t thinking when I said that! You are not innocent here—you provoke me on purpose!” he yells, even louder than I did. “Provoke you? I provoke you! Please, do enlighten me!” I know everyone in the house can hear. But, for once, I don’t care (Todd, 2014: 312).

In this case, Tessa reminds Hardin to be kind by responding when

his father asks something, but Hardin responds by reprimanding Tessa to mind her own business and even saying she should take care of Tessa's father instead of his. This hurts Tessa. Hardin always uses someone's weakness to provoke them, and he does so subconsciously.

The form, in this case, is how the Ego receives the impulse from the Id so that the reaction is formed. In the excerpt of this dialogue, it is explained that Hardin is someone who tries to do reaction formation, where a reaction formation is a form of self-defense mechanism by hiding the feelings he is experiencing.

Rationalization

Rationalization is a psychoanalytic defense mechanism that arises when the ego does not accept the real motives of individual behavior and replaces them with hidden motives (Halonen and Santrock, 1996). Hardin is one example of how a person builds his defenses in response to problems. The attitude that is formed is a way of responding to the consequences of the trauma that he got as a child. And it also has an impact on those around them because, for someone who has the right to self-defense mechanisms, the closest people will have many impacts because they interact more intensely.

... “No, I don’t need your pity,” he interrupts.

“It’s not pity. I’m just trying to—”

“Trying to what?”

“Help you. Be here for you,” I say softly. And he smiles. It’s a beautifully haunting smile and makes me hopeful that I can help him through this, but I know what is really about to happen.

“You are so pathetic. Don’t you see that I don’t want you here? I don’t want you to be here for me. Just because I messed around with you doesn’t mean I want anything to do with you. Yet here you are, leaving your nice boyfriend—who can stand to be around you—to come and try to ‘help’ me. That, Theresa, is the definition of pathetic,” he says, (Todd, 2014: 116)

At this point, it is known that Hardin is very fragile because he received news that his father is getting married, so Landon calls Tessa to control Hardin and calm him down. Hardin is a character

who does not want anyone to know the problems he is facing. So here the writer finds a form of self-defense rationalization, in which this form of self-defense moves to engage in wrong behavior, even though he knows that this is wrong.

CONCLUSION

Hardin's Defense Mechanism is caused by his father, Hardin's father in the past was a drunkard and also angry. As a child, Hardin had to accept his father's harsh attitude until he was traumatized until he grew up as a teenager.

Hardin's father was also the cause of how his mother had to be harassed by the person he beat at the bar, thus traumatizing Hardin. Therefore, Hardin had an unresolved conflict with his father until he was a teenager and that is the reason Hardin has unconscious motives for the ongoing conflict by causing the defense mechanism found in the main character.

The Researcher found that the form of analysis from the novel taken was that Hardin had an unconscious motive in the unresolved conflict experienced by his father, thus forming several defense mechanisms, namely displacement, denial, projection, isolation, reaction formation, rationalization, and identification with the aggressor. The form of defense mechanism that often appears is the type of displacement and denial, in the form of displacement, Hardin often makes an outlet aimed at the weakest object, namely Landon. In the next form that often comes out is denial, the researcher finds that Hardin still refuses to have a good relationship with his father and still thinks that his father is a loser.

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