

Defense mechanism in Charles Williams' *Dead Calm*

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- Abstract : This study analyzes defense mechanism undergone by Hughie Warriner in *Dead Calm*. Warriner conducts defense mechanism because he wants to reduce his anxiety after accidental incident of sinking a yacht and the killing of his friend. His action of doing defense mechanism is psychologically explainable that is also undergone by people in real life which then becomes the reason the researchers get interested in analyzing defense mechanism. Besides, this kind of mechanisms are close in human life that man is born with anxiety through which he conducts defense mechanisms unconsciously. Using three types of anxiety by Sigmund Freud, the study shows that Warriner conducts defense mechanisms: denial, displacement, and sublimation. By denial, he denies sinking the yacht and killing his friend, by displacement, he blames other object by shouting at it, and by sublimation, he puts the investigators under the yacht. Thus, the three types of defense mechanism are worthy of research since people can reduce their anxiety properly. By this study then, the researchers hope so much that it contributes to the development of the literary study especially in the study of psychology of literature.
- Keywords : *defense mechanism, denial, displacement, sublimation, anxiety*
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INTRODUCTION

Simpson, et. al (2010) in their book *anxiety disorders* explain about human anxiety that human and anxiety are closely related since anxiety is a global human feeling. Though closely related, yet, most people undergo anxiety that is not productive leading to anxiety disorders that include panic disorder, agoraphobia, social anxiety disorder/social phobia, specific phobia, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), acute stress disorder, obsessive–compulsive disorder (OCD), and separation anxiety disorder.

Those kinds of anxiety disorders can be concluded in three types of anxiety, that is, reality anxiety, neurotic anxiety, and moral anxiety (Schultz, 2017), two of which (moral and neurotic anxiety) are incline to trigger defense mechanisms (Zeidner, at al, 2011). Then, people improve defense mechanism against anxiety (Cervone, et. al, 2019). Defense mechanisms, then, are usually understood as actions that are used to deal with stress denoting to unconscious processes (Epstein, et. al, 2014)).

Sigmund Freud categorizes defense mechanisms into eight: repression, denial, reaction formation, projection, regression, rationalization, displacement, and sublimation (Schultz, 2017). Repression is the most repeatedly and vitally used defense mechanism, whose work is to remove something painful and uncomfortable within people's awareness. The instance of this is the repression of a man's sexual drive so he becomes impotent. Denial is to deny something that makes the person threatened or being distressing, the example of which is to deny a death of the member of the family that is hurtful, though not changing the member's bedroom by the parents. Reaction formation is to defend oneself from the dangerous impulse by the opposite of the impulse: hatred vs love, angry vs lovely, unkindly vs friendly, etc. Projection is to project the painful impulse to someone else in order that the threatening impulse to that person becomes less threatening. For instance, to respond someone else's threat, the person says that the person does not hate that someone. That someone hates him, instead.

Regression is the way of defending oneself by regressing back to the earlier years of life, the childhood, the years he is so secure and dependent. Therefore, by being childish, he feels good when an unpleasant impulse comes to him. Rationalization is to rationalize every unpleasant impulse by sensible interpretation in case of the dangerous threat to him/herself. For instance, if he is sent home from his job, he may say that he is not worthy of the job because the job field does not match his qualification. Displacement is to replace the unpleasant object to other object when the replacer is afraid of the unpleasant object though the substitute object does not reduce the feeling of unpleasant. For instance, if a child is being afraid of his angry mother, he may kick his sister or if a worker is fearful of his manager, he may shout at a seeable animal. Sublimation is not like displacement that finds another object for the substitute. It is rather changing his behavior for being pleasant. For example, if someone cannot express his sexual drive, he may express it through art or sport.

As one of the psychological phenomena undergone by people (Livesley, et. al, 2018), defense mechanisms can also be seen in literary works as Philip Tew states that novels that play important roles by explaining and participating dialectically with human beings' historical presence, play their part in human beings' understanding of and reflection upon human beings' lives (Prokrivcak, 2010:42). The novel the researchers find the defense mechanisms is Charles Williams' *Dead Calm*.

Hughie Warriner, the main character in *Dead Calm*, makes a mistake by drowning a yacht and killing his friend unintentionally. Therefore, the feeling of anxiety comes to him when he meets people. To overcome his anxiety, he develops defense mechanisms

unconsciously through denial, displacement, and sublimation. The researchers are interested in raising defense mechanisms as issue in this article because defense mechanisms are attached to human's life. Human's life as well as the whole universes are the creation of God. As the creation of God, surely, humans have been prepared things to overcome their problems by God. In relation to defense mechanisms to solve anxiety, one of the psychological problems, Sigmund Freud states that God is the defense mechanism Himself for the people (Walborn, 2014). Thus, through studying denial, displacement, and sublimation in this article, the readers are aware of their existence that 'people are born in anxiety except for those who do the prayers.' The semi quotation from surah al ma'aarij matches with Freud's statement above. Then, how denial, displacement, and sublimation are undergone by the main character in Charles Williams' *Dead Calm* will be discussed here.

As defense mechanisms in this article belong to literary psychology, the researchers then refer to previous studies dealing with literary psychology, too, to find the gap of the researchers' study. The first previous study belongs to Abu Fanani, et. al, (2015) in the article *A Psychological Thriller in Donna Tartt's the Goldfinch* he analyzes the main character's anxiety. Using psychological theory, the study finds that the main character experiences repeated memory(s), feeling shamed, worry, fear, nightmares, and feelings of terror.

The second previous study belongs to Irwan Sumarsono, et. al, (2022). In the article *the Oedipus Complex in Eugene O'neills' Desire Under the Elms*, he analyzes the Oedipus complex in Eben, the main character. Using psychoanalysis, the study finds that Eben's Oedipus complex is influenced by the id, ego and superego. In the following year, in the third previous study, Irwan Sumarsono, et. al, (2023) again deals with literary psychology. In the article *the Effects of Poverty on the Human Psyche Reflected in Rupert Brooke's Lithuania: a Psychoanalytic Study* he analyzes the psychological effects of poverty on individuals. Using psychoanalysis theory, the study finds that sense of morality and ethical decision-making can be influenced by societal attitudes towards wealth and poverty.

The fourth previous study belongs to Khairunissya Turachma Aurelly Nurananda Suhandoko, et al (2023). In the article *the Anxiety in Meena Kandasamy's When I Hit You* she analyzes Meena's anxiety. Using types of anxiety, the study finds that the main character in the novel undergoes neurotic anxiety, moral anxiety, and realistic anxiety all of which belong to kinds of anxiety. Therefore, Meena's feeling is tense as well as restless, shameful, guilty and worried, and her abusive husband fear. The fifth previous study belongs to Naila Dian Ekaputri, et. al, (2023). In the article *Persona and Shadow in Harlan Ellison's Shatterday and Chuck Palahniuk's Fight Club*, she analyzes the main character's mental disorders. Using Jung's psychoanalysis, the study finds that in the two novels, the persona makes the characters confused, whilst, the shadow does something wrong so that the narrator makes a peace with it.

The sixth previous study belongs to Ila Nuriya Habibah, et. al, (2023). In the article *Quentin's Personality Development in John Green's Paper Towns* she analyzes changes of personality of a main character. Using two determinants of Hurlock, the main character, Quentin alters from a stagnant person: without motivations, a chicken, and controlled one before meeting Margo to a lively person: with a motivation, a brave person, and a rebellious one after meeting Margo.

The seventh previous study belongs to Amaliyah, Nur, and Yeni Prastiwi (2022). In their article *Defense Mechanisms in Emily Bronte's Wuthering Heights: How Catherine Earnshaw Deal with Egocentricity*, they analyze the personality of Catherine Earnshaw. Using form of denial, identification, repression, and rationalization, the study finds that Catherine can balance her personality of egocentric. The last previous study belongs to Setiawan, Feri, et al. (2021).

In their article Facing Anxiety through Ego Defense Mechanisms on The Walking Dead: Michonne Movie Game, analyze ego defense mechanisms, using types of defense mechanisms: repression, sublimation, rationalization, and aggression, the study finds that the character can manage his resentment or dissatisfaction.

All in all, mostly, the previous studies above refer to the same general field of study as the researchers' study, that is, literary psychology study, only two of which have the same topic as the researchers. However, the two previous studies with the topic of defense mechanism only have similarity in denial in the seventh previous study, whilst, in the last previous study, the similarity is in sublimation. Thus, though there is the same topic with the researchers', the difference is that the researchers use denial, sublimation, and displacement. Therefore, the researchers' study meets the requirement of the novelty. Through this novelty, the researchers are in a considerable hope that it gives contribution to the growth of the literary study especially in the study of literary psychology.

METHOD

Research Design

The researchers use descriptive and dramatic method in analyzing the novel through Freud's three types of defense mechanisms: denial, displacement, and sublimation in that describing and discussing as well as reporting the character's speech and action are presented by the researchers. Consequently, from the description, discussion and report of the character's speech and action, the researchers do the presentation as well the analysis of the three types of defense mechanism of the main character. Further, to get the analysis of the clear data, the researchers use Freud's three types of defense mechanism to be a main method for the analysis of defense mechanism in Anxiety in Charles Williams *Dead Calm*.

Data Sources

The data sources of this study are taken in the form of description, speech, and action of the main character's defense mechanism from the novel of Charles Williams *Dead Calm*.

Data Collection

There is a way of collecting the data: interview, observation, document, and survey the data (Miles & Huberman, 1984). Since this study is a literary study, therefore, observation, document, and survey the data are worth applying here. By observation, the researchers mean to read the whole novel first and find the problem and after that the researchers get the related theory. By document, the researchers mean to classify the data which belong to defense mechanisms: denial, displacement, and sublimation. By survey the data, the researchers mean to analyze the classified data

Data Analysis

The data analysis refers to the research question and the explanation of the research question (Miles and Huberman 1984) that is how denial, displacement, and sublimation are undergone by the main character in Charles Williams' *Dead Calm* are discussed here.

RESULTS

There are two things the researchers would like to present before coming to the result of the study. Firstly, the result of the researchers' study truly has the novelty; as explained above that all of the previous studies above are with the literary psychology study as the researchers, the last two are similar in topic as the researchers. Yet, the two mentioned previous studies are with denial and sublimation, respectively, whilst, the researchers' study combine denial and

sublimation as well as use displacement. Therefore, the researchers' study meets the requirement of the novelty

Secondly, the researchers would like to elaborate a little bit about the main character's (Warriner) anxiety that led him to conduct defense mechanisms: denial, displacement, and sublimation. Because of his mistakes of drowning a yacht and killing his friend, he feels anxious to meet people such as feeling fear which belongs to neurotic anxiety. It is then understood that neurotic anxiety is the fear towards the persons in authority that refer to parents or teacher or manager in a workplace. After the accident drowning and killing, Warriner is anxious to see people that he regards as his parents or people in authority. The second anxiety he experiences is moral anxiety that is understood as the feeling of shame. In spite of fear, Warriner feels shameful when he meets people after the terrible incident already mentioned. The last anxiety is real anxiety that is a physical danger that somebody is fearful of facing. To Warriner, the drowning of the yacht is regarded as physical danger that should be avoided of. Warriner cannot stand of this accident. He prefers not coming back to be in the yacht in case of the drowning.

Denial

As explained above that denial a type of defense mechanism that denies a terrible event since it gives inconvenient feeling. In this case, Warriner denies the terrible accident of the drowning by preventing somebody to come near to the drowning yacht.

He frowned. "Yes, but that's still not what I mean. If she's leaking at all, he'd never make port in her alone; she's too big for singlehanded sailing, to say nothing of being at the pump all the time. He almost has to abandon her, but not the way he did. I keep getting the feeling he doesn't want anybody to go aboard." (Williams, 1963).

John Ingram is one of the people Warriner is anxious of, because of whom he conducts this type of defense mechanism, that is, denial. The quotation above shows that John Ingram is forbidden to be on aboard. Through Warriner's prevention of Ingram's visit, he hope so much that his anxiety decreases. Therefore, he will live normally as nothing terrible has happened. This denial also happens in reality that one of parents' children is away abroad, the mother lets the child's bedroom it be when it is left by him because the mother longs for him so much. Hence, she wants to decrease her anxiety for the longing.

Displacement

As explained above that displacement is to get another thing/person to be the object of somebody's target of anger when he has unpleasant object fearing him in order to reduce his anxiety for example by kicking or shouting at the target object though the target object does not know anything about the anxiety. It happens to Warriner when Ingram insists on coming to come to the yacht to search what happens actually that causes Estelle's death, Warriner feels anxious and shout at the shark,"When we'd try to question him about Estelle, he'd go all to pieces and begin shouting again about a shark. I made Bellew stop asking him. (Williams, 1963). The shouting of Warriner at the shark is because Warriner is the only witness of the death of Estelle. being panic and thinking of his own safety, the shark is the target object of his shouting.

Sublimation

As explained above that sublimation refers to the change of behavior in order to reduce anxiety with example of changing a sexual drive to art or sport. Though, in this study, changing to art or sport is difficult to find by the researchers, however, the researchers come to an event

that is close to sublimation. In this case, Bellew is threatened by Warriner by the throwing basket to his head and putting him in a chain in order that Warriner's anxiety reduces. It is a positive action to Warriner. "No," Bellew said. "When we heard you walking around, we thought it was still him. We didn't know he'd sighted a rescue boat when he slugged me and locked us in there. A laugh a minute, that Hughie-boy. Like to run into him again someday" (Williams, 1963). The quotation above is from Bellew's point of view about Warriner who slugs and locks him in his boat. In this situation, Warriner faces some pressure from Bellew, who continues to question Estelle's condition and blame Warriner for her death. Finally, Warriner takes the risk to fight against Bellew by throwing a basket in his head. Warriner adopts a brave act to fight Bellew, although he still has the fear inside his heart and his whole body shivers. The researchers find the feeling anxious as the cause of Warriner using sublimation as a self-defense mechanism. He feels anxious that Bellew will kill and blame him because he is with Estelle before her death.

In a nutshell, comparing with the previous studies above from Fanani, Sumarsono, Suhandoko, Ekaputri, Habibah, Amaliyah, and Setiawan, this study truly has the novelty. The explanation is as follows. Most the researchers above use psychology referring to psychological theory by Fanani, psychoanalysis in two articles by Sumarsono, types of anxiety by Suhandoko, Jung's psychoanalysis by Ekaputri, and two determinants of Hurlock by Habibah only two with similar topic by Amaliyah and Setiawan. Though similar, but the difference is the use of the types of defense mechanisms, Amaliyah and Setiawan use denial and sublimation, respectively, the researchers use denial, sublimation and displacement.

DISCUSSION

In this discussion, the researchers divide into two parts, one-part deals with the theory, whilst, the other part deals with the analysis. Indeed, it is not easy to apply the first part, that is, the three types of defense mechanism in this study since there are studies dealing with literary psychology. However, through hard work, the researchers succeed in applying the theory of defense mechanism. Initially, the researchers try to refer to use anxiety as the issue. Yet, since the researchers find some other researchers have used it, the researchers turn to other theory, namely, id, ego, and superego. Likewise, this theory has been used by other researcher, in two articles by the same researcher and in one article by the other researcher.

Before coming to the decision to use types of defense mechanism, the researchers' mind is led to use personality development theory as the researchers regard that Warriner's personality changes, yet, this desire is again blocked by the existence of other researcher using the same theory. Thus, the use of defense mechanism is the final decision because the researchers does not find other researchers using it.

In the second part, Warriner tries to deny the death of his friend by forbidding other people to go to the yacht since it is the scene of the death by his accidental murder, "I keep getting the feeling he doesn't want anybody to go aboard." (Williams, 1963). This is a kind of psychological attitude Warriner does to reduce his anxiety that does not happen in the previous studies; what happens to Theodore Decker when he feels anxious in his life by the death of her mother, "God, I'm so haunted by that movie. I think about Tyrell's niece a lot" (Fanani, et al, 2015). The movie seems to be putting his mind of his beloved mother, therefore, there is no other ways unless he has to forget his mother even though he is in the entertainment place.

Likewise, the clear disparity also happens to Warriner by the action of Meena when she is anxious. She runs away from her life instead of conducting defense mechanisms to reduce her anxiety, "I am the woman who was a battered wife. I am the same wife who ran away"

(Suhandoko, 2023). Decker and Meena have anxiety but they do not have solution to do. They seem to go away from the reality that such difference from this study is supported by the action of Novin who denies the existence of his mother when he comes to success,” I’ve got work to do, places I have to go, I have a life to lead...” (Ekaputri, 2023). ‘Deny’ here is not denial as one of the types of defense mechanism but it is the ignorance the very important person in somebody’s life, a mother. It seems that Novin undergoes a psychological deviation that he ignores his mother.

The change of personality psychologically also differentiates this study. Margo has undergone a change of character from coward to bravery,” she said. “Margo, we gotta go home and tell” (Habibah, 2023). The change of Margo’s personality is a normal change after he experiences things. Still, it supports the novelty of this article that Warriner does not change his personality. He solves his anxiety by conducting defense mechanisms.

The following two behaviors conclude the novelty of this article by the influence of id, ego, and superego in the main characters of Eben and the daughter. The former refers to his psychological disorder that he wants to kill his father and marries his mother,” I pray he’s died” (Sumarsono, 2022), whilst, the second refers to the psychological change due to the poverty,” Daughter “I don’t know. We’ll be rich. We’ll get away from here” (Sumarsono, 2023).

Still in the second part, here the researchers find a little problem by applying displacement as a type of defense mechanism in Warriner’s shouting at a shark. The shout to other object is a normal action in that it does not have things to do with psychological matters. “When we’d try to question him about Estelle, he’d go all to pieces and begin shouting again about a shark. I made Bellew stop asking him” (Williams, 1963). The shark could have appeared in the surface of the sea, therefore, Warriner shouts at it. However, remembering Warriner’s other psychological actions, the researchers then come strongly to the belief that what Warriner has done by shouting at the shark is a kind of defense mechanism to reduce his feeling of anxious at being investigated.

Likewise, another problem faces the researchers on analyzing Warriner’s defense mechanism precisely in type of sublimation is that when Warriner puts Ingram in a box in the yacht. “We didn’t know he’d sighted a rescue boat when he slugged me and locked us in there” (Williams, 1963). Indeed, it is another way of expressing energy with someone for another action in order that that someone reduces his anxiety. Yet, the researchers come up with an idea that what Warriner has done as stated in the quotation is a type of defense mechanism, that is, sublimation. This thing is supported by the fact that what Warriner has done gives positive impact to him and it is ‘another way of expressing energy.’ Besides, the researchers are made convinced by the fact that all the characters in the previous studies above do not do what Warriner has done to decrease his anxiety by doing sublimation.

All in all, the researchers come to the strong conclusion that Warriner has conducted defense mechanisms in the types of denial, displacement, and sublimation. It is proved by the fact that most of the psychological problems experienced by the characters in the previous studies above do not refer to the defense mechanism, only two do, still, they do not use types of defense mechanism more than the researchers. Again, the three types of defense mechanism conducted by Warriner gives the novelty of this study.

CONCLUSION

The researcher concludes that to get rid of his anxiety, Warriner has denied something wrong he has done, has shouted to another object as if the other object is to blame, and to do something he thinks positive for himself. All is conducted in order that Warriner’s anxiety decreases.

Besides, through finding and discussion above, this study has the novelty that has been proved by the fact that though two characters in the mentioned previous studies conduct defense mechanism, however, they use denial and sublimation, respectively, whilst, the researchers combine the two types plus displacement. In the future the researchers hope so much that this study of defense mechanism is developed by other types with the same novel or by the same types of defense mechanisms with different novel.

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