



DEFENSE MECHANISM IN A PLAY MR. BAILEY'S MINDER BY DEBRA OSWALD (2005)

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Abstract

The research proposes to analyze the defense mechanism issues faced by character Leo in drama "Mr. Bailey's Minder" (2005) by Debra Oswald. Defense mechanism refers to an old man who was abandoned by his family. The character used defense mechanism to deal with his anxiety and problem in his life. This analysis is related to psychoanalysis theory by Sigmund Freud. The theory based on interpreting the text and context of the drama. The data were in the form of dialog and sentences. The result of the study shows the character used defense mechanism in this analysis refers to how the defense mechanism used by the antagonist cannot make him overcome anxiety and problems in his life. He has a different character at the beginning of the story and at the end of the story towards his death. In the initial phase, he uses several defense mechanisms such as denial, projection, regression, and displacement. At the end of his life, the character uses the sublimation defense mechanism as his last defense mechanism. Sublimation is the only defense mechanism that can get him out of the problems in his life and start to make peace with the shortcomings that exist in him.

Key words: Anxiety, Defense Mechanism, Psychoanalysis.

A. INTRODUCTION

Human life will never be separated from problems and tests. Sometimes, there problems and tests cause anxiety, discomfort, fear, and uneasy feeling. When experiencing an unpleasant event, human's mind of mental will consciously or unconsciously try to overcome the situation. The strategies that can be used to deal with unpleasant situations are called defense mechanism. This strategy can help someone from unwanted feelings and conditions. Mehta (2021:2) states that, people who experience unpleasant and painful events will use defense mechanism strategies. Without realizing it, a person performs defense mechanism in everyday life, such as diverting anxiety in a more positive way or in a negative way.

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Defense mechanism is a mechanism that humans use to protect themselves from things they do not want or avoid. Defense mechanism can be seen as something positive if person are able to divert their energy to something positive. However, defense mechanism can also lead a person to unhealthy psychological conditions. The defense mechanism does make a person forget the unpleasant feeling, but actually the effect of this feeling of comfort is only temporary. Mehta (2021:1) explains that excessive use of defense mechanism or for a continuous period of time can be very dangerous. Defense mechanism is human habits that occur under the control of the human unconscious. In fact, most people are not aware of the defense mechanism strategies they use.

“Defense mechanisms are unconscious or subconscious behaviors so that individuals feel they are getting something they need even though in reality there is none. Another meaning of defense mechanism is a person's desire not to accept something he doesn't want even though the reality is there.” (Sanyata 2009:36).

Leo Bailey is a complicated character. In this drama, he is described as an old man who is very cynical about his life. He really hated himself. He could not come to terms with the facts he had to face. He eventually became a drinker to release his anxiety. In this drama, alcohol is poison to him. Alcohol only relieves his anxiety in the short term. This finally makes Leo unable to escape from alcohol. He could no longer fight his addiction to alcohol. Alcohol changes a person's personality to be out of control. He becomes a rude person. He could not trust another. He became emotional. He hurt himself as well as those around him, both physically and mentally. He always feels anxious. According to Andrews at all (2018:110) Anxiety refers to a sensation of fear and concern manifested by an individual regarding an ongoing issue, leading to discomfort and impairment.

The defense mechanism used by the character in this drama shows a negative defense mechanism. The lack of precise use of the defense mechanism used makes the main character's relationship with the second character not improved. This can be seen through the relationship between the first character as the antagonist character and the second character Margo as the protagonist character. The second character has carried women named Therese. She pays her to taking care of her father. She does not want to taking care her father by herself. Leo has alcohol related dementia that makes his condition become so bad. The first character does not like to see his daughter. His attitude toward her was very rude. Margo is patient enough to face Leo's rant. He always feels threatened by Margo. He thinks that she will take the property from him. He thinks that she has stolen his paintings. He does not trust his daughter. He uses defense mechanism as proof that it was his family who did not treat him well and only wanted his wealth. He uses denial defense mechanism to deny the fact that he is the one who disappointed his family.

This analysis is based on the psychological aspect of the main character in drama *Mr. Bailey's Minder* by Debra Oswald (2005) by using psychoanalysis theory by Sigmund Freud, to find out inappropriate defense mechanism used by the main character. One of the reasons defense mechanism are chosen as a topic to be discussed in this thesis is because the researcher interested in discussing defense mechanism that will be related to the life and personality of the individual. In this drama, the main character is a perfect example of a human who is trying to deny the fact that he did things that hurt his wife and children. His hard to come to deal with himself makes him try to ignore, hide and deny facts by using defense mechanism. In this issue of the drama, the main character shows the continuous use of defense mechanism in a negative way. Through a deep understanding of reading the drama *Mr. Bailey's Minder* (2005), the researcher wants to reveal how inappropriate defense mechanism are depicted in Oswald's *Mr. Bailey's Minder*.

There are numerous researchers who have conducted literary research on modern play or drama text and the issue of defense mechanism on literary text. To illustrate, the literary studies on modern drama have been done recently by Paradila & Marlina (2019), Mahardika, Susanto & Siti (2023). Meanwhile the study the issue of defense mechanism and anxiety in literary work such as novel and short story has been studied by Pradana (2018); and Tennisanna (2018), Zulfaisya and Hasra (2020); Sinaga (2020), Viona & Wahyuni (2022), Arifin (2023).

Zulfaisya and Hasra (2020), have studied anxiety and defense mechanism in novel. The writer analyze the defense mechanism of the main character in Laurie Halse Anderson's novel entitle *Speak*. This study reveals that the main character experiencing psychological conflicts as a victim of verbal, physical and psychological bullying she got at school. The character use defense mechanism as strategies in overcoming her anxiety as the impact of the bullying. Pradhana (2018), have studied anxiety and defense mechanism in novels. The writer reveals that the first character experience anxiety of the dead body. The defense mechanism character use succeeded to reduce her anxiety and bring into fully functioning her conscious and conscience. Tennisanna (2018), have studied anxiety and defense mechanism in short stories. The writer reveals that characters used defense mechanism to against anxiety and suspense. The characters use defense mechanism as strategies to avoid the conflict. They tend to solve the` conflict by means of defense mechanism rather that discussing the problems.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

The type of this research is qualitative research. According to Bogdan and Taylor, as described by Lexy J. Moleong (2000:48), qualitative research is a research technique that generates descriptive data from individuals in the form of written or spoken words and observed behavior. The research data used is qualitative data sourced from the literary work of the drama *Mr. Bailey's Minder*.

Qualitative data is defined as the data that approximates and characterizes. It is possible to observe and record qualitative data. This is a non-numerical data type.

The data will be analyzed based on the theory of psychoanalysis. This theory reveals the anxiety and defense mechanism of this drama. It is supported by dramatic elements, such as characters, setting, plot, and stage direction. The characters of this drama are set out by various human behavioral problems. The previous theory work by Sigmund Freud will help the researcher to see how far anxiety and defense mechanism are.

This research is qualitative research. In this research, the researcher focuses on the phenomena within the drama *Mr. Bailey's Minder* by Debra Oswald (2005). The data will analyze by fictional device such as the character used in the drama. Character is used to reveal anxiety and defense mechanism by analyzing character belief, attitude, and behavior or action. In addition, this element is analyzed based on *Mr. Bailey's Minder* by Debra Oswald (2005). Using psychological theory can help how the character in the drama overcomes the anxiety feel, and which defense mechanism those work for overcome the anxiety. This research reveal how anxiety and defense mechanism on "*Mr. Bailey's Minder* by Debra Oswald (2005)."

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the issues of defense mechanisms in Debra Oswald's drama *Mr. Bailey's Minder* (2005). In this analysis, defense mechanism is experienced by an old man who was abandoned by his family. The fictional device used in this analysis is character. Leo as the main character experiences anxiety which makes him abandoned by his family. He often experiences panic and excessive anxiety. He always feels in danger, he feels that people who approach him only want to take the property he has. Anxiety emerges as an outcome of emotional alteration within the repression process, necessitating the mechanism's placement within the realm of the unconscious. (Masschelein, 2011: 44). Anxiety is a painful person's experience that represents a threat or danger to that person. (Cervone and Perovin, 2015: 92). Leo uses a defense mechanism to deal with the anxiety he is experiencing. Sanyata (2009:36) argue that, defense mechanism is a form of rejection of reality due to inability to face the real situation. In other words, someone who experiences anxiety has the assumption that by rejecting it, the anxiety will disappear. (Berry 2002: 98). According to Viona and Wahyuni (2002: 557), a defense mechanism is a strategy employed by humans to alleviate anxiety arising from unforeseen events that operate within the subconscious. This mechanism serves as a form of self-protection when an individual regularly encounters unfavourable circumstances.. However, defense mechanisms can also lead a person to an unhealthy psychological condition if they are not aware of the defense mechanisms they are using. According to Freud, there are eight types of defense mechanisms. The types are denial, projection, repression, reaction formation, displacement, regression, rationalization, and sublimation. The meaning of this play can be interpreted in two ways: the wrong

defense mechanism main character used in the Drama and the successful defense mechanism the main character used in drama.

1. The Wrong Defense Mechanism Main Character used in the Drama

Defense mechanism is not always able to make a person to overcome the problems in their self. Defense mechanism is a method used to avoid or reject a problem in the hope that anxiety will disappear. Using the wrong defense mechanism can make things worse. In this drama, the first character shows that the defense mechanism he uses cannot improve his relationship with his child.

1.1 Denial

In this section, the researcher discusses the denial made by the main character as his defense mechanism to avoid the problems that occur to him. Denial is defense mechanism when someone refuses to accept the reality or facts that are in front of them. This can be seen in the quote below:

THERESE: So you've got four kids?
LEO: No. More. Eight that I know of.
THERESE: Four kids still unaccounted for.
LEO: I'm hungry. That's why I can't think. I missed out a wife.
LEO peers at the family tree, grunting with frustration.
THERESE: Leave a gap and you can fill them in later, eh.
LEO: They're all monsters, anyway. All my children turned out to be monsters.
THERESE: I'll scrounge us some lunch. (p.18)

Leo has bad character that makes difficult for his children and wives. Among his children and wives, there were four who experienced nervous breakdowns, and two who committed suicide. This is what makes Leo used self-defense mechanism. According to Fajar and Ningsih (2022: 223), Denial occurs when an individual avoids confronting an unpleasant truth, creating a defense mechanism to reject the reality.

In this analysis, Leo does not want to admit that he is was the reason why he is avoiding by his family. The sentence "They're all monsters" shows that he tries to blame others to overcome his guilt. He believed that it was his family that abandoned him. He tried to deny the fact that, he was the one who made his family ignore him. This is what makes his relationship with the second character unable to improve.

1.2 Projection

Projection is a self-defense technique by projecting negative emotions and thoughts that exist in the individual to others because he does not want to receive it. Projection proves that the character cannot accept the failures or weaknesses that exist in him. This can be seen in the quote below:

LEO: Viper! She's a viper! Step away from her!

MARGO: This is Leo Bailey.

THERESE: Hi. I'm Therese.

LEO circles MARGO, making snake hissing noises. MARGO ignores him and goes through papers in her briefcase.

LEO: Did The Viper tell you she works in investment banking?
Investment

banking! The dead hand. Feast your eyes! She's a dried-up bitch.

Have you asked her why she's got no children?

THERESE: Uh...

LEO: Because she's a dried-up bitch—I just told you! She had one grotesque marriage to a shrivelled-up loser of a bloke and she couldn't even hang onto him. Ask her why.

THERESE: None of my business, really.

LEO grabs Therese's bags and thrusts them into her hands.

LEO: Hang onto your purse. Soon as you look away, she's pinching stuff. Oh yes, oh yes. Ask The Viper where she's hiding all my paintings she stole! (p.16)

This quotation shows that Leo is experiencing anxiety. He has been married five times, but no one wants to take care of him. Leo realized that he had made a mistake. Therefore he must accept the punishment. The form of punishment he received was being ignored by his wives and children. This proves that he failed in his household. This is what made Leo use the defense mechanism projection. Projection is an effort that he does to get rid of the anxiety that is in him. Andre and Dewi opinion on their journal, people who do projection think that something that is not good for them is not theirs but belongs to someone else. (Andre and Dewi 2011: 237).

In this analysis, Leo does projection by projecting his failures in marriage to Margo. She did projection by accusing Margo that she did not marry the right man. He accuses Margo that he failed in his marriage. The defense mechanism projection that Leo uses is a way he uses to transfer the anxiety he feels to other people. The projection that he uses shows that he has not been able to admit the mistakes he has made. The accusations he made against the second character made his relationship with the second character not improve

1.3 Regression

When feeling threatened and experiencing anxiety, a person tends to run away from an early developmental stage or return to childhood. In this drama, the characters use this strategy unconsciously by acting childishly. His immature attitude made him feel less anxious. He exhibits child-like behavior, such as crying, whining, and being overly spoiled to gain a sense of security and attention. This can be seen in the quotation below:

The sound of a car honking outside. THERESE peers out the front door.

A taxi. What's he—? Leo!

She rushes outside, leaving KARL there. He starts to organise his work gear but is distracted by the scene outside. LEO stumbles in, barefoot, bleeding from grazes on his head and hands, clutching the scotch bottle.

KARL: Hello. Mr Bailey? Are you all right?

LEO: My shoes! That bastard taxi driver is holding my shoes hostage!

KARL: Oh—your shoes.

LEO: Yes! You go and rescue my shoes! Quickly!

LEO collapses, moaning. KARL goes outside, passing THERESE as she rushes back in.

THERESE: Are you going?

KARL: To get his shoes.

KARL exits.

THERESE: [to LEO] Oh, look at your head. I'll get something to clean you up.

She cleans up LEO's grazes. He pulls away, ouching like a little kid.

LEO: Stupid mongrel taxi driver—I gave him the address I wanted to go to but he couldn't find his arse with both hands. Ow! (p.31)

The quote above shows that the first character uses a defense mechanism regression to overcome his anxiety towards other people. He considers the taxi driver as a threat to him. He also exhibits immature behavior. He acts like a child in order to feel safe and get the attention of other characters. He also could not control his emotions and fear. He expressed his fear with harsh words. The defense mechanisms that the characters use can only overcome temporary anxiety. This strategy cannot make the character get out of the problem he is facing.

1.4 Displacement

When feeling threatened and experiencing anxiety, the character seeks an outlet to release the negative emotions that are in him. The character vents his emotions on other objects or people who are not a threat to him. This can be seen in the quotation below:

THERESE: Woo-hoo! There's a tin of sardines.

LEO: Shut up! Don't talk about sardines when I'm trying to tell you something.

THERESE: Fancy sardines for lunch?

LEO: I'm explaining something and you keep talking about sardines!

THERESE: I don't keep talking about sardines. I only said the word twice.

Well, now I've said it three times but only because you—

LEO: Who are you? Why would anyone want this job? You must be a loser, a no-hoper. I can see why. Look at you. A grubby, ignorant, gauche nobody.

THERESE fixes him with a fierce look. (p.20)

The first character is a person who is very cynical about his life. He hated his life. The second character is the only member of the family who wants to take care of the first character. However, the second character does not take care of the first character directly. He chose to pay someone else to take care of the first character. The quote above shows that the first character diverts his feelings of displeasure to other people who are not a threat to him. The first character's self-defense is a form of disappointment with the second character. He felt that no one cared about him. The sentence "You must be a loser, a no-hoper. I can see why. Look at you. A grubby, ignorant, gauche nobody." This sentence describes her current condition. However, he tries to vent these feelings to Therese to reduce his anger towards himself.

2. The Successful Defense Mechanism the Main Character used in Drama

There is a different phase between the first character in the initial phase and the first character in the final phase. At the beginning of the story, the first character is unable to overcome the problems in his life. He could not admit his mistake. He used the wrong defense mechanism that made his relationship with his daughter not improve. However, in the final phase of his life, the first character begins to admit his mistakes.

Sublimation is one of the self-defense strategies carried out by the first character. Sublimation is a self-defense mechanism by changing unacceptable negative desires into more positive behavior. It can be proof in the quotation below:

LEO: So! What's on the agenda for tomorrow? More bowling?
LEO does his bowling action again.
KARL: I thought you'd wanna go round the art galleries, Leo.
LEO does a flamboyant wail and rolls his head around.
THERESE: No way.
LEO: Art! Ha! I don't want to go anywhere near art.
THERESE: We stick to movies, museums, ferry rides.
LEO: Movies tomorrow. (p.37)

The first character never left the house except for a health check. He is also a drinker who cannot stop his habit. The character's self-defense mechanism is by accepting Therese's invitation to do activities outside the home. Accepting Therese's invitation is the character's first attempt to divert the feelings of discomfort or anxiety he feels in order to find comfort. The efforts made by the main character also aim to divert his desire to drink alcohol. The spirit of the main character shows that he is trying to make peace with himself.

His passion for change made him successful in stopping drinking alcohol. This can be seen in the quotation below:

LEO: [proudly to MARGO] I'm off the booze. Off the booze for—[To THERESE] How long?
THERESE: Eleven weeks.

MARGO: Well, that's very good.

LEO: My liver—Therese, tell about my liver.

THERESE: His liver function test improved heaps.

LEO: Doctor reckons my heart's sturdy and I could last another ten years!
(p.50)

The quote above shows that the defense mechanism used succeeded in making the first character stop drinking alcohol. He was very excited to tell the second character the good changes he had made. He wants to show the second character that he can change. He can fix his relationship with the second character.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

a. Conclusion

Drama *Mr. Bailey's Minder* (2005) by Debra Oswald reflect various issues and of them is defense mechanism. The technique of the data analysis in this study was descriptive technique procedures in which the researcher interprets and understands the text content analysis. This research used the defense mechanism theory to reveal the self defense mechanism in the drama. *Mr. Bailey's Minder* (2005) was literary work that revealed the issues of how defense mechanism cannot overcome the anxiety and problems experienced by the characters.

In this analysis, the issue of defense mechanism is reflected by Leo who is the antagonist in this drama. The defense mechanism in this analysis refers to how the defense mechanism used by the antagonist cannot make him overcome anxiety and problems in his life. He has a different character at the beginning of the story and at the end of the story towards his death. In the initial phase, he uses several defense mechanisms such as denial, projection, regression, and displacement. However, this defense mechanism failed to get him out of the problems in his life. At the end of his life, the character uses the sublimation defense mechanism as his last defense mechanism. Sublimation is the only defense mechanism that can get him out of the problems in his life and start to make peace with the shortcomings that exist in him.

b. Suggestion

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the researcher would like to provide some suggestions for future studies. This research only focuses on the main character that has carried out self-defense mechanisms as someone who experienced an adverse childhood in the drama. There are still many aspects that can be analyzed from this drama with other critical theories and approaches. In line with this research, the researcher suggests to the next researcher to analyze other aspects that have not been analyzed. By analyzing different aspects, it will provide inspiration for further researchers. However, it doesn't matter if the next researcher wants to analyze *Mr. Bailey's Minder* with the same theory. The next researcher can expand the previous analysis into a more detailed analysis, for example by analyzing all the characters in the drama. Besides that, future

researchers can also look for limitations in this analysis to be added and complemented to produce a better analysis in the same theory. Researchers also hope this study can be helpful for future studies in analyzing those related to defense mechanism

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