

SELF-DEFENSE MECHANISM OF SUPPORTING CHARACTERS IN THE AFTER EVER HAPPY NOVEL

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Abstract

Literature entitled *After Ever Happy* written by Anna Todd is the last novel of *After* series. The novel mainly tells about the life of the main character Hardin who is known by the closest people around him as a troublemaker and rebellious. He cannot control his emotions whenever he faced problems. Damaging and rebelling can be categorized as defence mechanism as a way to protect himself. Hardin's action give a substantial impact on his closest people such as Tessa, Vance, and Landon. The impact will be the main focus of this research. Employing defense mechanism theory by Freud the results of this study show that Hardin's closest people are also used a defence mechanisms to respond to Hardin's action. Thus to reduce the bigger problems that will arise, that can harm more people. the three supporting characters who felt the impact of Hardin's emotion use self-defense mechanism.

Keywords: Emotion Effect, Self-Defense Mechanism, Supporting Characters.

Introduction

After Ever Happy novel is one of the bestselling books written by Anna Todd. This is the fourth series of the *After* series named after the name of first series. The second one is *After We Collided*, and the third one is *After We Fell*. *After* series mainly tells Hardin's story. Hardin has his own problematic life. His attitude affects people around him into his mess. His problematic behavior is occurred because of his defense mechanism. He tried to protect himself against threats that hurt him or that likely will hurt him. Hardin's behavior is also the result of his traumatic past. Even so, there are his closest people that still tried to be with him such as Tessa, Vance, and Landon.

They are also using the defense mechanism to protect themselves in dealing with Hardin's behavior. Thus, not only Hardin's defense mechanism that is interesting to be discussed, defense mechanism performed by supporting character is also interesting to be explored.

The issue will be discussed using the theory of defense mechanism (Freud in Hentschel and G Juris, 1923, p 43), Freud stated that the realm of defense mechanism, neurotic conflict occurs between the ego and the id, the ego tries to limit the expression of certain instinctual impulses by using defense mechanisms. Defense mechanism means a manner to ease anxiety by using methods such as deny, falsity, or distort reality and that

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impede the development of personality (Freud, 1954, p 85). Freud divided the human mind into three elements, namely id, ego, and superego. Freud states that the defense mechanism helps to protect the ego from the disagreement between id, superego, and reality.

Id takes place in "human's basic instinct, inborn disposition, and animalistic urges" (Freud in Barbara, 1985, p 284). It placed in the unconscious mind so nobody can feel or know how it works. The drive make people tried to to get what he or she wants without the consideration to the rational thinking. The Ego begins from childhood and is usually defined as "self". It falls under both the conscious, unconscious parts of the mind and uses the principle of reality to help the Id what it wants, by distinguishing imagination and reality. When Id cannot be changed, the ego trying to look for tactics to deal with the unrealistic impulse from the Id. In addition, to satisfying what the id wants, ego also in charge of the action, whereas the superego acts make someone not feel offending all the time, so both of them will be equally satisfied, for instance, when someone wants to sleep in the class, she or he will shortly think about a nice nap. The role of the ego here is to look for the way how she or he gets a nice nap in reality. Whilst the superego means "above the ego", superego contains the moral idea. The individual gets the moral idea from learning through their society, and the environment around them. The same thing between the superego and the ego, both belong to the conscious and unconscious part of the mind. The principle ego-deal used by the superego and the ego. Freud states that in Hall that "It represents the ideal rather than the real, and it strives for perfection rather than for reality or pleasure" (Freud in Hall, 1954, p 31). It is more than reality such as, can satisfying

she or he needs, but also is it acceptable for society and the environment or not. The individual will be proud of themselves if they do something acceptable in society and feel offending if they do something wrong.

Tessa, Vance, and London as supporting characters in the *After Ever Happy* novel that used defense mechanisms in dealing with Hardin's behavior will be discussed furthermore in this article. In advance of dicussed their actions as supporting characters in the novel, this part will explain what is supporting characters. Aminudin stated that "Tokoh yang terdapat di dalam cerita mempunyai peranan yang bermacam-macam. Suatu tokoh yang mempunyai peran penting di dalam cerita disebut sebagai tokoh inti atau tokoh utama. Sedangkan tokoh yang mempunyai peranan yang tidak penting karena kemunculannya hanya melengkapi, , melayani, mendukung tokoh utama. Mereka disebut sebagai tokoh tambahan atau tokoh pembantu" (Aminudin, 1995, p 79-80). It means, the characters in a story have different roles. A character who has an important role in a story is called the main character. Whereas the characters who have an insignificant role because they appear only to completing, serve, and support the main character are called additional character or supporting characters.

The purpose of this study is to find out the type of defense mechanism used by the supporting characters in the *After Ever Happy* novel in order to deal with Hardin's behavior and the events that occur in the novel. Meanwhile, the benefit of this study theoretically is to give the contribution to informing the reader the use of defense mechanisms by the characters in the novel, using the psychological theory of Sigmund Freud. Practically, this study aims to

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widen the knowledge on the defense mechanism used in the novel especially in the *After Ever Happy* novel written by Anna Todd.

Methodology

The method used in this paper is descriptive method. Sugiyono stated that "The descriptive method is a method that is used to describe or analyze the research but is not used to make broader (Sugiyono, 2005, p 1)". This research using descriptive methods to examine the issue that are related to the data.

The subjects of research are the supporting characters in the *After Ever Happy* novel taken simultaneously towards Hardin's girlfriend namely Tessa, Hardin's father Vance, and Hardin's friend Landon. They are the people whose lives are close to Hardin, as the main character in the novel. The data obtained from the *After Ever Happy* novel, so that the data is processed and analyzed according to the subject research. The use of defense mechanics by Tessa, Vance, and Landon is important to know in response to Hardin's behavior towards them.

The main instrument of qualitative research is the researcher itself. Sugiyono stated that in qualitative research "researchers are a key instrument" (Sugiyono, 2008, p 223). Therefore, researcher is a key instrument for the study. First thing first choose the object as the data source, in this case, the *After Ever Happy* novel. The second is set the focus of research, the third is analyze the data, and the last is make conclusions of the research.

In conducting the data collection, there are several elements that have been carried out

by the writer, firstly read the whole *After Ever Happy* novel until the end, with the close reading technique. Secondly identifying and classifying data found from dialogue and action shown by the supporting characters in the *After Ever Happy* novel. In analyzing data, the writer uses descriptive methods in the research method, also uses the intrinsic and extrinsic elements approach to identify the supporting characters and the use of self-defense mechanism.

Data collection is a systematic and standard procedure for obtaining the required data (Nazir, 2013, p 174). The success of the study is determined by the data collection techniques used by the writer. The first thing the writer do before getting into the issue are, looking for the issue that can be analyzed related to psychology. The second thing is to identify the significant issue that can be found in the *After Ever Happy* novel. The chosen issue is what self-defense mechanism used by supporting characters in *After Ever Happy* novel. The third is to limit and formulated the problem clearly and determining the aims and benefits of the study for the writer and the reader. The fourth is designing research methods to be used including in this case determining the novel, supporting characters, collecting data, and analyzing data. The last thing is making the paper. this paper will analyze the issue of the self-defense mechanism used by supporting character in after Ever Happy novel.

Finding and Discussion

In this part, the use of defense mechanisms by supporting characters will be discussed. Self-defense mechanism has various types such as Repression, Reaction formation, Displacement, Fixation, Regression,

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Introjection, and Sublimation. Freud's theory, defense mechanism will be used to find out the responses of supporting characters towards Hardin's behavior. It is already stated that the function of the defense mechanism is to protect from the threat that comes from *id* and *superego*. In this case, the source comes from Hardin's behavior that can bother the existence of *id* and *superego*. There are three supporting characters in the *After Ever Happy* novel that will be discussed using psychoanalysis. Tessa as Hardin's girlfriend, Vance as the father of character Hardin, and Landon as a friend of character Hardin. Their characteristic mainly to develop the character, Hardin, to be a better version of himself. Supporting characters are the ones that add profoundly to the story, especially in the *After Ever Happy* novel and they also come along and contribute to or enhance the main character's experiences.

Defense Mechanism Character Tessa

The defense mechanism is used by the character Tessa in the *After Ever Happy* novel in order to deal with herself from the things that Hardin did to her. Tessa in the novel as Hardin's girlfriend puts herself in every situation that Hardin through in his life. This time, the rejection occurs when Tessa offers herself to help Hardin dealing with the truth about his father and the whole event that happened before the wedding of his mother such as burning the house of his mother down and getting high from the liquor to reduce the pain Hardin felt. Even though Tessa tried to be there for Hardin in such a situation that hard for Hardin to handle, Hardin refuses to let Tessa dealing with all of his problems. Knowing such a dreadful response from Hardin, and he wants to leave their relationship, makes Tessa disappoints and

feeling sorry for herself to the point it is drained her.

The data below shows how Tessa feels after Hardin leaving her without any more explanation. Every little thing that reminds her of Hardin makes her think twice, but that does not stop her from thinking about what happened with Hardin. She acts as fine as she is without Hardin until she has a thought to move to New York along with Landon. To sum up, Tessa stills struggle to deal with the pain that Hardin caused to her that drive her insane and she stills able to be nice to herself.

“I was both hurt and pathetically relieved when I found a dirty black T-shirt while rummaging through my suitcase at Chicago O’Hare. I started off looking for my phone charger and ended up finding his last blow. I couldn’t bring myself, no matter how many times I tried, to walk over and throw it into the nearest trash can. I couldn’t. Instead, I shoved it back into the suitcase and buried it under my clothes. So much for a clean break, but I’m giving myself a break, given how hard all this feels. How my entire world has been ripped apart, and I’m left alone to sort out the pieces . . .No. As I resolved on the plane, I won’t indulge in such thinking. These thoughts are getting me nowhere. Feeling sorry for myself only makes it worse. “I’m leaning towards New York, but I need a little more time to decide,” I tell Landon. “Good.” His smile is contagious. “We would leave in about three weeks at the end of the semester.” “I hope so.” I sigh, desperately wanting time to pass. A minute, an hour, a day, a week, a month, any time that passes can only be a good thing for me at this point. And so it does, time passes, and somehow I find myself moving along with it. The problem is, I haven’t decided if that’s a good thing or not.” (Chapter 16, p. 110)

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As the data above, we can see Tessa's *id* shows when she feels really hurt when she finds out Hardin's t-shirt in her suitcase "***I was both hurt and pathetically relieved***" because it reminds her of Hardin and what he did to her, the rejection from him. Tessa's *ego* shows when she has a desire to try to throw everything that has a relation with Hardin "***no matter how many times I tried, to walk over and throw it into the nearest trash can***". Tessa's *superego* reminds her that she still has herself that needed to take care of, she cannot drown in her own thought until it tiring her and makes her situation worse "***I won't indulge in such thinking. These thoughts are getting me nowhere. Feeling sorry for myself only makes it worse***". By telling Landon that she has thought about moving to New York, is a new beginning for herself to have a new life without the existence of Hardin. In this case of Tessa, Tessa's *superego* overcome her *ego*. She is no longer drowned in her own thought about what Hardin did to her, even though it is still hurting her, she can manage herself to do what she has to do afterward. The outcome showing the defense mechanism used by Tessa is *sublimation* because she succeeds in her desire from being hurt, by giving Landon her decision about moving along with him to New York, so that she can have a better start for herself "***I'm leaning towards New York, but I need a little more time to decide,***". Sublimation according to Freud (1916) refers to successful defenses and is not itself, a defense, and indeed he argue that sublimation consist in reject the sexual desire another, which is no longer a sexual desire. *Reversal Into Opposite* is one of the category of defense within sublimation. There are two processes involved in *Reversal into Opposite*. The first is change from active into passive, for instance, sadism becomes masochism. The second

is Reversal of content, for instance, love become hate. In this case, for what the character Tessa did is defense mechanism Sublimation that reversal of content. She turn the hate that she feels towards Hardin to think more about herself.

Defense Mechanism Character Vance

In this part, the supporting character Vance will be discussed. Vance in the novel act as Harry's boss that later in this series he turns out to be Hardin's biological father. The fact that Vance is Hardin's biological father hidden for a very long time. The story of Vance's past life with Hardin's mother is the reason why the problem between whose Hardin's father exist. Later on Vance tried to explain everything to Hardin. One of the things that insist Vance tell Hardin the truth about their past life is the wedding of Hardin's mother, that will be held on the same day as Vance tells the truth to Hardin. Vance is no longer want to hold the secret between himself and Hardin so that he wants to start a new life with Hardin as his child. Thereupon, Vance asked Hardin to come with him and meet him before the wedding of Hardin's mother beginto. Vance finally meets Hardin on his rented car and starts to tell Hardin about the truth of their past life. Vance told Hardin that actually he is Vance's child, Vance's own blood. The news is shocking for Hardin himself because he believes that Vance is Hardin's mother friend, and also the CEO of the company that he works for, no more than that. Vance keeps telling Hardin that how he loves Hardin's mother back then up until now. The outburst of Hardin receiving the truth about his past life makes Vance anxiety and covering up the truth that Hardin's mother did to Vance. It can be seen from the data below, how Hardin wants the details of the story of

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Vance and his mother how Vance being anxious.

“Then I form a fist again, and I don’t recognize my voice as I ask, “So basically my mum used you for her entertainment and tossed you aside because you had no money?” Vance lets out a deep breath. “No. She didn’t use me.” He glances in my direction. “I know it seems that way, and it’s such a fucked-up situation, but she had to think of you and your future. I was a complete and utter fuckup—complete rubbish. And I had nothing going for me.” (Chapter 1, p. 10)

From the data above. We can see Hardin’s response receiving the truth about what his mother did with Vance **“Then I form a fist again,”**. Hardin keeps pushing Vance to tell the details about everything his mother did to him. Vance’s id appears when he wants to tell Hardin the truth about the reality of Hardin’s father, but still loving Hardin’s mother. Vance’s ego shows the believes that what Hardin’s mother did to him was not something he cannot tolerate because Hardin’s mother thought about the future life of Hardin. Then, Vance’s superego makes Vance protect Hardin’s mother, instead Vance blaming his condition back then. Then, Vance’s superego makes him realize for sure Hardin’s mother needs to be protected by him, to keep Hardin feeling towards his mother. In this case, the ego of Vance wins over his superego, hence, even though Vance knows exactly why Hardin’s mother left him in the first place, Vance stills defense Hardin’s mother in a good way from the reason why she exactly did to him by saying **“No. She didn’t use me.”** As a result of this analysis, it can be said that Vance using the defense mechanism denial because Vance making his excuse for Hardin's mother like **“she had to think of you and your future”**, by

saying all of it, he won't make Hardin's mother seen, treated and loved differently by Hardin, instead he blames himself **“I was a complete and utter fuckup—complete rubbish. And I had nothing going for me”**. Vance’s defense mechanism shows that he used denial as his defense to protect what Hardin’s mother did to him. According to Freud (1925), denial is the ego that wards of by literally denying them some perceptions from the external world that would be painful. The fact that Hardin’s mother left Vance back them might be painful for Vance because he denies Hardin’s mother use him only for the sake of fun. It's a fact that Hardin’s mother only use Vance because she didn’t get what she needs from her boyfriend.

Defense Mechanism Character Landon.

Landon is Hardin’s friend and he also Tessa’s friend. In this part, another defense mechanism used by character Landon in order to deal with Hardin’s behavior. Landon have been asking Tessa to come join to New York with him without Hardin knowing it because he feels sorry that Tessa and Hardin have relation conflict every time it happens make Tessa breakdown. There’s nothing Landon can do to save Tessa from what Hardin did to her. The hard situation that Tessa felt makes Landon as a friend of her, offering her to moves with him to New York, to start a new life. However, Hardin didn’t know their plans until Hardin suddenly calling out for Landon because he finds out the thing that makes Tessa have thought about moving to New York is Landon, he offers it for Tessa. After that, Hardin tried to knock out Landon’s face and yells to his face. In those moments Landon keeps his reason why he is offering New York for Tessa. He only wants all the best for Tessa. Landon isn't

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even responding to what Hardin did to him, because he knows that it will only get hard when he did what Hardin did to him.

“Wait, this is about New York, isn’t it?”
“Fuck yes, it’s about New York!” Hardin yells at him. Landon stands up, and Sophia sends Hardin a murderous warning glare. Right then I decide that I’m okay with her and Landon becoming more than friendly neighbors. *“I was only looking out for Tessa when I invited her to come with me! You broke up with her and she was broken, absolutely broken. New York is what is best for her,”* Landon calmly explains. *“You know how fucked-up you are? You pretended to be my fucking friend, and then you go and pull this shit?”* Hardin begins pacing again, this time in a smaller circle across the empty space in the dining room. *“I wasn’t pretending! You messed up again, and I was trying to help her!”* Landon yells back at Hardin. *“I’m both of your friends!”* *My heart is racing as Hardin crosses the room and wraps his fists around Landon’s shirt. “Help her by taking her away from me!”* Hardin pushes Landon against the wall. *“You were too high to care!”* Landon screams into Hardin’s face.” (Chapter 60, p. 355)

In the data above Landon is also angry because Hardin cannot control his behavior until it causes a scene in their house *“the two men yelling in each other’s face, the noise from Ken and Karen rushing down the stairs, the rattling and shattering glasses and plates from how Hardin grabbed and dragged Landon to the wall”*. As we can see from the data, Landon’s id appears when he is being honest and he tried to explain everything to Hardin. Landon’s ego makes him yell yo Hardin when he tried to explain the reason why he asked Tessa to come with him *“I was only looking out for Tessa when I invited her to come with*

me! You broke up with her and she was broken, absolutely broken. New York is what is best for her,”. The superego of Landon overcome his ego which he exactly knows how Hardin will react, so he just tries to stay still *“My heart is racing as Hardin crosses the room and wraps his fists around Landon’s shirt.”*, instead Landon forces Hardin to make his move towards him. The outcome of the analysis the defense mechanism used by Landon is sublimation because Landon chooses to explain to Hardin calmly and didn’t try to psychically respond to Hardin’ behavior when Hardin’s behavior starts to drive the whole people in the house insane because what Hardin did to Landon could harm him in any way If Landon try to respons to Hardin’s behavior with violence too it could hurt both men, instead he response to Hardin calmly and told him what he did was to help Tessa.

Conclusions

The supporting characters Tessa, Vance, Landon in *After Ever Happy* novel shows the defense mechanism aspect by Sigmund Freud. Self-defense mechanism values they used is to protect the truth about Hardin’s past life and also to protect themselves from the main character in the novel Hardin. Tessa as one of the supporting character, takes care of herself without the existence of her loved one, in this case, Hardin. She does self-defense mechanism sublimation by changing her anger towards Hardin into the positive one such as think about herself and have a tough on going to New York. Meanwhile, Vance using self-defense mechanism denial to avoid the truth about what Hardin’s mother did to him in the past. Vance denies the fact that Hardin’s mother rejected him because of his economic problem although he knows it is the truth,

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he hides it from Hardin and refused to tell the truth. The last person whom also used self-defense mechanism is Landon, to avoid the anger that Hardin throw to him, Landon do nothing in return, besides he keeps telling Hardin what he did is to help Tessa. Hardin's action give a big impact on his closest people. Thus to reduce the bigger problems that will arise, that can harm more people. The defense mechanism used by the supporting characters give them positive control for themselves to handle Hardin's behavior as the main character, that could hurt them somehow. the closest people around Hardin, known him as a troublemaker and rebellious, he sometimes cannot control his emotions whenever he faced problems. Damaging and rebelling can also be categorized as defence mechanism as a way to protect himself.

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