

DEFENSE MECHANISM OF THE MAIN CHARACTER IN LAURIE HALSE ANDERSON'S *SPEAK* NOVEL

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ABSTRACT

This study is a descriptive qualitative study which aims at revealing how defense mechanisms are experienced by Melinda Sordino as the main character of Speak novel in overcoming her anxiety after being bullied physically and verbally at school. This study relies on Sigmund Freud's defense mechanism theory. The data is the narration and dialogue in the narrative implying defense mechanism strategies used by the main character. The finding shows that the main character has repression, rationalization, regression, and reaction-formation as dominant strategies to overcome the conflicts. Besides, she also applies projection, replacement, isolation, identification, sublimation as defense mechanisms strategies to solve her anxiety and psychological problems. Psychological approach is applied because the main character, like human's psyche, needs to negotiate and survive psychologically from realities which can not suit her ideal expectation.

Keywords: *main character; defense mechanisms; psychoanalysis.*

INTRODUCTION

As a literary text, novel is a story with the prose form in long shape, this long shape means the story including the complex plot, many character and various setting. The word comes from the Italian, novella, which means the new staff that is small. The novel was

developed in England and America. The novel was originally developed in the region from other forms of narrative nonfiction, such as letters, biographies, and history, but with a shift in society and time development, the novel is not only based on nonfiction data, author of novel can change the topic according to the desired imagination. Wellek &

Warren (1956) defined novel as a literary work formed in a narrative story. The story is supposed to entertain the reader. However the experiences and life problems are usually the important points in the story, fictions must remain as an interesting story, remains as a coherent structure building, and still has an aesthetic purpose.

Issues in literary texts like novel are various and it most of the time represents human experience. In terms of human conflicts, literary texts could portray human conflicts, like psychological problems, as reflected in the characters's internal conflicts. These conflicts can also be interpreted as the writer's stream of consciousness or psychological conflicts, like anxiety, which can be viewed from psychonalysis perspective.

Human tends to decrease tension for the purpose of decreasing anxiety

and uses defense mechanisms for this purpose. Therefore, defense mechanisms serve the function of protecting individuals from anxiety. Likewise, we feel anxiety when ego defense mechanisms fail to work properly. Anxiety is of crucial importance since it represents our core issues like fear of intimacy, fear of abandonment, fear of betrayal and low self-esteem (Tyson in Sarijaloo, 2016).

Sigmund Freud (in Gokdag, 2015) described the typical attitudes are demonstrated by individuals to decrease or avoid anxiety. He called them defense mechanisms. Defense mechanism is one of important parts in psychoanalytic study. Psychoanalysis is a branch of psychological study, which has basic assumption that human's mental elements are divided into two levels, the unconscious and the conscious. Defense mechanism is activated when the individual deals with

serious anxiety and emotional conflict.

Defense mechanism is the mental strategy used by the ego to continue blocking the harmful behavior while at the same time reducing anxiety (Gokdag, 2015, p. 348). There are some types of the defense mechanism proposed by Freud; **a) Repression.** This is a method of defense mechanism when a person remove miserable thoughts from her mind in order to not to remember them anymore. This defense mechanism works when a person experiences trauma as a painful and fearful event then she places the traumatic memory to her unconscious mind to prevent the memory from reaching her conscious mind. The person prevents the painful and fearful memory from reaching her conscious mind because she considers it as unpleasure memory. So, she turns the memory away and keeps it at a distance from her conscious mind. In other

words, she wishes to forget the unpleasure memory to be inaccessible in her conscious mind (Freud, 2010, p. 102). Repression can be experienced in sequence of steps. Firstly, danger as a result of socially banned desire is anticipated by the ego. Secondly, fear of the danger stimulates repression. Lastly, the repression is achieved through internalising of the external fear or the superego. **b) Reaction-formation.** This is a method of defense mechanism when a person transforms an unacceptable feeling or trait into something more socially acceptable. It means that the person actually has the feeling or trait considered socially negative or disturbing. While the negative feeling or trait is repressed, the person forms a reaction tactic that she may feel the tactic fits in with social norms by adopting polar opposite stance on the repressed feeling or trait. The person uses reaction formation as her

defense mechanism because she wants to avoid some sort of social punishment or fear of social criticism for her different thoughts that she considers as socially negative feeling or trait (Freud, 2010, p. 2194). Reaction formation works by converting a socially unacceptable feeling or trait into its opposite to cover up the person's real feeling or trait. **c) Projection.** It is when a person projects her own traits to someone else. She projects the traits to someone else because they can not be denied or repressed completely. Human mind has a very positive self image to feed the ego with praise in recognition from others. When this image is threatened by negative traits, she will have tendency to discard the negative traits by projecting them to someone else (Freud, 2010, p. 2432). In other words, this situation can be called as reflection, in which individual passes her repressed motives, thoughts and

feelings to others. In projecting the traits, the other person whom the traits are projected is not targeted randomly because the traits may have existed even on a small scale in that person. So, the person who project the traits later takes and exaggerate the traits in projecting them to someone else. By projecting the threatening traits to others, it helps the person to avoid recognizing it in herself. **d) Regression.** Regression is method of defense mechanism when a person experiences the temporary or long-term reversion of the ego to the earlier stage of development. It happens when she can not handle an unacceptable impulse or event in a more adult manner. The unacceptable impulses cause stress and unpleasure feeling to the person, so she returns to the previous stage of development as if she were a child. Children usually manifest regressive behaviour to communicate their

distress. For instance, when they have little sibling for the first time, their parents pay more attention to the little sibling and it makes them to be jealous. So, the children will act like their little sibling to get back their parents' attention (Freud, 2010, p. 2435). Regression can be caused by insecurity, fear, and danger of any unpleasure impulse or event. **e) Sublimation.** Sublimation is method of defense mechanism when a person transform her repressed motives or emotions into more acceptable forms in social terms. The transformation happens because the repressed motives that she has are considered as negative trait and they become unacceptable desires for her to release in conscious mind. But in other side, the person does not want to repress the desires, so she releases them by providing acceptable forms and by having social value (Freud, 2010, p. 2827).

The unacceptable desires can be said as the real object, but they have to be repressed then lose in unconscious mind. The acceptable forms releasing by the person can be said as the new object restoring the real object that she brings to her conscious mind. Sublimation raises the unacceptable desires as the real object by transforming them into acceptable and socially valuable forms to make the person still can release the repressed desires. **f) Denial.** Denial is method of defense mechanism when a repressed memory finds its way into conscious mind. If repression turns the memory away and keeps it at a distance to be inaccessible in the conscious mind, then denial lets the repressed memory finds its way to consciousness in revealing a piece of information about something that is repressed. The way to reveal the repressed memory is by negating the information of the

memory. So, a person who uses denial as her defense mechanism denies the correctness of the repressed memory (Freud, 2010, p. 796).

Denial can be experienced in sequence of steps. Firstly, a person represses the memory into her unconscious mind. There is content of a repressed image or idea which is not reaching conscious mind. Secondly, the conscious mind of the person is now aware of a memory that it was not aware of before. Then the awareness lifts and finds its way to reach the conscious mind by negating the information of the repressed image or idea.

g) Rationalization.

Rationalization is method of defense mechanism when a person makes logical excuses to justify generally unacceptable behaviour. It is used in unconscious mind to avoid addressing the actual reasons for the behaviour. Rationalization can seem like logical

and clear excuses but it is actually used to cover up the underlying emotions and motives (Freud, 2010, p. 2333).

By rationalizing the behaviour, a person may maintain self-respect or avoid guilt over something they actually have done wrong. Rationalization protects the person from unsafe emotion in behaving of what they considers as right and logical. So, she can keep behaving in the way she considers as right without concerning any danger of her behavior.

h) Identification.

Identification is method of defense mechanism when a person adopts attitude or qualification of another person she admires. In this case, the person actually represses the qualification she wishes to achieve then she takes another person whose qualification admired by her. This defense mechanism involves a change in one's self to become more like the admired person (Freud, 2010, p. 2619).

By taking another person's own certain quality, the person who uses this defense mechanism provides a sense of security and self-esteem because she finds the quality requirement in another person's self. Identification takes the place of the Oedipus complex. It was first applied to the explanation of one kind of homosexuality, in which a boy changes his love for his mother by identifying himself with her as the admired person. **i) Fixation.** This is method of defense mechanism when a person is stuck in a certain aspect of developmental age. It is stated that human development is like a journey. When a person migrates into new unexplored territory, there is a condition of she might stop along the way at a place because of experiencing unpleasure and stress in the new unexplored territory. So, the person is stuck in the specific stage of development at which the journey stops

because the stage is safer for.

Nevertheless, the person is unable to free herself due to the fixation. She is isolated in that certain stage of development and is separated both from the present and the future. The unpleasure and stress which become trauma show clear indications that the person is grounded in a fixation upon the moment of the traumatic disaster. Then, she keeps attaching herself to a period of safety and security before her entire journey of life is fully accomplished (Freud, 2010, p. 2435). **j)**

Turning against the self. Turning against the self is method of defense mechanism when a person makes herself as the target of hatred, anger, and aggression. In this way, the ego defends itself against the fear of the aggression. The person turns the aggression away from other objects as the target but toward herself (Freud, 2010, p. 3851). This defense

mechanism happens when the person realizes that the real object of the hatred, anger, and aggression can not be targetted. So, she decides to make her as the substitution target. It can be said as self punishment because she puts the fault to herself and punishes her for it. This mechanism can reveal guilt and depression due to the repressed anger .

k) Displacement. Displacement is method of defense mechanism when a person takes one emotion (usually a hostile or angry emotion) which is threatening or dangerous impulse from one situation into another.

She shifts the displeasure or the thing that cause the stress away from herself to a less threatening target. The displacement happens when the person assumes that someone causing the stress which is the actual object of harming has higher authority or power, so she can not take the emotion of angry directly to the actual object.

Nevertheless, she still wants to react the emotion to make her feel relieved, so she replaces the actual object to another object that is less threatening as her target (Freud, 2010, p. 3266). **i)**

Isolation. It is when a person creates a mental gap as her barrier between situation and condition that makes her threatened. It is related to repression experiencing by the person, then she separates herself from the unpleasant or threatening situation and condition, together with other thoughts and feelings (Freud, 2010, p. 198).

Tyson (in Sarijaloo, 2016) describes that psychoanalytic concepts have long been an integral part of human's lives. We appreciate the significance of these concepts since our lives are strongly influenced by psychplogical aspects, and we are able to comprehend that human conduct which arouses a feeling of puzzlement within us by understanding,

apprehending and applying these key concepts. Thus, we can deeply grasp the implications of those literary texts that are associated with human behavior through application of psychoanalytic concepts. This study aims to reveal the defense mechanisms experienced by Melinda Sordino, the main character of *Speak* novel (1999) in dealing with her anxiety and psychological conflicts she has. The harassment accident she experienced reflects her defense mechanism as her efforts to survive with from both internal and external oppression.

There have been some previous studies conducted about the related topics and data. Firstly, it is entitled "Why Won't Melinda Just Talk About What Happened? Speak and The Confessional Voice," by Chris McGee (2009). She believes that Melinda would not confess what really happens without an adult figure.

Secondly is entitled "Women's representation and identity construction in the HBO series 'Girls'" by Tiina Mustonen (2015). This paper aims to examine how gender is represented in the media through linguistic and multimodal means. More specifically, it focuses on the representation and identity construction of women in the television series 'Girls', which has received a great deal of attention for its realistic portrayal of women. The result shows that lexical items play an important role in constructing the characters' identities. For example, many of the nouns used to describe the female characters are often derogatory and negative. However, keeping in mind the series' ironic tone it could be argued that the series aims to empower its characters by showing how the female characters are not negatively affected by the use of lexical items.

In 2017, Kamonwan Chummee and Supaporn Yimwilai conducted a research with the title “The Presentation of Rape in Laurie Halse Anderson’s *Speak*” aiming to discuss the presentation of rape in Laurie Halse Anderson's *Speak*. It also discusses the effects of rape culture on a rape victim. The result shows that Melinda is a good example of a person who does not understand the realities of sexual violence.

The next study is entitled “Coping Behavior Of Melinda In *Speak* Novel By Laurie Halse Anderson (1999); An Individual Psychological Approach” by Kristiana (2012). This paper aims to analyze the character of Melinda Sordino based on individual psychological analysis developed by Alfred Adler. The result shows that Laurie Halse Anderson creates the main character, Melinda, as a way to convey her idea about adolescence’s coping

behavior. The character of Melinda Sordino gets maturity in her personality that is shaped from her effort to cope her problems in gaining her life goals.

There is not any research conducted previously that discussed defense mechanisms analysis of the main character in the novel, so this study aims to reveal how defense mechanism of the main character by referring to psychological approach to reveal the psyche of the main characters.

Speak is Laurie Halse Anderson's first young adult novel. It was published in 1999 by Penguin Group and re-released in 2006 as a platinum edition containing an interview with the author. The novel consists of 198 pages, and four chapters. It is written in the first person and features a diary-like format with loosely connected, short chapters. The novel was a New York Times Best-Seller the year it was released and it

was a National Book Award finalist as well as the winner of the 2000 ALA Best Book for Young Adults award. It was also adapted into a movie in 2004 starring Kristen Stewart as Melinda Sordino as cited from www.bookreports.info/speak-summary.

Speak tells the story of Melinda Sordino, a Syracuse ninth grader who must overcome her depression and silence after being raped in a summer party causing she calls the police and breaks up the party. Starting the high school, Melinda claims herself as an outcast because everybody who knows her ruining the party avoids her, including her friends. Since she got a sexual harrashment from a senior at school, Melinda stops speaking. She is always mute and she only speaks in very rare situation. Melinda deals with the trauma and struggles to tell someone about what happens to her. She also experiences some defence mechanism

strategies to overcome the trauma and the psychological conflicts.

METHOD

This study uses descriptive qualitative method. The descriptive qualitative is a research method that describes data, where data is inductively analyzed and interpreted qualitatively (Creswell, 2009).

The source of the data is the novel entitled *Speak* written by Laurie Halse Anderson. The main data are the narrations and the dialogues in the narrative which reflect the defense mechanism of the main character. The researcher read closely the novel to understand the implied meaning content of the novel, then identified and classified the narrations and dialogues in the narrative which indicate the defense mechanism types of the main character. The classified data was analysed by referring to Sigmund

Freud's mechanism theory, before interpreting it and drawing the conclusion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study reveals that the main character used many kinds of strategies in overcoming her anxiety and psychological conflicts as a victim of verbal, physical and psychological bullying she got at school. She had repression, reaction-formation, projection, regression, replacement, sublimation, rationalization, identification, turning against the self, and isolation as self defense mechanism.

Unconscious mind is a place where unacceptable memories, fantasies, wishes, thoughts, ideas, and even painful events are pushed through repression together with the associated emotions (Freud in Chalkiadaki, 2014: 3). Therefore, understanding how

unconscious fears and oppression will help reveal the underlying reasons for Melinda's behaviour.

a) Repression

Melinda, a new student at high school, faced oppression and injustice at school after the summer party accident where she was blamed by everyone at the party for calling the police. Whereas, she actually called the police because a senior harrassed her, but no one knew it. It was surely a painful event for her, because she was sexually harrassed and victimized. Furthermore, Melinda experienced bullying from the people at school, including the rapist who goes to the same school with her and also her ex-friends. Those are the external oppression that she must experience. In addition, Melinda also experiences internal oppression where she must repress the truth about the accident and never speak up of it to anybody.

In order to cope with the oppression, Melinda's defense mechanisms are triggered. As what Freud (cited in Chalkiadaki, 2014: 16) says that defensive action is done to protect the ego and to rescue it from unpleasure experience or oppression. Therefore, the defense mechanisms used by Melinda who experiences oppression is one of her efforts to survive from both internal and external oppression.

After being harrassed in summer party by a senior, Melinda is avoided by all the people who know her, including her gang, The Plain Janes, and her best friend Rachel. It is because they blamed her ruining the party for calling the cops. Whereas, Melinda did it as a result of her fear after being sexually harrassed. No one knew it because she did not tell anyone about the accident, she also stopped talking to anyone since then. Starting

the high school just few months after the accident, Melinda as the new student starts to experience bullying from the people who know her at the middle school (who obviously know about her ruining the summer party) . Moreover, the people spread the story of Melinda ruining the party and it makes more people bully her. On this context, Melinda experiences bullying from her classmates in classroom. Moreover, her ex-best friend Rachel also gives Melinda verbal threat by saying "I hate you" to her and takes part of bullying with other classmates. Here, Melinda is oppressed by this situation of the bullying. She handles it by trying not to think about the bullying because it is a painful event. So, she tries to place the painful memory of the bullying event to her unconscious mind to prevent the memory from reaching her conscious mind by using repression as her defense mechanism. It is shown

in the narration; *'I am not going to think about it. It was ugly, but it's over, and I'm not going to think about it* (Anderson, 1999, p.5)'.

Melinda imagines that she was in a TV show and she was interviewed by Oprah, Sally Jessy, and Jerry about the accident. But, her imagination later triggers her to recall all the bad and threatening memory of the harrassment accident. Here, Melinda is oppressed by this situation. She handles it by trying not to remove the miserable thoughts from her mind. She tries to place the painful memory of the event to her unconscious mind to prevent the memory from reaching her conscious mind by using repression as her defense mechanism, *'My head is killing me, my throat is killing me, my stomach bubbles with toxic waste. I just want to sleep. A coma would be nice. Or amnesia. Anything, just to get rid of this, these*

thoughts, whispers in my mind (Anderson, 1999, p.165).'

Melinda was ignored by many students, except by a new student at school. She comes from another town of Ohio, named Heather, who wants to talk to Melinda. As a new student from another town, Heather does not know that Melinda has caused police stopped the summer party. She only knows that Melinda is a taciturn girl who is not passionate on anything. Heather can be friends with Melinda because Heather thinks that Melinda has been so sweet of being a good listener for Heather.

b) Rationalization

As she decided to stop talking to anyone, she also needs to overcome her own anxiety by doing some rationalization strategies. At this point, she tries to make logical excuse to justify generally unacceptable behaviour, which is, the action of not saying anything to anyone about her

harrashment accident, as shown in the narration, 'My family has a good system. We communicate with notes on the kitchen counter. I write when I need school supplies or a ride to the mall. They write what time they'll be home from work and if I should thaw anything (Anderson, 1999, p.14). Her family system, which is to talk about things indirectly through notes, forced her to logically accept the condition at the beginning and not consider it as the accident which had victimized her. She even decided not to talk to her family about it.

Melinda has an inharmonious family. The parents often argue even on trivial matters and they seem to hate each other. Her family communicate with notes on the kitchen counter. They write whatever they want to say on the notes. So, Melinda does not feel comfortable to tell the parents about whatever she feels, including the

harrashment accident. Melinda who stops talking since the accident realizes that her behaviour is not acceptable because other normal people can talk whatever they want to talk. So, she makes logical excuses to justify unacceptable behaviour in rationalization. On this context, Melinda states that her family barely talk directly because they communicate with notes that means talking indirectly. So, her unacceptale behaviour of not talking seems like to have logical and clear excuse and she can keep behaving in the way she considers as logical, eventhough she is pshycholegically depressed. On the other side, she keep behaving in the way she considers as logical act, as shown in the following dialogue, when she skipped the Spanish class;

'I cut class, you cut class, he, she, it cuts class. We cut class, they cut class. We

all cut class. I cannot say this in Spanish because I didn't go to Spanish today

(Anderson, 1999, p.107).'

She considered escaping from Spanish class as logically acceptable action as she does not go to Spain that day, and she does that to ignore many people bullying her, and to deal with her anxiety.

c) Displacement

On one occasion, Melinda and Heather go to a pep rally. It is full of student there because they want to watch football game. Melinda feels uncomfortable of being in such crowd because there are many people who know her in the former school. It becomes a problem for her and caused her in a deep anxiety, because they remind her of the harrassment accident in the summer party. It can be seen from the quotation,'*The crowd stomps the bleachers and roars back. I put my head*

in my hands and scream to let out the animal noise and some of that night'

(Anderson, 1999, p.28).

Melinda takes her emotion by screaming to the crowd. She still wants to react the emotion to make her feel relieved although nobody can hear her scream because the crowd are all quite spirited and the scream is still too soft. She makes the crowd as the target because it is less threatening than the noise that come from the repressed bad memory. So, this event shows where Melinda uses displacement as her defense mechanism to handle the oppression, '*When I close the closet door behind me,I bury my face into the clothes on the left side of the rack, clothes that haven't fit for years. I stuff my mouth with old fabric and scream until there are no sounds left under my skin* (Anderson, 1999, p.162)'.

d) Regression

There are many gangs at the school, one of them is The Martha. Heather who is obsessed to The Martha finally joins the gang. As the new member of The Martha, Heather has to decorate a room for her first Martha project but she can not do it by herself. So, she asks Melinda to help her decorating. After decorating the room, The Martha comes in. The Martha recognizes Melinda's existence and looks at her. Then, the gang insults Melinda's appearance. It is because they always dress nicely and beautifully, meanwhile Melinda looks creepy.

At this point, Melinda is oppressed by The Martha's attitude. She can not handle the unacceptable impulse that causes unpleasure feeling to her. So, she uses regression where she returns to the previous stage of

development as if she were a child by crying,

Being blamed for ruining the summer party by calling the cops, Melinda is also bullied by her ex-best friend Rachel. Rachel ignores Melinda, and once even blows a candy cigarette at Melinda's face. At this point, Melinda is oppressed by Rachel's attitude. She can not handle the unacceptable impulse that causes unpleasure feeling to her. So, she uses regression where she returns to the previous stage of development as if she were a child by crying,' *I hide in the bathroom until I know Heather's bus has left. The salt in my tears feels so good when it stings my lips* (Anderson, 1999, p.45)'.

Melinda actually has huge desire to speak up to her parents about everything she has experienced, specifically about the harrasement accident. But, she tries to repress her desire because she is still not brave to

say anything to any people. So, she handles the repression by using regression as her defense mechanism where she returns to the previous stage of development as if she were a child by crying, *'I almost tell them right then and there. Tears flood my eyes* (Anderson, 1999, p.72).'

e) Sublimation

Melinda also transformed her repressed emotions of the oppression into more acceptable forms by drawing, *'For a solid week, ever since the pep rally, I've been painting watercolors of trees that have been hit by lightning. I try to paint them so they are nearly dead, but not totally* (Anderson, 1999, p.30).'

She uses sublimation as her defense mechanism to handle her oppression where she releases the repressed emotion through her drawing.

f) Identification

In *Social Studies* class, Melinda sees how her lab partner, David Petrakis, is brave to deliver his protest to Mr. Neck as the teacher, who leads a debate in the lesson as racist and intolerant although he collides with Mr. Neck. David's bravery of speaking up the truth as his qualification makes Melinda admire him because she herself has stopped talking to anyone, *'He says a million things without saying a word. I make a note to study David Petrakis* (Anderson, 1999, p.57). At this point, Melinda uses identification as her defense mechanism. By stating that she makes a note to study David Petrakis, it means that she wishes to achieve David's qualification which she admired.

g) Turning again the self

Melinda goes to her mother's store to talk about her problems. When she stops at a traffic light, she sees that her mother's skin and shirt look bad. It

is possibly because the mother is so busy in her work and she does not have time to pay attention at her appearance. Nevertheless, Melinda does not blame her mother for the bad-looking appearance. Melinda uses turning against the self where she turns the anger away from the mother as the real object as the target but toward herself by blaming herself who does not fold more shirts for her mother. *'I feel bad that I didn't fold more shirts for her* (Anderson, 1999, p.73).'

h) Projection

Melinda is often oppressed because of the bullying. Therefore, she sometimes skips school to avoid all the things that she considers as threat for example people who always bully her. This time, guidance counselor calls Melinda's parents to school because Melinda's grades have been bad and she skips school for some times. At home, the parents scold her and keep asking

about why she has that bad behaviour at school. Nevertheless, Melinda does not want to be blamed of her bad behaviour. So, she uses projection as her defense mechanism by projecting the bad behaviour to someone else, that is the parents where she states that the parents never want to hear anything from her, *'They don't want to hear anything I have to say. They ground me until the Second Coming* (Anderson, 1999, p.87).'

i) Reaction-formation

Because she was reminded by the counsellor of her bad scores and skipped school many times, Melinda transforms the unacceptable behaviour into something more socially acceptable, that is to be a good student. Here, Melinda uses reaction-formation to handle her oppression wants to avoid another social punishment or criticism from the parents for her bad behaviour.

It can be seen from the following narration; *I do my homework and show it like a good little girl*, (Anderson, 1999, p.87). She covers her conflicts by doing something good, so nobody knew how she feels.

j) Isolation

At some point, she separates herself from the unpleasant or threatening person and condition, which is Andy Evans, the one harassed her, to minimize the impact of the threatening situation and condition for her. It is because Andy Evans makes her repressed where she reminds of the accident by seeing him flirting with The Martha gang. So, she uses isolation as her defense mechanism by creating a gap as her barrier between situation and condition that makes her threatened, where she runs for the bathroom, *He steps toward me, holding out the doughnut. "Want a bite?" he asks. Bunny Rabbit bolts, leaving fast tracks*

in the snow. Getaway getaway getaway'(Anderson, 1999, p.97).

Melinda chose to ignore the person caused her trauma by getting away from him.

Melinda is oppressed again of Heather's behaviour who returns the friendship necklace to her. So, she decides to skip school again to separate herself from the oppression. At this point, she separates herself from the unpleasant or threatening situation and condition, which is the school, to minimize the impact of the threatening situation and condition for her. It is because there is Heather who has oppressed her by returning the friendship necklace at school. So, she uses isolation as her defense mechanism by creating a gap as her barrier between situation and condition that makes her threatened where she skips school, as seen in the narration, *I am Bunny Rabbit again, hiding in the open*

‘(Anderson, 1999, p.117), and in the narration, *‘The best place to figure this out is my closet, my throne room, my foster home. I want a shower’*(Anderson, 1999, p.150). She hid from her friend who also caused an uncomfortable psychological condition as a defense mechanism.

CONCLUSION

Melinda as a teenager has to deal with her trauma after being harrassed by her senior in a summer party. Unfortunately, people in that party do not help her at all because no one knows the accident. Besides, she is blamed by everyone in that party for calling the cops who ruined the party. From that on, Melinda deals with her both internal oppression from the accident and external oppression from the people who blame her including her gang and her best friend. Nevertheless, Melinda’s efforts to survive with from

both internal and external oppression is by experiencing defense mechanisms to defend herself so that she does not n blow up of the face of fear, guilt, anxious, and anger because of the rape incident and the bullying from people.

The researcher found eleven kinds of defense mechanisms, they are repression, reaction-formation, projection, regression, sublimation, rationalization, identification, turning against the self, and isolation used by the main character in coping up with internal and external conflicts she had. These mechanism are experienced by Melinda as the result psychological condition change after being sexually harrassed by her senior and being avoided by the people at school including her gang and her best friend. Finally, the defense mechanisms can actually save her from blowing up because at the end of the novel she can be brave to speak up to tell the the truth

about what she experienced to her best friend Rachel and her art teacher, Mr.

Freeman.

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