

How Does Psychological Defence Work in Characterization: The Case Study of The Last Chapter

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Abstract: *The present article refers to the psychological defense mechanisms by which almost all people justify their behavior to others and appear in many literary works with a particular motive. "The Last Chapter" by Guita Garakani examines the protagonist Raena in detail and discusses her defense mechanisms, which are presented literarily. This results in an analogy between all psychoanalytic interpretations, which primarily refer to psychoanalysis, and literary interpretation since the latter has to consider and weigh the following aspects. Psychoanalysis views the literary work first as a psychic product of an individual in a particular social and cultural situation, a product that turns out to be a compromise between fantasy and defense.*

Key Words: *psychoanalysis, defense mechanisms, literature.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

It is important to note that literary characters, their relationships, their problems, and their life stories reflect our everyday interactions and interpersonal relationships. The resultant processes consist of a stimulus and a reaction. Between the stimulus and the reaction, there is a space in which we can choose our reaction, resulting in emotional comfort in the process. It is common for people to employ defense mechanisms when they are experiencing psychological suffering because each reaction stems from different motives, needs, desires, and values. It is common for these defense mechanisms to unconsciously hide or suppress true motives or needs that are often incompatible with social norms. We cannot consciously choose to use specific defense mechanisms; they are usually deeply ingrained in our psyches. This paper explores literary representations of defense mechanisms, both conscious and unconscious. The protagonist in Garakani's novel "The Last Chapter" displays specific reactions and commits evil acts without remorse. These questions arouse interest in understanding psychological defense mechanisms.

2. METHOD:

In this study, we examine the defense mechanisms that almost all people use to justify their behavior toward others, which are reflected in several literary works with a specific motif. The next section of this article explains a few defense mechanisms used by the protagonist Raena in this novel, "The Last Chapter," to create a typical dominated woman living in a traditional society. Raena, the protagonist in the last Chapter, is a specimen mirrored in the other personages like Marjan, Mahtab, Great Aunt (Khale Bozorge), Amghezi, and Zarrintaj. The following paragraph discusses the defense mechanisms discussed in literary terms in the novel, in which all girls must suffer the victimization of ruthless and workaholic men who are always shirking their responsibilities as committed husbands or lovers.

The theoretical framework on which this work is based is introduced first. It primarily uses psychoanalytic research approaches founded by Sigmund Freud and his daughter Anna Freud. As a result of the emphasized relevance of psychoanalysis in modern literary studies, this study examines the psychological psyche of the protagonist of Garakani's novel "The Last Chapter" due to the abnormal and horrific acts committed by the protagonist in the novel. The fundamental questions of psychology have been almost the same since Freudian psychoanalysis in the last century: Who is man, what does he think, and how does he act? This could be like cognitive questions that clearly illustrate the diversity of human behavior. Defense mechanisms keep or control unpleasant feelings, effects, and perceptions from consciousness.

In-depth psychology, unconscious mental processes play a decisive role in human behavior, thinking, and feeling. Defense becomes problematic when it restricts a person's thinking and actions and thus becomes harmful (Jeong et al., 2022). We experience unpleasant emotions such as excitement, anxiety, fear, mental pain, guilt, etc., because of unresolved mental conflicts that we should make or hold unconsciously. In most cases, this does not result in an actual

conflict resolution. This means that more intensive and complicated defense mechanisms are necessary to avoid or solve the conflict - albeit temporarily unconsciously. Sigmund Freud founded psychoanalysis and said that a psychoanalytic theory could be examined and applied to literary works.. According to Charlier, 2001, the psychoanalytic theory is helpful for interpreting literary psychology (cf. Charlier, 2001, p. 79)

3. DEFINITION OF DEFENSE MECHANISM IN PSYCHOLOGY:

In order to transfer psychoanalytic theories to the literature, it is particularly crucial to understand Freud's psychoanalytic theory and explain the importance of a person's defense mechanisms.

According to Freud, the defense mechanism is a protective mechanism of the psyche used to ward off underlying needs that cannot be tolerated for personal reasons. The ego unconsciously uses these defense mechanisms to avoid unpleasant effects, urges, desires, and fears (Vigna-Taglianti, & Arfelli, 2013).

Mental disorders are characterized by emotional processes, which form the disorder's core and are also highly interconnected with cognitive processes and unconscious conflicts. People's defenses are automatic psychological responses to internal or external stress or emotional conflicts. Whether collectively or individually, the ego's defenses or defense systems alter the subjective experience in order to keep emotional distress at bay since it is the ego that is responsible for directing observation and that allows us to detect the other agents. (Pritz, 2009, p.3)

The word "defense mechanism" is primarily composed of two words. Defense is a system of physical and mental action patterns that ensure the survival of the individual, their mental health, and the appropriate education in order to cope with the most crucial environment at the moment. The defense system helps mentally stressed people cope with all abnormal life stresses and work productively by using these survival strategies when danger is felt. As a result, the person is in a state of well-being where they can fulfill their abilities. (cf. Stumm & Pritz, 2009, p. 3)

According to Harcourt (2017), Jean Laplanche, a French author and psychoanalytic theorist, coined the term defense in 1967, and Jean-Bertrand Pontalis, a French philosopher, psychoanalyst, and writer, co-authored the definitive work *The Vocabulary of Psychoanalysis*. According to them, defense is the process by which any modifications aimed at destroying the integrity and constancy of a biopsychological individual are limited or suppressed. The defense usually consists of an internal stimulus (drive), an internal stimulus tied to ideas (memories, fantasies), and a specific situation that triggers these emotions. Above all, the defense system strives to eliminate all unpleasant effects and maintain mental balance. The defense process consists of defense mechanisms more or less integrated into the ego.

"Mechanism" is a system of movements or events determined by law, along with the apparatus on which they occur, and it is derived from the French word *mécanisme*. On the part of psychoanalysis, a mechanism is composed of elements constructed so that every movement of one element causes a movement of other elements. They function automatically as a system that has an automatic process. (Dorsch, 2014, p. 2002)

It is possible to find defense mechanisms as a pathological conflict management in symbolic satisfaction or reparation and a normal protective function for maintaining the ego and its functions. Their goal is to keep away from all mental disturbances and stress. (cf. Stumm & Pritz, 2009, p. 5)

A variety of defense mechanisms are available in psychoanalysis to deal with anxiety caused by disturbances in drive dynamics. As a result of learning processes, successful mechanisms can be repeated to maintain psychological stability. Thus, individual defense styles or characteristic defense patterns can be formed (Wildgrube, 1999, p. 1)

There is consensus among researchers that categorization or hierarchical ordering of defense mechanisms is appropriate based on personality adaptation. Keeping the inner world in balance is accomplished through involuntary reactions. As a result, it is challenging to classify defense mechanisms precisely because their value depends on the situation in which they are used.

4. DEFENSE MECHANISM IN THE LITERATURE:

Psychiatry uses a different set of defense mechanisms than the literature does. As already shown, the defense mechanisms primarily serve to protect oneself and try to protect people from mental disorders and stress—but the defensive processes in fiction work in a very different way. Although unaware of human perception's defense mechanisms, the author uses them as literary techniques and controls them. In this way, readers can better appreciate fictional characters' true character and guess the hidden motives behind their actions (cf. Shtrezi, 2018, p. 7).

The following is an attempt to break down the defense mechanisms, but only those related to the subject and literary analysis of the work. Raena, the central character in "The Last Chapter," relies on defense mechanisms daily because he aims to achieve a specific life goal, creating a dominant object rather than a subject. Raena is a second-gender controlled by his father, lover, and stepson, cast as a puppet by paternalistic society. Yusof rejected her for shirking his responsibilities as a true lover, and Nasrollahkhan also ordered her to marry Atabaki's son instead. These defense mechanisms do not appear by accident but serve a specific purpose. Garakani tries to express and affect something

through her symptoms in The Last Chapter and to dominate all people. Defense mechanisms tend to be unconscious processes that ward off anxiety.. However, Garakani's defensiveness can lead to varying degrees of self-disappointment, depending on the situation's intensity, and sometimes causes him to distort reality. Defense mechanisms can cause immediate perceptions or shifts in impulses and affects.

Since Garakani is treated extremely unfriendly from the start by all children and later by all people, his psyche is severely affected internally, which is why he consciously and unconsciously uses various defense mechanisms. They help him free himself from all mental stress and eliminate unpleasant, painful, threatening impulses and effects. In the following, Garakani arranges the most effective defense mechanisms, which according to Freudian psychoanalysis, are reactions to ward off unwanted disturbance according to the course of events.

5. EMOTIONAL BLOCKS:

A person deploys this defense mechanism in response to danger or emotional distress. Here the person has an unfulfillable desire and thereby tries to cope with this problem and satisfy this need in a distorted form. All emotions and moods are blocked, i.e., an extreme form of affect isolation. (See Itten, 2015, p. 126) As a child, Raena was not out of danger. Her life and psychological balance are threatened by the other children in Malak Khanum and Nurse Khanum, whom she represents.

Several times in her old age, when her stepson turns 30, Raena tries to enter a new world full of illusionary representations without any good reason. As she gets closer to loved ones, her inner and internalized fear causes her to disengage from the new faces she meets. So the mental disorders stem from the present, embedded in the slowing down of their forgetting by taking pills. She does her best to eliminate her short-term memory and reverts to bad memories. So she begins to isolate herself more and more. This unconscious defense mechanism that Raena uses significantly negatively impacts her older psyche. Since then, Raena has had her self-contained personality, allowing her to enter a new world of far-fetched years.

She threw the pills in the trash can. She drank the water. She looked out the kitchen window at the street. There was no news. She returned to the room. The photos were arranged on the round table in the corner of the room. She tidied them up a bit" (, p. 59).

6. UNDOING:

In undoing, the person commits ineffective acts to which symbolic power is attributed. So the person acts as if certain actions, desires, and thoughts did not occur. The aim is to avert penalties for violations of prohibitions or requirements. Compulsion is also considered a disorder that Raena is likely to be able to deal with if she develops her behavior and uses this defense mechanism. Such a defense system can mutually influence both persons, the sender, and the receiver. The receiver, who shows no reaction, is insured against all possible dangers and the sender, the source of interference, perceives that the receiver constantly fulfills all orders and tasks and follows the rules to the letter. Malek Khanum, the mother of Raena, is the typical person in this novel who tries to use this mechanism to avert Mister Piran's wrongdoing towards her. She masters the situations that can trigger a fire in life with him. She denies taking part in the challenges that Mr. Piran may plan. Malek Khanum only wants to survive in poor economic conditions and gossip against them. To avoid these dangers, Malek Khanum fulfills all of Mr. Piran's orders at first. This defense mechanism is a complete success. (Cf. Morgenroth, 1990, p. 68)

" Malek Khanum never complained about anything. Although from the first year, his eyes became hollow, and his facial wrinkles increased. It was not to be expected otherwise. Malik Khanam was the daughter of Khanam Jan. In this part. It was not customary for him to complain to the family. No one ever finds out about her work. Even Aunt Khanum was the confidante and confidant of the entire clan. He did not know much about her adventures. Everything was speculation.

When Ms. Malik returned to the room and saw the guests' confused faces, she only said with a smile: This registration is this older adult's entertainment. He has been working with Yan since his retirement. It is also perfect (p.31-32).

7. COMPENSATION:

As a defensive behavior, compensation compensates for weaknesses and the non-fulfillment of an essential need or impulse. Any excessive behavior or community involvement indicates that it is replacing something important that is being prevented from being fulfilled. The weakness, lack, and inhibition can be justified consciously and understandably by external circumstances. However, they can also come from within and be unconscious. Sometimes the compensation describes an ongoing private lifestyle that can contribute to a mental balance. Raena uses this defense mechanism to overcome the underlying inner conflict created by the negligence of others. However, when it comes to creating compensatory mechanisms, Raena must be inventive. From the outside world, petite, young, and old Raenas,

live asymptotically and can survive like a tick on a tiny drop of blood. However, when finding out that she does not have a lover of her own, she feels a psychological burden that there is no way to get rid of her. Now she knows why everyone feels offensive or hurtful towards her except Daejan, who connects with an enduring love; therefore, he can empathize with her. As a result, Raena develops a personality independent of anyone else, refusing to associate with many people. This is how Raena finds this indescribably good mother, who should devote her whole life to Abbot. In this way, she can protect her spiritual balance, which stems from a paternal rule that emphasizes a woman's rules as a good wife and mother. However, she needs specific credit from others, including her society. Some of Raena's behaviors are indicators of the use of this defense mechanism, which can stably balance her mental balance.

8. MANIPULATION:

The defense mechanisms include manipulation, which is of great importance psychologically. Manipulation of people is the deliberate and ruthless behavior of exploiting and controlling the behavior of individuals or groups for one's own purposes without their knowledge and often against their will, whereby this influence should remain hidden from those affected. Manipulation lies somewhere between coercion and persuasion since the controlled persons can defend themselves against the manipulation without their knowledge or consent. However, they cannot decide because this psychological control influences them unconsciously. (cf. Fischer, 2017, p. 165)

Raena usually uses different techniques, always related to her goals. Raena uses the individuality of women such as Marjan, Zari, and her great aunt (Kare Bozorghe) to design her make-believe world with similar characteristics. Thus, creating herself as a respectable girl whom Amme Kanum, Zarin Kanum appreciate, and her mother, Malek Kanum, and influences others to They use a defense mechanism to influence others. What is striking is that she is very loyal to her kin-based attachments like her lover, Yousof, her nephew, her aunts, her uncle, and other relatives. She needs to be accepted by her relatives because they are her sanctuary to protect her from harm after her mother's death.

Raena's confidence-inspiring behavior serves to ensure that the psychomotor dimensions of the others develop plausibly. As a result, these individuals begin to follow Raena's orders unconsciously. Raena also changes her tactics to adapt to the current situation. As with Raena, Yousof, her friend and filial love, gains more freedom through industrious frugality. He appreciates the help of his loved ones, especially the support of Nurse Khanum, and is often allowed to make his own decisions. If Raena wins Yusof's favor, Raena can achieve his goals. At Nurse Khanum's home, Raena must learn a process to familiarize herself with the mysteries of family and kinsfolk while developing her finesse as Nurse Khanum excels under challenging moments. In the meantime, she does not want to avoid damaging or optimistic interest in herself. She never pays attention to the friendships with the others, but in Yusof's presence, he adopts a submissive attitude and listens to Yusof's instructions, although she knows full well that Yusof's instructions are primarily useless for the distillation process. Despite this, Raena follows her orders without a word.

With this defense mechanism, Raena can fully gain Abtin's trust. Now Raena can get Abtin to behave as he intended, but she has been unable to involve her son in a most profound and most committed relationship with Mahtob. It seems that Raena fosters Abtin like Yusof; unlike him, there is no genetic relationship as Abtin escapes a marital relationship like Yusof while trying to get involved like Yusof in helping her mother. Contrary to the close relationship between Daie Jan (Raena's uncle) and Raena, Abtin ridicules such a connection as Yusof tries to leave the relatives.

In response to Rana's proposal to marry Abtin, Abtin would reply, "What? Should I be an uncle? Should I lay my life at the feet of someone who doesn't want to stay here? No mom. I am not. I need to find someone I can trust, someone who is honest, I need to find someone who is himself (p. 127).

9. INSULATION:

Freud's psychoanalysis describes isolation as a defense mechanism that describes the defense against an intolerable idea by separating it from its emotion. In connection with obsessive-compulsive neuroses, this defense mechanism is a pause after an unpleasant event, during which nothing more is allowed to happen. Isolation is described in the context of nullification and reaction formation as a signature defense mechanism of Raena. She cannot forget the experience. The isolation is intended to guarantee the breaking of the mental connection. Her ego is more awakening and his isolation sharper, probably due to the high conflict between his superego and id. The isolation serves to keep away any disturbance of the ego. (cf. Freud, 1992,2017)

In addition, she seeks the same interruption under these circumstances, preferring to continue living on a deserted mountain. Inferiority is one of the main reasons for isolation. Human derision and contempt for Raena emphasize the emotions underlying isolation. Instead, this creates sadness in Raena, which is why anger and revenge often arise. Freud pointed this out repeatedly.

The course of such feelings significantly influences a person's behavior, and the fate of drives can show up in his psychodynamics. Raena intends to withdraw from the environment and the world through this defense mechanism, accompanied by silence.

Rana looked out the window. The sun is almost down. People came and went on the streets. She did not know anyone. She was a stranger to the neighbors. The passers-by were strangers. Of all the people who came and went from morning to night, none had come to his house. She thought that everyone had deserted her and that only Abbot was left, who was still delaying his departure." (p. 140)

" Now he knew that people leave for different reasons. Tsarina Taj Khanam left her husband because she did not want the rest of her children to suffer the same fate as Maryam. Yusuf left his father because he supported his mother and brothers wanted. If Waqar al-Saltaneh loved his wife and child, he would never have gone as far as he did, and the story would have been very different." (p. 140)

10. RATIONALIZATION:

In some people, the actual motives, which come from unconscious sources, for some behavior or inner attitudes are hidden behind another justification or an apparent reason. Rationalization as a defense mechanism allows socially accepted reasons for behavior and hides other unreasonable reasons behind them. This defense mechanism is somewhat different from lying. With rationalization, the threatening feelings are reversed, and one unconsciously lies to oneself. Therefore, one does not have to justify one's considered behavior. Raena uses this defense mechanism to relieve her ego (Lear, 2018). Raena remains isolated in a city for years to find his inner happiness while having the same experience in an asylum in Switzerland to erase the bitter memories and find herself as a woman who could live without a man. Without people or Yousof, she can go on with her life undisturbed. However, other women in her family gradually lose their mental faculties while turning their world into an illusion.

Unfortunately, their efforts to prove its existence in real life have been in vain because it does not smell. Surely this will scare Raena to death and pose significant psychological dangers to her. Also, she decides to leave the mountain. Raena stayed at the asylum for seven years. Now she looks terrible. He has hair down to his knees, a thin beard down to his navel, and bird-like nails (pp. 82-83).

Experiencing this situation where she does not like herself, Raena searches for a reasonable way to achieve a specific goal and save herself from the problematic situation. She unconsciously uses this defense mechanism not to reveal her true self, characterized by contempt for human beings and her character. Since Yousof, like other male characters in this story, has a narcissistic personality characterized by a lack of overestimation of one's abilities, Raena and other female victims who fall prey to these male monsters, such as Vaqarosaltane or Mr. Piran attempt to adapt to their mundaneness to get used to personalities. Freud's narcissism requires attributing values and meanings even when they are absent. For example, Yousof, his father_Vaqarosaltaneh_uses rationalizations to unconsciously support narcissism and ward off intrapsychic conflicts to behave ruthlessly towards their partners. Accordingly, Yousof or other male monsters portrayed in this novel intend to create a new world around themselves. He manages to convince the others that he is only telling the truth (cf. Stumm / Pritz, 2009, p. 582) by saying, for example, that now is not the time to get married because his father and mother were not happy. Similarly, Abtin, Raena's stepson, tries to attribute his reluctance to marry Mahtob to his uncle Daejean's bad memories since his wife left him after he fell ill.

11. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION:

In literary studies, numerous methods can interpret a literary text. The psychoanalytic interpretation of literature is one of the most important methods of the 20th century since it interprets the text in different ways. This method goes back to the founder of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud. When people are exposed to a mental disorder, they consciously and unconsciously try to maintain their mental balance. He behaves so normally that every action has an appropriate reaction. However, they will have unrelated feelings if they cannot overcome the psychological stress. As a result of this ambivalent emotional structure, he begins to use defense mechanisms. With the help of defense mechanisms, he can strengthen his mental powers and survive difficult situations without permanent impairment.

Psychoanalysis regards the literary work primarily as the psychic product of an individual in a particular social and cultural situation, a product that turns out to be a compromise between fantasy and defense. According to literary studies, literary work is primarily an aesthetic-formal structure that can be viewed from different perspectives.

The protagonist of The Final Chapter, Raena, suffers from a sense of inadequacy that upsets her emotional balance. She tries to make up for this deficiency as much as possible. The main reason is that he does not have his scent for life. Therefore, she is not noticed by everyone at all, which prompts her to create fabulous The Last Chapters. Feeling inferior, Raena wants to prove her femininity by bringing her stepson, Abtin, to maturity. This shows a kind of Oedipus complex because she experienced a surpassed love with her father and her lover Yousof. In order to get pure love, she must dedicate her love to her stepson Abtins. All she needs is to forget her bitter memories. In an asylum in Switzerland, she tried to kill her surpassed love, Yousof, in the sea. In Freudian psychoanalysis, the sea is a symbol of conquered love. At first, however, their defense mechanisms only served to survive. Only then did the urge to completely forget to develop. In order to achieve its goals more efficiently, it uses various defense mechanisms. This character can be better

appreciated by analyzing the text psychologically and examining the defense mechanisms used in work. A psychoanalytic approach is particularly appropriate.

Based on psychological studies, psychoanalysis contributes to interpreting literary works of art. Therefore, every work of art results from a psychic activity and is the subject of psychological research, mainly because psychoanalysis considers the literary work primarily as the psychic product of an individual in a specific social and cultural life situation. Without exception, all literary works of art can then be reinterpreted psychoanalytically. (cf. Schönau / Pfeiffer, 2003, p. 75)

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