

Analysis of Defense Mechanisms in Hawkins' *The Girl on the Train*

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ABSTRACT

This research paper seeks to examine the psychic behaviors and the defense strategies used by the leading character of Paula Hawkins' novel, *The Girl on the Train*, Tom to avoid his emotional injuries. In order to explore how Tom uses defense mechanisms for releasing traumatic tensions and protect self-image, the research tool used for the investigation is Crammer's concept of defense mechanism instruments such as such as repression, reaction formation, and denial. The uses of various types of defense mechanisms by Tom mainly repression, reaction formation and denial help him live his life with an 'illusion of being clean' despite being a cheater, liar and murderer. The research not only corresponds to the hidden incidents that Tom emerges on but also other factors supporting to the use of defense mechanism. It digs out the reasons Tom blames or neglects others and lives in the illusionary world of 'being clean' that justifies the flaws in his behavior. The finding is that the central character, Tom is suffering from ego split and he is trying to get out from tensions and anxiety. It is expected that this paper stands as a reference to the scholars intending to research Hawkins further.

Keywords: Anxiety, Denial, Repression, Unconscious.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Because of the increasing traumatic and psychic disorders, many personality problems have aroused in the 21st century. People suffering from personality problems are prone to committing suicide very soon. But if they are able to make skilful use of the defense mechanisms, they can protect their lives. This research paper is directed to mark the psychic disorders in Paula Hawkins's psychological thriller, *The Girl on the Train*. The novel covers narcissistic disorder of the leading characters, Tom, Megan and Rachel (Gonzalez, 2017; Roisiah & Wijayadi, 2021). *The Girl on the Train* was published in 2015, and Hawkins was listed as one of BBC's 100 Women in November 2016. Hawkins not only deals with the plight of women but also depicts their inner conflicts and psychic tensions in fighting against their exploitation in *The Girl on the Train* (Muthuselvam, 2017). For the critic, Schaub (2015), "Hawkins' remarkable understanding of the limits of human knowledge and the degree to which memory and imagination can become confused" (p. 32). The novel, *The Girl on the Train*, was adopted into a film in 2016. Judging on subject matter of the fiction, Taylor (2015) iterated, "*The Girl on the Train* does examine the complexity of individuals, and the effect we have, through a journey into the lives of the people living beside the tracks, and some of the people travelling on the trains" (para. 3). *The Girl on the Train* is narrated in first person from the perspective of Rachel, a thirty-four-year-old London commuter, who during her daily trip into the capital, is found inhabiting into a house where a train stops almost every day because of some technical error (Feay, 2015). This house, which coincidentally sits a few doors down from Rachel's former home, and which is shared blissfully with her ex-boyfriend Tom, belongs to a couple she calls Jason and Jess, and Rachel envisions their happy life together while internally yearning for her former relationship with Tom.

The Girl on the Train has had a dizzying rise because of the defense mechanism used by Tom. Defense mechanisms are behaviors people use to separate themselves from unpleasant events, actions, or thoughts (Holland, 2019). Tom disregards the fact but denies his fault throughout the novella by claiming him to be clean despite his involvement in murder and infidelity. Throughout the novella till his death, Tom lives with the illusion of being clean and blames other characters for their actions. Tom sees his actions as the appropriate and inevitable reaction of others' bad actions (Gonzalez, 2017). This keeps him in the illusion that whatever he did is not his mistake and is only the reaction of inappropriate actions of others. Illusion and self-centeredness guides Tom to the series of crimes. Even in the final stage of life, he still tries to justify his actions as appropriate. Tom unconsciously denies taking the responsibility of his destructive behaviors in order to defend the crime he commits. Tom refuses to accept his fault despite breaking the

trust of three women and killing one of them later. He keeps denying the fault in his actions by putting the blame on Rachel, Anna and Megan for not loving him properly, not being attractive enough and not letting go easily. The rationality of the research lies in its issue of exploration, that is, defense mechanism. The psychic threats, feelings of guilt and shame, experienced by the characters in the novel, are analyzed to diagnose why people are bound to execute their defense mechanisms. Tom's defense mechanisms and behaviors separate him from unpleasant events, actions, or thoughts.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

For the justification of the proposed hypothesis, the study makes a close reading of the primary resource, that is, the text, *The Girl on the Train* by Paula Hawkins from the psychological perspectives. The systematic sampling method is used to test the working hypothesis. It focuses on the psychological flaws illustrated by Sigmund Freud, mainly defensive mechanism on the main character of the novella Tom. Besides this, secondary sources such as the reviews on the text written on journals, websites, and other resources commentaries are studied to find the research gap. It applies a descriptive, qualitative research design to collect data from the primary and secondary texts and analyze them.

A. Conceptual Framework

The defense mechanism is a psychic device used by a person to protect himself from tensed emotions that come in the conscious (Cramer, 2000; Tyson, 2006). This instrument of the mind assists a person to feel comfortable in an unhealthy or unfriendly environment. In psychological theory, "a defense is an unconscious psychological operation that functions to protect a person from anxiety-producing thoughts and feelings related to internal conflicts and outer stressors" (Schacter, 2011, pp. 482-483). The psychic concept of defense evolved out of the works of Sigmund Freud, who researched on the ego defenses and noted so many forms of them manifesting in our behavioural activities. Repression, denial, sublimation, and displacement are the key defense mechanisms (Crammer, 2000). Repression refers to the undesirable but blocked ideas or instincts in the unconscious. This defense mechanism can be noted in one who does not have any recollection of a traumatic event. Denial is another kind of defense mechanism that seeks to ignore the bitter reality of a situation so as to avoid anxiety (Bailey & Pico, 2021). Sublimation is a very effective defense mechanism because attempts to redirect negative feelings or impulses into positive ones. Defense mechanisms can have healthy or unhealthy impacts depending on their root causes and frequency of occurrences (Bailey & Pico, 2021; Tyson, 2002). Defense mechanism signifies the use of psychological strategies employed by a person in order to reduce or avoid negative states such as conflicts, frustration, anxiety and stress (Crammer, 2000). Instincts are the forces which we assume to exist behind the tensions caused by the needs of the id while they can never become objects of consciousness (Freud, 1924). Splitting ego is a disease and causes to ego system and defense mechanism is a way to self-protect from social exclusion (Crammer, 2000). When the mind involves in a debate about our desires, the ego tears into parts. These parts are guided by our instinctual desires, which are considered to be wrong and unsuitable for society. This is when the ego starts to defend society to show that instinctive desire is good.

By applying the literature on the defense mechanisms advocated by Crammer and others in the noted psychological novel, *The Girl on the Train*, the researcher would like to explore the impacts of the utilization of such instruments.

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There are several works carried out on *The Girl on the Train* which shed light on Hawkins' purpose in writing this novella. Roisiah and Wijayadi (2021) marked astonishing juxtaposition of suspense and emotions in Hawkins' novel, *The Girl on the Train*. Taylor (2015), impressed by the narrative technique of *The Girl on the Train*, stated, "The story is told from the perspective of Rachel and two other female characters, all of whom have very different lives and experiences but are similarly flawed" (para. 4). Feay (2015) observed the atmosphere of suspense in the novel. But the suspense in the novel is not so appealing to the senses of the readers. Maslin (2015), judging on the content of the novel, opined that *The Girl on the Train* has more fun with unreliable narration than any chiller since *Gone Girl*. The novel is full of backstabbing, none of it literal.

Analyzing the narrative of the fiction, Feay (2015) said, "The narrative is skilfully split between three women whose lives interlink tragically: Rachel, Megan and Anna" (para.2). May (2014) evaluated the story of the novel, *The Girl on the Train* in such words: "This is one unsettling little thriller and the best bit about it is that no one can be trusted, including the three female narrators who share the storytelling of this book" (para. 1). *The Boston Globe* (2015) reviewed the fictional plot in these words: "Like its train, the story blasts through the stagnation of these lives in suburban London and the reader cannot help but turn pages"

(para. 1). *The Girl on the Train* is the most surprising novel which shows Hawkins' concern about drug abuse, alcoholism and domestic violence among others and affair.

Supporting these reviews, this study states that there are certain flaws and uncertainties in human mind, which result in split personalities and the traces of split personalities are found in Tom's behavior. Criminal mind searches for attacks and so does Tom's mind but it also defends. Human minds tend to defend in order to protect their social reputation and belonging. The defense mechanism helps to cope with trauma and anxiety in extreme difficult mode. Tom is a dominant character who is exposed to frequent tensions, physical and verbal attacks and uses defense strategies in order to hide the behaviors guided by that tension. The defense strategies Tom uses hide his faults and cruelties highlighting the calm and loving nature of Tom throughout the novella. The unfulfilled yearning has a significant effect on the structure and functions of the ego itself, leaving a deficit in the ego on the character. It highlights the flaws and egos of Tom in *The Girl on the Train* which shades light on his attempts to defend his ego and immoral behaviour.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The novel *The Girl on the Train* presents the regular flaws in the life of the antagonist Tom who is one of the central characters of the novel. The paper seeks to analyse the defense mechanisms exercised by Tom in different ways. Crammer (2000) asserted that defense mechanisms help to protect against anxiety and threat to self-esteem. In the novel, Paula Hawkins depicts the character as immoral and ill but this study attempts to show the defense strategies the character uses. *The Girl on the Train*, also referred to here with the abbreviation, *TGoT*, for reference purpose, presents the restless conflict and resolution of both type of psychic disorder; neurosis and psychosis. Splitting, a part of the ego simply goes missing: the violent splitting off and destroying of one part of the personality is the main theme of the novel, *The Girl on the Train*. Hawkins has depicted a character named Tom for this purpose. Tom himself is suffering from psychosis and neurosis. Both are the cause of splitting ego but defense mechanism is the way to protect the ego from splitting. Splitting ego and defense mechanism are the disease and the treatment for achieving the id instinct's desire (Tyson, 2002). Defense mechanism is the unconscious process. When ego splits, ego manages for defensive process (Crammer, 2000; Thomson, 1998). Tom's ego splits when his desires are not fulfilled. His dissatisfaction causes the anxiety and to reduce anxiety his ego uses defense mechanism in different incidents, which is unconscious. The crime has its relation to neurosis and psychosis. Thinking is very closer to our personality. "Personality is the type of test inside will tell you about the choice you have made and the direction you are taking" (Thomson, 1998, p. 67). Instinct is affected by personality. *The Girl on the Train* is a novel based on the intense ego and its defense. Here, the central concern of the research lies in making a query on what sort of defense mechanisms, and splitting ego is used and what might the motive be. There occurs the conflict between two instincts. Then the ego mediates and it starts to negotiate between the two instincts. Anxiety is aroused when ego and id happen to emerge in the conflicting scene (Tyson, 2006). It is torn apart and one side of the personality is damaged, then the ego starts defense. There are many mechanisms to defend reality:

A. Repression in *The Girl on the Train*

Tom represses many desires in order to conceal his guilt feelings and instincts. Those unsatisfied matters are stored in the unconscious but not abandoned. Repression is one of the defense strategies mostly used by the ego, which represses our thoughts from getting manifested at the conscious level (Cherry, 2021; Crammer, 2000). When a person has the tension and pressure of repressing his emotions, he begins to forget his traumatic events and experiences. Likewise, when our mind starts to cope with reality, when it fails it splits (Tyson, 2002). It creates a gap and vacuum. Repression deals with "things which the patient wished to forget, and therefore intentionally repressed from his conscious thought and inhibited and suppressed" (Breuer & Freud, 1895, p. 10). Tom represses the bad memories of his relationship with his parents, bad incidences with Rachel, his ex-wife, and other impulses in order to feel and believe that he is not bad. The instances of his past that portray him badly are intentionally repressed from consciousness and are stored in the unconscious level of the mind: "I did my best, you know. I was a good husband to you, Rach. I put up with a lot, your drinking and your depression" (*TGoT*, p. 38). Tom wants to show himself as a good and faithful husband to his wife (Gonzalez, 2017). Tom does not only want to portray it but actually believes it.

Tom embodies lots of illusions about himself. He perceives himself as a flawless person and an ideal husband. In order to convince himself, Tom chooses to forget his bad behavior towards Rachel, his first wife. People adopt denial and tend to forget their problems so that they can live better life (Breuer & Freud, 1895). Tom forgets the betrayal and infidelity that was the main reason for Rachel's devastation. He forgets his violent and criminal self and only remembers the positive instances. Obsessed by guilt-ridden activities, Tom does not want to harm his ego by remembering the painful past. Tom, as Taylor (2015) noticed, reassures Rachel that he was a good husband who persisted with his wife's drinking habit and depression

for a long time which he did. In contrary to what Tom believes him to be (Muthuselvam, 2017). Rachel confesses that she was isolated and was forced to stay alienated, away from Tom in these words: "I became lonelier because no one likes being around a drunk. I lost and I drank and I drank and I lost(...)I'm not beautiful, and I can't have kids, so what does that make me? Worthless" (*TGoT*, p. 40). Rachel became a drunkard because she wanted to forget the problem with Tom.

Tom acclaims that he was there with Rachel when she had put herself into drinking and depression to support her. People may exercise unhealthy activities to defend their depression (Bailey & Pico, 2021). Drinking is a defense mechanism used to erase depression (Crammer, 2000). But, in fact, Tom was the one to neglect Rachel when she was sad for the fact that she won't be able to conceive a baby. Tom's ignorance and lack of interest in her pushed her to be more alcoholic and depressed. Tom chooses to forget this fact and only remembers the positive side of the relationship (Roisiah & Wijayadi, 2021). He keeps disturbing and threatening thoughts from being conscious. But, he forgets that he was responsible for the state of Rachel. Rachel clarifies, "No, no. He wags a figure at me. Let's not start rewriting history. I was good to you. Sometimes... well, sometime you forced my hand. But I was good to you" (*TGoT*, p. 301). It was because of him Rachel started drinking alcohol and was led to depression ultimately.

Tom refuses to accept the truth that he was a betrayer and a violent husband in his relationship with Rachel. He reassures Rachel that he was a good husband to bear her, to help her with her depression and to take care of her when she would not care about anything time and again. Though he would hit Rachel and be physically abusive, he calls it 'sometimes'. He further says sometimes Rachel would "force his hand" (*TGoT*, p. 301) which explains he does not think he was bad. He rather thinks Rachel would turn him bad sometimes and he would hit her. Here, Tom uses regression as a defense mechanism in order to keep the disturbing incidences of the past in unconscious and only consciously remember the things that makes him look and feel like "a good husband" (*TGoT*, p. 298). As a result of repression, Tom is not aware of his own anxiety producing impulses or does not remember deeply emotional and traumatic past events.

In the novel, Tom uses reaction formation in his dealings with Megan, Rachel and Anna. Reaction formation indicates the defense mechanism which becomes just opposite to the desire to be safe from the social isolation. For example, hateful thoughts and feelings are repressed, and the individual is aware only of loving ones. Reaction formation is actually a mental process, transforming anxiety-producing thoughts into their opposites in consciousness (Holland, 2019; Tyson, 2006). Tom neglects Megan when he first meets her: "He does not appear so focused with Megsan" (*TGoT*, p. 285). He just flashes a smile for a moment and leaves for the office without saying anything. This shows he is not interested in her and in other girls. Tom, as Feay (2015) noted, does not engage in conversation, which is the opposite of his personality and behavior in dealing with girls. In contrast to how he behaved, Tom happens to be flirty and interested in girls and affairs beyond his wife's back. In the first meeting, Megan felt that Tom is not at all interested in her: "He flashes me his wide, Tom Cruise smile, and then he's gone, and it's just me and her and the baby" (*TGoT*, p. 28). In reality, Tom does not leave an opportunity to engage in conversations with girls.

Tom's behavior and inner ego search for sexual intentions due to the fear of society. He shows himself to be faithful to his wife and family. Holland (2019) highlighted the symptom of defense mechanism in this way: Unsavory thoughts, painful memories, or irrational beliefs can upset you. Instead of facing them, you may unconsciously choose to hide them in hopes of forgetting about them entirely. His actions however regularly show flaws in his personality. As Taylor (2015) marked, Tom makes her feel that her weakness in technology will put him in a loss as she might delete something important by mistake, or click on something she should not. It shows that he's worried for Rachel and is serious about his business. It is Tom's defense to protect and hide the emails and conversation with Anna from Rachel: "I wasn't supposed to go near Tom's computer because he was worried I would delete something important by mistake(...) 'Technology's not really your strong point, is it, Rach'" (*TGoT*, p. 37)? He represses instinctual desires in order to avoid social isolation. In another case with Rachel, Tom politely convinces Rachel that technology is not her strong point. Rachel blamed herself for being technologically ignorant and feared checking his computer. Rachel later explains how she found out about her husband's affair with another woman: "I found out the way everyone seems to find out these days: an electronic slip. Sometimes it's a text or a voicemail message; in my case, it was an email, the modern-day lipstick on the collar" (*TGoT*, p. 37). Later, it is revealed that, Tom said so just to fool Rachel and to keep her away from the secrets he hides in his computer. Tom is bounded and accountable to society and he knows that cheating on one's wife is not excused in social relations (Roisiah & Wijayadi, 2021). In order to avoid social isolation, people react in a skillful way. Tom reacts in a way that is believable so that Rachel does not doubt on his intentions.

Tom also uses Reaction Formation in his dealings with Rachel. Tom hates Rachel, more than anything else. Hatred towards her is the reason why he left her. He hates her through-out his life but pretends that he cares about her and is worried for her. In fact, he pretends to care Rachel just to keep her away from the reality that he hates her. Rachel, as Muthuselvam (2017) judged, functions as a society and Tom does not want to look bad in front of society. Hence, he pretends to look good.

Though Tom says, “I feel sorry for Rachel’s condition” (*TGoT*, p. 309), he actually does not feel bad for her. He is just hiding his cruelty behind nice words. He does not care if Rachel reaches home safely and is doing well. He becomes good to Rachel so that she does not disturb his wife Anna and his daughter. Tom hates Rachel but does not show it to her. His real feeling for Rachel gets revealed only at the end of the novel: “You’re like one of those dogs, the unwanted ones that have been mistreated all their lives. You can kick them and kick them, but they’ll still come back to you, cringing and wagging their tails” (*TGoT*, p. 310). Tom cares for her just to make sure that Rachel does not doubt him for the wound and the hurt she has got in her body.

Tom portrays the opposite of what he feels in order to reduce anxiety by taking the opposite feeling. The traumatic people begin to react in the opposite way to avoid their wounds (Tyson, 2006). Tom’s real feelings for Rachel get revealed at the end of the novel, *The Girl on the Train*. He reveals the fact when he becomes unable to hide the truth of Megan’s death and his instinctual desire for Rachel and Anna. It is because he seeks to prefer what is contrary to reality, Tom suffers a lot.

B. Denial in *The Girl on the Train*

Denial is a form of defense mechanism which involves ignoring reality simply because it is permeated with trauma and feelings of failure. Tom is lying and lying is a refusal of reality. It is the denial defense. George (1997) defined denial as “refusing a fact, a realistic perception that is unhappy by losing or changing that perception to fantasy or hallucination” (p. 10). Tom “murdered Megan in his abnormal, tensed behavior” (*TGoT*, p. 301). However, Tom denies the fact that he murdered Megan because he wanted to hide the reality that he had an extramarital affair with her and she was pregnant with his baby (Taylor, 2015). His ego does not want to be questioned by society due to his instinctual desire. He refuses to accept the reality which was created by his own fault. From this incident, Tom becomes high-tempered, “tries to take revenge with Megan for revealing his truth” (*TGoT*, p. 302) and struggles to satisfy the self-ego. Our habit develops when we succeed to fulfil our needs by defending instinctual actions which is a crucial part of our personality (Crammer, 2000). Tom found comfort in lying, hiding and defending his actions which is his personality engaged with ego. When ego hurts personality hurts. To be safe from hurt Tom’s ego repeats to distort the fact. He even is aware of the punishment and the consequence once his deeds are revealed but defense is the unconscious process that is later recognized consciously. Anxiety pressures the mind, which gives him pleasure which is a way to be safe from splitting ego and he only gets satisfaction after denying the fact by rejecting it (Bailey & Pico, 2021). When Rachel finally remembers the incident and narrates the whole story to Tom and Anna, Tom gets angry with Rachel. Once Tom’s reality is exposed, he immediately turns to Rachel to blame her for all the things that happened (Taylor, 2015). He turned to Anna to convince her that he murdered Megan because he wanted to settle things with her and wanted to live a happy life with Anna. He rather blames Rachel for forcing him to murder Megan: “If you hadn’t been there that night if Anna hadn’t come running back here after she saw you at the station, then I’d probably have just been able to sort things out with Megan” (*TGoT*, p. 309). He simply denies that murdering Megan was his fault.

Tom fears if the reality gets revealed, he might be accused as a murderer and betrayer by society. The moment a person is addicted to taking the assistance of defense mechanisms, his actions and behaviors look dubious (Crammer, 2000). Hence, to distort reality, Tom denies the fact and justifies it by saying that it was not his mistake. He shifts all the blame to Rachel, who was in “the underpass just by chance” (*TGoT*, p. 275). Although Rachel is innocent and has nothing to do with Megan’s murder, “Tom drags her in the incident” (*TGoT*, p. 279) and tries to impose all the blame on her in order to fulfil his ego’s self-esteem.

Here, the danger of reality is acknowledged and also the reality itself is twisted. To lie and distort the fact is a habit of Tom. His personality hurts by pointing the satisfying action as a lie. He is caught up but his ego is denying the fact. He does not want to hold the kind of character Rachel is describing. When reality comes out and the instinctual desire of the id remains unquenched, it suffers (George, 1997; Tyson, 2006). But ego is the mechanism that deals with reality. Tom’s ego cannot accept the fact and keeps denying no matter how bitter the consequence might be. In the extract, Tom denies his involvement in “the murder of Megan” (*TGoT*, p. 305). He does the exact same thing while denying his fault in having an extra-marital affair with Megan. He blames Anna, his current wife, for not being interesting enough, not “giving him enough time for having an affair with Megan” (*TGoT*, p. 305). The trend is repeated in his character throughout the novel. He repeats the errors. He gets divorce with Rachel by complaining how she lacked time for him and how uninterested she became in having sex and he repeats the same process with Anna because his ego does not want to be alleged by society as a selfish and unfaithful man.

Tom keeps on denying the reality to be safe. Denial occurs when you refuse to accept reality or facts (Crammer, 2000). His ego denies the fault. It is the denial defense. Social norms and systems are hindrances in the way of fulfilling the desires (Holland, 2019). So, by denial as a defense mechanism, ego rejects the reality and reduces anxiety. His family “loved him even after he wasted his parent’s property” (*TGoT*, p. 288). Tom isn’t aware of the fact that what he did was a crime. He rather keeps denying the fact to defend his actions. Tom actually is a liar. He always lived his life in an illusion.

The reality reveals only after his death. Rachel and Anna were always told that his parents do not love Tom (Muthuselvam, 2017). As Saner (2015) noted, Tom's parents do not support him either. Tom also lied to them saying he has been in the army for years. The revelation of his truth in the newspaper after his death comes as a shock to both Anna and Rachel: "There's been a lot of stuff about Tom in the papers. I found out that he was never in the army. He tried to get in but he was rejected twice. The story about his father was a lie, too he'd twisted it all round" (*TGoT*, p. 313). He always distorted the fact and people believed him. He had mastered the act of lying and defending. The whole truth is revealed after his death- the investigation shows that he was completely hiding the fact.

Tom used denial defense strategy. He also chose to refuse the fact that he was rejected in the army and his family loved him. He had applied in the army few times but did not get through the tests. Tom commits crime and defenses for the crime which is a symptom of defense mechanism. People who exercise defense mechanisms unnecessarily start behaving abnormally. Tom behaves like a criminal in his attempts to denying the confession of truth. Like a criminal, Tom suffers from the splitting ego, and uses defense strategies. It protects us from the social isolation and self-depression, too. Tom's ego becomes harmful and it needs treatment only when its regular use leads to abnormal behavior such that the physical and/or mental health of the individual is affected.

V. CONCLUSION

The research paper has critically examined the tireless conflict between the neurosis and psychosis of Tom, one of the central characters of the novel, *The Girl on the Train*. It shows the conflict between instinctual needs and lying for the defensive purpose by Tom. He disregards the fact and denies his fault throughout the novella by believing himself to be clean despite his involvement in murder and infidelity. Throughout the novella till his death, Tom lives with the illusion of being clean and blames other characters for their actions. He sees his actions as the appropriate and inevitable reaction to others' bad actions. This keeps him in the illusion that whatever he did is not his mistake and is only the reaction to the inappropriate actions of others. Illusion and self-centeredness guide Tom to the series of crimes. He dies without realization of his crime. Even in the final stage of life, he still attempts to justify his actions as appropriate. Tom unconsciously denies taking responsibility for his destructive behaviors in order to defend the crime he commits. The conflict inside our minds is endless. The human ego works in a compromising way. In the novel, when Tom makes some mistakes, his superego tries to stop him but id wants to continue. This conflict reaches the ego. Ego fulfills the instinctual desires by satisfying social norms and values. When the ego fails to deal with society, it starts splitting. Splitting ego sinks into anxiety. To reduce anxiety, the ego starts to defend its workings by using various techniques called defense mechanisms. This report is concluded with the findings that the central character, Tom is suffering from ego splitting and he is trying to get out from tensions and anxiety. For that purpose, a defense strategy is inevitable. Tom has used defense mechanisms to protect his instinctual desires without being imposed in front of Rachel and Anna who are presented there as society symbolically. In short, it can be said that if the human mind keeps repeating mistakes that become a habit and society forbids repeating them. In order to avoid forbidding those habits, the human mind appeals to the ego. The ego creates a balance between id and superego and the socially forbidden instinctual desires are fulfilled in a more socially acceptable manner. But, when the instinctual desires get revealed, the ego uses various defense strategies in order to reduce the anxiety which is the outcome of the tension evoked due to the unfulfilled desires. Unconsciously, Tom uses various defense strategies to reduce his anxiety.

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