

EGO DEFENSE MECHANISM OF OBSESSIVE-COMPULSIVE DISORDER (OCD) SUFFERER IN JOHN GREEN'S *TURTLES ALL THE WAY DOWN*

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Abstract

To complete the topic research, the researchers examined this study in three components: (1) the psychoanalytic perspective from Sigmund Freud which discussed about three elements of personality in Aza Holmes; (2) mental illness in a form of obsessive-compulsive disorder that reflected on Aza Holmes' daily life; (3) and the ego defense mechanisms to see how Aza Holmes copes with her obsessive thoughts. This study is analyzed using context-oriented approach, which included in reading the novel, identifying and selecting the data, evaluating the data based on Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis theory, and interpreting the findings. According to the findings of this study, Aza Holmes' Id is more demanding than her ego and superego. This can be used to assess whether Aza Holmes suffers from obsessive thoughts and compulsive behaviors. It also manifests on how Aza Holmes' obsessive-compulsive disorder condition always related to her psychological defense mechanisms in her daily life.

Keywords: *Three Elements of Personality, Ego Defense Mechanism, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, Turtles All the Way Down's Novel*

INTRODUCTION

Every human being is born with a wide range of emotions. According to Eckman (Cherry, 2021), there are six basic emotions that human always experienced with as long as they are still becoming a living creature. These emotions are sadness, happiness, disgust, fear, surprise, and anger. From these 6 basic emotions, humans continue to develop their emotions so that they have emotions that are much more diverse than the 6 basic emotions. One of which is anxious. Being anxious develops from one of the basic emotions, namely fear. This emotion will develop into higher level of anxiety if human tends to bottle up their anxiousness. Although anxious is not always a pleasant sensation, it is healthy and common, and it can help us stay focused or even make better judgments. While the early symptoms of

anxiety and anxiousness may be similar, those with anxiety disorders will be anxious all the time. As written by Mayo Clinic, anxiety is a feeling that makes a person feel scared and worry about the uncertainty that will occur in the future. These feelings will cause some real side effects in the body of the person who is experiencing them. People whose anxiety is controlling themselves tend to feel uneasy feelings such as cold sweats, dry mouth, nausea, rapid heartbeat, and even fainting (Mayo Clinic, n.d.). Someone who has experienced these things will certainly be more familiar when remembering how anxiety leads a person to cope with their emotions.

Sigmund Freud once wrote in his essay *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1922) about the element of personality. There are three elements in the human's mind. Those three elements are the ego, the Id, and superego. Freud then elaborated his ideas in his essay entitled *The Ego and the Id* (1923). Ego deals with reality and works as a decision maker that is taken by the mind consciously. The Id is an element in personality that contains desire, fulfillment of needs, and is impulsive. While the superego works so that the ego can act ideally and in accordance with morals, because the superego contains morals and values that humans get from society, parental education, and religious matter. As explained by Freud, the ego defense mechanism is formed because of something that happens so that the id or superego becomes too demanding (Hall, 1955). When the Id or superego becomes too demanding, it makes our ego unable to work properly to make decisions. Id that is too demanding will often make a person look like they lost their sanity because the Id will tend to indulge their pleasure desires and violate the norms in society. Meanwhile, if the superego is too demanding, then they will look like people who are too rigid in obeying the rules, then find their lives too shackled by the existing rules. By this, ego defense mechanism exists to help the ego balancing the id and superego.

Anxiety and the ego defense mechanism are inextricably linked. When someone suffers from anxiety, the ego defense mechanism will do its job to protect the conscious mind from the unwanted thoughts and feelings right when the anxiety occurs (Hall, 1955). Ego defense mechanisms operate on an unconscious level of the mind to assist the individual in avoiding undesirable emotions such as anxiousness. In other words, ego defense mechanisms are natural and normal. The researcher attempted to use John Green's novel *Turtles All the Way Down* to investigate the issue of anxiety and ego defense mechanisms.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Psychoanalysis is defined as a set of psychological theory and therapy methods which once originated with Sigmund Freud's work and theories. It is explained as their belief that everyone has unconscious thoughts, feelings, desires, and memories at the core of Freudian (Newman & Newman, 2020). Psychoanalysis proposes that by bringing the content of the unconscious into conscious state, people can experience catharsis and gain insight into their current state of mind. A person can find relief from psychological distress or pressure through this process. Other than that, emotional and psychological problems such as depression and anxiety are frequently rooted in dispute between the conscious and unconscious mind (Paris, 2017). As a result, people employ defense mechanisms to shield themselves from the information contained in the unconscious (Bowins, 2021).

1. Element of Personality

The Id

According to Freud's personality theory (Freud, 1923), The human psyche is divided into three parts: Id, ego, and superego. They all emerge at different times of human's lives. These are systems, not sections of the brain or physical entities.

The Id is the most primitive and instinctive aspect of human's personality because the Id is the only element of personality that exists when humans are just born (Freud, 1922). The Id is a portion of the unconscious that holds all of the drives and impulses, including what is known as the libido, a type of generalized sexual energy used for everything from survival instincts to art appreciation; which in another words the Id always related to the pleasure of human being (Freud, 1923).

The Ego

On his essay, Freud writes an analogy about the ego and the Id. The Id is described as a horse, meanwhile the ego is described as a horseback rider who has to control the horse's strength. The ego is the sole conscious personality component. It is what the individual is conscious of when they think about themselves, and it is usually what they strive to reflect onto others (Freud, 1923). The ego grows to serve as a bridge between the unrealistic id and the outside world. It is the component of personality that makes decisions. The ego, in theory, operates rationally, whereas the id is chaotic and illogical. The ego operates on the realism principle, devising practical methods of meeting what the Id wants, frequently deferring or postponing gratification to avoid undesirable societal consequences. When selecting how to behave, the ego takes into account societal realities and standards, as well as etiquette and rules (Freud, 1923).

Superego

The superego is a component of the unconscious that serves as the conscience or simply doing what is right and the source of self-criticism. To some extent, it reflects society's moral standards where people are occasionally aware of their own morals and ethics, but the superego has a great number of codes, or prohibitions, that are issued

mostly involuntarily in the form of commands or “do not” statements (Lapsley & Stey, 2012).

The superego’s job is to restrain the Id’s urges which particularly about those forbidden acts or behaviors by society, such as sex and aggression. It also persuades the ego to pursue moralistic goals rather than just practical ones, and to strive for perfection (Freud, 2009).

2. Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder

Obsessive-compulsive disorder is defined based on two terms; obsession and compulsion. Obsession is described as recurring and persistent thoughts, urges, or images that are perceived as intrusive and unwanted at some point during the disturbance and that cause marked anxiety or distress in most individuals, where the individuals also attempt to ignore or suppress those thoughts, urges, or images, or to neutralize them with several other mental activities (Birx et al., 2013).

Meanwhile, compulsion refers to repetitive behaviors (e.g., washing hands, ordering, checking) or mental acts (e.g., praying, counting, quietly repeating words) geared at preventing or lowering anxiety or distress, or avoiding some dreaded occurrence or situation. However, these behaviors or mental activities are either not realistically related to what they are intended to neutralize or prevent, or they are manifestly excessive (Birx et al., 2013).

According to Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders: DSM-5, there are several other signs to describe this mental illness, including:

1. Obsessions or compulsions consume a large amount of time (e.g., more than one hour per day) or produce clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other critical fields of human endeavor.

2. The symptoms of obsessive-compulsive disorder are not caused by the physiological effects of a substance (e.g., a drug of abuse, a medicine) or another medical issue.
3. The signs of another mental condition do not explain the abnormality.

3. Ego Defense Mechanism

Ego defense mechanisms once identified by Freud as unconscious resources utilized by the ego to lessen conflict between the Id and superego, thus represent of how a person copes with conflict and stress (Bowins, 2021). There are several types of ego defense mechanisms reflected on this study:

a. Sublimation

Human's energy can be explained as something that can move from one place to another. When a person feels and experiences an emotion that makes them feel bad or arising their anxiety, the energy from that emotion can be transferred from one object to another. In this case, there are two properties that arise when transferring the emotion to another object, which can be something positive or constructive and something negative or destructive. Sublimation is explained as a positive ego defense mechanism because in transferring those emotions, a person is not destructive towards themselves or the objects around them (Hall, 1955).

b. Regression

Regression is a defense mechanism postulated by Anna Freud in which the ego reverts to an earlier stage of development in reaction to stressful conditions. Regression is a type of retreat that allows a person to mentally travel back in time to a moment when they felt safer, usually when a person still in their childhood phase where they could feel nothing but love from their parents (Hall, 1955).

c. Reaction Formation

In psychology, reaction formation is a defense mechanism in which a person automatically replaces an unwanted or anxious urge with its opposite acts, sometimes in an excessive or flashy manner (Hall, 1955).

d. Denial

One of the most popular defense mechanisms is denial. It happens when someone refuses to accept reality or facts. They filter out external events or circumstances in their minds in order to avoid dealing with the emotional consequences. In other words, they avoid unpleasant emotions or occurrences (Hall, 1955).

e. Projection

Freud once proposed this defense mechanism as an act when a person is avoiding such unacceptable traits or impulses right away after they start to recognize it subconsciously (Hall, 1955).

f. Displacement

Similar to sublimation, displacement is explained as an ego defense mechanism which is usually destructive when transferring emotions from within to other objects (Hall, 1955).

METHODOLOGY

This research employs a qualitative method in which data is collected in the form of utterances, phrases, and any other non-numerical data. This method investigates acts, behaviors, and relationships with others by interpreting the data. The data for this study came from John Green's novel *Turtles All the Way Down*, which was read and classified depending on the type of psychological characteristics before being interpreted using Freudian theory.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

There will be three topics discussed in this chapter, the three elements of personality in Aza Holmes as the main character of the novel *Turtles All the Way Down*, Aza Holmes'

obsessive compulsive disorder, and the ego defense mechanisms that Aza Holmes uses when she tries to overcome her obsessive thoughts between her daily life basis.

1. The Id, Ego, and Superego of Aza Holmes.

Human personalities are made up of three parts: the Id, ego, and superego. The Id is in charge of defining human needs and desires which relate to pleasure, the ego is in charge of mediating between the Id and the superego, and the superego is in charge of supporting the ego in making decisions by providing a moral that a human being can use as a guide. Sigmund Freud based this thesis on Calvin Hall's work *A Primer of Freudian Psychology* (1955). Thus, Aza Holmes will be depicted using this theory.

The utterance below will show how Id in Aza Holmes appears. The Id is described by a narrative written in italics.

I knew from previous searches that the Cleveland Clinic had reported the case of one person who'd died of *C. diff* after presenting at the hospital with only abdominal pain and fever. I reminded myself that I didn't have a fever, and myself replied: *You don't have a fever YET.* (Green, 2017:4-5)

The Id wants to make Aza find out more information about *C. diff* bacteria by browsing and reading articles on the internet. After Aza reads the article, the superego tries to tell that Aza does not have the symptoms mentioned in the article by saying, "I reminded myself that I didn't have a fever." But the Id again refutes the superego by saying, "*You don't have a fever YET.*"

Ever since I was little, I've pressed my right thumbnail into the finger pad of my middle finger, and so now there's this weird callus over my fingerprint. After so many years of doing this, I can open up a crack in the skin really easily, so I cover it up with a Band-Aid to try to prevent infection. (Green, 2017:5-6)

So, the ego uses a coping mechanism to overcome the worries that start to arise from her obsessive thoughts by doing a 'routine' of opening the crack in her hand and then closing

it again with Band-Aid, because after Aza does her ‘routine’ then the Id gets its release and feels relieved because the Id’s wish has been fulfilled.

I told myself to be in this moment, to let myself feel his warmth on my skin, but now his tongue was on my neck, wet and alive and microbial, and his hand was sneaking under my jacket, his cold fingers against my bare skin. It’s fine you’re fine just kiss him *you need to check something* it’s fine just be fucking normal *check to see if his microbes stay in you* billions of people kiss and don’t die *just make sure his microbes aren’t going to permanently colonize you* come on please stop this *he could have campylobacter he could be a nonsymptomatic E.coli carrier get that and you’ll need antibiotics and then you’ll get C. diff and boom dead in four days* please fucking stop just kiss him *JUST TO MAKE SURE*.
I pulled away. (Green, 2017:152-153)

Id on Aza often can be so demanding that force Aza to immediately letting herself go from their intimate scene. The utterance above is showing how conversations often goes on inside her mind, to show that her obsessive thoughts such as, “*you need to check something*”, “*check to see if his microbes stay in you*”, “*just make sure his microbes aren’t going to permanently colonize you.*” can suddenly appear only to make Aza feels the uneasiness and the urge to avoid or runaway. The superego works on reminding the Id that kissing is normal, that Davis will not make her be in hazard position because of his bacteria since the Id always have its urge to pull Aza away from their kiss when it said, “It’s fine you’re fine just kiss him”, “billions of people kiss and don’t die.” After both elements play their role, the ego works before Aza gets more undesired thoughts from her Id by making Aza pulled away from him.

I even told him something I’d never actually said to Daisy or Dr. Singh or anybody—that the pressing of my thumbnail against my fingertip had started off as a way of convincing myself that I was real. (Green, 2017:106)

Aza recounts how she has the habit and urge to press her thumbnail against her fingertip in the quotation above. Aza’s desire to do so is identified as the role of the Id in her

actions. As stated previously in Chapter 3, Id is constantly associated with human pleasure, hence once the Id's desire is gratified by Aza pressing her thumbnail on her fingertip, the Id feels satisfied and may convince Aza that she is absolutely real and does not belong to the fictional beings.

It'll feel better if you reapply the hand sanitizer. Just a couple more times. It was 3:12. We had to get to the bank. I took off the Band-Aid, applied hand sanitizer, reapplied a Band-Aid. It was 3:13. Daisy said, "Do you want me to drive?" I shook my head. Started Harold up. Put him in reverse. Then back in park. (Green, 2017:130-131)

The Id encourages Aza to reapply hand sanitizer to the callus on her finger, which was always covered with Band-Aid, as stated in the beginning of the quotation, "*It'll feel better if you reapply the hand sanitizer. Just a few more times.*" If they were too late to travel to the bank to meet Simon Morris about the cash reward after learning the information about Russell Pickett's disappearance, the superego serves as a reminder of the time, "It was 3:12." The ego then attempts to fulfill the desires of the Id, forcing Aza into her obsessive thoughts. Aza began to remove her Band-Aid, use hand sanitizer, and reapply the new Band-Aid to cover the callus on her hand. After performing the 'ritual,' Aza's superego reminded her, "It was 3:13." Only then Aza feels relieved that she could drive her car and continue to be focused on with their activities.

2. Aza Holmes as An Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder Sufferer.

According to the American Psychiatric Association's (2013) *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (5th ed.; DSM-5), obsessions and/or compulsions are the hallmarks of OCD. Obsessions are recurring and persistent thoughts, desires, or visions that are perceived as invasive and undesired, whereas compulsions are repetitive behavioral or mental activities that an individual feels compelled to perform in reaction to an obsession or in accordance with rigorous rules.

1. *Obsession*

Obsessions are described as intrusive and compelling thoughts, such as a pent-up desire, or images similar to self-invasion attacks that are very, very disturbing to a person's life and that needs significant concern or suffering for the majority of people with OCD (Birx et al., 2013). The utterance below will be proof of Aza Holmes' obsessive thoughts.

I wanted to listen, but the cafeteria was so loud, and I couldn't stop wondering whether there was something wrong with the microbial balance of power inside me. Excessive abdominal noise is an uncommon, but not unprecedented, presenting symptom of infection with the bacteria *Clostridium difficile*, which can be fatal. I pulled out my phone and searched "human microbiome" to reread Wikipedia's introduction to the trillions of microorganisms currently inside me. I clicked over to the article about *C. diff*, scrolling to the part about how most *C. diff* infections occur in hospitals. (Green, 2017:4-5)

The Id on Aza is very strong. The Id has an obsession with the *Clostridioides difficile* bacteria. It can suddenly make Aza think of unpleasant things.

Supposedly everyone has them – you look out from over a bridge or whatever and it occurs to you out of nowhere that you could just jump. And then if you're most people, you think, *Well, that was a weird thought*, and move on with your life. But for some people, the invasive can kind of takeover, crowding out all the other thoughts until it's the only one you're able to have, the thought you're perpetually either thinking or distracting yourself from. (Green, 2017:45)

Aza noted that every human being will have obsessive thoughts which will interfere with their everyday duties on occasion, but most individuals will find it easy to redirect their thoughts to other things and forget the disturbing thoughts. As for Aza, who has obsessive-compulsive disorder, obsessive thoughts are defined as ideas that are difficult to regulate, are not easily transferred to other thoughts, and are extremely disruptive in her daily activities.

It'll feel better if you reapply the hand sanitizer. Just a couple more times. It was 3:12. We had to get to the bank. I took off the Band-Aid, applied hand sanitizer, reapplied a Band-Aid. (Green, 2017:130-131)

The utterances “*It’ll feel better if you reapply the hand sanitizer. Just a couple more times.*” Shows how Aza Holmes’ obsessive thoughts tell Aza to reapply hand sanitizer to her hands so that there will be no more infections.

2. Compulsion

Compulsion is defined as repetitive behaviors or mental acts that an individual feels obligated to perform in responding the obsessive thoughts, or according to rules that must be strictly followed in order to prevent or reduce anxiety or distress, or to avoid some feared event or situation; however, these behaviors or mental acts are not realistically related to what they are designed to neutralize or prevent, or are overtreatment. (Birx et al., 2013). The utterances below are proofs of Aza Holmes’ compulsive act to reduce anxiety when she remembers about the obsessive thoughts.

Ever since I was little, I’ve pressed my right thumbnail into the finger pad of my middle finger, and so now there’s this weird callus over my fingerprint. After so many years of doing this, I can open up a crack in the skin really easily, so I cover it up with a Band-Aid to try to prevent infection. But sometimes I get worried that there already is an infection, and so I need to drain it, and the only way to do that is to reopen the wound and press out any blood that will come. (Green, 2017:5-6)

Aza has this behavior since she was a child. The unpleasant feelings will go once Aza cope with her compulsion. Her compulsion shows whenever Aza places her right thumbnail against the callus on her middle finger’s finger pad until the crack opens.

Thus, the utterance below will show what Aza does after pressing her thumbnail to her middle finger pad to the callus as the compulsive act does not end there.

Beneath the table, I slid the old Band-Aid into my pocket and, without looking, pulled a new one, unwrapped it, and then glanced down to apply it to my finger. (Green, 2017:7)

In order to prevent herself from being absorbed in tormenting obsessive thoughts, Aza performs her ritual of changing Band-Aid after placed her right thumbnail against her middle finger's finger pad. This activity is intended to prevent or minimize worry or distress, as well as to avoid some dreaded occurrence or situation.

It'll feel better if you reapply the hand sanitizer. Just a couple more times. It was 3:12. We had to get to the bank. I took off the Band-Aid, applied hand sanitizer, reapplied a Band-Aid. (Green, 2017:130-131)

Another evidence that shows how compulsive behavior is seen in Aza Holmes is when the obsessive thought "*It'll feel better if you reapply the hand sanitizer. Just a couple more times.*" finally followed by the activity of Aza removing her Band-Aid, applying hand sanitizer over her callus and then closing the callus again with a new Band-Aid.

3. The Ego Defense Mechanisms on Aza Holmes.

Ego defense mechanisms, according to Freud, are unconscious resources used by the ego to reduce conflict between the Id and superego, and they are a reflection of how an individual responds to conflict and stress because the ego and superego divert energy away from the Id by creating ideational and moralistic identifications with the intuitive Id's object-choices. (Hall, 1955).

1. Sublimation

Energy can be displaceable in two kinds of way; the destructive and productive. According to Freud, sublimation is a mature form of defense mechanism in which socially inappropriate impulses or idealizations are changed into socially acceptable behavior or activity, potentially leading to long-term conversion of the underlying urge (Hall, 1955).

Sublimation helps Aza to transfer the negative energy into a positive one by doing breathing exercise.

All the while, I was breathing in through my nose and out through my mouth, in the manner advised by Dr. Karen Singh, exhaling at a pace “that would make a candle flicker but not go out. Imagine that candle, Aza, flickering from your breath but still there, always there.” (Green, 2017:8)

In this paragraph, Aza attempts to redirect her energy to non-harmful activities, such as controlling her breath and imagining herself exhaling on a candle, but only until the candle flickers and not goes out. This activity necessitates a high level of concentration and control. Aza will feel more relaxed if she takes slow, deep breaths. Aza will be able to calm her central nervous system, reducing the stress and anxiety she is experiencing if she takes this seriously.

2. Regression

Regression is an act about retreating to the childhood phase (Hall, 1955) which shows in Aza’s behavior when she is avoiding her friends.

Daisy and Davis both tried to visit, but I wanted to be alone, in bed. I didn’t read or watch TV; neither could adequately distract me. I just lay there, almost catatonic, as my mother hovered, perpetually near, breaking the silence every few minutes with a question-phrased-as-a-statement. Each day is a little better? You’re feeling okay? You’re improving? The inquisition of declarations. (Green, 2017:236)

After spending a few days in the hospital, Aza does not let anyone see her even though several people around her tried to see and visit her. Aza’s behavior looks like a child who chooses to remain silent. This kind of behavior is usually done by young children because of several factors such as finding it difficult to explain their difficult situation to others, or feeling that other people do not have too much important business to know if they are currently having a hard time. In this case, the ego works to make Aza feel like she is

repeating her childhood behavioral phase by avoiding her friends who want to visit her when Aza is recovering according to an accident.

3. Reaction Formation

According to Hall, reaction formation is an ego defense mechanism in which a person expresses their feelings with behavior that is actually inversely proportional to what they really feel to reduce anxiety and usually tends to exaggerate so that other people would really believe that the feelings they are currently feeling are actually genuine even though it is not the truth (1955). The utterance below shows how the Id in Aza immediately opposing tendency to the anxiety.

Like, parts of typical romantic relationships that made me anxious included 1. Kissing; 2. Having to say the right things to avoid hurt feelings; 3. Saying more wrong things while trying to apologize; 4. Being at a movie theater together and feeling obligated to hold hands even after your hand become sweaty and the sweat starts mixing together; and 5. The part where they say, “What are you thinking about?” And they want you to be, like, “I’m thinking about you, darling,” but you’re actually thinking about how cows literally could not survive if it weren’t for the bacteria in their guts, and how that sort of means that cows do not exist as independent life-forms, but that’s not really something you can say out loud, so you’re ultimately forced to choose between lying and seeming weird. (Green, 2017:42)

The Id keeps telling her that being in relationship is somehow makes her life in such a jeopardy position because of the bacteria they shared during skin ship. But the superego tells her to act fine for her couple so that she will not hurt her couple’s feeling. Meanwhile the ego will do its job as she is telling her couple a lie if she is okay. Lying is also an act of reaction formation in ego defense mechanism because reaction formation is described as a person act in a way, they do not really wanna act like that (Hall, 1955).

4. Denial

Denial is one of defense mechanisms that an OCD sufferer usually does (Hamidi & Motlagh, 2010). Aza includes to one of them. This shows of how Aza Holmes' mental act is proof to it.

... I've been better this week. Maybe the medicine is working, when from nowhere the thought appeared: The medicine has made you complacent, and you forgot to change the Band-Aid this morning. I was pretty sure I had actually changed the Band-Aid right after waking up, just before I brushed my teeth, but the thought was insistent. I don't think you changed it. I think this is last night's Band-Aid. Well, it's not last night's Band-Aid because I definitely changed it at lunch. Did you, though? I think so. You THINK so? I'm pretty sure. And the wound is open. Which was true. It hadn't yet scabbed over. And you left the same Band-Aid on for—God—probably thirty-seven hours by now, just letting it fester inside that warm, moist old Band-Aid. I glanced down at the Band-Aid. It looked new. You didn't. I think I did. Are you sure? No, but that's actually progress if I'm not checking it every five minutes. Yeah, progress toward an infection. I'll do that at the bank. It's probably already too late. That's ridiculous. Once the infection is in your bloodstream— Stop that makes no sense it's not even red or swollen. You know it doesn't have to be— Please just stop I will change it at the bank—YOU KNOW I'M RIGHT. (Green, 2017:128)

To avoid the anxious or uncomfortable feeling, Aza performs an ego defense mechanism in the form of denial in which Aza refuses to believe and accept the reality in a situation that she is currently experiencing. Denial is a coping method that people employ in order to deal with painful emotions, because surely it can involve in either refusing to acknowledge a reality or denying the consequences of truth (Costa, 2017). This ego defense system is carried out by Aza consciously to avoid Id who is acting very demanding. Denial here shows how the Id struggling to believe the superego that tells Aza if she is already change her Band-Aid even though she actually had changed her Band-Aid at lunch which makes the Id feel stressful.

5. Projection

Projection is a defense mechanism in which people attribute their own undesired features or sentiments to other people, animal, or stuff (Corey, 2008). The utterance below shows how Aza is projecting her anxious self to other things.

I took off the Band-Aid, opened up the cut with my thumbnail, then washed my hands and put on a new Band-Aid. I looked in the drawers beneath the sink for some mouthwash, but they didn't have any, so in the end, I just swished cold water around my mouth and spit it out.

There, are we good? I asked myself, and I responded, *One more time to make sure*, and so I swished and gargled more water, spit it out. I patted my sweaty face dry with some toilet paper and walked back into the golden light of Davis's mansion.

He motioned for me to sit down, and put his arm around me. I didn't want his microbiota near me, but I let him keep his arm there, because I didn't want to seem like a freak. (Green, 2017:154-155)

Aza's anxious mind tries to tell her the fact of 80 million bacteria from Davis' body are transferred to her body and will stay forever inside her after they are kissing. This is very intolerable for Aza. Aza immediately stops their activities and goes about to her routines such as washing hands, changing Band-Aid, and gargling using water to prevent the bacteria go inside her body. This is a proof of projection because Aza is fighting her neurotic and moral anxiety. She deliberately does not tell Davis the truth because she does not want to hurt Davis.

6. Displacement

If one object is unavailable, the cathexis can transfer to another that is, because this implies that psychic energy has the quality of being movable. The process of rechanneling energy from one item to another is known as displacement (Hall, 1955).

I pulled myself to standing. For a moment, I thought I might faint as the pain blazed through me. I grabbed hold of the IV pole and took a few shuffling steps. I heard my mom stirring. I didn't care. Pressed the dispenser, rubbed the foam all through my hands. Pressed it again, and shoved a scoop of it into my mouth. (Green, 2017:229)

Displacement is used for some people to release the uneasy feeling to another object or person to satisfy the Id (Freud, 2009). The utterance above is showing how the Id makes Aza feels anxious about the C. diff in the hospital. Aza then satisfies the Id by drinking hand sanitizer.

CONCLUSION

The researcher uses John Green's novel *Turtles All the Way Down* (2017) as an object study by evaluating Aza's ego defense mechanism from a psychoanalytic standpoint. From this study, it can be seen how Id is always stronger than the ego and superego. Aza's mental illness is influenced by Id as the strongest in between of the three elements mentioned above. The ego and the superego on Aza act as supporters in attaining objective of Id's. Further reason why the Id becomes the strongest is because Aza suffered from mental illness. Aza, unlike the other humans, feels abnormal. Yet, she understands if she is a little bit different, particularly in terms of her mental health. The Id often makes Aza remember things that make her anxious. When such a thing happens, the superego will work to remind Aza that her obsessive thoughts are not real, while the ego works to do what the Id wants so that Aza will no longer feel anxious.

This results in how Aza has obsessive thoughts with the *Clostridioides difficile* bacteria are always followed by compulsive behavior afterwards. The compulsive behavior requires Aza to dig in middle finger's callus until the crack opens, apply hand sanitizer on it, and change her Band-Aid so that the crack will not get any infection.

Thus, several types of ego defense mechanisms such as sublimation, regression, reaction formation, denial, projection, and displacement are represented for how the ego defense mechanisms work so that Aza no longer feels anxious because of her obsessive thoughts.

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