

ANXIETY AND DEFENSE MECHANISM OF THE MAIN CHARACTER IN JOHN GREEN'S *TURTLES ALL THE WAY DOWN*

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INTRODUCTION

In this paper, the writer analyzes anxiety and defense mechanism of the main character as represented in *Turtles All The Way Down*. This novel illustrates the condition of the main character who has obsessive compulsive disorder, where this disease experienced by many people and cannot be avoided. The author tells how anxieties disorder can attack the main character and how she protects herself against anxieties. Based on this problem the aim of this study is to describe how the main character protects herself from anxiety. Boeree states that anxiety is the anticipation of fear involving the activation of the sympathetic nervous system in response to a dangerous situation [1]. Spielberger categorizes anxiety into two types, namely: (1) State anxiety refers to a temporary condition in response to some perceived threat when confronted with specific situation or object, (2) trait anxiety describes personality characteristics rather than temporary feeling, which is relatively stable compared to state anxiety [2]. The main character's response toward the anxiety are divided into five classification which are displacement, denial, repression, fantasy and turning against [3]. Anxiety is an unpleasant feeling which often experienced by human. Therefore, the writer considers the anxieties and defense mechanism of the main character important to be studied.

METHOD

The data is taken from a novel *entitled Turtles All The Way Down* by John Green [4]. The research is done by doing close reading and interpretation techniques. Showalter described that close reading is pausing technique to looking for dynamics and seeing multiple meanings of the text [5]. In conducting the research, the writer collects the data about the anxiety experienced by the main character. The writer classified these data into two types of anxieties and interprets the data. The data showing defense

mechanism of anxieties were then put into classification and interpreted. Data are analyzed based on the theory applied.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The act of anxiety found in *Turtles All The Way Down* fulfill all types classified by Spielberger.

The following data is example of state anxiety experienced by Aza Holmesy. State anxiety arises when she manipulates email address as a journalist to get a police report about the identity of Russell Pickett.

The file is in your email. "Sometimes I wondered if Daisy was my friend only because she needed a witness. As the file downloaded, I glanced away from my screen, through the slits of the blinds to the parking lot outside. A streetlight was shining right at us, which made everything around it look pitch-black. I was trying to shake off a thought, but as I opened the police report and began scanning through it, the thought grew (38).

The data above shows the main character's anxiety appears when she was at a restaurant with her best friend, Daisy. Aza and Daisy are involved in the search for a fugitive police named Russell Pickett. To get Pickett's identity, Daisy carryout manipulation involving Aza as an accomplice. Knowing that the identity of Pickett in her email was obtained illegally by Daisy, Aza began to feel anxious till it disturbs her thoughts at that time. She feels fear and worry thinking about the dangers of the actions they have done. "The thought grew" proves that Aza was influenced by her own thoughts, she feels very nervous and loses concentration due to the disturbance of bad thoughts that are affecting her about the threats that could happen to her that night. She fears in becoming a fugitive and sentenced to prison. This case proves that state anxiety has occurred of Aza. The feeling of fear that arises is a temporary condition for Aza due to a threatening situation that occur suddenly and disappears when she is no longer in that situation.

Trait anxiety is another type of anxiety experienced by Aza Holmes. This type of anxiety occurs to her everyday. The data below shows the occurrence of state anxiety when she wants to replace the bandaid on the callus of her hand.

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 (3).

The data above proves that Aza has been experiencing excessive anxiety since she was a child until now. Being unable to control herself when anxiety came, she hurt herself by tearing the finger on her hand which became a callus now. After along time, Aza began to think about the bad consequences of her actions. Aza believed that the wound had become infected which could endanger her life. Her trait anxiety was reflected when she had the greatest fear of infection with the wound on her hand. However, she tried to forget the anxiety, yet her mind still forced to think that the wound could threaten her through the bacteria that could enter the infection. Aza's feelings of excessive anxiety about illness had been stable since she was a child.

The experience of anxiety triggers defense mechanism to appear. One of the defense mechanism shown by Aza is displacement.

We were stopped at a red light, and when it turned green I was somewhat ungente with Harold's accelerator. I could feel the heat in my cheeks, but couldn't tell if I was about to start crying or screaming. Daisy kept going (130).

The data above illustrates that the defense mechanism displacement has been used by the main character. Aza releases her anger at Daisy to a non threatening object, her favorite car, Harold. She "was somewhat ungente with Harold's accelerator" describes something wrong happened to her car named, Harold. The main character shows that she has damaged the engine of her car as a sense of release that she did unconsciously. These thing caused by the quarrel that was going on Aza and Daisy along the way home. This treatment is defense mechanism that appear to protect herself from state anxiety.

Another defense mechanism that appears is denial. It is seen at school cafeteria.

I scrolled down farther to a list of symptoms, none of which I had, except for the excessive abdominal noises, although I knew from

precious searches that the Cleveland Clinic had reported the case of none 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 my self replied: You don't have a fever yet (2).

The data above illustrates defense mechanism of denial which can be seen in "I remind myself that I have no fever". The quote shows Aza is denying the anxiety that appear in her mind. She denies having any symptoms of c.diff that could threaten her. Denial is done because of the unpleasant feelings described in the quote "I scroll further down the list of symptoms". By finding out about c.diff bacteria as if it was on her, resulting feelings of anxiety and fear. This denial is a way to protect her from trait anxiety. The third defense mechanism of the main character is repression.

Your now is not your forever. I went to class, got good grades, wrote papers, talked to Mom after lunch, ate dinner, watched televisions, read. I was not always stuck inside myself, or inside my selves. I wasn't only crazy (55).

It can be seen that the main character performs a defense of repression to forget the anxiety that comes and bother her. This self-defense is carried out by Aza through activities that are positive and very useful for her. So far, Aza has always been stuck with bad thoughts that make her tormented and feel threatened. Finally, she tried to do activities like a normal person without any burden. Spending time and just focusing on doing that, succeeded making Aza forget the negative thoughts about her anxiety and fear of clostridium difficile bacteria or callus on her hand that had been interfering life and hindering her daily activities. This is the prove that the main character protect herself from trait anxiety.

The fourth defense mechanism experienced by Aza is fantasy. She fantasizing about her future life.

Reading through the hundreds of colleges in this book, which were rated on everything from academics to cafeteria quality, I couldn't help but imagine myslef at some small college somewhere on a hilltop in the middle of nowhere with two hundred year old buildings. I read about one school where you could use the same library study carrel that Alice Walker had. Admittedly, fifty thousand would hardly make a dent in the tuition, but maybe I could get a scholarship. My grades were good, and I was a competent standardized test taker. I let myself imagine it---taking classes like Politicized Geography and Nineteenth-Century British Women in Literature in small classrooms, everyone seated in a circle. I imagined the crunch of gravel paths under my feet as I walked fromclass to the library, whereand then before

dinner at a cafeteria that served everything from cereal to sushi, we'd stop at the college coffee shop and talk about philosophy or power systems or whatever you talk about in college. It was so fun to imagine the possibilities---West Coast or East Coast? City or country? I felt like I might end up anywhere, and imagining all the futures I might have, all the Azas I might become, was a glorious and welcome vacation from living with the me I currently was (82).

The data above illustrates defense of fantasy have been done by Aza Holmesy. She imagines all the possibilities that can be reached in the future. This makes her happy because she can live freely and do activities like normal people. This case is prove the main character try to avoid the anxiety of trait. If she does not have obsessive compulsive disease or excessive anxiety about something. In the quote "It was so fun to imagine the possibilities", the sentence shows that aza realizes all the things she wants for her educational future are difficult to achieve, because of a mental disorder as a character personality of her that always controls her daily activities. Fantasy is the defense that protect her from trait anxiety.

The last of defense mechanism experienced by Aza Holmesy is turning against. In this case, she illustrates defense of turning against by blaming herself for her bad condition.

I hated my body. It disgusted me---its hair, its pinpricks of sweat, its scrawniness. Skin pulled over a skeleton, an animated corpse. I wanted out---out of my body, out of my thoughts, out---but I was stuck inside of this thing, just like all the bacteria colonizing me (94).

It can be seen that Aza shows self defense of turning against by making herself as a substitute target for the anxiety that arises. Releasing all the distraction that she feels resulting Aza hate, insult and even feel disgust of her own body. This is a way for her to get rid of all the disturbances and unpleasant feelings that have been disturbing her. This case proves that Aza blames herself as the results of trait anxiety.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The results of this study indicate that trait anxiety is the type of anxiety mostly experienced by the main character. Trait anxiety experienced by the main character occured because of threaten situation concern fear of contamination with clostridium difficile bacteria that hinders the main character doing daily activities. The main character shows defense mechanism as the result of anxieties. The defense mechanism most often appear that protect the main character is denial, which is seen through personality of the main character who denies the emergence of

excessive anxiety about bacteria c.diff that she believes would kill her. Further study on this novel through other psychology perspectives is suggested to gain more insights on how anxiety affects the lives of the character.

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