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The Use of Emotion and Defense Mechanisms in Understanding Lead Characters in Selected

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Philippine Normal University
National Center for Teacher Education

THE USE OF EMOTION AND DEFENSE MECHANISMS IN UNDERSTANDING
LEAD CHARACTERS IN SELECTED SHORT STORIES

A Seminar Paper Presented
to the College of Graduate Studies and Teacher Education Research
Philippine Normal University

In Partial fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
of Master of Arts in Teaching Literature

JOANNA M. SAVARIS

March 2014



Philippine Normal University
National Center for Teacher Education

Acknowledgements



Philippine Normal University National Center for Teacher Education

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Philippine Normal University
National Center for Teacher Education

J.M.S

ABSTRACT



Philippine Normal University

National Center for Teacher Education

Title: The Role of Emotion and Defense Mechanisms in
Understanding Characters in Few Selected Filipino Short
Stories

Researcher: Joanna M. Savaris

Degree: Master of Arts in Teaching Literature (MAT)

Adviser: Dr. Jennie V. Jocson

Key Concepts: Defence Mechanism
Emotion

In this study, the researcher discussed the ego defense mechanisms used by the characters in the eight (8) selected Filipino short stories. In the analysis of these works, the researcher tries to answer the following questions: (1) what defense mechanisms were used by the lead characters in the selected short stories?, (2) how did the lead characters show the use of defense mechanism?, and (3) why did the characters apply the ego defense mechanisms?

This study uses the descriptive research. Since there has been no consensus on the exact number of emotions and ego defenses the researcher used Robert Plutchick's Psychoevolutionary Theory of Emotion which basically describes the eight basic emotions and ego defenses that will help in analyzing the lead characters in the story. In selecting the eight (8) selected short stories, the researcher goes through a list of stories with defense mechanism as themes. The process of data analysis involved three phases. Phase I involved surveying of literary works, short stories in particular, written by Filipino writers. Phase II involved the preparation of the list of short stories with the following criteria: (1) the literary texts must be written by reputable writers in Philippine



Literature, (2) the literary texts must be works of Filipino short stories in English, (3) the literary texts must lend themselves to the use of psychoanalytic principles, (4) two works for each author will be included in the study, and (5) the literary texts must be cited in anthologies and/or self-published. Finally, Phase III involved an in-depth analysis by describing the defense mechanisms used by the characters and explaining how and why the characters used such defense mechanisms.

The researcher arrived with the findings that the homely girl in the short story “Desire” uses the defense mechanism of compensation by writing beautiful sketches to take her mind off the loneliness she feels from being unwanted by men. Choleng in “The Small Key” uses displacement as her defense mechanism. She displaced her anger and jealousy against her husband by burning the clothes of his first wife. She expressed anger without fear of retaliation because her husband’s first wife was already dead. In the story “Cost Price”, Joe used intellectualization by trying to find a rational justification for desiring his girlfriend, Isabel, and urging her to sleep with him by saying that couples normally do make love even if they’re not yet married to show how much they love each other and the raise he received from work was enough to support his parents and Minda. Meanwhile, Miss Mijares in “The Virgin” employed repression to exclude from her consciousness the idea of finding a man to love by tying herself to work to support her ill stricken mother and send her niece to school. Reaction formation was shown in “The Centipede” when the lead character chose to understand and put up with the cruelty of his sister instead of getting back at her for her meanness due to her bad health condition. In the story “Death In A Sawmill” Rustico applied the defense mechanism of projection. He blames and kills Rey Olbes to decrease his feeling of inferiority and shame. His wife,



Dida gets pregnant while everybody knows that he is impotent. Ben in “Pina Colada” utilized reaction formation by reversing his feeling of resentment to empathy towards his housemate Carol for her carelessness because he understands her plight of being in a foreign country for the first time. Besides, he made a promise to return the favor somebody did for him when he first set foot in the U.S. Minda in “The Summer of My 17th Year” used denial twice; first by asserting herself as a mature person when in fact she was just doing it to please the people around her who expect her to be one. The second was used to make herself believe that aside from the letter Tim would do everything to keep in touch with her again. Of the eight basic defense mechanisms, none of the characters exhibit the use of regression as defense mechanism.

The researcher arrived with the conclusions that although the concept of defense mechanism is defined as a psychological strategy brought into play by the unconscious mind to manipulate or distort reality this does not necessarily translate to being neurotic. Defense mechanisms are prevalent in people’s lives and are employed by sane individuals in almost every day situations to help them cope with stress at least for a while.

The various emotions experienced by the lead characters in the short stories generate the use of defense mechanisms either to protect themselves from threats or danger or to avoid the recurrence of undesirable and painful experiences.

Certain defense mechanisms are beneficial and effective in controlling anxiety and protecting individuals from suffering as in the case of the characters of the homely girl and Ben in the short stories *Desire* and *Pina Colada*. Other defenses become counter-productive and inadequate when used in compulsive manner as in the case of Choleng and Rustico in the short stories *The Small Key* and *Death In A Sawmill*.



Analyzing human behavior through the defense mechanisms expressed by the characters in the short stories allows a person to acquire a great deal of knowledge about himself/herself to mediate unproductive aspects of his/her own personality to achieve personal growth.

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CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM AND ITS BACKGROUND



Introduction

Literature has a wide definition and it includes everything that is expressed through the written or printed page. Different people have different interpretation to the meaning of literature. To some, it refers to works of the creative imagination, including works of poetry, drama, fiction and non-fiction. To others, it refers to the subject taught in schools and colleges about written works that exemplify exceptional quality.

Etymologically, literature has to do with letters but not all that is written down is considered literature. For a work to be considered literature it must display excellence in form and style. Literature differs in other forms of writing by artistic use and attention to language. T. Eagleton (1983), discusses the definition of literature and its relationship to language. "Literature transforms and intensifies ordinary language, deviates systematically from everyday speech." Literature springs from the creative mind of a writer to create language and use it in an artistic way to evoke emotion from the readers.

It is said that literature is an expression of a writer's own psyche. Writers create literary pieces which are drawn sometimes from their own personal experiences but make alterations by changing the names of characters, dates and places and inventing dialogues. When a work of literature pleases the reader, he/she responds emotionally to the writer's carefully crafted world.

Literature can take readers to places they have never been before, believe the impossible, and in doing so it creates a sense of adventure and wonder. Literature offers readers more than just pleasure or escape, it enables the readers to understand their own experiences and associate with the experiences of the characters in the text, a process called identification. In an experiment made by Jose and Brewer (1991), identification



allowed children to become worried with the characters they read in stories. The experiment suggested a connection between emotional involvement with a character and thinking of them as in some respect 'like me or mine.'

L. Blum (1980), suggests that we have to dwell imaginatively on the condition of the other person and this is only possible by experiencing compassion. This involves not only taking imaginatively the other's viewpoint, and involving oneself in the other person's vision of the world, but also having care and concern for that person as a fellow human being. We have to see the characters in the story as one of our own-the kind of creatures who arouse emotions by virtue of being related to us. Indeed, part of the social value of reading novels and short stories arises from the fact that novels and short stories present real-life situations. We discover that the characters in the stories that we read are human beings like us, with the same troubles and problems, the loves and hates, the same longings and hopes.

Ultimately, we may discover meaning in literature by looking at what the author says and how he says it and discover the message he wants to convey by carrying out the use of literary theory using a mythological, sociological, historical, or psychological approach. We can assume that literature tends to be eclectic, drawing on psychology to help explain and understand how people come to perceive, understand and act within the world.

Literature presents things which are not available to our own consciousness. Understanding the mind's depth is a difficult task and we turn to psychology to come up with a reassuringly qualitative approach. Hidden motives and unconscious desire are the things psychology drills down into and meaning is what literature thrives on.



Eagleton (1983), talks about the connection between literature and science in his book *Darwin Won't Help*. He says that “ Science deals with the actual, while fiction trades in the possible; Science, so the story goes, delivers us a world bleached of taste and texture, purged of value and feeling. The task of literature is to restore to the world its plundered body, redeeming it from the reductive schemas of the technocrats. Art is organic, science is mechanical. Poetic language is richly connotative, while scientific language is merely denotative. Science deals with facts, and arts with values. The Victorian man of letters spent much of his time seeking to coat unpalatable scientific truths with the sugar of spiritual consolation. Science chilling reports on the material world were not what the spiritual self, hungry for order, purpose and transcendent value, wanted to hear.

Psychology offers a scientific study of mental functions and behaviors. Its ultimate goal is to provide explanation in understanding individuals by establishing general principles and researching specific cases which is proven to be very beneficial to society at large. Psychologists attempt to understand the role of mental functions in individual and social behavior, while also exploring the physiological and neurobiological processes that underlie certain cognitive functions and behaviors.

Because psychology is a science it attempts to investigate the causes of behavior using systematic and objective procedures for observation, measurement, and analysis supported by theoretical interpretations generalizations, explanations and predictions. Psychology covers a wide range of topics such as learning and memory, thinking and language, personality and social behavior and much more. Furthermore, psychologists examine these topics from different perspectives tied by a shared set of assumptions of



what people are like, what is important to study and how to study it. Some conduct detailed biological studies of the brain, others explore how we process information; others analyze the role of evolution and still others study the influence of culture and society.

There is a growing interest in human psychology as a useful tool for literary critics who have developed a renewed concern for, among other things, literary character. Writers create works of art with psychological content which deals with the character's inner experiences, thoughts, feelings, emotions, and introspections. But writers do not provide all that there is to know about the literary work. Instead, the author uses symbolism or metaphors and the readers are left on their own to use their imagination to fill in the gaps in the story. Others use the structure of the text, the time, the place, the action or even in meter and rhythm in the case of poetry to guide readers to respond emotionally to the characters in the stories.

James Joyce is one of the most prominent writers of the twentieth century to tap into the mind of its character. Joyce present his character, Bloom, using the stream of consciousness technique to allow the readers follow the character's thoughts, knows his social needs and desires, celebrate his joy and lament with his pain and sorrow.

Russian authors Tyodor Dostoyevsky and Leo Tolstoy also explored human psychology in their works. Dostoyevsky made use of psychological realism in *Crime and Punishment* where he presents the spiritual struggle, the suffering and the redemption of a student who murders a pawnbroker. *The Brothers Karamazov* present the inner struggle between mind and heart in the context of religion.



In Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, people's inner life, feelings and thoughts are presented as close to reality. Tolstoy emphasizes in his *War and Peace* the irrational reasons behind human behavior.

Henry James and Arthur Miller are known for their great contributions in psychological realism in American Literature. James explores the minds of his characters facing different complex social situations. His characters are often entangled in difficult situations that it is difficult to envision them with a happy ending.

Arthur Miller is well known for his deep insight into the minds and personal weaknesses of his characters. His play *Death of a Salesman* presents loss of identity and a man's inability to accept change within himself and society.

The texts above are just some of the examples of the classical stories that made a mark in the history of psychological literature. In modern days, it's the love story of Bella Swan and Edward Cullen and the magical power of Harry Potter that dominated the world. Readers and movie goers, in many ways, learn to identify with the characters in the story and see their own wants, needs and goals enacted in stories. Modern novels like these two became instant big hits and draw the attention of fictional readers and movie goers across the globe because they present the fantasies in life of most young boys and girls. Like real human beings, the characters in the stories are beset with problems they have to deal with. Themes of love and hate and the presence of death are some of the predicaments that disturb the characters. But how do characters like Edward Cullen, Bella Swan and Harry Potter survive in a world that seems to be new to them? The answer is with the use of defense mechanism. Anyone can relate to the troubles of the characters in the two novels. Edward Cullen's detached and aloof character is just his defense



mechanism to protect his family's dark secrets. Harry Potter could also be a representative of those people who have lost their parents and have to deal with a new environment. Living in Harry's situation, one can't help but compensate the lost in the mastery of sorcery to protect oneself from evil people.

Fictional characters wrestles with the emotional or physical issues in the texts and employ different defense mechanisms to cope up with their troubles. Readers can relate to the situations and shortcomings of the characters and contemplate on their own without scrutinizing themselves. The world of the fictional characters is too distant for the readers but somehow the stories are told in a way that the readers care about the events they recount.

This research paper is made to talk about a topic which has not so far received very much attention which is the role of the ego defense in understanding the desires and motives of the characters in short stories.

Theoretical Bases

So what are defenses? Before a person could ever give his/her definition of defenses it is important that he/she first have to define emotions and its relationship to ego defenses. The word "emotion" has been given many different interpretations both by lay people and scientists. To some, emotions include a wide range of observable behaviors, expressed feelings and changes in the body state. Some defines emotions as a natural instinctive state of mind deriving from one's circumstances, mood or relationship with the others. Others used it to refer to a feeling such as joy or anger.



J. Mayer (1990), says, “Emotions operate on many levels. They have a physical aspect as well as psychological aspect. Emotions bridge thought, feeling, and action – they operate in every part of a person, they affect many aspects of a person, and the person affects many aspects of the emotions.”

M. Elias (2001), says, “Emotions are human beings’ warning systems as to what is really going on around them. Emotions are our most reliable indicators of how things are going on in our lives. Emotions help keep us on the right track by making sure that we are led by more than the mental/intellectual faculties of thought, perception, reason, memory.”

In psychology, emotion is often defined as a complex state of feeling that results in physical and psychological changes that influence thought and behavior. Emotionality is associated with a range of psychological phenomena including temperament, personality, mood and motivation. D. Meyers (2004), states that emotion involves “... physiological arousal, expressive behaviors, and conscious experience.”

There are three major traditions in the study of emotions and they can be grouped into three categories: physiological, neurological, and cognitive. Physiological theories suggest that responses within the body are responsible for emotions. Neurological theories propose that activity within the brain leads to emotional responses. Finally, cognitive theories argue that thoughts and other mental activity play an essential role in the formation of emotions.



The first to impart his scientific view on emotion was known for his theory of evolution, Charles Darwin. Darwin (1872), in his classic book *The Expression of Emotions in Man and Animals* tried to prove his views that intelligence, reasoning ability, memory and emotions had an evolutionary history. He proposed that much like other traits found in animals, emotions also evolved and were adapted over time. His work looked not only facial expressions in animals such as humans, but attempted to point out parallels between behaviors in humans and animals.

W. James and C. Lange (1884), proposed a physiological theory of emotion which postulated that emotions occur as a result of physiological reactions to events. According to James-Lange theory, you see an external stimulus that leads to a physiological reaction. Your emotional reaction is dependent upon how you interpret those physical reactions. For example, suppose you are walking in the woods and you see a grizzly bear. You begin to tremble and your heart begins to race. He says that you will interpret your physical reactions and conclude that you are frightened ("I am trembling, therefore I am afraid").

The third major view and considered the most influential in the psychology of emotions is based on the work of Sigmund Freud. Freud (1926/1957), built his concept on emotions after a careful examination of his patients suffering from mental illness called hysteria. He believed that mental illness came from repressed emotions in the unconscious mind. He further argued that the release and acceptance of these denied or repressed emotions and memories were vital for mental health. If this emotional energy was not released, Freud noted that it led to physiological symptoms and illnesses. He



termed these physiological manifestations of emotions “psychosomatic.” Severe psychosomatic cases of repressed memories of trauma led to a diagnosis of hysteria.

Given these three different views on emotions, many psychologists agree that emotions are indeed followed sooner or later by defenses. H. Dahl (1995) developed an “information feedback” theory of emotions which classifies all emotions in terms of orientation (it or me), valence (attraction or repulsion), and activity (active or passive). For the animals without the capability of symbolic language (including our great ancestors and infants), emotions served as the primary “intelligence” system for surviving in a complex world of many dangers and for communicating and recognizing the intentions of members of one’s own species. The theory implicitly claims that emotions are special class of appetites which function as wishes and beliefs. This opinion rests firmly on a definition that a wish is an attempt to achieve perceptual identity and/or symbolic equivalence with a previous experience of satisfaction. A belief is an “abstract concept” and/or perceptual experience “that is not disputed” (Baars, 1988). The emotional appetite of anger embodies an implicit wish *to get rid of the object of the anger* and the wish might be represented (a) as a conscious wish linguistically in some variation of the thought as in “I’d like to kill him” or (b) as an image of the person being hit by a car or getting killed in a drive-by shooting, or (c) as a feeling of rage. But (d) it is also possible to carry out an assault (hitting, shooting, knifing) without the accompanying affect and this representation of the wish may sometimes be its clearest expression. To reiterate, there are four separate ways in which a wish to get rid of an object may be represented: linguistically, as a nonverbal image, as an emotion, and as a consummatory act. Ego defenses may be directed at all or any combination of these expressions. It is a



commonplace that one emotion is substituted for another and thus functions as a defense. For example, instead of expressing anger or irritation the individual might offer phrases such as “I felt anxious all day” or “For some reason I can’t concentrate.” And this leads us to a very important proposition that an unexpected emotion in a particular context might be an important clue to the operation of some defenses. It also means that sudden changes in the kind of emotion expressed by an individual are his/her clues to the operation of a defense. Timidity or shyness, impulsiveness or anger could also be regarded as forms of defenses on the premise that emotions are state of feelings that results in the physical and psychological changes in the behavior of an individual..

Robert Plutchick (1995) illustrates the survival value of emotion and defense mechanism in his psychoevolutionary theory of emotion. According to Plutchick emotions are complex psychological processes that have evolved to deal with emergency or unusual situations in an individual’s life. Emotions play a crucial role in communicating one’s thoughts and feelings in a non-verbal way. Philosophers agree that emotions serve a purpose for humans in communication and in aiding their survival.

Emotions have two purposes. One is to communicate intentions from one individual to another. Another is to support behavior that increases long-term chances of survival. Fundamentally, emotions are basic adaptive processes, identifiable in all organisms. The psychoevolutionary theory presents the concept of derivatives which stems from the general conception of emotions. The first domain or conceptual language refers to the stimulus events followed by the cognitive evaluation of the events. Cognition is an important aspect of emotion, particularly the interpretation of events. Certain stimuli



are cognitively evaluated as 'dangerous', others as 'enemies' and others as 'friends'. Such cognitions may be unconscious. Based on such cognitions, subjective feelings of emotion occur as sadness, fear and surprise. Associated with each feeling is the impulse to act in a certain way of a particular behavioral action. Thus, fear results to escaping, anger to attacking, and sadness to crying. These behavioral responses serve to protect the individual in the act of escape; to destroy a barrier in the case of attack; and to reintegrate with the lost object in the case of crying. These survival enhancing functions are what we call defense mechanisms.

Of the innumerable concepts listed as defenses Robert Plutchick enumerated only eight basic ego defense mechanisms. The classification of the eight basic defenses is due to the degree of nearness of all defenses which were given and introduced by so many psychologists. Thus, for example, denial, repression, and undoing are considered to be relatively similar in meaning, just as intellectualization, rationalization, and isolation are relatively similar in meaning. The cluster of projection, displacement, and acting out are also found near one another and thus represent similar methods by which the ego defends itself. The eight basic defenses according to Plutchick et.al(1979) have been called repression, displacement, reaction-formation, compensation, denial, projection, intellectualization, and regression. Repression is the exclusion from consciousness of an idea and/or its associated emotions to avoid painful conflicts or threats. Denial is the lack of awareness of certain events, experiences or feelings that would be painful to acknowledge. Displacement is the discharge of pent up emotions, usually of anger on objects, animals or people perceived as less dangerous to the individual than those that originally aroused the emotions. Regression is the retreat under stress to earlier or more



immature patterns of behavior and gratification. Compensation is the development of strength in one area to offset real or imagined deficiency in another. Intellectualization is the unconscious control of emotions and impulses by excessive dependence on rational interpretations of situations. Projection is the unconscious rejection of emotionally unacceptable thoughts, traits, wishes, and the attribution of them to other people. And the last is reaction formation which is the prevention of the expression of unacceptable desires, particularly sexual or aggressive, by developing or exaggerating opposite attitudes and behaviors. In choosing these eight defenses, Plutchick remained close to the Freudian notion of defenses as unconscious mechanisms.

The ordinary meaning of the word 'defense' is 'protection'. In Freudian psychoanalytic theory, defense mechanisms are psychological strategies brought into play by the unconscious mind to manipulate, deny or distort reality to defend against feelings of anxiety and unacceptable impulses to maintain one's self schema. In Freud's view, we have a natural instinct to avoid anxiety and employ defensive strategies to lessen or reduce tension. Anxiety is an unpleasant state of inner turmoil. It is the subjectively unpleasant feelings of dread over something unlikely to happen. Defense mechanisms can be psychologically healthy or maladaptive but its overall goal is to ward off feelings that cause anxiety to an individual. He grouped human personality into three categories: the id, ego and superego. The id is the part of the mind that determines sexual drives and other unconscious compulsions that urge an individual to unthinking gratification. The id is the entirely unconscious part of personality and operates on the pleasure principle. The ego is the conscious mind that strives to deal with the demands of the id and to balance its needs with messages from the superego. The id operates on the reality principle which



strives to satisfy the id's desires in realistic and socially appropriate ways. The superego is the part of personality that is unconscious that seeks to repress the demands of the id and to prevent gratification of basic physical appetites. The superego is a sort of censor that represents the prohibitions of society, religion, family, beliefs and so on. Defenses emerge from a conflict between the id and the superego.

In the first definitive book on defense mechanisms, *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defence*, Anna Freud (1936) built on her father's theory and introduced the idea concept of signal anxiety. She stated that it was not directly a conflicted instinctual tension but a signal occurring in the ego of an anticipated instinctual tension. The signaling function of anxiety is thus seen as crucial one and biologically adapted to warn the organism of danger or threat to its equilibrium. The anxiety is felt and it allows the organism to take defensive action regarding the perceived danger. Defense mechanism work by distorting the id impulses into acceptable forms, or by conscious or unconscious blockage of these impulses.

Anna Freud also came up with other defensive methods of the ego. She first examined denial which is directed against some painful or potentially overwhelming aspect of external reality. She asserted that denial plays a normal role in childhood and it is also seen in everyday life. Her theory postulates the developmental hierarchy of defenses – certain primitive defense mechanisms are used by the ego very early in life.

Another prominent individual in the field of psychology who attempted to order ego defenses in terms of levels of maturity has been made by Vaillant (1971; 1976). The first level refers to pathological defenses which includes psychotic denial, projection and



distortion. The individual who use this kind of mechanism frequently appear irrational or insane to others. The second level includes the “immature” defenses of acting out, fantasy, and passive-aggressive behavior. These mechanisms are often used by adults but excessive use is seen as socially undesirable and seriously out of touch with reality. The neurotic level of defenses includes intellectualization, repression, displacement reaction formation and dissociation. At the top of this hierarchy are the mature defenses of sublimation, suppression, altruism, anticipation and humor.

Benjamin (1995) challenges the long held view in psychoanalysis that defenses keep people from becoming aware of their own thoughts and behaviors resulting from severe conflicts and anxiety. She proposes the idea that normal defenses are consistent with wishes and fears that enhance the likelihood of behaviors associated with “attachment affects” such as affirmation, love and protection while, on the other hand, abnormal defenses are associated with wishes and fears that result in disruptive behaviors such as blaming, attack or ignoring.

Horowitz and Stinson (1996) gave a new perception at understanding defenses. They developed the “control process theory” which attempts to identify the verbal and non- verbal processes that individuals used to modify, ward off, or modulate states of mind generated by strong affects, conflicts or stress. Some examples of control processes are focus of attention thresholds of decision or interruption, action planning and thresholds for arousal. Control processes act to reduce emotion to tolerable limits.

Safyer and Hauser explore the idea that defenses maybe conceptualized along a developmental continuum based on level of maturity or degree of pathology. The



approach groups defenses into three levels: (a) narcissistic defenses, (b) affective defenses, and (c) neurotic defenses. Hauser's research indicated that individuals can use defenses in adaptive as well as maladaptive ways. Individuals at higher level of ego development use more differentiated and "engaging" defenses, whereas individuals at lower ego development levels are more likely to use "constricting/detaching" defenses.

Slavin and Grief state that the concept of repression is at the heart of psychoanalytic theory, but the question remains as to *what* is repressed and *why* it is repressed. The psychoanalytic view assumes that repression regulates conflicts between self-centered motives and the demands of the parental environment. While the more contemporary interpersonal view sees repression as the individual's method of protecting parts of the self to enable future growth. Slavin and Grief relates the conflicting concept about the nature repression to the issues of parent-child conflict as understood by modern evolutionary biology. This theory recognizes that conflict is an expected feature of parent-offspring relations because the self-interests (inclusive fitness) of parents are not identical to the self-interests of their children. Repression is seen as a diversion of subjective experience to preserve access to temporarily unacceptable but potentially important needs. Because of repression the child could identify with the parents' identities without sacrificing his or her own long-term interests. Repression is a form of strategic self-deception designed to deceive others into greater investment and reciprocity than would obtain if the person's true intentions were known.

Defense mechanism has become a part of our everyday lives. The world we live in is full of anxiety and stress and in order to cope up with these undesirable experiences,



one way or another, we employ defensive measures. But just as defense mechanisms help an individual deal with anxiety it becomes hazardous when used in excess. Defense mechanism distorts reality to avoid pain from resurfacing. Goleman (1985), states in his book *Vital Lies Simple Truths* how the mind protects itself against anxiety by dimming awareness. This mechanism creates a blind spot where one uses several ego defenses to take one's mind off a traumatic experience.

Conceptual Framework

The concept of ego defenses presented here has been described as one aspect of a more general theory of emotions. All organisms are born with certain genetically determined behavioral mechanisms that deal with environmental emergencies. There are a limited number of such mechanisms, and they are concerned with such survival-related activities as avoiding predators, finding prey, incorporating food, expelling waste products or toxins, and sexual behavior to ensure genetic survival.

When a person sense danger or threat in his surrounding anxiety is felt and it allows the person the possibility of taking defensive action of the perceived danger. The characters in the story are people who are likely to go through undesirable experiences in the texts and employ certain defense mechanism to protect themselves.

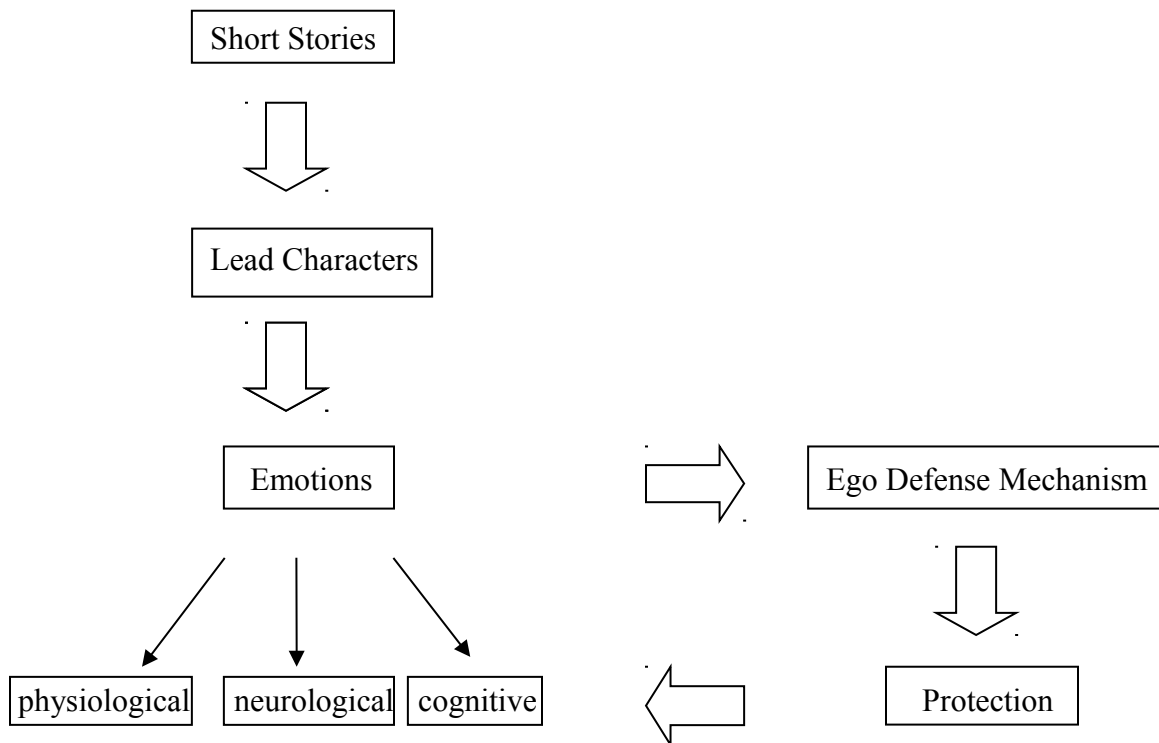
Among the numerous short stories written and published by Filipino authors, the following works are used as subjects for analysis.

1. "Desire" (1928) by Paz Latorena
2. "The Small Key" (1927) by Paz Latorena



3. "Cost Price" (1968) by Kerima Polotan Tuvera
4. "The Virgin" (1951) by Kerima Polotan Tuvera
5. "The Centipede" (1952) by Rony V. Diaz
6. "Death In A Sawmill" (1974) by Rony V. Diaz
7. "Pina Colada" (1999) by H.O. Santos
8. "The Summer of My 17th Year" (2002) by Rony V. Diaz

The researcher has chosen these writings in as much as that they provide specimen of lead characters from whence the theme of defense mechanisms can be drawn.



Conceptual Paradigm



Short stories are the chosen genre for the analysis of this study. Short stories are fictional narratives in prose consisting of a series of events designed to create a single dominant effect. Short stories involve characters which may experience various emotions. Characters in short stories may be people, animals or animated objects who take part in the action. The emotions experienced by the characters may be followed sooner or later by ego defense mechanisms for protection. Emotions can be physiological, neurological or cognitive. Physiological theories suggest that responses within the body are responsible for emotions. Neurological theories propose that activity within the brain leads to emotional responses and cognitive theories argues that thoughts and other mental activity play an essential role in the formation of emotions. Ego defense mechanisms are psychological strategies brought into play by the unconscious mind to manipulate, deny or distort reality to defend against feelings of anxiety and unacceptable impulses to maintain one's self-schema.

Statement of the Problem

The study is an analysis of the emotion of defense mechanisms used by the lead characters found in the eight (8) selected Filipino short stories. In the analysis of these works, the researcher tries to answer the following questions:

1. What defense mechanism is used by the lead character?
2. How did the lead character show the use of defense mechanism?
3. Why did the characters apply the ego defense mechanism?

Significance of the Study



This study is a humble contribution in presenting a study involving ego defenses which will offer new concepts and result that may pave the way for further psychoanalytic studies in this field.

This study will shed light on the use of defense mechanisms by an individual. Although defense mechanisms are defined as ways of people in dealing with uncomfortable feelings or stress this does not necessarily translate to being neurotic. It is important to realize that the environment we live in is so complex and that we face difficulties adjusting to it. There are instances that we get suddenly overwhelmed by a situation or feel pressured by inevitable circumstances. It is in these cases that we may need a temporary safety valve to help us cope with the difficulty. Defense mechanisms offer a temporary escape with all these pressures. They redirect, reinterpret, or block out difficult situations and anxiety. Some may seem more unusual than others, but the basic purpose of all the defense mechanisms is the same. They can be helpful when used as a temporary crutch to help us stand up in difficult situations.

Analyzing human behavior through the defense mechanism expressed by others allows us to acquire a great deal of knowledge about ourselves and to mediate unproductive aspects of our own personality to achieve personal growth. Understanding an individual means understanding which defense mechanisms their subconscious has chosen and how their defenses work for them.

This study will also prove to be useful in analyzing the characters in a short story or novel. This study will help us respond emotionally to fictional characters by understanding the function of emotion and its role in literature.

Definition of Terms



Anxiety – It refers to an unpleasant state of inner turmoil, often accompanied by nervous behavior, such as pacing back and forth, somatic complaints and rumination. It is the subjectively unpleasant feelings of dread over something unlikely to happen, such as the feeling of imminent death. Anxiety is not the same as fear, which is felt about something realistically intimidating or dangerous and is an appropriate response to a perceived threat; anxiety is a feeling of fear, worry and uneasiness, usually generalized and unfocused as an overreaction to a situation that is only subjectively seen as menacing. It is often accompanied by restlessness, fatigue, problems in concentration, and muscular tension. Anxiety is not considered to be a normal reaction to a perceived stressor although many feel it occasionally.

Behavior – It refers to the range of actions and mannerisms made by organisms, or artificial entities in conjunction with their environment, which includes the other systems or organisms around as well as the physical environment. It is the response of the system or organism to various stimuli or inputs, whether internal or external, conscious or subconscious, overt or covert, and voluntary or involuntary.

Compensation – It refers to the development of strength in one area to offset real or imagined deficiency in another.

Defense Mechanisms – It refers to the strategy used by the ego protect itself from anxiety.

Denial – It refers to the lack of awareness of certain events, experiences, or feelings that would be painful to acknowledge.



Displacement – It refers to the discharge of pent up emotions, usually of anger, on objects, animals or people perceived as less dangerous to the individual than those that originally aroused the emotions.

Ego – It refers to the conscious mind that strives to deal with the demands of the id and to balance its needs with messages from the superego.

Emotion – It refers to an affective state of an consciousness in which joy, sorrow, fear, hate, or the like, is experienced as distinguished from cognitive and volitional states of consciousness.

Id – It refers to the part of the mind that determines sexual drives and other unconscious compulsions that urge individuals to unthinking gratification.

Intellectualization – It refers to the unconscious control of emotion and impulses by excessive dependence on rational interpretations of situations.

Neurosis – It refers to the class of functional mental disorders involving distress but neither delusions nor hallucinations, whereby behavior is not outside socially acceptable norms. It is also known as psychoneurosis or neurotic disorder, and thus those suffering from it are said to be neurotic, The term essentially describes an “invisible injury” and the resulting condition.

Projection- It refers to the unconscious rejection of emotionally unacceptable thoughts, traits or wishes, and the attribution of them to other people.

Psychoanalytic Criticism – It focuses on a work of literature as an expression in fictional form of the inner working of the human mind.



Reaction Formation – It refers to the prevention of the expression of unacceptable desires, particularly sexual or aggressive, by developing or exaggerating opposite attitudes and behaviors

Regression – It refers to the retreat under stress to earlier or more immature patterns of behavior and gratification.

Repression – It refers to the exclusion from consciousness of an idea/or its associated emotions to avoid painful conflicts or threats.

Stimulus – It is defined as something or regarded as causing response, such as an agent, action, or condition that elicits or accelerates a physiological or psychological activity or response. It could also refer to something that incites or rouses to action, such as an incentive.

Superego – It refers to the part of the unconscious that seeks to repress the demands of the id and to prevent gratification of basic physical appetites. The superego is a sort of censor that represents the prohibitions of the society, religion, family beliefs, and so on.

Unconscious – It refers to the part of the mind which is inaccessible to the conscious mind but which affects behavior and emotions.



CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This survey presents the survey of related theories, concepts and studies which were reviewed to gain information and insights which can be used to support the present study.

Conceptual Literature

The topic on ego defenses has been a pervasive theme in some stories we enjoy reading. Norman Holland takes a psychoanalytic perspective on the form and content in literature in his published book *The Dynamics of Literary Response*. Holland assumes that all literary works always involves central unconscious fantasy like the Oedipal fantasy in *Hamlet*. According to Holland the reader gives the text meaning through the transformation of unconscious fantasy by relating it to his own experience and personal significance.

Readers enjoy reading a text that embodies painful and troubling themes because the formal devices in a text present defensive manoeuvres that shields the reader from frightening experiences.

Literary work resembles real-life experiences and readers find in the text what they characteristically both fear and desire but the writer provides the reader with formal or structural devices that allows the reader to accept or even tolerate threatening content.



Holland bases his concept on basic Freudian taxonomy. He states that in life we develop defence mechanism, notably repression, denial, and displacement of various kinds such as reversal, reaction-formation, undoing, projection, introjection, regression, splitting or decomposing, symbolization, sublimation and rationalization. Literary work contains defence mechanisms embodied by formal techniques such as that “irony corresponds to reversal and reaction-formation, omission to repression and denial, pointing a moral to rationalization and so on. ‘Very loosely,’ he says, ‘form in a literary work corresponds to defence; content to fantasy or impulse.’

Holland further stresses the fact that different readers interpret the same work in different ways because “each reader responds and re-creates the work in terms of his own identity theme which includes characteristic ways of managing or coping with reality that are manifested in the author’s work.”

J. Blackman’s (2011) work *Defence Mechanism in the 21st Century* discusses the concept of defenses present in English idioms. For example, the expression “The acorn doesn’t fall far from the tree,” refers to the defense of identification with parents; “He is glutton for punishment,” refers to the defense of masochistic provocation – usually to relieve unconscious guilt; “Mid-life crisis,” refers to the middle-aged man who starts acting like a teenager (sports car, new “hot” girlfriend) – i.e., the defense of libidinal regression used to relieve the depressive feelings that go along with aging; “I’m not angry, you are!” referring to the defense of projection; “He’s a pushover!” – the defense of passivity; and denial, the defense of not seeing something that is quite evident because it is painful.



He also sees denial in the country song lyrics, “call me Cleopatra..., cause I’m the Queen of Denial,” where the singer observes that her fear of losing love has caused her to (defensively) overlook her lover’s negative character traits.

According to Blackman ideas about defenses also are used by the Big Brothers organization, which, due to Ernest Coulter’s astute observation in 1904, recognized the need of fatherless boys to have a kind, helpful, and honest male adult with whom the boys could have contact. Once the boy felt attached to a Big Brother, the boy could identify with that man’s value system (superego) and thus be better able to manage (i.e., defend against) delinquent (hostile-destructive) urges.

His work also focuses on the psychological cinematic defenses found in movies *Lion King* (1994), *Up in the Air*(2010), *In her Shoes* (2005), and *Star Wars* saga (6 episodes, 1977-2005). *The Lion King* is a kind of movie that shows a good example of multiple defenses. After his father’s death, Simba regresses by gallivanting around with the warthog and the meerkat. He lives in a “hakuna matata” lifestyle to *avoid* the guilt he feels over his father’s death. Simba *punishes himself* because he believes that he was the cause of his father’s death to get trampled in the stampede. Three things helped Simba to come back and get what is rightfully his. First, Nala, his childhood friend, encourages him to save the pride from hyenas (states an ego ideal). Second, his father’s ghost admonishes Simba to do his duty (stimulates *superego identification with the lost object* – that he should act responsibly toward that ideal). Third, Simba’s aggression is not released from isolation only after his uncle admits that he was behind the death of Simba’s father. Upon knowing the truth behind his father’s death Simba is relieved from guilt and decides to avenge his father, marry Nala and lead his pride. *In Her Shoes* shows



how sexual activity is used as a defense mechanism. In the movie, Cameron Diaz sleeps with her sister's boyfriend to improve (i.e., defend against) her poor self-esteem. She ends up living with her grandmother in the grandmother's retirement village where she met a dying professor. She introjects (takes in) his praise of and confidence in her, which helps her gain self-esteem especially after he dies (*identification with the lost object*). In 2010, George Clooney starred in the movie *Up In The Air* as a slick travelling businessman who idealizes his use of defensive emotional distancing as a lifestyle. His value system (superego) changes after a friend made him changed his mind about his affair with Vera Farmiga. Finally, his older sister asks him to help his younger sister's fiancé get over his wedding jitters. This event helps Clooney identifies with his sister's values and drops the distancing as an ideal in relationships. He is surprised to find that Vera Farmiga already married with children and that she was just using him as an "escape," i.e., a defense against boredom and loneliness when she was travelling alone. He reacts to disappointment defensively by going back to his old ways: identifying with the aggressor – after the fact and regressing to more distancing. *Star Wars Saga* is a movie packed with developmental and political conflicts that bring about a plethora of defensive maneuvers in its characters. One very notable illustration is the transformation of Anakin Skywalker into the evil Darth Vader. In episode III, the Emperor seduced Anakin toward "the dark side of the Force". Anakin's nightmares of his wife's dying in childbirth cause him (defensively) to turn to the dark side where he feels he will have more power to save his wife and to avoid the pain of loss. The anticipation of grief of losing his wife is too much to handle for Anakin because it only reminds him of the pain when he was forced to get separated from his mother when he was nine. Queen Amidala



has been a replacement (symbolic substitute) for his mother. By episode III, Anakin becomes a knight under Obi Wan Kinobi's tutelage. But Obi Wan must leave on a mission alone and Emperor Palpatine takes the chance to induce Anakin to disidentify from the stepfather-figure Obi Wan, to displace his rage about the losses (mother, Obi-Wan, and dreamed-of wife) onto the Jedi and later the Rebel Alliance, and to identify with the grandiosity (power) of the Emperor to relieve himself of pain and anger. When Obi Wan returns, Anakin fights with his devalued father-figure and gets almost killed. Emperor Palpatine puts him back to life as the cyborg Darth Vader who inflicts death instead of being the victim of pain and loss himself (identification with the aggressor and turning passive to active, both defenses). In the final episode, Return of the Jedi, Vader fights with his own son, Luke Skywalker. Luke refuses to kill his own father so the Palpatine grabs the opportunity to torture Luke with lightning. Vader disidentifies with the emperor and sacrifices himself to help his son. Before he dies, Vader drops his hostility as a defence against pain, stops disavowing his Anakin-as-father identity, and requests his helmet to be removed so they could see each other.

T. Sexton (2006), discusses the Freudian concept of sublimation of repressed sexual frustration into behavior in Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. Gulliver's journey to Brobdingnag is thematically coherent pre-Freudian exploration of Gulliver's sublimating his sexual frustration and humiliation into his vision of proving to the King his own masculine worth climaxing with his revelation of the secrets of the invention and uses of gunpowder. Gulliver's physical size heightens his sense of sexual potency and power because the size of his penis instills awe among the little people inflating his ego. Even though Gulliver was incapable of acting sexually with the Liliput women due of his



enormous size, he is able to boost his ego because he believes that the Liliput women finds him attractive and sexually desirable.

J. Robinson (2005), sees intellectualization in Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* when he comments, "Justice" was done, and the President of the Immortals in Aeschylean phrase, had ended his sport with Tess," he is intruding himself on the story and pointing the moral for us so that we may disengage from and cope with the macabre events of the story and meditate instead on its intellectual significance.

E. Napoletano, in her research paper titled *Defence Mechanism in Comic Literature*, explores the defense mechanisms of identification, projection, shifting and idealization that she has found in reading comic literature. In her research, Napoletano studies the Marvel comic characters found in the stories of Spider Man, Batman, Superman and Fantastic Four. She stresses that the reading of comic book is an activity that is part of the lives of billions of people therefore it is important that further studies be made in the psychology of comics because comic book reading is a significant world phenomenon that it merits more study.



Studies on defense mechanism are anchored on the theories proposed by psychoanalytic theory. The following studies were reviewed and found significant and or relevant to the present study.

Carlito Biales (2010) developed instructional materials for teaching world literature to college students. His study entitled *Development of Instructional Materials for Teaching World Literature To College Students Using the Psychoanalytic Reader - Response Theory* gives students the opportunity to relate and participate freely in classroom discussion, focuses on the identity theme as a psychological principle in the instructional materials and employ ideas from the reader-response theories in the instructional materials, particularly in the discussion of the text. It concludes that the Reader-Response Theory of Norman Holland offers an opportunity to improve the teaching of world literature.

Justine Zulueta's study in *A Freudian Psychoanalysis of the Character of Enderby in the Novel Enderby Outside* proved how Freud's psychoanalytic theories were so essential in explaining how the unconscious aspect of a person's psyche is so important in that it regulates human behavior, and in giving us insight into the character's desires and unconscious thoughts by using Freud's dream work analysis.

Giselle Therese Franco Alcantara applied Lacanian Psychoanalytic Reading of Loss in Katrina Tuviera's short fiction. She analyzed four stories and showed how loss and language using Lacan's theory constructs the identity of the Subjects with their journey through the imaginary realm and symbolic order of the mirror stage. This This psychoanalytic reading of Katrina Tuviera's timely short fiction will be useful for future



psychoanalytic studies on Philippine literary texts, particularly studies making use of Jacques Lacan's theories.

This writing project titled, *Mourning After: Stories of Sorrow and Redemption* is a collection of short stories that attempts to explore the concept of sorrow as brought about by various absences and losses in our lives, sorrow as a test of a character's strength or frailty; and sorrow as a possible vehicle to self-redemption. The project consists of one (1) published short story and four (4) new and unpublished short stories. It makes use of the philosophical framework of Sigmund Freud's theories in psychoanalysis. In his article, "Mourning and Melancholia", Freud identified absences and losses of a person or a cherished idea as the root cause of sadness and sorrow in our lives. We are constantly beset by sorrow and we react to it in different ways.

The special project entitled *Dream Analysis An approach To Counseling: Nature, Theory, Process and Cases* by Efren M. Uy (1991) endeavored to compile literary theory materials on dreams concentrating on its nature, theories, process of dream analysis/interpretation which would be advantageous to students in psychology, guidance and counseling, and to practicing counselors as well. This study was made in the hope that dreams as all-time phenomena of the human psyche would awaken the interest of practicing counselors as well students of behavioral sciences, psychology and education to make similar and/or advanced researches on this particular aspect of human consciousness and the reward of its efficacy in understanding the human condition.



Eva E. Mala makes use of the archetypal approach in literary criticism using the theories of Carl Gustav Jung and Sir James George Frazer in her dissertation entitled *An Archetypal Analysis of Selected Maranao Folk Narratives*. Comparison of the ancient and present Maranao culture based on their selected folk narratives was done with an aim to come up with an answer regarding their similarities in culture. This study invited the Maranaos to look more deeply into their own culture. To non-Maranaos, this undertaking made available Marano archetypes from folk narratives.

Ester Garcia Mawanay in her thesis entitled *The Relationship Between Ego States and Self-Actualization of South-Central Luzon Mission Elementary School Teachers* determine the relationship between the ego states and self-actualization of elementary school teachers. It further analyzed what ego states were contributing to the level of self-actualization of Seventh-Day Adventist elementary school teachers of South-Central Luzon Mission.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY



This chapter describes the research design, the source of data, which part also identifies the rationale behind the selection of short stories and treatment of the literary texts.

Research Design

This study uses the descriptive research. Since there has been no consensus on the exact number of emotions and ego defenses the researcher used Robert Plutchick's Psychoevolutionary Theory of Emotion which basically describes the eight basic emotions and ego defenses that will help in analyzing the lead characters in the story. In selecting the eight (8) selected short stories, the researcher goes through a list of stories with defense mechanism as themes.

The process of data analysis involved three phases. Phase I involved surveying of literary works, short stories in particular, written by Filipino writers. Phase II involved the preparation of the list of short stories with the following criteria: (1) the literary texts must be written by reputable writers in Philippine Literature, (2) the literary texts must be works of Filipino short stories in English, (3) the literary texts must lend themselves to the use of psychoanalytic principles, (4) two works for each author will be included in the study, and (5) the literary texts must be cited in anthologies and/or self-published. Finally, Phase III involved an in-depth analysis by describing the defense mechanisms used by the characters and explaining how and why the characters used such defense mechanisms.

Subsequently, after a thorough research on the materials needed, the final short stories were selected.



1. "Desire" (1928) by Paz Latorena
2. "The Small Key" (1927) by Paz Latorena
3. "Cost Price" (1968) by Kerima Polotan Tuvera
4. "The Virgin" (1951) by Kerima Polotan Tuvera
5. "The Centipede" (1952) by Rony V. Diaz
6. "Death In A Sawmill" (1974) by Rony V. Diaz
7. "Pina Colada" (1999) by H. O. Santos
8. "The Summer of My 17th Year" (2002) by H. O. Santos

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION



This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of the data. The synopsis are provided followed by the analysis of the short stories.

Synopsis of *Desire* by Paz Latorena

The homely girl is a product of nature's irony giving her a homely face and a body of absolute beauty. She struggled to be accepted and be loved as other women were loved. She set out to hide under the long, wide dresses that completely disfigured her body. She turned her frustrations into writing and caught the attention of a man from the West. The two went out on a date and the man with white blood on his veins found the homely girl interesting and asked her to go out again. Thinking that the man from the West was far different from the guys she knew, she showed up wearing clothes that showed the perfect curve of her body. He couldn't believe his eyes and admired the figure that was hiding under the long, wide dresses she used to wear before. The homely girl took offense and turned her back at the chance of friendship.

Analysis of *Desire*

Paz Latorena's short story *Desire* reflects society's ideals of true beauty. Culture dictates the standards of beauty and defines such as having fair complexion, good health, youthful appearances and facial symmetry. People always judge another person on a first impression on his/her physical appearance. The lead character in the story is in an emotional state of sadness and struggles so much to find a man who will accept her for herself because though she is blessed with exceptional body, she is devoid of facial beauty. She sees her beautiful body as a curse than as a blessing to be thankful for. She learned to be suspicious of men and therefore hides the beautiful body by wearing long,



wide dresses. She has no one to share her pain and sorrow and therefore channels all her attention in writing. Her works caught the attention of the man from the West and asked to see her personally. She accepted the invitation. She knew that the guy might get disappointed upon seeing her face but she took the risk. They met and the white man realized that beyond the unattractive face was an amazing quality of a woman to catch a man's interest. The white man is thrilled about how great she handles a conversation. "You have some very queer ideas," he observed. "I should have," she retorted. "If I didn't, nobody would notice me with my face and my...my...figure," she hated herself for stammering the last words." Her wit and sense of humor, viewed psychologically, is the homely girl's defence mechanism to compensate for her ugliness. Compensation as defined by Conte, et al. (1995) is "the development of strength in one area to offset real or imagined deficiency in another." She also believed that this distinct personality of hers to hold a conversation would overlook all her other imperfections. Happy thoughts filled her to consider the man different from any other men she knew. On their successive dates she dressed up in clothes that flattered her body but her world shattered when the white man confessed of loving her beautiful body and seeing the unbeautiful light in his eyes she saw in other men.

Synopsis of *The Small Key*

"The Small Key" is a short story by a Filipino author Paz Latorena. It is about a woman named Soledad who is married to a man named Pedro Buhay. They live on a farm. One morning Soledad finds herself knowing that the farm will produce plenty but



that she still had some inner feeling of discontent. She planned to mend some of her husband's shirts, which were in a locked trunk. Pedro took out from his pocket a string which held two keys, one large and shiny and one small and rusty. He gave Soledad the large key to his trunk and put the small key back in his jacket pocket. Since it was hot that morning, he removed his coat before leaving to work in the field. When he was gone, Soledad began to fold the jacket and the small key fell to the floor. It is obvious that Pedro values the small key while Soledad fears it. Soledad knows that the small key is a key to a different trunk. She tries to busy herself so that she will not think about what the smaller trunk contains, but she cannot stop thinking about it and reveals that the small trunk contains clothing that belonged to Pedro's first wife. She wonders why it is that he keeps her old clothing and why he seems to have a special feeling about them. She obviously fears that Pedro still loves his first wife even though she has been dead for many years by now. She reveals that she hates the things in the small trunk and worries that they will destroy the relationship between her and her husband. Despite her attempts to not think about the contents of the small trunk, Soledad opens it. At this point, Pedro returns home to find Soledad in bed supposedly with a fever. It turns out she does not. The next morning Pedro discovers a pile of ashes and half burnt clothing in the backyard. He realizes what Soledad has done and rushes to look in the trunk to confirm it. Soledad has indeed, burned his first wife's clothing. Pedro is angry and bitter that this has happened and he expects that Soledad will explain things later. He thinks to himself that he will forgive her because he loves her but that even if she did it out of love for him, it will always remain a matter of some resentment toward her for doing it.

Analysis of The Small Key



The *The Small Key* is a story of a wife's jealousy and anger towards the kept clothes of her husband's first wife. Choleng is married to Pedro Buhay, a prosperous farmer in their town. He just finished eating his midday meal and left to finish plowing in the field leaving behind his coat which had the key to the small trunk in the room. She despised the trunk because "it held the things she had come to hate with unreasoning violence, the things that were causing her so much unnecessary anguish and pain, and threatened to destroy all that was most beautiful between her and her husband!". To her, the importance he gave in keeping the old clothes in the trunk meant that he still loved his first wife. The only solution she could think of to end her grief was to burn the clothes. "With a long drawn breath she inserted the small key." From a psychological point of view, it can be assumed that Choleng displaced her anger against her husband for being so insensitive of her feelings by burning the clothes of his first wife. Pedro Buhay has no understanding of his wife's anguish. His concern centers upon his crops and the money these will yield. Since Pedro's world is concentrated outside of the home, he is unaware in what is brewing in his wife's heart. Choleng kept her sorrows all for herself and so when she couldn't suppress her feelings anymore she exploded like a volcano ready to wreak havoc to everything in its path. What increases her anguish was that she remained within her home where she could see the clothes that would remind her of Pedro's first love. It was easier for Choleng to displace her wrath into the clothes since the owner was already dead and couldn't get back at her.

Synopsis of Cost Price

Isabel and Joe went on a restaurant after they had a fight in the park they went to earlier. Isabel was furious because her boyfriend, Joe desired her but they shouldn't



because they were poor and couldn't even afford to get married. They couldn't commit to such things because they both had miserable jobs, the futile night studies, and Joe's sick parents. Joe worked as a clerk in a publishing house and received meager salary which he spent to his sick parents while Isabel was an assistant librarian to Mrs. Suntay in a small children's library. They first met in the library where Isabel was working and Joe showed up selling books. Isabel and Mrs. Suntay almost refused to take the books Joe was selling but seeing how his shoulders drooped, Isabel told him to leave a copy or two in the library. In the beginning they would talk of marriage but as time passed by the weight of poverty struck and Joe's responsibility to his parents hit them. Many times Joe had attempted to make love with her but she would decline and they ended up fighting. One day, Joe called up and convinced her to watch a show. The movie brought tears in her eyes and Joe wrapped her in his arms and asked for forgiveness. Joe's words seemed to Isabel the final defeat and told him she had the key to the library. They headed to the cot in the library and found themselves in each other's arms. Isabel almost got carried away but she came back to her senses after realizing the dreadful future they will both have if they persist. Isabel hit Joe but he caught her hands and pushed her away. Soon the feeling of anger and desire finally receded. Joe regretted going to the movies and Isabel soon realized he will leave her and she would be alone.

Analysis of Cost Price

Kerima Polotan's *Cost Price* fleshes out the problem confronting the couple Joe and his girlfriend Isabel. The couple are both sad because they wanted to engage in premarital sex but their miserable jobs won't be able to support a family they will certainly have in the future. It can be gleaned that Joe had many times attempted to make love with



Isabel but she would always decline to give in in his desire because of Joe's sick parents, the difficult and futile night studies, and the miserable jobs they both held. The late afternoon atmosphere sets for a more depressing mood for Isabel. Joe urged Isabel to sleep with him justifying his act by the increase in his salary. "With that raise we can go ahead," he said leaning forward to draw a paper napkin." But the thoughts of a miserable future with Joe frightens her to engage in pre-marital sex. She wanted to secure her future with Joe but with his job and sick parents it was impossible. Isabel, in several occasions, almost submitted herself to his wish. "Still held in his arms, she lifted her face to his own warm and living one, moist against the shadows, and said the words at last, Joe when Mrs. Suntay leaves, I have the key." Joe used the defence mechanism of intellectualization to convince Isabel there was nothing wrong in asking her to make love with him.

"That still doesn't make it wrong, you know, or cheap. Out there (star and hill and grass) I love you very much. It seemed the most natural wish and I couldn't see where anyone had anything to do with it, where the world came into it at all."

"We won't talk of it or think about it anymore."

"-And you were wrong. I don't go around wanting to raise as many shirts as I can. Sure it was sex, but it was also love, and all the good things that go with it."

Joe's words "the most natural wish" seemed to make it look only but normal to ask a girl for it, that the world exist because everybody does it. In the end, their relationship will come to nothing because of Isabel's fear to settle down with a guy who still supports his parent with a low paying job.

Synopsis of *The Virgin*



Miss Mijares works in a placement office where she interviews countless jobseekers every day. The mundane task of interviewing the jobless across her desk dulled the edges of her instinct for courtesy. Miss Mijares is a woman past her youth but still remained single. She gets tied in the responsibility of sending her niece to school and taking care of an ill mother who eventually dies at the end. She becomes detached and aloof towards the people especially to the poor applicants she meets at the office. The applicants, since they are poor, are stripped off the right to ask questions concerning their jobs thinking that a single word might offend the interviewer and lose their chances of getting hired. But that is not the way the carpenter thinks when he comes and applies at the office. The man seems quite different from the rest of the applicants. He is not starved, like the rest and wears old but pressed clothes. For a job seeker he talks too much and without a call that at once disarmed and annoyed Miss Mijares. The carpenter gets the job at the office and receives salary higher than expected through Miss Mijares' intervention. He thanks her for speaking for him and says that he actually doesn't need the extra peso for he is single. Miss Mijares feels overwhelmed by the carpenter's boldness but she can't deny the fact that she is drawn towards him by his attitude. Miss Mijares becomes enraged when the carpenter did not show up for a week and without a word from him. When he comes back he explains that the death of his son caused his unnoticed absence. She feels furious for what she thinks was a deliberate lie from the carpenter. She gets out of the office and takes a jeepney when she notices the carpenter boarded the same vehicle. They haven't gone far when the driver announces he can't drive any farther. Miss Mijares and the carpenter are left on the sidewalk and he takes the chance to say sorry if she thinks he lied to her.



Analysis of *The Virgin*

Psychologically speaking, the story "The Virgin" deals with the defence mechanism of repression. The lead character, Miss Mijares, despite the age of 34 still remained virgin devoting nine years of her life in caring for her ailing mother and putting her niece to school. The result was that her own personal life, most especially her love life, was severely compromised. It appeared that her obligation to her family particularly that of her mother thwarted her desire to marry someday.

"When she was younger, there had been other things to do – college to finish, a niece to put through school, a mother to care for. She had gone through all these with singular patience, for it had seemed to her that Love stood behind her, biding his time, a quiet hand upon her shoulder(I wait. Do not despair.) so that if she wished she had but to turn from her mother's bed to see the man and all her timid, pure dreams would burst into glory. But it had taken her parent many years to die. Towards the end, it had become a thankless chore, kneading her mother's loose flesh, hour after hour, struggling to bring the cold, sluggish blood back to her dying body. In the end she had died – her toothless, thin-haired, flabby - fleshed mother – and Miss Mijares had pushed against the bed in grief and also in gratitude. But neither Love nor glory stood behind her, only the lurking, empty shadows, and nine years gone, nine years. In the room of her unburied dead, she had held up her hands to the light, noting the thick durable fingers, thinking in a mixture of shame and bitterness and guilt that they had never touched a man."

The suppressed feeling of not being able to engage herself in an intimate relationship resulted to her sternness in manner and abruptness of speech, a disguise for being lonely. Realizing that she was old enough to find a man she can marry she had no choice but to set her standards low and it seemed that the carpenter was not a bad choice after all. The carpenter has a certain grace, poise and confidence "walking with an economy of movement, graceful and light, a man who knew his body and used it well." He was her



complete opposite but Miss Mijares was likely to allow herself to the invitation of the man.

Synopsis of *The Centipede*

When Eddie saw his sister beating his dog with a stick, he felt hate like a caged, angry beast in his chest. He could not cry to his sister because she had a weak heart. He recalled the things his sister did to him. For Eddie, his sister, Delia was the meanest creature he knew. He remembered when he was furiously hit by his sister when she learned that the leg of her doll was accidentally torn by him. Nothing Eddie did ever pleased her. Destroying willfully anything he liked had become a habit for her. She even told Berto to kill his monkey because it snickered at her one morning, while she was brushing her teeth. Eddie did not tell anything when she told their father that she did not like Eddie's pigeon house because it stank and he had to give away his pigeons and Berto had to chop the house into kindling wood. He learned how to hold himself because he knew they had to put up with her whims to keep her calm and quiet. But when she dumped his collection of butterflies into a waste can and burned them in the backyard, he realized that she was spiting him. Eddie got a big centipede that Berto found under the stock he chopped. He made sure that it was dead and placed it in a white cloth. He unwrapped and threw it on the lap of his sister whom he hated so much. His sister collapsed. Her voice dragged off into a painstaking moan. Eddie was engulfed by a sudden feeling of pity and guilt. He cried kneeling before her, telling her that the centipede was dead.

Analysis of *The Centipede*



Rony V. Diaz's masterwork, *The Centipede*, illustrates reaction formation as a defence mechanism used by the lead character, Eddie, in the story. Reaction formation was shown when Eddie chose to put up with his sister's bad temper because of her health. "She had a weak heart and she must not be surprised. So I held myself, my throat swelled, and I felt hate rear and plunge in its cage of ribs." There were many instances that his sister showed her meanness to him by letting it out on his pets or anything he liked. "At first I took it as a process of adaptation, a step of adjustment; I snatched and crushed every seed of anger she planted in me, but later on I realized that it had become a habit with her." In the beginning, Eddie tried to prevent the expression of his anger to his sister and replaced it with pity and understanding. Her meanness to her brother could be attributed to the fact that he was the cause of their mother's untimely death. "She was eight when I was born, the day my mother died. Although we continued to live in the same house, she had gone, it seemed, to another country from where she looked at me with increasing annoyance and contempt. As time passed by, he noticed that his sister did everything on purpose to cause him pain and sorrow. Hatred soon took the place of pity and understanding and throwing her a dead centipede would surely give her the shock of her life and that's exactly what he did to get even.

Synopsis of *Death In A Sawmill*

Death in a Sawmill by Rony V. Diaz is a story of jealousy and how it leads to tragedy. Rey Olbes, an assistant sawyer who was assigned to guide Eddie in his hunt, died in an accident in a sawmill, and that is what they believed to have happened. But Eddie was the only one who strongly believed that it was a murder and not an accident. An impotent bastard named Rustico can only be the one to do such acts of murdering



Rey. The story started when Eddie, the son of Mang Pepe who is the owner of the sawmill, decided to spend his summer at their sawmill to hunt as soon as the school was out. And his father asked Rey to guide him in his hunt. Rey was tall was talking to Eddie when Dida approached them looking for her husband Rustico. Eddie witnessed the intense confrontation between the three. The next day reaching the end of the kaingin after a tiring hunt, there Rey told Eddie about his affair with Rustico's wife. He told Eddie that Rustico was furious because his wife is pregnant and he was not the father because he is impotent. Rustico knows that Rey is the reason. The night when Eddie and Rey passed in their hut, Rustico was already angry saying that Dida should drop the baby or else he'll kill her. The next day Dida ran away from her husband. Meanwhile Rustico planned to go after her but Mang Pepe denied him permission because it turned out that Rey already left for town early in the morning. Rustico then got up on the carriage and leaned on the chain that held the log clamps. He asked Eddie about what Rey has been telling him about while they were out hunting. He got angry causing the chain to lash out and fell rattling to the floor. He was tensed staring at the chain like a dead snake. He seemed to know how to operate the machine very well.

Analysis of Death In A Sawmill

The story is about the abhorrence of the villain Rustico to his co-worker Rey Olbes which resulted to the horrifying death of the latter. Rustico projects his own unacceptable impulses to Rey. Rustico and Rey Olbes both work in the sawmill but Rey was out to take his wife away from him. Projection as defined by Coon (2001) is "attributing one's own feelings, shortcomings, or unacceptable impulses to others". He believed that Rey delight in telling everybody that he fathered Dida's child, covering up



the issue of his impotence less evident. "He told you about my wife, didn't he? He delights in telling that story to everybody." Rustico was deeply guilty over his sexual inadequacy. He blames Rey Olbes' for his wife's infidelity when it was really his impotence that drove her to be unfaithful. He did so to decrease his feelings of inferiority and shame.

Synopsis of *Pina Colada*

The story began with an invitation in the wedding of Bill and Carol. Ben realized who the sender was and started to reminisce his past with Carol. There was a turn of unfortunate events for Ben when she came and lived with him for a few months. Maybe, not so unfortunate but his daily routine and his bills seem to be out of control that time. Carol for being a first timer in a foreign country was a kind of careless and innocent to what kind of lifestyle they have in America. But eventually she copes up with the kind of living there, thanks to Ben. By the time Carol learned that Bill is going to meet with her, she asked Ben to accompany her as a Filipino custom. The three of them went for a drink. Ben and Carol ordered the Piña Colada – a cocktail drink, while Bill got a double Jack Daniels. Carol was a little bit tipsy and drunk. That's why when Ben took her home



something happened between them. In the morning, Ben didn't tell her about what happened to them and lied to her. After that incident, things change and Carol was really grateful to Ben for taking her as a guest even though they didn't really know each other. After two months, Carol married Bill and Ben was the one who gave her away, because she doesn't have any relatives living in the US.

Analysis of *Pina Colada*

Ben in the story *Pina Colada* uses the defence mechanism of reaction formation. Reaction formation was shown when Ben had no choice but to show good (or correct) behavior to Carol despite the inconveniences she caused during her stay in his apartment. "I embraced Carol and said it was okay." "I'm not mad--I just want you to think what you would do if this were your own home. I know you wouldn't waste money and you would want to keep the place neat and clean. That's all I want." According to Plutchick, et al (1995), "reaction formation is the prevention of the expression of unacceptable desires, particularly sexual or aggressive, by developing or exaggerating opposite attitudes and behaviors." Ben tried to prevent to express his anger thinking that Carol wouldn't stay long and as soon she gets married to one of her American correspondents all his worries would soon be over. Seeing Carol's situation he remembered how it was for him when he first arrived in the U. S. Besides he thought about a promise to return the favor somebody did for him when he first set foot in the U.S.

Synopsis of *The Summer of My 17th Year*

The story was presented as a summer diary entry of a teenage girl named Minda. She and her cousin John were at the Masbate pier to meet John's college friend, Tim, who was visiting their island for the first time. The two hadn't seen each other since Tim



moved to the States after they graduated from college. Tim briefly introduced himself to Minda and they headed to John's house where Tim would spend his weeklong vacation. On Tim's second day of vacation, Minda took him to a public market to eat and they had a chance to get to know each other better. Minda liked Tim's laid-back attitude to life and felt sorry for herself for always being sensible pushing herself to act maturely more than her age dictates. On the third day, John threw a party for Tim in his house. Minda went early to the party to have a quick talk with Tim. During their talk, she learned that Tim was single and he said he would prefer a girl like Minda – pretty, happy, and not afraid to speak out. Only she was too young for him. She was thrilled when Tim asked her for a dance. For the last two days Minda hardly seen Tim because she was busy helping with the family business. The next evening, Minda found a package for her from Tim. It was a book of poems with note from him. In his letter he told her that he wasn't supposed to leave until Saturday but that her friend Christina begged him to escort her to Manila. He said that he appreciated the friendship she offered him and that he would never forget her. Minda tried to catch the ferry but it had already left when she got to the pier. Minda felt sad that she was not able to talk with him before he left. She woke up late the next day convincing herself that Tim will find a way to keep in touch with her. But first she would go back to the things she used to do before Tim came for she hadn't been outside her own little world for almost a week.

Analysis of The Summer of My 17th Year

Minda displayed the use of denial as a defence mechanism to cope with the sadness she felt after Tim's visit in their island. On Tim's first day in the island Minda



took him to a public market on his own encouragement to have a taste of the local food of the island. Minda asserted herself right away during her conversation with Tim when he asked about her schooling. “I just finished high school – I went to Sacred Heart College in Lucena.” “That’s far from here. Do you have relatives there?” “No, I stayed in a boarding house. I’m quite independent and can take care of myself.” She saw herself as an independent woman and can take care of herself. Such attitudes imply that she has an unrealistic and somewhat grandiose belief about herself. She tried hard to maintain the figure of a mature and responsible girl for her age because they were what everybody else expected her to be. Tim also seemed to like an independent woman since he lived in the U.S and she very much wanted to be that girl. Minda felt devastated when Tim left for Manila without saying goodbye to her. The pain she felt was too much to bear for a seventeen year old like her and to avoid it she consoled herself by thinking that somehow Tim would find a way to write her or that he could have left her a message in his poems that he wanted her to read. She directed her attention and cushioned herself against the anxiety she was feeling by thinking of a more acceptable scenario thus, distorting the fact by denying the truth that Tim had left her only with that letter and nothing more. At that time she let herself fantasize to something that would help her alleviate the hurt that Tim’s departure had caused her. Such attempts to fight off feelings that would be painful to acknowledge is an apparent characteristic of a person in denial.



CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Summary

The study of ego defences as derivatives of emotions draws our attention to understanding human nature and human motivation. Psychologists made thorough researches on the study of human mind and behavior which lead them to the concept of basic emotions. Defences invoke distortions in perception, awareness, or response. Defences may or may be unconscious and serves the purpose of keeping off dangers or to lessen the threat or anxiety that the person is experiencing.

A careful reading of the literature on ego defences leads to the conclusion that there is a considerable overlap of meaning of many of the defences. Psychologists note that some defences are related quite closely to each other, such as intellectualization, rationalization, and isolation. Psychologists are interested in classifying the innumerable lists of defences. Robert Plutchick came up with eight basic defences namely repression,



displacement, reaction formation, compensation, denial, projection, intellectualization, and regression.

It is assumed that humans, especially infants and young children possess basic emotions such as anger, anxiety, sadness, and joy in different degrees. Each individual emotion has a corresponding behavior and this is his way of surviving in this ever changing complex world. The same basic emotions the psychologists say that humans possess are the same emotions of the characters in the story feel or possess. Emotions are necessary to literary understanding. We have to experience the story emotionally to full comprehend the text.

It is for this purpose that this study has been conducted. It aims to examine the characters in the eight selected Filipino short stories and look into the different defence mechanisms the characters employ to address the issues or problem that confront them.

Findings:

From the present study, the following findings were gathered.

1. The homely girl in the short story "Desire" uses the defense mechanism of compensation by writing beautiful sketches to take her mind off the loneliness she feels from being unwanted by men. Choleng in "The Small Key" uses displacement as her defense mechanism. She displaced her anger and jealousy against her husband by burning the clothes of his first wife. She expressed anger without fear of retaliation because her husband's first wife was already dead.
2. In the story "Cost Price", Joe used intellectualization by trying to find a rational justification for desiring his girlfriend, Isabel, and urging her to sleep with him by saying that couples normally do make love even if they're not yet married to show



how much they love each other and the raise he received from work was enough to support his parents and Minda. Meanwhile, Miss Mijares in “The Virgin” employed repression to exclude from her consciousness the idea of finding a man to love by tying herself to work to support her ill stricken mother and send her niece to school.

3. Reaction formation was shown in “The Centipede” when the lead character chose to understand and put up with the cruelty of his sister instead of getting back at her for her meanness due to her bad health condition. In the story “Death In A Sawmill” Rustico applied the defense mechanism of projection. He blames and kills Rey Olbes to decrease his feeling of inferiority and shame. His wife, Dida gets pregnant while everybody knows that he is impotent.
4. Ben in “Pina Colada” utilized reaction formation by reversing his feeling of resentment to empathy towards his housemate Carol for her carelessness because he understands her plight of being in a foreign country for the first time. Besides, he made a promise to return the favor somebody did for him when he first set foot in the U.S. Minda in “The Summer of My 17th Year” used denial twice; first by asserting herself as a mature person when in fact she was just doing it to please the people around her who expect her to be one. The second was used to make herself believe that aside from the letter Tim would do everything to keep in touch with her again.
5. Of the eight basic defense mechanisms, none of the characters exhibit the use of regression as defense mechanism.



Conclusions:

In the light of the findings of this study, the researcher arrived at the following conclusions.

1. Although the concept of defense mechanism is defined as a psychological strategy brought into play by the unconscious mind to manipulate or distort reality this does not necessarily translate to being neurotic. Defense mechanisms are prevalent in people's lives and are employed by sane individuals in almost every day situations to help them cope with stress at least for a while.
2. The various emotions experienced by the lead characters in the short stories generate the use of defense mechanisms either to protect themselves from threats or danger or to avoid the recurrence of undesirable and painful experiences.
3. Certain defense mechanisms are beneficial and effective in controlling anxiety and protecting individuals from suffering as in the case of the characters of the homely girl and Ben in the short stories *Desire* and *Pina Colada*. Other defenses become counter-productive and inadequate when used in compulsive manner as in the case of Choleng and Rustico in the short stories *The Small Key* and *Death In A Sawmill*.



4. Analyzing human behavior through the defense mechanisms expressed by the characters in the short stories allows a person to acquire a great deal of knowledge about himself/herself to mediate unproductive aspects of his/her own personality to achieve personal growth.

Recommendations:

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are hereby made:

1. Conduct a study on the role of formal devices as coping mechanisms in short stories.
2. A comparative psychoanalytic study of ego defenses of male and female characters in western stories.
3. An analysis of defense mechanisms found in poems.
4. An analysis of defense mechanisms generated in reading Filipino comic books.
5. An analysis of defense mechanisms found in movies.



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