

**DEFENSE MECHANISM IN
CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE'S *AMERICANAH***

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ABSTRACT

Defense mechanism is a psychological occurrence in human mind to reduce excessive stress. The study analyses defense mechanism and the exposition of it in the characters of C.N. Adichie's *Americanah*. The study is conducted to understand the process of defense mechanism through the related topics. This study uses descriptive qualitative research design to analyze the characters and explain the topics. The study uses psychoanalytical criticism approach which then combined with psychoanalysis and defense mechanism theory to analyze and understand defense mechanism. The researcher uses psychoanalysis and defense mechanism theory to analyze defense mechanism used and the process of it. The exposition of defense mechanism is then made according to the analysis. The study indicates the use of 5 defense mechanism in Ifemelu, which are Repression, Denial, Projection, Displacement, and Sublimation. It also indicates 2 defense mechanism Obinze has used, Displacement and Reaction Formation. This study also indicates that narrative are used to expose defense mechanism.

Keywords: *defense mechanism, psychoanalytical criticism, repression, displacement, sublimation*

INTRODUCTION

Defense mechanism is human defense system that respond according to the level of stress or anxiety within human mind. Cramer (1991: 3) states that defense mechanism is a system in human mind which aim is to reduce the stress level. The said stress level is caused by anxiety and guilt. Defense Mechanism also exist within literature work, as it is the mirror of relaiity. Adler (1927: 216) states that psychological issues indeed exist within literature work, which includes defense mechanism. This study analyzes defense mechanism employed caused by the treatment and discrimination experienced by both character in the literature work.

Defense mechanism is a branch of psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis itself is a study of human or the psyche. Clarke (2017: 60-61) states that as psychoanalysis deals with inner self (psyche). Defense mechanism can also be explained by the

structure of the psyche in psychoanalysis. According to Freud (1967:6-10), the psche of human mind is divided into 3 which are Id, Ego, and Super-Ego. The relation with defense mehcanism is that the structure is used to explain how defense mechanism functions. In defense mechanis, the Id seeks to relieve the stress either from external of internal source. The Ego then calculate the action after the impulse from Id is mitigated with moral from Super-Ego. The difference of source, action, rate of gratifitcation, etc. led to the difference of defense mechanism tpyes. (see: Susanto & Andayani, 2021).

This study uses defense mechanism as a basis to categories the defense mechanism employed in the story. According to Freud (1967: 6), defense mechanism is employed if the id is not in the state of calm, as it will encroach the ego in search of satisfaction. The ego's effort to calm the id, is the defense mechanism. The defense mechanism theory used in this study is Anna Freud's theory of defense mechanism. This theory shares similarities with Sigmund Freud's theory as it is based on Sigmund's theory on psychoanalysis and defense mechanism (Saputra & Andayani, 2021). Types of defense mechanism used in this study is based on Anna Freud's (1967) explanation throughout the book. Several types of defense mechanism are listed below.

- a) **Repression.** Repression is in which the impulse from the Id is drowned into the unconscious so that it may not disturb the ego. The impulse from the Id may came from different form, however it is always from negative desire in which stimulates the id to have impulses to seek direct gratification from the ego. Hower, the said impulse is only pushed down and may appear unconsciously.
- b) **Denial.** Denial is a process in which the mind refuse to acknowledge the external source of anxiety, differing it from repression which is the refusal of internal (desire) source. Denial can be said to be the most used or at least the most common, as Freud gave examples of denial such as calming children that medicine is not bitter to encourage children to deny the source of the anxiety, which is the bitter medicine. Denial is also a primary defense mechanism along with repression, which means that the id seek gratification directly from ego.
- c) **Projection.** Projection is a repression that is projected onto another person in order to ease the moral and guilt for possessing an obsession or fixation on something. For example, a man whose pride is hurt because he hates someone may accuse others, even the man he hates, of hating him. This happens because projection is a secondary defense mechanism, in which the id had to deal with super – ego. Dealing with super – ego means that the psyche must mind with morals, laws, etc. that super – ego has imposed. This also includes the rest of the defense mechanism.
- d) **Displacement.** Displacement is the transfer of the object which the mind use to relieve the stress, to the safer or remote object. The example of this is when a child hates a mother, the child may displace the hate to other as it is against moral to hate their own mother.
- e) **Reaction Formation.** Reaction formation is the process of repressing the impulse but doing the opposite of the said impulse. The height of moral and responsibility of the super – ego forces the id to do the opposite of the initial impulse.

f) Sublimation. Sublimation is transforming an impulse into a morally accepted behavior. In sublimation, the mind is forced to relieve the anxiety or stress from the impulses to a positive behavior.

C.N. Adichie's *Americanah* is a novel about the journey of two Nigerians in life as the two goes abroad, married, and eventually came back to hometown. The novel deals with the daily life of Ifemelu and Obinze. It follows the story of Ifemelu, a Nigerian woman that goes abroad to United States to continue study. The story follows Ifemelu's daily life, which includes love life, struggles to live as an African woman, and return to the hometown. Ifemelu's story includes the discrimination experienced not only as a "black" person, but also as African woman. The distinctions means that not only Ifemelu has to deal discrimination from others that perceive her as a black person, but also with others "black" person that has African American heritage. There are also bias and discrimination from Ifemelu's own race. Ifemelu is also a blog writer. Ifemelu writes the daily experience of black American in the perspective of the non-black American. Obinze, on the other hand, is a Nigerian man that came from the same place as Ifemelu. Obinze is Ifemelu's past lover and is Ifemelu's first love. Obinze's story follows a darker path, in which he has to work illegally in United Kingdom, while also dealing with the discrimination that came with his race in United Kingdom.

The researcher choses this topic as there is few research on defense mechanism in C.N. Adichie's *Americanah*. In the other hand, there are research on racism and defense mechanism separately, including research on C.N. Adichie's *Americanah*. The first previous related study is racism study by Megasari (2018) on *Racism in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Americanah*. Megasari researched the topic of racism, but the topic focuses more on the feminism, the struggle, and maturity of Ifemelu through Ifemelu's relationship. The relationship mentioned is with white men, Curt, and Obinze. Megasari focuses more on the feminism, in which is Ifemelu's growth through racism experienced in the relationship rather than the effect of racism on human mind. Megasarasi' research focuses on feminism and not touching the topic of defense mechanism, which differ from the topic of this research.

The second and last previous related study is Setianto's (2017) *Okonkwo's Anxieties and Defense Mechanisms in Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart*. Setianto use Sigmund Freud's defense mechanism to explore the anxiety that is the causes of defense mechanism Okonkwo's employed in the story. Setiantio uses Sigmund Freud's type of defense mechanism to further categories the defense mechanism and it is described as Okonkwo's weakness and failure. Setiantio also describe the depiction of Okonkwo's in the study. Similar with Setianto's study, this study relates the cause of the employed defense mechanism. However, this study focuses more on the process of defense mechanism and the exposition.

In this study, researcher analyzes defense mechanism and the exposition of it. The subject of this study is the main characters of C.N. Adichie's *Americanah*, Ifemelu and Obinze. This study aims to find out the defense mechanism employed by the characters as the result of the characters' experience by using Freud's

defense mechanism theory. The researcher aims to find out the defense mechanism and the exposition by employing Anna Freud's psychoanalysis theory.

This study focuses on analyzing the character through the psychological issue. Psychoanalytical criticism approach is applied throughout this study to help the researcher analyze the character's experience in the literature work. According to Berger (2005: 75), psychoanalytical criticism is a study approach based on study of human mind or psyche. In this study, psychoanalytical criticism helps in analyzing the psychological issues, the defense mechanism, in the character within the literature work.

METHOD

This study uses descriptive qualitative research design. Jackson et al (2007) describes the function of qualitative research method is to collect data, identify, analyze, and make an inference and conclusion to the problem based on a phenomenon. On the other hand, the descriptive research design is used to make a description based on an action or event. According to Adams et al (2007), the descriptive research is used to describe a why a phenomenon the way it is. The researcher uses the qualitative research design to collect, identify, analyze, and make an inference and conclusion based defense mechanism. The researcher then uses descriptive research design to describe the explanation behind the analysis. (see: Susanto & Andayani, 2021; Saputra & Andayani, 2021).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Ifemelu's Defense Mechanism

Throughout the story, Ifemelu has deployed several types of defense mechanism to relieve the stress or anxiety. The cause of the stress or anxiety in Ifemelu differs through the story, which in turns varies the defense mechanism deployed to reduce it. After analyzing Ifemelu in the literary work, the researcher found five types of defense mechanism deployed in the story. The mentioned defense mechanism is deployed, which means it is in the story whether the defense mechanism is successful or not. The types of defense mechanism in question are repression, denial, projection, displacement, and sublimation.

Repression

Ifemelu has employed the defense mechanism category repression in the story. The deployment of the repression happens once in the story. Ifemelu represses the internal source of the anxiety in the reaction to the mistreatment that has happened. In this repression, Ifemelu has talked to the university staff for registration. The staff then proceeds to mistreat Ifemelu. This event triggers the defense mechanism within Ifemelu. The deployment of the defense mechanism category repression can be seen from the quotation below.

Ifemelu shrank. In that strained, still second when her eyes met Cristina Tomas's before she took the forms, she shrank. She shrank like a dried leaf. She had spoken English all her life, led the debating society in secondary school, and always thought the American twang inchoate; she should not have cowered and shrunk, but she did. (Adichie, 2013: 127)

Ifemelu response to the mistreatment is shown in the quotation above. Tomas' mistreatment is causing Ifemelu to stay silent, even though Ifemelu clearly dislike it. Ifemelu is mistreated by Tomas's strange accents of speaking. Ifemelu never considers the way of speaking English can be considered inferior, as it is spoken through whole life. Responding to the mistreatment due one's identity, Ifemelu can only be silent and stands still. The response of silent is the deployment of defense mechanism.

Ifemelu's response is repression. The repression can be inferred by the repressed impulse shown in the quotation. The repression is shown by statement of Ifemelu shrinking when Tomas's eyes meet Ifemelu. Ifemelu's mind has repressed the impulse of responding to the mistreatment received. The result of the repression is also shown in the quotation, which is the confusion and silence. Ifemelu can only stay silent in response as the ego is not aware of the disruption caused by the impulse to response. It can be concluded from these discussions that Ifemelu has deployed repression to repress the source of anxiety in the story.

Denial

Ifemelu has deployed defense mechanism category denial in the story. Denial is used by Ifemelu to reduce stress level from external source. The external sources of stress vary throughout the story. The denial defense mechanism has helped Ifemelu to deny the reality to protect the mind. However, there are also the case there the denial defense mechanism deployed has failed. The researcher presents two cases of denial, the successful and the failed case, to prove the existence of denial defense mechanism deployed by Ifemelu in the story. The first case of denial is shown in the event from the quotation below.

Later Ginika said, "You could have just said ... They'll believe all kinds of shit about Africa."

Ginika laughed, a sure throaty laugh. Ifemelu laughed, too, although she did not fully understand the joke. And she had the sudden sensation of fogginess, of a milky web through which she tried to claw. (Adichie, 2013: 125)

Ifemelu's response in the conversation with Ginika is shown in the quotation above. The conversation shows Ginika response to Ifemelu's story. Ifemelu has talked to Ginika about the mistreatment experienced when registering to university. Ginika tells Ifemelu to says something unbelievable if experiencing similar events, as American will believe everything African say, and laughs. In the response to this, Ifemelu can only pretends to laugh but cannot help but feels confused.

Ifemelu's response to Ginika's statement is defense mechanism category denial. The denial is shown in the quotation by the action of laughing and confusion by Ifemelu. Ifemelu's mind deny Ginika's response as something repulsive. The effect of successful denial resulting in the confusion Ifemelu's conscious. As the ego is unaware of the external source, Ifemelu can only laughs too albeit feeling uncomfortable. The discomfort is the side effect of denying external threat but still recognizing it to some extent. The quotation below shows the next case of denial.

She began to plan and to dream, to apply for jobs in Lagos. She did not tell Blaine at first, because she wanted to finish her fellowship at Princeton, and then after her fellowship ended, she did not tell him because she wanted to give herself time to be sure. But as the weeks passed, she knew she would never be sure. (Adichie, 2013: 5)

The quotation above shows Ifemelu's attempt to tell Blaine about moving back to Lagos, Nigeria. Ifemelu decides to move back to Lagos to pursue the dream. Ifemelu feels that Lagos now has everything that initially expected when moving to United States. However, Ifemelu is not ready to end the relationship with Blaine. As such, Ifemelu is not sure whether to tell Blaine or not and decides to delay. In the end, Ifemelu knows that there will be no sureness and decides to tell Blaine.

Ifemelu's attempt of delaying of talking about moving back to Lagos is denial defense mechanism. The uncertainty of Blaine's response from the attempt of talking about moving back is the source of the anxiety. Ifemelu's mind denies the fact that talking to Blaine is a threat. As the effect of denial, Ifemelu delays talking about it. However, the defense mechanism failed to deny it and Ifemelu's ego realizes it. The failure of denial makes Ifemelu confronts the reality. The discussion of the quotations above shows that denial is used by Ifemelu to defend the mind.

Projection

Ifemelu has deployed projection once in the story. Projection is deployed by Ifemelu to reduce stress level by assuming other people to hate something. The assumed hate is the cause of Ifemelu's stress. The assumption is done to retract the mind from the initial impulse that is causing stress. Ifemelu's projection in the story is a failed attempt which is shown in the quotation below.

... when a man in line behind her at the supermarket muttered, "Fat people don't need to be eating that shit," ... She glanced at him, surprised, mildly offended, and thought it a perfect blog post, ... She would file the post under the tag "race, gender and body size." But back home, as she stood and faced the mirror's truth, she realized ... She was fat. (Adichie, 2013: 4)

The quotation above is about the event Ifemelu has experienced when buying food. Ifemelu is buying a lot of food when a person suddenly states that Ifemelu is fat. Fueled with anger, Ifemelu writes the experience in the blog. The post in the blogs seems to be in the favor of Ifemelu, as it paints the person who has called Ifemelu fat in full of negativity. However, Ifemelu realizes while looking in the mirror that it is true, not just an insult.

The projection in the quotation above is the assumption that the person Ifemelu has encountered is insulting with the background of gender and race in mind. It can be inferred from Ifemelu's projection that the inner anxiety of Ifemelu is body weight or shape. Ifemelu's mind tried to relieve the anxiety by assuming the person who has insulted is doing it with race and gender background. However, it is revealed after the projection failed that Ifemelu is indeed fat. The failed projection is resulting in Ifemelu's acknowledgement of

body weight. It can be concluded from this discussion that projection is deployed to reduce Ifemelu's stress level, albeit ends up in failure.

Displacement

Defense mechanism category displacement has been employed by Ifemelu in the story. To prove the statement above, two cases of displacement has been found and analyzed. Displacement is deployed Ifemelu by replacing the object of relieving stress or anxiety due to moral issue. However, Ifemelu has failed in deploying displacement in the story. The failure of displacement proves that the moral of Ifemelu is stronger than the need to relieve the stress. The quotation below is showing the first displacement Ifemelu has deployed in the story.

Before, she might have laughed dismissively, ... it felt too much of an effort.

On the day they left for Nigeria, she collapsed onto her bed, crying uncontrollably, and thinking: What is wrong with me? She was relieved that her parents had gone, and she felt guilty for feeling relief. (Adichie, 2013: 289)

The event in the quotation above is the aftermath of Ifemelu's parents visit to the United States. Ifemelu has broken up with Curt, in which the news is shared with the parents. As the condition of Ifemelu's health and social life is deteriorating, the parents have decided to visit United States. After visiting the country, Ifemelu's parents goes back to Nigeria. However, the farewell does not sit well with Ifemelu as the emotion emerging is relief and not sadness.

Ifemelu's feeling of relief is the result of displacement. The displacement in the quotation above is the changing object of stress from Blaine to the parents. The initial feeling of relief is from the successful deployment of displacement. As the parents leave, Ifemelu's mind is tricked into feeling that the source of stress has leaves too. However, the displacement has partially failed as Ifemelu is aware that the feeling of relief is wrong and ends up feeling guilty about it. The next case of displacement is show in the quotation below.

"..." Auntu Uju said, her tone pacifying and sad, as it had been since Dike came home from the hospital

"His depression is because of his experience, Auntu!" Ifemelu said, her voice rising, and then she was sobbing, apologizing to Auntu Uju, her own guilt spreading and sullyng her. (Adichie, 2013: 361)

The quotation above shows the conversation Ifemelu has had with Auntu Uju and the aftermath of it. Ifemelu has this conversation with Auntu Uju regarding the reason of Dike's attempts at suicide. Auntu Uju persists that the reason is just depression that came out of nowhere. On the other hand, Ifemelu states that the depression is from racism. The aftermath of the debates is that Ifemelu shouting and crying at Auntu Uju as shown in the quotation above.

The displacement in the quotation above is the act of shouting done by Ifemelu. Ifemelu displace the object of relief from Dike to Auntu Uju. The cause of the deployed displacement is due to moral, in which it is immoral to relieves stress by get angry to Dike who has attempted suicide. Ifemelu's mind replace the object to the safer one, Auntu Uju. Ifemelu relieves the stress by shouting at

Aunty Uju. However, the deployed defense mechanism ends up in failure as Ifemelu realizes that shouting at innocent person is wrong. The failure in the quotation is shown by the act of sobbing and apologizing done by Ifemelu. From the discussion of the quotations above, it can be concluded that displacement is deployed by Ifemelu to defend the mind in the story.

Sublimation

The last type of defense mechanism Ifemelu has deployed is sublimation. Sublimation has been deployed by Ifemelu to relieve the stress by doing things that are considered positive in society. Ifemelu's impulse is fueling these positive activities as the super-ego accept the method of relief. Two cases of sublimation is presented after being analyzed to prove the existence of sublimation within the story. The quotation below shows the first case of sublimation.

SHE HUNGERED to understand everything about America, ..., to wear a new, knowing skin right away: to support a team at the Super Bowl, understand what a Twinkie was and what sports "lockouts" meant, measure in ounces and square feet ... (Adichie, 2013: 129)

The quotation above is the response of Ifemelu after facing discriminations based on race. Ifemelu has faced discrimination in the form of difference way of speaking by the staff. Ifemelu also does not understand Ginika's view of the discrimination. In response to those events, Ifemelu has developed interests in understanding United States which is shown by the quotation above.

In the quotation above, Ifemelu's desire to understand everything about United States is sublimation. To relieve the stress accumulating from previously mentioned topics prior to the quotation. Ifemelu chooses to study United States. The act of study is sublimation as it is a positive activity. In the process, the accumulated stress becomes the fuel for Ifemelu to study America, to the point it borders the line of obsession. It can be concluded that Ifemelu's desire to study is sublimation. The quotation below shows the next case of sublimation.

The blog had unveiled itself and shed its milk teeth; by turns, it surprised her, pleased her, left her behind. Its readers increased, by the thousands from all over the world, so quickly that she resisted checking the stats, reluctant to know how many new people had clicked to read her that day, because it frightened her. And it exhilarated her. (Adichie, 2013: 291)

Ifemelu's blog popularity is shown in the quotation above. Prior to the raising popularity of the blog, Ifemelu has broken up with Curt. Curt has not forgiven Ifemelu about the one-night affair, resulting in the broken relationship. Reacting to the unrelenting Curt, Ifemelu decides to immerse in working and writing blog. As the result of the hard work, Ifemelu's blog is rising in popularity as shown in the quotation above

Ifemelu's sublimation can be inferred from the success of the blog as the result of immersing in writing it. To relieve the stress from the broken relationship, Ifemelu decides to immerse in writing the blog. The immersing is fueled by the accumulated stress, resulting in the rising popularity of the blog. Writing a blog is a positive activity. Due to the popularity of the blog, Ifemelu regain happiness. It can be concluded that as the result of the deployed

sublimation, the blog has become successful. It can also be concluded that from the discussion of the two quotations above that Ifemelu's use of sublimation exists in the story.

Obinze's Defense Mechanism

Two types of defense mechanism are found while analyzing Obinze in the story. Similar to Ifemelu, Obinze has deployed defense mechanism to reduce the stress level and anxiety. However, Obinze's defense mechanism does not vary as much as Ifemelu. The cause of the lack of varieties is that Obinze does not appear as much as Ifemelu. Another reason is that Obinze often deals with materialistic problem rather than emotional one. So, the lack of the varieties is due to the exposition and the problem faced by Obinze in the story. The defense mechanism Obinze has deployed is displacement and reaction formation.

Displacement

Displacement is used by Obinze to reduce the stress level due to the emotional problem. Throughout the story, Obinze must deal with many problems. While dealing with the problems, Obinze often resigns to fate and just deal with it face on. However, there are exceptions in which Obinze has to deal with deep emotion. The exception is the relationship with Ifemelu. The quotation below is the example of such type of problem.

And now here was her e-mail. Her tone the same, as though she had not wounded him, left him bleeding for more than five years. Why was she writing him now? What was there to tell her, that he cleaned toilets and had only just today encountered a curled turd? (Adichie, 2013: 227)

The quotation above shows one of Obinze's emotional problem with Ifemelu. Obinze has been ignored and dumped by Ifemelu in the past. As Ifemelu is in United States, Obinze has sent numerous e-mails, but everything is ignored. Filled with uncertainty, Obinze seeks opportunity abroad. However, Obinze is not successful and has to work illegally in United Kingdom. One day, Obinze suddenly received e-mail from Ifemelu. In the state of anguish and anger, Obinze blames everything to Ifemelu as seen in the quotation above.

Obinze's action of blaming everything that happening as Ifemelu's fault is displacement. Obinze's mind tries to blame everything to Ifemelu as Ifemelu has wounded Obinze in the past. Obinze's mind does not want Obinze to acknowledge that the current situation is Obinze's own choice. However, it is important to know that Obinze's blaming of Ifemelu's action in the past is not displacement. Only blaming everything in the current situation is displacement, as Ifemelu's action is separate source of stress. It is also the original source of stress, hence not included in displacement. From the discussion of the quotation above, It can be concluded that displacement is deployed by Obinze to reduce stress level.

Reaction Formation

Obinze also has deployed reaction formation to deal with emotional problem. However, the way Obinze deals with this emotional differs from before. Obinze's response to the emotional problem is more mature. The cause of this

difference is the experience Obinze has accumulated. Obinze is now calmer and do not have emotional outburst, unlike the prior event. The quotation below shows how Obinze handles emotional problem now.

... but it was the photo of the black American, oozing intellectual cool in distressed jeans and black-framed eyeglasses, that had tipped Obinze over, made him send her a cold reply. *Thank you for the good wishes, I have never been happier in my life*, he'd written. (Adichie, 2013: 17)

After being deported back to Nigeria, Obinze now has married with Kosi. The quotation above shows Obinze's response to Ifemelu's congratulatory message and the news of new lover. Obinze is obviously a little bit mad, as described in the quotation above as that it tipped Obinze over. After the experience working illegally in United Kingdom and deported, Obinze is now more mature. As the result, Obinze calmly replies to the mail but with a bit of meaning behind the words. Obinze also brags as seen to the replies in the quotation above.

Obinze's reply to Ifemelu's e-mail is defense mechanism category reaction formation. It can be inferred from the quotation above that Obinze may feel a little jealous as seen that it tipped Obinze over. However, the developed and experienced moral in the super ego does not allow to relieve stress by getting angry. In response to the super ego, the ego initiates the action of replying to the mail calmly. However, Obinze also writes with the intention not losing by saying happier than ever. This is side effect of the incomplete reaction formation. From the analysis and discussion of the quotation above, it can be concluded that reaction formation is indeed deployed by Obinze in the novel.

The Exposition of Defense Mechanism

The researcher finds out that defense mechanism is exposed through the narrative. Defense mechanism is exposed through the narration of the character's action in responding to conflict (either minor or major, as long as it has emotional implication). The exposition of defense mechanism is often included in either the initial response to the conflict or problem solving in the story. Repression, denial, projection, and displacement are the defense mechanism which exposition used as the initial response of the problem. The responses are also used to further deepen the conflict or problem. On the other hand, reaction formation and sublimation exposition is used in problem solving part of the story. (see: Susanto & Andayani, 2021; Saputra & Andayani, 2021).

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that defense mechanism exist and has been deployed by Ifemelu and Obinze in C.N. Adichie's *Americanah* (2013). Ifemelu has deployed five defense mechanism to reduce her anxiety level. The defense mechanisms are repression, denial, projection, displacement, and sublimation. In the repression, Ifemelu's mind hides the reality that it just encountered racism which resulting in confusion. In the denial, Ifemelu rejects the fact in the reality by laughing along with Ginika without knowing why and delays telling Blaine about moving back to Lagos. In the displacement, Ifemelu replace the object of relief to other person,

which is done by shouting at Aunt Uju and relief when the parents have left the country. The sublimation is done by Ifemelu by fueling the act of studying United States and writing blog with negative impulse.

Obinze, on the other hand, has only deployed two categories of defense mechanism. The first defense mechanism is displacement, in which Obinze blames Ifemelu for everything. In the second defense mechanism, Obinze is more mature. The second defense mechanism is reaction formation. Instead of getting angry to Ifemelu, Obinze writes e-mails back calmly. Thus, it can be concluded that defense mechanism exists and is deployed by Ifemelu and Obinze.

Researcher also found out that defense mechanism is exposed by the narrative within the text. This kind of exposition is often used as the response of the conflict/problem or the problem-solving part of the plot.

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