

## Chapter One

### Introduction

#### The Context

During the 1950s and 1960s, the writings of a group of called the angry young men, including John Osborne, is contributed to developing political and social awareness in England. Osborne's plays are presented as powerful and convincing characters who communicate with middle-class complacency and capitalistic social ethics explosively. Among his plays, his *Look Back in Anger* influenced the notion of the angry young man. About the angry young man movement, Susan Brook notes "The term was coined to describe both authors and dramatists such as John Osborne, John Braine, and Arnold Wesker, and the protagonists of their texts- the dissatisfied, alienated, lower-middle-class or working-class young men" (19). She further explains, "the significance of these writers and texts was seen to lie in which they captured the voice of their generation: rebellious, radical, striking out both against the inability of the Welfare State to deliver its promises and against the cultural complacency and consumerism of the Macmillan era" (19). As defined by Brook, in Osborne's play, Jimmy Porter is presented as the resentful protagonist who was betrayed and destroyed by the previous generation. Largely working and middle-class British writers were the people who advocated the angry young man movement.

*Look Back in Anger* purposefully focuses on the marital struggles between Jimmy Porter, an intelligent young man of the working class, and his equally capable upper-middle-class wife Alison. In the play, there are three characters, Jimmy Porter, the central character of the play, Alison Porter, the wife of Jimmy Porter, and a friend of Jimmy named Cliff. Jimmy and Cliff belong to the working class while Porter's wife Alison belongs to the upper-middle class. The difference in social status between

Jimmy and Alison is the main cause of Jimmy's dissatisfaction. His outlook towards everything shows him as a rebel against contemporary society. No person is born rebellious, but it is the circumstances and the psychological surroundings in which the person lives to make him/her rebellious. Jimmy Porter is portrayed as a rude, unkind, violent, aggressive, and irresponsible person. His strength ultimately depends on his challenges to repressive psychological forces. The development of rebellion feeling is the development of a defense mechanism in mind.

Jimmy persistently shows his frustration against society, especially hatred toward religion. In the play, there is one scene where Alison wanted to go to church and she requests Jimmy about this. Jimmy asks her "Where you are going?" (93). When he comes to know that she is going to church he says angrily "You are doing what? Have you gone out of your mind or something?" (93). He frequently makes complaints against the corruption, injustice and irregularity of the society. He likes nothing about anything. He again replied that there are "no beliefs, no convictions, and no enthusiasm?" (94). While going through the play, he is in anger constantly without any particular reason cursing society and the system. He belongs to a working-class background and has a University degree but has to engage at a small sweet shop, which he does not like. This inequality makes him furious all the time as he has this strong belief of this trauma that he belongs to the middle class so that society is fixing the choices of his values and goals in life.

Jimmy was infuriated because he was born outside of his time, in a completely hostile biased society. Despite that, he also rationalizes his behavior; his response to people around him can be taken as his defense mechanisms. He is logically and objectively correlated to his past experiences. He thinks that his anger or frustration towards society is not unfounded, or baseless. According to him, the reason behind his

anger is because he suffered a lot when he was a child. Thus, his present behavior is a reflection of that.

*Look Back in Anger* illustrates the condition of the English man, particularly after the Second World War, which happened between 1939 -1945. It shows how the person was terrible and hopeless because of the war of that time. Osborne identified with the protagonist, Jimmy Porter, who wants a dignified life, but he finds only difficulties throughout his life. When Jimmy was only ten, he lost his father. It depicts the terrible situation of the main character as he goes through much turbulence physically and psychologically. This bitter experience reflects his whole personality throughout the play. In addition, his working-class background has limited his opportunities, which are the main reason behind his anger and dissatisfaction with life. This play is about a stormy relationship between a married couple. They belong to two different classes: the working class and the upper class. The upper-class people, in Jimmy's point of view, pasteurize the forgery of aristocratic society. This is why it is incapable of authentic feelings for any human being. In the play, Osborne focuses so attentively on the hero who is Jimmy in the forefront.

The play is set in a gloomy apartment in central England, where Jimmy stays with his wife Alison and their friend Cliff. The contrast between the two families and their worldviews becomes clear when Jimmy and Alison get married. The play is about two groups of characters: the first one is the aristocrats and the second is the working class. Colonel Redfern, his wife, Mrs. Redfern, son Nigel and Alison belong to the members of the upper middle class. Alison's friend, Helena, is also from the same class. On the opposite, Jimmy, his friends Cliff, Hugg, and Mrs. Tanner belong to the working class. The entry of Helena, at the end of Act I embroils the plot. Alison becomes pregnant, as Jimmy does not care about her. He gets angry with her. Helena

wants to assist Alison in her internal affairs. Helena informs Alison's father without telling her to rescue her from the terrible situation. She provokes Alison to leave Jimmy alone to give him a lesson for his intolerable behavior.

### **Problem Statement**

There is a conflict that is regulating the behavior and overall personality of Jimmy. A lot of interpretations of the drama have been done by different critics. However, the question of the protagonist's unusual behaviors and activities has not been addressed yet. Therefore, the study is an attempt to find solutions to the following queries;

A: What could be the source of his frustration or hatred against British society?

B: How does the defense mechanism of the protagonist serve the purpose?

C: How would Jimmy have reacted if his wife Alison had been from a lower-class upbringing?

### **Objectives of the Study**

The study mainly focuses on:

- To explain why Jimmy shows eccentric behavior toward his family, friends, and overall society.
- It explores the source of Jimmy's frustration or hatred against British society.
- Analyzes the bases of Jimmy's psychological defense strategies.

### **Review of Literature**

*Look Back in Anger* focuses on the protagonist Jimmy Porter, a twenty-five-year-old university graduate and sweetshop owner who shares a cramped attic apartment with his wife Alison and friend Cliff. Before examining Jimmy from the psychoanalytical approach, the study takes some of the eminent critical works into consideration. In most reviews on *Look Back in Anger*, the protagonist is considered

as an alienated and despairing character in the standard of twentieth-century British society.

S. Chelliah discusses on the theme of alienation, internal conflict and hostility experienced by Jimmy Porter. He explores how Jimmy is furious with life, friends, and his wife. S. Chelliah states, “Jimmy Porter is a completely isolated person. He feels a sort of ‘isolation’ from his wife and suspects her without any mutual understanding” (144). According to him, Jimmy is extremely dissatisfied with his life and he frequently outbursts his anger toward her wife.

Diane Elizabeth Glatt remarks on the drama from the perspective of class consciousness. She states,

John Osborne’s *Look Back in Anger* was responsible, nevertheless, for stirring several gifted young playwrights into serious and meaningful action. Sons of the working class began writing plays, expressing themselves and their social classes on the stage for the first time. These people, like Osborne, were in intimate contact with the problems faced by the middle class, and consequently were fully equipped to air their problems. So, John Osborne can be credited with being the first English playwright after the war to speak openly about middle-class frustration and impotency, and with starting a whole wave of vital English drama. (72)

Glatt largely focuses on the problems faced by the lower-middle-class people, who were influenced by some frustration and helplessness. The critics' view is that the play and the protagonist are the outcomes of the social milieu. It means that the play is about Jimmy’s struggle within society, which sets odds against him at every turn.

KR Mala argues that the central character Porter stands for the Angry Young Men, a name that specifies a category of the group of working-class people. She

asserts, “The anger was a symbol of the rebellion contradicting the social and political establishments of British culture of the time” (307). He is tremendously annoyed and disappointed at the world which had not provided him with equitable social opportunities. His pursuit of real life; which he thinks the working class, in which he identifies himself, prevents him to accomplish. Thus, his resentment and hostility are addressed to the people around him. Her paper exemplifies the grounds behind his anger toward Jimmy and how he takes part in the main role of the rebellions.

Anger is a refusal feeling commonly expressed with psychological arousal, confrontational thoughts, and abnormal etiquette. For this reason, it is usually destructive to the surroundings. It is an authoritative emotion and can be destructive if not handled properly. About the reason behind Jimmy’s anger, she further states, “his sarcastic and terrible present life that despite having a university degree, he has worked as a vacuum-cleaner salesman, advertising salesman, a neophyte journalist and still does not have a suitable job” (308). This makes him angry towards society and even presently, he runs a sweet shop with his friend Cliff but according to their worldview, running a shop is not an appropriate occupation for a University graduate. She points out another reason for Jimmy’s anger is “that he thinks that there has not any good remained to live and even die for” as Jimmy clearly says, “I suppose people of our time aren’t able to die for good causes any longer” (87). Despite, the awful immediate situation he believes that nothing has remained that well-earned to live and die for.

Jimmy’s slongings about the past and does not like his present. More often he gets nostalgic and regularly talks about his childhood experiences to his friends. He easily gets irritated with the normal days of his life. Jimmy Porter’s actions are not healthy and wise, and he as a hero avoids self-examination in the play. Commenting

on the play, Dan Rebellato describes how the play *Look Back in Anger* changed the course of British theatre. He states:

8 May 1956 is one of the most momentous dates in British theatre history: it was the press night of *Look Back in Anger* at the Royal Court Theatre, London, only the third production of the newly formed English Stage Company. The date sharply divides 20th-century British theatre into before and after; this was the moment, it is said when British theatre rediscovered its artistic seriousness, its youth, its politics, and its anger. (87)

He examines the play in terms of the rise and fall of the protagonist and explains how the play changed the course of British theatre. Through this play Osborne is trying to tell the truth, we do what we must, and get it by anyway.

As discussed by the critics above, the play shows that a person turns aggressive and violent if the state does not provide an opportunity for them with better work. Similarly, Jimmy suffers because of the indifferent society. The relationship of the individual with society determines the personal development of the individual. Society constructs personality by using its social institutions and social devices. The relationship of the individual with the society in the post-war era also plays a key role in the character formation of the first generation of post-war British. As a result, Jimmy gets involved in anger and frustration.

### **Methodology**

I have adopted the unconscious defense mechanisms, a theory primarily rooted in psychoanalysis. The theory was developed by Sigmund Freud, and extended by her daughter Anna Freud. The study is based on library research. For this, internet surfing, and private search under the guidance of concerned teachers have been done for the purpose. References have been taken from essays, online materials, critical

books, magazines, etc. The theory applied is psychoanalysis, specifically the unconscious defense mechanisms. It is primarily rooted in Sigmund Freud's study of human psychology. So, it focuses on exploring the psychological behavior of Jimmy Porter.

### **Significance of the Study**

The majority of the mainstream studies have focused on Jimmy's personality as a product of the socio-economic challenges of his time. But the study focuses broadly on psychoanalysis in which specifically on the unconscious defense mechanisms, and how the protagonist uses defenses to save his spirit from the psychological crisis. Topics such as alienation, frustration, and the concept of an angry young man are broadly covered. In general, they look at the *why* aspects of the problem but hardly any researchers look into the *how* aspects. How does he do so? So, the study exclusively engages in the methods that the protagonist takes to adapt himself to society in a conflicting situation when his inner voice is not aligned with the external realities.

### **Organization of the Study**

The thesis consists of four chapters. The first chapter introduces the protagonist of the play Jimmy Porter. It includes the scope, context, research questions, literature review, methodology and significance of the study. The second chapter describes the theoretical framework. It incorporates the psychoanalytical overview, particularly the unconscious defense mechanisms. The notion is primarily rooted in Sigmund Freud's theory of psychoanalysis. In the third chapter, Jimmy uses different unconscious defense mechanisms to cope with his situation. It discusses how he adopts defense mechanisms to avoid anxiety. It further explains his tantrums and antics vent out as the tools to save his true spirit. The fourth chapter includes a



summary of the study. His unsuccessful struggle to find a peaceful life makes him angry and alienated from society. Jimmy's personality is a veritable outcome of his psychological conflict with his time, place and context.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Defense Mechanism in Psychoanalysis**

#### **Defining the Concept**

The concept of 'defense mechanisms' can be defined as mental operations where people try to defend themselves from displeasing events, actions, or unwanted thoughts to avoid painful events or feelings. It is largely a psychological process through which the contents of our unconsciousness like fear, guilt, passions, envy and other complexes, are safely kept within it, knowing that we cannot handle them. Phebe Cramer defined: "These mechanisms are theoretical constructs used to make assumptions about how the mind works" (4). It is an insentient psychological operation that works as a shield to protect a person from anxiety-producing thoughts and emotions related to an internal dispute. For him, "defense mechanisms protect the ego by 'warding off' anxiety and guilt feelings" (5). It may come in a healthy or unhealthy manner, depending on individual situations and the frequency with which the mechanism is used. Both healthy and unhealthy people use defense mechanisms, but unlike unhealthy people, healthy people normally use different defense mechanisms in their lives to defend themselves from possible attacks or difficulties. The defense mechanism normally is about protecting the mind from anxiety with which one cannot cope. Various theorists have different categorizations and approaches to defense mechanisms.

The concept of defense mechanisms comes from psychoanalytic theory, a psychological perspective of personality that sees personality as an interaction among three different components. They are the id, ego, and superego. There are various kinds of different defense mechanisms. Some of them are used more commonly than others. Defense mechanisms are normal, natural part of psychological development.

Some common defense mechanisms are avoidance, displacement, denial, rationalization, repression, projection, selective perception, selective memory, sublimation, and reaction formation.

Avoidance is one of the most important defense mechanisms when a person refuses to deal with or confront annoying situations. Lois Tyson in her book, *Critical Theory Today*, explains avoidance is “staying away from people or situations that are liable to make us anxious by stirring up some unconscious- i.e., repressed experience or emotion” (15). It is staying away from those people events or objects that make us anxious by reviving the painful memories. Georg Northoff in his book, *Psychotherapy, and Psychosomatics* explains denial as “Dealing with emotional stressors by failing to recognize obvious implications or consequences of a thought, act or situation” (142). It is presupposing that the difficulty or the pain did not happen or was never there. Displacement, to Tyson, it is “taking it out on someone or something less threatening than the person who caused our fear, hurt frustration, or anger” (15). Replacing or substituting the repressed (shameful, fearful) person, object, or wish of the unconscious into a better form. Cramer defines projection as, “it protects disruptive anxiety by attributing unacceptable feelings, wishes, and impulses to someone else” (62). When individual characteristics, thoughts feelings, and emotions specifically with which they are not comfortable, projected to another person is Projection.

Another defense mechanism is rationalization which requires a mental manipulation of certain facts to make an event or desire less terrifying for the individual. Each individual does it time and again on a fairly conscious level when they provide themselves with logical excuses. Tyson writes for regression, “the temporary return to a former psychological state, which is not just imagined but

relieved” (15). Regression can involve a return either to a painful or a pleasant experience. Reaction formation, which Anna Freud called “one of the most important measures adopted by the ego as a permanent protection against the id” (5). It is one of the psychological processes where a person goes beyond denial and acts the opposite way. Sublimation is similar to displacement, but takes place when we manage to displace our unacceptable emotions into behaviors that are constructive and socially acceptable, rather than destructive activities. Selective perception is the process by which the person only perceives the things they want to see while ignoring opposing standpoints. Tyson explains selective memory as “modifying our memories so that we don’t feel overwhelmed by them or forgetting painful events entirely” (15). Transforming painful memories into something comfortable with or forgetting painful memories.

“Defense” as a term occurs for the first time in 1894 in Sigmund Freud’s essay “The Neuro-Psychoses of Defence” and is used in several of his subsequent other works such as “The Aetiology of Hysteria” and “Further Remarks on the Neuro-Psychoses of Defense.” The term is used to describe the ego’s struggle against the painful or unacceptable thoughts and desires. As time went by, the term defense was replaced by the word repression. However, the association between these two concepts remained undetermined. In the book *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*, Freud reverted to the old concept of defense and stated that it would be advantageous to use it again without any doubt. He further explains that:

provided we employ it explicitly as a general designation for all the techniques which the ego makes use of in conflicts which may lead to a neurosis, while we retain the word ‘repression’ for the special method of defense which the

line of the approach taken by our investigations made us better acquainted with in the first instance. (163)

Here, we have a direct refutation of the notion that repression occupies a unique position among the psychic processes, and a place is made in the psychoanalytic theory for others that serve the same purpose, namely, “the projection of the ego against instinctual demands” (169). The significance of repression is reduced to that of a special method of defense.

### **The Unconscious**

Psychoanalysis is largely dependent on the study of our unconscious or Id as it is technically defined by Sigmund Freud. Quite simply, the unconscious is a storehouse of repressed wishes, desires, dreams, fears, wounds, guilt and unresolved conflicts that no one wants to accept and know about. Because of such repressed contents of the unconscious, a person's personality gets heavily influenced by it. Mostly, the patterns of behavior that are destructive are rooted in the unconscious need which is socially not acceptable. The unconscious is like the base of an iceberg which remains ninety percent underneath the water as it can be seen only ten percent of its total mass on the surface. Thus, the unconscious is essentially invisible and unknown even to everyone although it is the kernel of being. The unconscious is a product of complex family networks in which certain complexes like Oedipal Fixation, Sibling Rivalry, and the Electra complex are developed. The complexes that are prevalent in a person's childhood remain in the unconscious throughout life which is experienced later on as the “return of the repressed” (14). For example, a woman who had the longing a paternal love from her long-dead alcoholic father is likely to choose a mature alcoholic man as her lover to fulfill the longing for love from a mature man. She did not get in her childhood from her father, the mature man.

These ten methods of defense, which are very familiar in the practice and have been exhaustively described in the theoretical writings of psychoanalysis, are regression, repression, reaction formation, isolation, undoing, projection, introjections, turning against the self and reversal and sublimation, or displacement of instinctual aims. Thus, the ego has these ten different methods at its disposal in its conflicts with instinctual representatives and effects.

Being a psychotherapist himself, Freud developed his ways of diagnosing and treating his patients by making detailed investigations about their childhood wishes, family relationships, and hidden unfulfilled desires. Later on, scholars including Freud himself expanded the clinical concepts to other disciplines like culture, literature, anthropology, politics, fashion, music, painting, film, etc. Psychoanalysis is an exceptionally subjective theory as it deals with the psyche of human beings. Freud has developed a three-layered model of our psyche or subjectivity or personality or inner identity. Accordingly, a person's personality has a threefold division into id, ego, and superego. The id or the unconscious is the storehouse of the wild, primal, anti-social, animal, passion which needs to be repressed to get oneself socialized and culturally adapted.

The contents of the unconscious are regulated by a person's childhood experiences in which he or she wishes had been suppressed by the social forces as he or she grew up. No one consciously wants to show the contents of the unconscious as it could be a matter of shame, fear, or anxiety. The unconscious, therefore, has some safety valves or defenses to keep the destructive wishes within it. Selective perception, selective memory, denial, avoidance, displacement, condensation, projection and regression are some of the defenses that keep the unconscious from spilling over. In case, id spills over as the defenses do not work, anxiety occurs, which

may lead to frustration or shame in the end. The id always looks for the gratification of one's wishes and desires as it is guided by the pleasure principle.

### **The Unconscious and the Defense Mechanisms**

Psychoanalytic criticism is primarily rooted in Freud's study of human psychology which is used as a tool to visualize and critically examine the pattern of human behavior. Particularly it deals with the aspects of social conflicts consequent upon individual conflicts. Furthermore, in psychoanalytic theory, a defense mechanism is an unconscious psychological process or mechanism that reduces anxiety arising from unacceptable or potentially harmful thoughts. It may result in healthy or unhealthy consequences depending on the circumstances and frequency with which the mechanism is used. There are several defense mechanisms theorized by Sigmund Freud and his daughter Anna Freud. Their defense mechanism provides ways of coping with anxiety.

In the first book, *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense* (1936), relatively more about defense mechanisms Anna Freud detailed about ten different defense mechanisms that also appear in the works of her father, Sigmund Freud. As a father of psychoanalysis Freud is credited as the first psychoanalyst to make a systematic study of the human psyche. Some of the common defense mechanisms are repression, regression, reaction formation, isolation, undoing, projection, introjections, turning against one's person, reversal into the opposite and sublimation or displacement. Sigmund Freud and Anna Freud both studied defense mechanisms, but Anna spent more time on the main five defenses. They are repression, regression, projection, reaction formation and sublimation. All defense mechanisms are responses to harmful suppressed emotions and unfulfilled desires and how the consciousness and unconscious manage the pressure of a social situation.

According to the Freudian theory, defense mechanisms involve a distortion of reality differently so that a person is better able to cope with a given situation. For Freud “these mechanisms are brought into operation against the instincts” (59). The person uses defense mechanisms mainly to protect themselves from feelings of guilt or anxiety, which come arise because the person feels threatened as their id or superego becomes too demanding. Defense mechanisms operate most of the time at an unconscious level and help avoid unpleasant, unwanted feelings that cause anxiety.



## Chapter Three

### The Unconscious as Self-Defense in Osborne's *Look Back in Anger*

#### Jimmy as an Angry Young Man

The angry young men were a new breed of intellectuals, most of the working class or lower-middle-class background. The movement emerged in the 1950s. It expressed hatred and disaffection with the established socio-political order of the country. Osborne's hero Jimmy Porter was born in a middle-class family. He was projected as an angry young man who finds fault with everything. He was depressed and frustrated with society for several reasons. He is dominant in the play through the power of anger and language. From his birth to the age of twenty-five, Jimmy's fortunes rise and fall primarily because of himself, his wife and society. Osborne's hero sacrifices his desire and interests as being from a working-class background. In a way, he has become a victim of the circumstances of British society. However, the protagonist exhibits his will and courage to live up to the expectations of the society in which he lives. It portrays a clear picture of the struggle within the mind of a man. Thus, the protagonist Jimmy is presented as a character of immense psychological complexity and convolution.

In the play, Jimmy justifies his activities and behaviors toward people around him. He tries to save himself by using different defense mechanisms in his mind and behavior. He is angry, rude and offensive due to some reasons. His anger towards his loved one is not unfounded. They have reasons. They have a strong foundation. His derogatory behavior towards family, friends and with his relatives comes partly from his childhood experiences which is not the way he wanted it to be and which is not as he believes internally. People usually have two options: either they go for a complete isolation, or they fight to remain in society. He maintains his spirit. He tries to defend

himself unconsciously. Jimmy adopts certain behaviors to defend himself psychologically. He uses certain psychological defenses to save his spirit from the psychological crisis. His ego leads him to use defense mechanisms. Neither he has completely fallen for his id nor has he fallen for the superego. Rather he negotiates somewhere in the middle to get rid of the psychological conflict. Jimmy is furious with his own life and his wife. He spits venom against everything and everybody. He abuses his wife and friends for having “no beliefs, no carnations, and no enthusiasm” (16). Alienation becomes a root cause of anger in the play. He feels alienated from society, religion, women, and himself.

### **Jimmy’s Defense Mechanisms**

These defense mechanisms are mental processes that unknowingly work to defend a person from anxiety or uneasiness, which generally comes from inadequate thoughts or feelings. In this regard, Hentschel argues, “Defenses have come to mean very different things to different people, and the concept may become as vague as to be no falsifiable-retroactively invoked with impunity, yet of little use in formulating specific and differential predictions in society” (11). Thus, Jimmy led his ego to use certain defense mechanisms to remain stable and balanced.

Several designated defense mechanisms and their applications expand in all directions, from the consulting rooms of psychoanalysts to the training programs of different areas of life. Different theorists have different thoughts on defense mechanisms. Among these defense mechanisms, this study has used five major mechanisms for the protagonist Jimmy. They include; avoidance, denial, displacement, projection and rationalization.

Avoidance is specifically staying away from those painful moments or situations, which make a person restless or anxious. Jimmy is loud, rude and

offensive; he is verbally very abusive. Despite being highly educated, he is unemployed. He was born as a working-class family member. Throughout the play, Jimmy is cursing people and everything around him because he is dissatisfied with his life. He tries to avoid things that may cause anxiety for him. For instance, he avoids going to the church, even if he gets furious when the church bells ring. When the church bells begin ringing outside, he shouts, “Oh, hell!! Now the bloody bells have started! Stop ringing those bells! I don’t want to hear them!” (9). There is a reason behind his irritation. In one conversation, Jimmy said to Helena, “the last time we were in a church was when we were married” (65). He added again, “I’m not sure what happened after that. We must have been married, I suppose. I think I remember being sick in the vestry. (To Alison) Was I?” (66). It denotes that he does not want to remember the day he got married to Alison. So his ego tries to save himself from the unwanted feeling by using the mental mechanism called avoidance. Even he is with his trumpet most of the time when all the other family members gossip around. He closes his door and the loud noise of a trumpet echoed from his room. He does not like to go to the church as he does not want to remember the day of his marriage. As he mentioned in the play he suffers a lot after that.

Essentially, Jimmy is playing his jazz trumpet most often to avoid things around. The sound of his jazz trumpet comes from Jimmy’s room. “The trumpet gets louder” (112). While Helena and Alison discuss, “Jimmy is playing on his jazz trumpet, in intermittent bursts” (41). When the situation is not what Jimmy wants, the trumpet gets louder and louder in his room. It signifies that he does not want to face the problem. Rather he consciously wants to avoid to get free from anxiety. He tries to neglect his current financial situation. He avoids bad things from his past. When Alison goes with her father, he then lives with Helena for a few months. He does not

like even talking about Alison. According to him, she is the one who causes trouble in his life. When Helena reminds him about Alison, he gets furious. He does not like to recall her. One morning Alison comes back home, but he treats her as a stranger:

ALISON: (quietly). Hullo.

JIMMY: (to Helena, after a moment), "Nice to see a friend of yours. (34)

He behaves his wife as if he does not know her. In this way, he tries to save his ego from psychological conflicts by avoiding her. He tries to get rid of those uncomfortable thoughts and painful feelings.

### **Defense Mechanisms as Substitutes**

Denial is a defense mechanism in which the pain did not happen or was never there. It is a conscious refusal to perceive that painful facts exist. In denying latent feelings of homosexuality or hostility, or mental defects in one's child, an individual can escape intolerable thoughts, feelings, or events. Jimmy is refusing to recognize obvious signs of his wife's infidelity. He ignores her intimate moments with another guy, his friend Cliff. It seems that he does not care. Cliff kisses her hand, puts her fingers in his face, and tells Jimmy, "She's a beautiful girl, isn't she?" (3). He further compliments Alison in front of Jimmy by saying,

"It's a lovely, delicious paw you've got Ummmm. I'm going to bite it off" (3).

But Jimmy changes the topic and talks about Sunday's newspaper and asks Cliff, "What's the Bishop of Bromley say?" (4). It seems that Jimmy is not aware that something is going on between his wife Alison and his friend Cliff. He does not pay attention to their romance; he ignores them as if he does not see anything: "Cliff puts his arms round his waist and kisses her. She smiles, and gives his nose a tug" (8). Jimmy just watches from his chair and says nothing. Even though Alison and Cliff are so close about her pregnancy Alison tells first Cliff, not Jimmy:

ALISON: (staring at her outstretched arm). Cliff –

CLIFF: Um? (Slight pause.) What is it, lovely?

ALISON: Nothing.

CLIFF: I said: what is it?

ALISON: You see – (Hesitates.) I'm pregnant. (11)

In this way, Jimmy denies the reality of a situation to avoid anxiety. He refuses to accept the fact that his wife is unfaithful to him. He time and again sees that they are having a close bonding, but he denies the reality to avoid unwanted and uneasy feelings and emotions, so he ignores them. He always catches papers and acts as if he saw nothing. In this situation, he is the victim as his wife cheats on him yet he denies that nothing happened.

Displacement is a defense mechanism that imposes the fear or guilt upon someone or something less frightening than the one that was the reason. Satisfying an impulse or aggression with a substitute object. Someone who is frustrated by his/her boss at work may go home and kick the dog. Jimmy gets angry with his wife and his friend even with his mistress Helena for no reason. He tries to impose his anger or frustration upon them. He is for no reason angry all the time. Even for a normal conversation, he gets angry, "God, how I hate Sundays! It's always so depressing, always the same. We never seem to get any further, do we? He even behaves very rudely with everyone around him, "Damn you, damn both of you, damn them all" (4). Jimmy's bitterness is aimed in first place at the upper-class British society and its systems but he cannot do anything, so he pours his frustration onto his wife because she belongs to an upper class family. He finds her an easy target for his invectives, anger and tirades. Their day-to-day verbal skirmishes and verbal assaults create the domestic ambiance tense and tiresome beyond endurance. In the play, when Cliff is in

a bitter mood, Jimmy laments. "I cannot go on watching you two tearing the insides out of each other. It looks pretty ugly sometimes" (28). Jimmy curses the hierarchy and the systems. He does not like the aristocrat. Therefore, he is searching the clues to scold his wife so that he satisfies his ego. In this way, Jimmy is primarily angry with his life but he takes out his anger on his wife and friend by shouting at them all the time.

Projection is another defense mechanism that is associated to the fear or guilt with someone or something else to condemn them. Alison in conversation with Cliff says, "He taunted me with my virginity. He was quite angry about it as if I had deceived him in some strange way" (12). Jimmy shows insecurities toward his wife because he is not faithful in their relationship. Cliff answers Alison's question, while they were talking about Madeline, Jimmy's mistress, by saying, (To Jimmy) "I get mixed up with your entire woman. Was she the one all those years older than you?" (6) Jimmy replied without hesitation, saying, "ten years" (6). It shows that he is quite mature in this manner. Hence, he questions his wife's honesty. Projection is assigning one's intolerable feelings to others. Jimmy might have an attraction towards many women, but he fears that his wife is cheating on him. Similarly, Jimmy frequently said to Cliff, "You're too ignorant" (2). Jimmy himself is ignorant in so many ways of his surroundings, but he inflicts his weakness onto others: his friends, families and relatives. In projection, undesired wishes are transferred onto another person and the person who suffers gets relief. A common form of projection takes place when an individual, threatened by his annoying feelings, accuses another of harboring hostile thoughts.

Rationalization, yet another defense mechanism, occurs in two steps. There is a decision, action, or judgment made for a reason is the first step, whereas it is

executing and fabricating a valid reason, as in the process to justify the act after the fact for oneself or others depending on the situation is the second one. There are obvious logical reasons that are given to explain the unacceptable or unwanted behavior, normally guided through the unconscious, which is called rationalization. According to Jimmy, his father's death is still clearly an apparent reason for his anger. He makes a good excuse for his anger by rationalizing his horrible childhood experience. This terrible experience at an early age made a profound impression on his mind. He asked Helen:

JIMMY: Have you watched somebody die?

HELENA: No, I haven't.

JIMMY: For twelve months, I watched my father dying, when I was ten years old. (He moves around the chair) You see, I learnt at an early age what it was to be angry – angry and helpless. (Sits) I knew more about – love . . . betrayal . . . and death, when I was ten years old than you will probably ever know all your life. (70)

Thus, Jimmy tries to justify unacceptable behavior, such as anger, hatred, frustration and irritation providing logical reasons so that he does not feel guilt for behaving in such a way. He gives a logical reason to his anger to defend himself from unpleasant feelings. Consciously Jimmy may not like his rude behaviors himself however, they come very naturally to him as it becomes his habit now. Thus, he justifies with logic by saying that all his terrible behaviors are rooted in his childhood experiences.

Rationalization is the substitution of a safe and reasonable explanation for the faithful but threatening cause of the behavior. Comparing the pain and tragedy that he suffered in his childhood, Jimmy thinks that other people hardly know anything.

While in conversation with Helena, he said, "What I knew about betrayal and death

when I was just ten years old, you will probably ever know all your life” (70). These reasons create Jimmy, an antagonist who feels frustrated because society is callous and does not treat him gently. He rationalizes his behavior, his language and his response to people around him as rooted in his childhood experience which was filled with only suffering, tragedy and devastation. He is logically and objectively correlated with his memories of childhood. For him, his anger or frustration is not unfounded, or baseless. It has a reason because he suffered a lot when he was a child and his present behavior is a reflection of that. In this way, Jimmy uses rationalization as a psychological strategy that works as a shield to protect his psyche from anxiety.

Defense mechanisms provide ways of coping strategies to avoid anxiety. Anxiety reveals the core issues in the unconscious. The core issues are the dominant factors that are stored in the unconscious which eventually define one’s personality as they are. Jimmy uses different mental mechanisms to deal with disappointment, anger, and other stressful emotions. When the defenses of the unconscious momentarily break down and the contents that a person wants to repress appear on the surface, the person may suffer from an uneasy feeling. Jimmy relatively balances his life by using unconscious defense mechanisms.



## **Chapter Four**

### **Conclusion**

Jimmy is an intelligent, enthusiastic and educated young man but is dissatisfied with the present happenings in his life and the world around him. His personality is a veritable outcome of his psychological conflict with his time, place and context. He tries to save his ego to keep going his life's flame. He uses different defense mechanisms, which are not unfounded. They have an efficient foundation. It comes partly from his childhood and some from his life time. His personality carries immense psychological complexity and convolution. He shows eccentric behavior with his family and friends. He belongs to the working-class people. He sacrifices his desire and interests as being from a working-class background. He has become a victim of British society. However, he exhibits his will and courage to survive in society. He is frustrated with his family and friends. It shows a conflict between an individual and society's rules and regulations, which regulates the behavior and personality of the protagonist.

Jimmy uses different defense mechanisms to protect himself from painful feelings, events, actions and thoughts. These defense mechanisms can be called surviving mechanisms. They build strength to survive a harmful experience. He uses them to lessen his internal stress and anxiety. His unsuccessful struggle for searching peaceful life makes him disappointed. The possible source of his frustration or hatred is against the British society. So he adapts to social realities in a conflicting situation when his inner voice is not aligning with the external one. In this situation, he tries to apply mental strategies to maintain his life. He defends himself from a traumatic situation by developing certain habits in his personality.

Jimmy represents the post-war generation, looking for a balanced and stable life but he and finds only miseries. He comments on everything through his peculiar personality. His dispute is usually a natural outgrowth of his psychotic state. There is a connection between his personality and psychological troubles that he encounters. His tantrums and antics vent out as the tools to save his true spirit. Whether playing jazz trumpet alone in the room or scolding his wife or friends, Jimmy somehow tries to balance his life. His ego uses psychological mechanisms to protect the spirit from the psychological crisis.

Defense mechanisms help the mind to cope with uncomfortable feelings. People generally have two options: either remains in isolation or fight to fit in society. Similarly, Jimmy maintains his spirit and defends himself unconsciously through different defense mechanisms. Jimmy finds that his society is stagnant and class dominated. The political factors, social issues, and situations of the working class make him a pessimist. He tries to save him, to sustain himself in this society. Because he is dissatisfied with life, he curses people around him. The reason behind his anger is the inequality between the working class and the upper-class people. Another reason behind his annoyance is the monotonous daily routine which does not offer excitement. Thus, he gets bored on Sundays as it annoys him with its sameness. Meanwhile, his ego unconsciously uses different psychological mechanisms to deal with everyday life to avoid anxiety.

Defense mechanisms work positively to deal with stress and anxiety. Jimmy expresses himself to release psychological difficulties. Defense mechanisms are unconscious psychological mechanisms to deal with stress and anxiety. It is often developed unconsciously by an individual to decrease psychological disagreements with themselves, specifically between the internal reality like id and the external

reality like superego. The ego works as a mediator between the two. Jimmy uses these mechanisms to separate himself from unpleasant thoughts and feelings. He uses defenses; otherwise, he might go through social, psychological, or emotional conflicts. Defense mechanisms are adaptive mental mechanisms that are unknown to the individual. Using different defense mechanisms is a part of mental processes but not an indication of psychological disorders. However, excessive uses lead to mental disorders.

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