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**DEFENCE MECHANISM IN THE CHARACTER OF SYDNEY CARTON  
IN A TALE OF TWO CITIES**

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**Abstract:**

A Tale of Two Cities is a historical novel written by Charles Dickens. The protagonist of the novel is Sydney Carton. At the beginning, he is a careless and insensitive character in the story, but with the passage of time, he becomes more careful and more vigilant when he falls in love with a girl, Lucie Manette. In contrast, she loves Charles Darnay. His unrequited love could not be accomplished and his one-sided love produced anxiety and angst inside him. So, at the end of the novel, his anxiety drives him to such an extreme level that he sacrifices himself instead of Charles Darnay. Therefore, the researchers analyzed the "Defense Mechanism" in the character of Sydney Carton. The defense mechanism is a psychological strategy proposed by Sigmund Freud used by a person to lessen anxiety. Defense mechanisms are different kinds of strategies that try to lessen or protect a person from depression, anxiety, and such problems arising from intolerable thoughts and feelings. The analysis shows that Sydney Carton suffers from "Realistic Anxiety," "Moral Anxiety," and "Neurotic Anxiety" in several instances in the novel, due to his actions. It also highlights that his consciousness employs different methods of defense mechanisms, including "Denial, Reaction Formation," "Identification with the Antagonist," and "Projection", "Suppression", "Sublimation", "Fantasy", and "Isolation of affect". These findings

support the researchers' hypothesis that this novel contains traces of anxiety as well as defense mechanisms for dealing with anxiety.

### **Introduction:**

A Tale of Two Cities is a historical novel about the French revolution written by Charles Dickens, and he discussed the early life of the French and compared it with that of the English. Furthermore, it portrays a picture of both French and English society and the conditions before, during, and after the French revolution. In this novel, there are two seats: England and France. All the events occurred in France and England. France is considered a modern city and is centered on momentous events and the trivial events that take place in England. The story begins in England and ends in France. Hence, in the novel, there are two cities in which the whole story revolves around them. In the same way, it is the story of two heroes in two cities: Charles Darney and Sydney Carton. Both these characters maintain inconsistent behaviors but assume a similar bodily appearance. Sydney Carton is a jackal because of his carelessness and inactivity. Both the characters fall in love with the same girl, Lucie Mannette, but later on, she gets married to Charles Darney. Lucie Mannette remains a kind heart, a delicate and a juvenile girl and her age is not more than twenty. She is very sensitive about her relationship, and she looks after her old father and her little daughter, Lucie. Madame Defarge is considered to be a revolutionist and the leader of the revolutionaries. She accuses Charles Darney of being a member of the noble and leading class of society. Before his execution, Sydney Carton reached him at the same time to extricate him. Sydney Carton applied certain tricks through which Charles Darney became a freeman. He is so happy when he turns into a freeman and meets with his family and heads back to England. Instead of Darney, he goes to prison and dies on the guillotine.

According to Sigmund Freud, the Defense Mechanism Certificate is a theory related to the human psyche. Using this theory, one can investigate the hidden reasons behind the behavior of a person or a character in literature.

A defense mechanism is a collection of systems that attempt to distort reality in order to cope with anxiety. Defense mechanisms are also known as self-defense mechanisms or ego defense mechanisms, since the ego takes the action of defending itself from anxiety. In addition, it is employed to safeguard the ego from overburdening anxiety.

### **Statement of the Problem:**

In this novel, the researcher wants to analyze and explain the following questions:

1. What is the characterization of Sydney Carton in A Tale of Two Cities?
2. What were the causes of anxiety for Sydney Carton?
3. Sydney Carton used which defense mechanism to alleviate his anxiety?

**Significance of the Research:**

The significance of the research is to trace out the anxiety and defense mechanisms in Sydney Carton's character, in which the researchers will analyze Sydney Carton's psychological problems in light of anxiety and defense mechanisms.

**Literature Review:**

A Tale of Two Cities is criticized by many critics from different angles and is considered to be a historical novel. Charles Dickens also described the psychological turmoil of the character, Sydney Carton.

Iftikhar Hussain Lone and Shaffiq Muzaffar have closely touched on this novel, A Tale of Two Cities. They examine the major themes of the novel. But the theme of sacrifice and resurrection is significantly emphasized in their work. They first describe these characters in detail before connecting them to the themes. They focus on the character Sydney Carton on the theme of sacrifice and resurrection; they direct the character Doctor Manette. There are a bundle of themes in this novel, but they mention and explain only these two themes.

The story revolved around the character of Doctor Manette. He was imprisoned in the fortress of Paris, the Bastille, where he suffered a lot and became very sick. He was hopeless about going outside of this bloody fort and was depressed about the future and his fortune. When Jarvis Lee discovered who he was, he and Lucie Manette began to struggle with his recovery from life. They were on the mission and gave a name to the mission, "recalled to life" (Dickens 20). Fortunately, the mission was completed successfully. Lucie Manette met with her father happily and they enjoyed a good life. So he was set free and resurrected, thanks in large part to his daughter and the lorry.

Newlin also did some work with a different perspective in the novel A Tale of Two Cities and analyzed different themes through a binary perspective; hate and love, light and dark and good and evil are present in the novel. The whole story revolved around these binary themes. The opposite themes of the novel are because of the characters which are opposite to each other. He also assumed the novel a good lesson book for us that we gain a good lesson from it. He claims,

"It is a story with a lesson for us to learn and to apply in our lives" (Newlin 5).

He compares Sydney Carton with Jesus because both have sacrificed their lives for others. Jesus sacrifices himself for the sake of the whole world and Carton sacrifices himself for his love, Lucie Manette, and for her family. Both have put their lives in jeopardy for the sake of humanity. His best statement about the parallel between Jesus and Sydney Carton is:

There is Carton's action in pouring his brandy "slowly out on the hearth" and watching it as it falls. Brandy is a kind of wine. Remember the last supper, when Jesus gave his disciples wine to drink, saying, "this is my blood, which is given for thee" (Newlin 9).

Krishna Chaudhary highlights different themes of the novel *A Tale of Two Cities* and also claims that the novel is correlated with a private group of people, but also real and existing history that is explained throughout the novel.

"Undoubtedly, the story of this novel is convincing and realistic" (Krishna Chaudhary, 72).

He highlights that all the incidents of the French revolution have been explained in the novel in detail and starts the story with the character of Dr. Marnette and his imprisonment in the fort. Despite the fact that he was not guilty, he was imprisoned by the Evermond brothers and government officials. After a long time, he gets freedom and he settles in London with his daughter, Lucie Marnette.

Randolph emphasizes the application of duality in the novel *A Tale of Two Cities*. According to him, the duality lies in the characters due to their kind-heartedness and ruthlessness, indifference, and antagonism. In the story, some characters are good and kind-hearted, while there are some characters that are bad enough and show their brutality in the story. Here, two highlighted characters in which duality is seen are Lucie Marnette, good and kind-hearted, and Madam Defarge, brutal and cruel. These two kinds of characters are quite opposite to each other. Lucie felt sympathy not only for his father or his family, but also for others as well. She was quite responsive and talked to Carton in a moral way. Because of her empathy for others, her temperament is gentle.

Prit Joshi worked on the comparative study of the story of *A Tale of Two Cities* with the mutiny of India, "the war of independence". He claimed that the Indian mutiny had had an impact on *A Tale of Two Cities* because it was written after two years of the Indian mutiny. "The war of independence" was held for their own freedom, while Britain called it the "Indian mutiny". He takes them both similarly because both are related to bloodshed, violence, and terror. He says: "I argue that events in India were the match that ignited Dickens' already established midcentury interest in national identity, nobility and masculine heroism" (n.p).

As a result, critics and writers worked on and analyzed the impact of the Indian Mutiny, which had a significant impact on *A Tale of Two Cities*. They noticed the parallels between the Indian Mutiny and Dickens' depiction of the French Revolution.

### **Strategies of Defense Mechanisms:**

The following are the different strategies of defense mechanisms as proposed in the theory of Defense Mechanisms:

#### **Denial:**

Denial is a defense mechanism introduced by Anna Freud. A denial, according to Michael Pressley and Christiane B. McCormick, is simply denying an objectionable and painful reality. (14) People deny real events that are too difficult for them to deal with. So they block external events from their awareness and refuse to admit that something stressful has happened.

By reducing anxiety, one rejects the actual scenes of reality which are dangerous. A person who denies and rejects reality and certainty in order to alleviate anxiety will also lose his or her world. He is not a normal being and is unable to see the reality of the world.

In real life, we see a person who drinks a lot, even when someone is trying to get away from it. He would say that he is a social drinker and also, it might be possible that he would say that alcohol is not dangerous for his health.

### **Suppression:**

According to Hasim, "Freud explained that if someone is going through a bad experience that threatens him/her, the person's ego will provide a kind of protection by forgetting the bad accident, so that the anxiety decreases and does not have the power to threaten him/her again" (44). It means that an individual prevents inappropriate thoughts and traumatic events from entering into the subconscious and being buried in the unconscious mind. Anxiety is produced when thoughts are forced to be fixed in the subconscious part of the mind and these thoughts are actually a part of the unconscious.

### **Sublimation:**

According to Hasim, sublimation is the condition when someone changes their bad feelings into actions which can be acceptable in human life (22). In this type of defense mechanism, a person satisfies an impulse with a substitute in a socially acceptable way. It means that the identity of a human being produces unwanted and intolerable behaviors that are socially unacceptable. S is not satisfied with himself or herself those unsocial desires. As a result, she is redirecting all of those inappropriate actions and behaviors in a positive, socially acceptable manner.

This type of defense mechanism is widespread in everyday life. People do not want to disturb their social models and norms and one modifies all those unacceptable desires into a positive technique.

For instance, a person who is more aggressive and violent becomes a professional football player. So, this person used his aggressiveness in a worthy and positive way, which is not unsocial and immoral.

### **Displacement:**

According to Saul Mcleod, displacement is the redirection of an impulse to a powerless substitute target. The target can be a person or an object that can serve as a symbolic substitute.

The ego of an individual resolves the conflict between the id and the superego by involving an additional object in this defense mechanism. When the desire of the Id is totally opposite to that of the Superego, the Superego creates resistance to the Id, not to it. As a result, the superego's resistance to the id causes anxiety. Hence, the problem is resolved by using a substitute object which produces less anxiety.

People channel their emotions in everyday life into objects that are less harmful and more problematic than the actual ones. For example, consider a student who fails an exam and then goes home and kicks his dog. So, in this way, the ego uses an additional object to consume its own energy.

### **Textual Analysis:**

In the novel *A Tale of Two Cities*, the characters are portrayed very clearly. The author of the novel, Charles Dickens, uses the direct characterization method in order to describe different characters' traits, thoughts, and physical appearances. Moreover, he analyzes himself, his way of life, and his actions in the novel. In addition to that, Charles Dickens implicitly analyzes the inner nature of the characters. He uses the help of language and diction in order to implicitly analyze Sydney Carton's character. From the very beginning of the story to the end, he faces anxiety and the same situation goes on throughout the novel. He challenges a very critical situation in the novel and, in these situations, he gets a different kind of anxiety. He uses different methods in order to reduce anxiety and depression. These different means—as acknowledged by Sigmund Freud, Anna Freud, and other followers of psychoanalysis—are termed as defense mechanisms. In this chapter, the researcher focuses on different occasions where Sydney Carton faces various sorts of anxiety and he uses different strategies and means in order to cope with or lessen these anxieties.

Sydney Carton is depicted as the most sophisticated and exciting character in *A Tale of Two Cities*. He claims at the start of the story that he is a careless person with no interests in life. He claims that he does not care about anyone, and that no one cares about him. This sort of negation shows that he is facing realistic anxiety.

"I believe you've been drinking, Mr. Carton."

"Think? "You're aware that I've been drinking."

"Since I must say so, I know it."

"Then you'll understand why." "I am a disappointed drudge, sir. I care for no man on earth, and no man on earth cares for me " (p. 91).

When Charles Darney questions him about his use of alcohol and wine, he responds that he does not care about others in this world, and the world does not care about him in this world. Actually, he suffers from anxiety and uses denial defense mechanisms. He denies the realistic situation in real life. Although he cares about all, for instance, Lucie Manette, Charles Darney, Dr. Manette, and so many others. He loves Lucie Manette from the depth of his heart, but, in contrast, she loves Charles Darney and gets married to him. When he gets to know that she is in love with Charles Darney, he does not stay away from her care. Even when he hears that Charles Darney is sentenced to death, he changes his position towards Charles Darney and sacrifices himself. So, he cares about all but in order to cope with the realistic anxiety, Sydney Carton employs the defense mechanism which is denial.

At the beginning of the novel, Sydney Carton falls in love with Lucie Manette, but he cannot articulate it. He confides in his friend, Charles Darney, about his feelings. After that, he goes to her home and he admits his feelings to Lucie Manette. "I opened my heart to you, most of all worlds; and there was something left in me at this time which you could deplore and pity," he explained (p. 123).

He expresses his feelings for her, but his proposal is rejected, and he becomes mentally unstable and anxious. He is depressed because he likes and loves Charles Darney. He can't stand Charles Darney's marriage to Lucie Manette. So, he became extremely anxious and depressed. He wants to reduce depression and anxiety. He uses rational defense mechanisms. Cherry indicates that "Rationalization is a defense mechanism that involves explaining unacceptable behaviors and feelings rationally or logically, avoiding the true reasons for the behaviors" (6). In this type of defense mechanism, one's cognition manipulates reality to provide an acceptable reason for some irrational or less acceptable reason.

Miss Manette, I am not worthy of such feelings. In an hour or two, the low companions and low habits that I despise but succumb to will make me less worthy of such tears as those than any wretch who creeps along the streets. Be comforted! But, within myself, I shall always be, towards you, what I am now, though outwardly I shall be what you have heretofore seen. The final request, but one I make to you, is that you believe in me (p.155).

As previously stated, now that he is aware of the truth, he tells her, "I am not worthy of her, and I do not deserve her." The way he talks to her is a symptom of anxiety and a depressed person. So, Sydney Carton uses a 'rationalization' defense mechanism in order to overcome anxiety and also protect the ego from inappropriate thoughts and uncomfortable feelings produced by anxiety. According to the APA Dictionary of Psychology, "the ego defense is one in which apparently logical reasons are given to justify unacceptable behavior that is motivated by unconscious instinctual impulses."

Carton and Stryver spend most of the time in the bar, drinking wine and solving Stryver's cases. They enjoy drinking wine while memorizing their school days. At the same time, when Sydney Carton looks at a pretty girl, Lucie Manette, he murmurs about her "Golden doll". The whole court admires her beauty, so Stryver catches him when he looks at Lucie Manette. Stryver asks different questions about her, but he says that she is nothing to him and he does not care about her. Actually, it was his anxiety that he rejected and denied the reality of beauty and the whole court praised her beauty. So he uses denial defense mechanisms in order to reduce his anxiety. The definition of denial is "to deny an objectionable and painful reality" (Pressley and McCormick, Child and Adolescent Development for Educators).

Moreover, Sydney Carton, a regular fixture in the Lucie Manette household, has rarely shown any of his inner good qualities, but now he knows that Stryver is not going to propose to her. He decides that he must tell her how he feels about her. She was the last dream of his soul. Sydney Carton tells Lucie Manette that he knows all about her love, that she loves Charles Darney and cannot return her feelings for him. She asks for his trust and assures him that she will do so, and they both cry. He tells her that she should be comfortable because he does not deserve her. She rejects his proposal and he becomes disturbed and anxious, but he denies that he is not

disturbed by her. In this situation, he uses denial defense mechanisms in order to reduce his anxiety. "Don't say that, Miss Mannette. If anything happens, you will not be the cause of my becoming worse" (p.154-55).

He denies the truth of his bad nature, but it is all because of her. When he finds himself undeserving of her love, this scene hurts him. By denying and avoiding this reality, he denies the authenticity of his sadness and claims that the worst feelings and anxiety are not her fault.

Sydney Carton meets with Charles Darney in court and they want to get out of here. He asked Charles Darney for dinner. He's aware of Darney's resemblance to Lucie Manette. Sydney Carton does not like him, but he wants Charles Darney to care about her. Sydney Carton is angry at Charles Darney because he does not care about Lucie Manette. This anger is anxiety caused by Darney and he gets to hold on to this anxiety by using displacement defense mechanisms. According to Mussen et. al., displacement is a kind of defense mechanism that "means uncomfortable impulses are attributed to other subjects, not the true subject" (p.517).

The novel writes, "Carton flung his glass over his shoulder against the wall, where it shivered to pieces; then rang the bell, and ordered another" (p.90). Actually, the central factor in his anger was Charles Darney, but he used a displacement defense mechanism. He vents his rage by hurling the glass against the wall, which is less dangerous to him.

When Sydney Carton expressed his feelings, she said sorry to him. She claims that this is his confidence, which she never wants to lose his confidence in. If possible, she will help him everywhere and will repay his confidence, but she cannot help him in this regard. He is so hurt that he becomes depressed and anxious. In order to remove or avoid anxiety, he uses reaction formation defense mechanisms. According to Britannica, "Reaction formation is the fixation in consciousness of an idea, affect, or desire that is opposite to a feared unconscious impulse." In this mechanism, a person tries to fend off anxiety by acting in the exact opposite manner to what he/she actually believes or thinks. He said that her tenderness and affection were a blessing to him.

No, Miss Manette; all through it, I have known myself to be quite undeserving. And yet I have had the weakness, and still have the weakness, to wish you to know with what a sudden mastery you kindled me, the heap of ashes that I am, into a fire-a fire, however, inseparable in its nature from myself, quickening nothing, lighting nothing, doing no service, idly burning away (p. 154).

Sydney Carton and Stryver are drinking late at night, and they are both ecstatic about sharing a bowl with one another. Stryver says that he has chosen a girl to marry, but he is still worried about Carton's choice of a bride. Carton inquires about Stryver's upcoming marriage. He answers that he wants to marry Lucie Mannette because he has observed her poor economic condition and she will get benefits from him. He gets anxious about hearing the tragic news about Lucie Mannette. He becomes sad and anxious. Stryver asks Carton about his plan but he answers in a melancholic mood that he will arrange a better life for himself. " Carton, still drinking the punch, rejoined, "Why should I be astonished?"



"Carton was still sipping his punch when he retorted, "Why should I not approve?"(p144)

Here, Carton is completely depressed and he does not want to express his emotions and feelings about how much he wants Lucie Manette. Actually, he uses one of the strategies of the defense mechanism, which is suppression. "Freud explained that if someone is going through a bad experience that threatens him/her, the person's ego will provide a kind of protection by forgetting the bad accident, so that the anxiety will decrease and have the power to threaten him/her again," Hasim writes (44). Suppression means when one consciously suppresses or excludes unwanted thoughts and unacceptable feelings. As a result, Sydney Carton employed the same strategy, drinking wine to suppress his original desire and to avoid and remove anxiety.

One of the most significant reasons for Sidney Carton's anxiety is Charles Darney's intimacy with his beloved Lucie Manette. Every time he comes across Charles Darney, he is trapped in realistic anxiety as he realizes that he is unable to find his love. In order to cope with this anxiety, he develops an "identification with the aggressor" defense mechanism. It means that if you are afraid of being threatened, you can overcome this problem by becoming more like him. He says: "Mr. Darney," said Carton, "I wish we could be friends" (p. 205).

What motivated him to do it? Because, he was trying to get closer to Charles Darney in order to overcome his anxiety.

Identification with the antagonist defense mechanism is highlighted at the end of the novel. When Charles Darney is decreed a death sentence, Sydney Carton makes a protection plan for him. He did not want Charles Darney to be executed, even if it meant sacrificing his own life. He swaps places with him and wishes to be executed in his place. He wears Darney's clothes and escapes from prison because his facial and physical appearance matches Darney's. He tells him: "You have no time to ask me why I brought it, or what it means; I have no time to tell you. You must comply with it-take off those boots you wear, and draw on these of mine. " (p.343)

Does Sydney Carton have anxiety and why am I here? Yes, he does not want to live any more. So, in order to overcome anxiety, he employs identification with the aggression mechanism. According to Ferenczi, "it involves the victim adopting the behavior of a person who is more powerful and hostile towards them"

In the middle of the novel, Stryver confesses that he is going to marry Lucie Manette. He is the right person for her to marry because he has enough money and a lot of fortune. He says that he will fulfill all her demands in daily life. So when Sydney Carton and Stryver go for her, obviously, she will choose Stryver. The reason for this is that he has enough money and intends to spend it on her. In addition, he suggested that Sydney Carton marry a girl of his own choosing rather than Lucie Manette. He is stuck in realistic anxiety as he realizes that he is unable to find this kind of love. In order to cope with this anxiety, he developed an "Isolation of Affect" defense mechanism. According to the APA Dictionary of Psychology, it is "a defense mechanism in which the individual screens out painful feelings by recalling a traumatic or painful event without experiencing the emotion associated with it". He says:

"Now, let me recommend you," pursued Stryver, "to look it in the face. I've looked it in the face, in my own unique way; I've looked it in the face of you, in your own unique way. Marry. Provide someone to take care of you. Never mind your having no enjoyment of women's society, nor understanding of it, nor tact in it. Find somebody. Find a respectable woman with some property--someone in the landlady's or lodging-letting's way--and marry her on a rainy day. That's the kind of thing for you. Now think of it, Sydney. "

"I'll think of it," said Sydney. (p.145)

So, in order to lessen his anxiety, he accepts reality without emotional outbursts from himself.

At the end of the story, Sydney Carton thinks that sacrificing his life for his beloved is the best idea ever. He envisions his name being celebrated on every street corner, and Lucie Manette bearing his name alongside his children. He compares himself with Saint Antoine. He repeats his verse: "I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord: He that believes in me, though he is dead, yet shall live: and whoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (p.366).

Actually, he escapes himself from an unpleasant condition and develops daydreaming and fantasy in order to overcome his anxiety. According to Collins English Dictionary, "A fantasy is a pleasant situation or event that you think about and that you want to happen, especially one that is unlikely to happen".

### **Conclusion:**

Sydney Carton has anxiety which is produced by his beloved, Lucie Mannette. It is Sydney Carton's own beliefs and nervousness that threaten him. He often found himself in misery, thinking negatively about the situations around him, and he felt alone in the world. Consequently, his anxiety hurts him and produces painful feelings. Therefore, in order to lessen his anxiety, Sydney Carton employs many defense mechanisms: denial, fantasy, projection, displacement, and sublimation.

In order to lessen the various types of anxiety described above, Sydney Carton employs many defense mechanisms. He uses the defense mechanism of "Denial" and refuses to acknowledge the reality of his love. He also uses the defense mechanism of "Reaction Formation" as he labels his hatred for the old man as love. Furthermore, he used the "Identification of the aggressor" defense mechanism by changing Charles Darney's shoes and clothes. Moreover, he uses the defense mechanism of "Projection" in some instances in the novel.

So this novel, A Tale of Two Cities, is an umbrella novel and employs various aspects to be analyzed. The novel is examined from various angles, such as duality and socioeconomic crises, etc., etc., etc. But the researchers employed the theory of defense mechanisms to analyze this novel.

In practical life, we have the same story roaming all around us as Sydney Carton has. According to the researcher, we live in a society where people have different perspectives and consider everything relative; nothing remains constant. So, the same problems and complications

are present around us and we deal with them as Sydney Carton did. We also use defense mechanisms against such obstacles and complications. Sydney Carton does not find a possible way to resolve a conflict for which he denies the problems or blames others. In contrast, the situation is critical, which is why he hides behind the bushes and employs various defense mechanisms. People face the same problem; they can't handle it, but they blame others for their inability.

This novel, "A Tale of Two Cities", is about Sydney Carton's anxiety and he uses different strategies for defense mechanisms. Eventually, the researcher claims that Sydney Carton feels troubled by anxiety. The researcher deeply evaluates the character of Sydney Carton and he knows the causes of his anxiety: his carelessness, laziness, and his unrequited love. So that's why he uses defense mechanisms like denial, rationalization and displacement, etc.

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