CHAPTER III

Esther Greenwood's Distaste of Life as Seen in Sylvia Plath's the Bell Jar

In this chapter, this study focuses more to find out the answers of the question formulated in the research questions before. Firstly, by using Sigmund Freud's concept of unconscious mind, the analysis attempts to find out the causes of Esther Greenwood's distaste of life that is mostly influenced by her unconscious mind. Secondly, the defense mechanism is applied to know about the effect of Esther Greenwood's distaste of life.

3.1 The causes of Esther Greenwood's distaste of life

Esther Greenwood as the main character in *the Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath is described as a girl who has everything in her life but is easily hating everything around her. She tries to find out her own identity instead of what society or others expect from her. Esther describes herself as a girl who is trapped in the bell jar.

"I would be sitting under the same glass bell jar, stewing in my own sour air...The air of the bell jar wadded round me and I couldn't stir..." (98) The bell jar hung, suspended, a few feet above my head. I was open to the circulating air." (113).

Esther Greenwood imagines herself as a girl who is trapped in the airless bell jar. She imagines herself as the one who is wadded by the bell jar. She feels hopeless as she cannot move to any places she wants. Esther could not control it.

Esther Greenwood feels like being isolated from connecting with other people and being prevented to see the world from her own perspective. Her distaste of life becomes worse until she decides to commit suicide. This analysis attempts to find out the causes of Esther Greenwood distaste of life which is influenced by her unconscious mind. Esther Greenwood's distaste of life and the causes are explained as follow:

3.1.1 Esther Greenwood's feelings to man

One thing that happened on Esther's past which gives a lot influences to her current life was when some men in her life make her disappointed. Esther had a very high expectation towards man. She always dreams of a man she wants, "I felt the first man I slept with must be intelligent, so I would respect him...I wanted somebody I didn't know..." (119). Esther's sentences implies that she wants a man who is intelligent and experienced. She wants a man that she does not know well to have such relationship with. So that, she would have a respect for him.

In fact, the opposite thing happened when she has sex with a man named Irwin who is the one she knows. Moreover, Esther also thinks that Irwin already has an affair with another woman named Olga. Irwin admits it (119). This situation disappoints Esther because this means that she does not get what she wants from Irwin.

Irwin's affair then unconsciously drags Esther to her memories when she had a boyfriend named Buddy Willard. Esther adored Buddy very much, "I thought he was the most wonderful boy I'd ever seen. I'd adored him from a distance for five years..." (28). Esther Greenwood had been adoring Buddy for a long time. She was thinking that Buddy might be the most wonderful boy she had ever seen. Buddy was very intelligent. Buddy knows a lot of things such as when Esther asked Buddy about what poem means to him, Buddy answered that a poem is a 'piece of dust', he also knows much about history. However, Buddy Willard then makes her deeply disappointed when she found out that Buddy was a hypocrite.

"Buddy Willard was a hypocrite. Of course, i didn't know he was a hypocrite at first. And then just as he was looking at me more and more i discovered quite by accident what an awful hypocrite he was..." (28)

Buddy Willard, a man whom she had been adoring for a long time was a hypocrite. Esther was not aware at first. Buddy acted out as a very innocent and pure man while the fact speaks the opposite (37). Buddy had had an affair with other women and that fact made Esther really disappointed. Esther found it out when she asked Buddy about having affair with another woman, "Suddenly, i said, "Have you ever had an affair with anyone, Buddy?" (37). Esther's question explains how Esther asked Buddy about having an affair in sudden. Esther Greenwood expected Buddy to be the real innocent man who has never been in affair, "I expected him to say, "No, I have been saving myself for when I get married to somebody pure and a virgin like you." (37). She wants Buddy to be someone who would likely saving himself until he gets married.

Buddy's answer was unexpected for Esther, "Well, yes, I have," Buddy said finally. I almost fell over..." (37). Buddy Willard ever had an affair. He even slept with another woman. This fact makes Esther thinks that Buddy is not as innocent as she thinks he should be. Esther was feeling fooled by Buddy. Esther used to take everything Buddy Willard told her as the honest – to – God truth. That is why she was feeling more disappointed.

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Buddy Willard also disappoints Esther when he kissed her for the first time, "While he kissed me I kept my eyes open...so I would never forget them... "Wow, it makes me feel terrific to kiss you." I modestly didn't say anything. "I guess you go out with a lot of boys," Buddy said then." (33). The sentences explain Buddy's unexpected reaction after he kissed Esther for the first time. Buddy explained how terrific it was to kiss Esther. Buddy also judged Esther as a girl who had been out with many boys before him while in fact Esther was a girl who kept her virginity and Buddy was the first boy she kissed. Buddy's comment on their first kiss disappointed Esther a lot.

Esther's high expectation towards men might be due to the fact that she grows up without her father who died when she was nine years old. Esther Greenwood has been losing an affection from a figure of father. When she was a child, Esther had a dream that one day she will know a lot of things from her father, since Esther's father was a man with a lot of knowledge such as about insects, German, Greek, and Latin (87). Yet the fact that her father died when she had not even know about those things makes her disappointed and put a high expectation for a man who comes to her life.

Besides that, her father's death force her to witness how her mother struggled for their life. However, she also realizes how much actually her mother hated what she was doing. Esther's mother teaches the shorthand and typing forcefully, because she has no choice. Esther's mother also hated her husband for not leaving them money till she has to work hard for raising Esther (21). This could also make Esther blames her father for dying. All the things happened on Esther's past life influence the way Esther sees a man. She seems like always having problems with every man she gets to meet. Without being realized by Esther, the things happened on her past influence her. The first thing happened was when she met some boys on street. Those men turns out to be Lenny Shepherd and Frankie.

Even before knowing Lenny and Frankie deeply, Esther has already made an anticipation, "The laughter should have warned me. It was a kind of low, know-it-all snicker..." (06). Esther's words implies Esther Greenwood's distrust to men as the part of her distaste of life. Without knowing more about the men, she has already thought that she should have been warned even by the way those men laughed.

This kinds of anticipation is resulted from her unconscious mind. The thing triggered on her mind was that when she was with Buddy Willard. Ever since she was feeling fooled by Buddy, Esther feels like she should be more careful towards men. Esther Greenwood is like having a trauma and everything on her past was stored on her mind, so unconsciously, she got the distaste of her own life.

Esther Greenwood also was being judgmental towards men, "He was the type of fellow I can't stand. I'm five feet ten in my stocking feet... so I'll look shorter, and I feel gawky and morbid as somebody in a sideshow." (06). She judged a man based on what she sees. She hates someone who is shorter than her because it will make her lower her position that she will look shorter. Esther Greenwood hates this kind of situation. She hates adjusting her height just to comfort a shorter man. This situation makes Esther looks inferior.

Esther Greenwood even dislikes the way a man looking at one of her friends named Doreen, "He kept staring at her the way people stare at the great white macaw in the zoo, waiting for it to say something human." (07). She describes that the man's stare is like animal stare who is ready to swallow its prey. That man is Lenny Shepherd, the one whom she met along with Frankie. After their first meeting, Doreen and Lenny Shepherd have a relationship. Esther also hates that relationship.

"The two of them didn't even stop jitterbugging during the intervals. I felt myself shrinking to a small black dot against all those red and white rugs and that pine paneling." (10)

Esther Greenwood and Doreen made a visit to Lenny Shepherd's house. Since Doreen and Lenny Shepherd were in love, they spent most of their time together and this makes Esther felt disgusted. She was feeling like being the isolated and unimportant person next to them, "There is something demoralizing about watching two people get more and more crazy about each other, especially when you are the only extra person in the room." (10). From Esther's sentences, we can know that she was feeling as if being marginalized because of Doreen keeps jitterbugging with Lenny Shepherd.

Another thing that adds up to Esther's distaste of life is when she meets a man named Marco. Esther Greenwood labels Marco as a woman – hater, "I could tell Marco was a woman-hater, because in spite of all the models and TV starlets

in the room that night he paid attention to nobody but me." (56). This happened when Marco only pays attention to her and ignores other women. She easily decides to say that Marco is a man who hates women.

"I began to see why woman-haters could make such fools of women. Woman – haters were like gods: invulnerable and chock-full of power. They descended, and then they disappeared. You could never catch one." (56)

In Esther's perspective, men whom she labelled as a woman – hater are like Gods. They cannot be harmed and full of power. But once they disappear, no one will be able to catch them. Woman – haters could make women fooled because they seem untouchable. Her meeting with Marco then brings Esther back to her past when Buddy also treated her as his only girl yet in fact Buddy also had other women. Moreover, Marco also gives a bad impression to Esther when he grabbed Esther's hand tightly till it makes a thumbprint on Esther's arm.

"Marco's small, flickering smile reminded me of a snake I'd teased in the Bronx Zoo. When I tapped my finger on the stout cage glass the snake had opened its clockwork jaws and seemed to smile. Then it struck and struck and struck at the invisible pane till I moved off..." (56)

Here, Esther Greenwood thinks about Marco's smile as if when she looks at a snake in a zoo she ever visited before. When she gets closer to it and tease the snake, it looks like the snake smiled to her but then it keeps striking and striking till she disappeared. Same goes to Marco. Marco looks nice when she smiles to Esther but she also feels like Marco is ready to strike her.

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As being explained before that Esther Greenwood is a type of girl who is easily hating and judging on something. She judges every men around her easily without knowing them deeply. Esther Greenwood's distasteful feelings towards men is resulted from her unconscious mind. Esther Greenwood has been hurt by a man named Buddy Willard. Buddy was acting as a very pure man, yet he was a hypocrite. Esther's disappointment then influences her in her way of seeing something, in this case is the way she sees a man.

Esther Greenwood's distaste towards men also can be seen when she met Doctor Gordon for the first time. "I hated him the minute I walked in through the door..." (68). From Esther's statement, she already has a distaste towards Doctor Gordon even though she had not seen him even for once. It is caused by her experiences in the past that she got hurt by some men including Buddy and the fact that her father died when she was nine also influence her. She hates an intelligent man like Buddy. She got a lot of disappointment from him. This could be the reason why she hates an intelligent man like Doctor Gordon.

3.1.2 Esther Greenwood's feelings to her friends

Esther lives in New York along with some of her friends who have won a fashion magazine contest, by writing essays and stories and poems and fashion blurbs. Those girls included Esther Greenwood to get a job in New York for a month. Esther made two friends there. Those are Betsy and Doreen. Unfortunately, Esther is considering Doreen as one of her problems.

"Doreen came from a society girls' college down South and had bright white hair standing out in a cotton candy fluff round her head and blue eyes like transparent agate marbles, hard and polished and just about indestructible, and a mouth set in a sort of perpetual sneer...She could tell some good jokes on them if she wanted to." (04)

Doreen's physical appearance is even disturbing for Esther Greenwood. She is described as a girl who comes from a college in the South. She has eyes like transparent agate marbles. She smiles as if she is mocking on someone. Esther could not stand with it. In Esther's perspective, Doreen is a very silly girl who will tell a joke to everyone she wants. Doreen always gives more attention to Esther. It is done by Doreen when she only talks to Esther and whispers a witty sarcastic remarks to Esther under her breath. This makes Esther feels like she is much more superior that anyone else, "Doreen singled me out right away. She made me feel I was that much sharper than the others..." (04).

Esther Greenwood is holding everything she dislikes about Doreen in her heart, but this grows more and more, that day by day Doreen is seen as a bad girl in Esther's eyes. Esther becomes someone who has no more feeling to Doreen who was very close with her and even becoming her one and only friend in New York.

"Doreen looked terrific. She was wearing a strapless white lace dress zipped up over a snug corset affair that curved her in at the middle and bulged her out again spectacularly above and below, and her skin had a bronzy polish under the pale dusting powder. She smelled strong as a whole perfume store..." (06)

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Slowly, everything about Doreen seems wrong in Esther's perspective. When Esther Greenwood and Doreen go to a party, they are stuck in the theater – hour rush. Their cab sat wedged in back of Betsy's cab and in front of a cab with four of the other girls, and nothing moves. At that time, Esther realizes how terrific Doreen is as a girl. Doreen is indeed a type of a girl who is acting out differently from the other girls even in her way she dresses up. This is more like a very nauseating thing for Esther Greenwood because at that time Doreen was too much in her dressing while Esther just wore forty dollars dress she bought before going to New York.

Another friend of Esther Greenwood who also lives with her in New York is a girl named Betsy who comes from Kansas. This is not very different from the way Doreen treats Esther Greenwood. Betsy always wants to do a lot of things with Esther, "Betsy was always asking me to do things with her and the other girls as if she were trying to save me in some way..." (05). From Esther's sentences, Betsy is a type of friend who acts out as if she will always be there for Esther and do everything for her.

Esther Greenwood recalls her memories when both Betsy and her were called over to the office of a TV producer. At the time, Betsy enthusiastically told the producer about male and female corn in Kansas (04). In Esther's eyes, Betsy got too excited only because of a corn which is not even fun for her. That thing makes Betsy did looks silly to Esther. Later, on the Beauty Editor, Betsy even cut her hair and became a cover girl. This makes Esther feels jealous.

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Esther Greenwood's other friends in hotel also look distracting for her. The girls who are living with her are coming from a wealthy family and Esther has a distasteful feeling to this condition, "These girls looked awfully bored to me. I saw them on the sunroof, yawning and painting their nails.... I talked with one of them, and she was bored with yachts and bored with flying... Girls like that make me sick." (04). Those girls look boring for Esther Greenwood. All of their activities seem so boring and silly. They like to paint their nails and make their skin as tanned as possible. She even talked with one of the girls and that girl told Esther how she has been feeling bored going vacation to other countries. And this kind of girl makes Esther sick.

Esther Greenwood also feels jealous of those friends who easily go to everywhere they want even go skiing in overseas. Esther Greenwood cannot speak when she is with her friends in the hotel.

"Girls like that make me sick. I'm so jealous I can't speak. Nineteen years, and I hadn't been out of New England except for this trip to New York. It was my first big chance, but here I was, sitting back and letting it run through my fingers like so much water." (04)

Esther has a jealousy feeling to the other girls who are indeed coming from a high class society. She has not ever been anywhere except New York. The jealousy grows more when Esther cannot even do anything in New York. She is just sitting there as someone who gets a scholarship prize in New York while other girls can go everywhere they want.

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Then, another distaste of Esther also shows up because of one of her friends named Joan Gilling. Joan stole Buddy from Esther because Buddy said that he would go to prom with Joan. "Oh, I can't do that. I'm up here for the Sophomore Prom with Joan..." (31). At that time, Buddy met Esther and talked to her, but Esther was disappointed when Buddy said that actually he went to meet Joan so that was why he was there. This then could result in Esther's distaste towards Joan Gilling.

Those kinds of situation of Esther and her friends including Doreen and Betsy and also Joan lead her to distasteful feeling to her friends. In Doreen's case, Esther was close with her but then things about Doreen make her sick. At that night, she realizes how actually she dislikes Doreen as a friend. When Doreen got back home in a drunken condition, Esther wanted to avoid her but she could not help but bringing Doreen back to her room. Doreen turns out into a troublesome girl for Esther until she decides that she has no more feeling to Doreen as a friend. At the same time, Esther thinks that has more similarity to her than Doreen (13). Esther mind goes back to the time when Doreen made her feeling superior then day by day, Doreen always makes Esther feeling disappointed. Slowly she hates Doreen.

The things that happened to Esther Greenwood every time she spends her time with her friends are unexpected for her. She dislikes that fact that her friends have so many things which she does not have. She also dislikes that a man she adored was turning into her friend than her. Esther Greenwood's jealousy influences her that she shows up her distaste to them. 3.1.3 Esther Greenwood's feelings to her mother

Esther Greenwood is only raised by her mother. Ever since her father died when she was nine, Esther spends most of her time witnessing her mother struggles for their life as a family. Esther loves her mother for raising her but on the other side, Esther Greenwood also has distasteful feeling to her mother.

One thing that causes Esther's distasteful feeling toward her mother is her mother's reaction when she goes back home for the first time after spending some time working in New York. Living in New York affects her mental condition badly. She loses control of herself. Esther's emotion becomes unstable. When Esther finally meets her mom, her mom's words surprised her, "you didn't make that writing course." The air punched out of my stomach." (60). Instead of worrying over Esther's condition, her mom nags about how Esther does not make it into the writing course which she has been dreaming of. Her mother's reaction on her coming home must have disappointed Esther a lot.

Esther Greenwood's mother is actually a type of mother who always talks to her daughter sweetly. However, there are also many times when she does not tell the truth to Esther, "My mother took care never to tell me to do anything. She would only reason with me sweetly..." (64). From Esther's words, her mom is described as a woman who says everything nicely in front of Esther. She never asks Esther Greenwood to do anything, but she also does not tell the exact truth to Esther.

When Esther Greenwood has to do a treatment by psychiatrist for her mental's health, her mother seems disappointed with the condition of her daughter as being reported by the psychiatrist named Doctor Gordon. Esther's mom said, "Doctor Gordon doesn't think you've improved at all. He thinks you should have some shock treatments at his private hospital in Walton." (72). Her sentences implies that Esther has to have some shock treatments in the private hospital in Walton because Esther does not show any improvement at all. Esther feels disappointed because of this news. She does hope that her mother will always tell her the truth.

"Esther: does he mean live there?

Mother: no (her chin quivered)

Esther: (i thought she must be lying) you tell me the truth or i'll never speak to you again

Mother: don't i always tell you the truth? (burst into tears)" (72)

From those conversation, Esther begs her mother to tell the truth about the shock treatments that she is going to experience. Then, with raised tone, her mother said that she always tells the truth to Esther. Esther's mother bursts into tears. This little fight could also influence the way Esther thinks about her mother later.

One day, deeply in her heart, Esther does not want to continue her treatments anymore but her mother keeps positioning her in a situation which is not easy to decide. Her mom keeps insisting that Esther will do it again later. She says that her daughter will not give up in doing treatments (77). Another causes of Esther's distasteful feeling to her mother shows up when Esther Greenwood's father was dead when she was nine years old. "My mother hadn't cried either. She had just smiled and said what a merciful thing it was for him he had died..." (88). In Esther's eyes, her mother was not even feeling sad when her father was dead. She even smiled at that time.

It contrasts with Esther Greenwood who grows with her hopes for her life that one day her father would teach her all about insects since it was his specialty when he was on university (87). Esther Greenwood wanted her father to teach her about German, Greek, and Latin. Those wishes suddenly disappeared when her father died. And the fact that her mother did not even feel sad may also disappoints her.

One day, Esther Greenwood wanted to go to the Catholic Church herself. She knows that committing suicide is a great sin for a Catholic so she hopes that the Catholic Church will help her find way to do redemption. She went to her mother asking how to be a nun. But her mother's answer seems so disappointed for her, "My mother had laughed at me, "Do you think they'll take somebody like you, right off the bat?" (87). her mother laughed at her. She wanted her mother's support but the fact that her mother laughed at her caught her off guard. Her answer seems to place Esther in a very low condition.

All of the things relating to Esther Greenwood's mother then grow in Esther's mind as a distaste. The things she has been holding up about her mother started from how her mother never understands her well as a daughter until how her mother reacted towards her father's dead blow up in a form of distaste. The peak was that when Esther was on shock treatment. Slowly, she hates her mother. Her unconscious mind plays the role. While she is still in the treatments, Esther Greenwood hates her mother's visits. She wants to be alone while having her treatments, "I hated these visits." (107). From her sentence, Esther dislikes her mother and the time her mother visits her. Even though her mother is the only one to come at that time, "That afternoon my mother had come to visit me. My mother was only one in a long stream of visitors..." (106), Esther Greenwood never likes those visits at all.

Esther Greenwood thinks that her mother is the worst. As being explained before that Esther's mother is a type of mother who always talks sweetly to her daughter, "My mother was the worst. She never scolded me, but kept begging me, with a sorrowful face, to tell her what she had done wrong..." (107). She hates her mother for always begging and saying everything to her with a sorrowful face. She always asks Esther to tell her what she has done wrong. Esther dislikes her mother for many things. She hates her mother for not understanding her feelings well and also for acting out as a very good mother when she does not even know what her daughter wants.

"That was a silly thing for her to do," I said to Doctor Nolan. Doctor Nolan nodded. She seemed to know what I meant. "I hate her," I said, and waited for the blow to fall. But Doctor Nolan only smiled at me as if something had pleased her very, very much, and said, "I suppose you do." (107)

One day, Esther Greenwood's mother brought her roses. Esther asked her to save the roses for Esther's funeral. But then, her mother's face puckered and she was about to cry. Esther was thinking that what has been done by her mom looks so silly after everything that has happened between her mom and herself. Then, she said to her psychiatrist named Doctor Nolan that she hates her mother.

Esther Greenwood's distasteful feeling to her mother grows slowly. Even though Esther spends her days by knowing how hard her mother struggling for their life, but the way her mother treats her disappoints her. As a daughter, Esther Greenwood had nothing to do. She is just a daughter after all. It is impossible for her to be a rebellious person. This is then stored in her mind and she throws it in a form of distaste to her mother.

3.1.4 Esther Greenwood's feelings to the social perspectives

As a girl who grows up normally, Esther always has her own dreams towards the society. She hopes that the society will have the same perspective as her. But then, she gets very disappointed that in the fact there are many things exist in the society which are the opposite of her own point of view.

One thing that opposes her point of view when Esther Greenwood was still in relationship with Buddy Willard, he ever showed Esther a cadaver. Esther cannot help but always remember it.

"I kept hearing about the Rosenbergs over the radio and at the office till I couldn't get them out of my mind. It was like the first time I saw a cadaver... floated up behind my eggs and bacon at breakfast and behind the face of Buddy Willard, who was responsible for my seeing it in the first place..." (03).

From the sentences above, we can see how Esther's first experience of seeing cadaver influences her life later. Esther Greenwood says that Buddy

Willard was responsible for this situation, "I started out by dressing in a white coat and sitting on a tall stool in a room with four cadavers, while Buddy and his friends cut them up... These cadavers were so unhuman..." (33). Ever since she saw the cadaver, she always feels as if she is carrying that cadaver's head around. She also has a feeling as if there is a cadaver in her breakfast menu. This is very disturbing for her.

The thing happened on her past with Buddy then makes Esther Greenwood feels bothered by the fact that she has to be surrounded by the news about the electrocution of Rosenbergs. She does not know why but every time she hears about the Rosenbergs, she feels sick of it. Actually, Esther's distaste is caused by her unconscious mind which she could not express it when she was with Buddy Willard. Buddy showed her a cadaver. Esther's mind goes back to her past unconsciously. At that time, Esther could not express her disgusted feeling towards a cadaver because she was with Buddy then it is stored in her unconscious mind.

Another thing that opposes her view is when Buddy Willard was inviting Esther Greenwood to go to hospital because Esther kept begging him to show her the interesting sights of hospital. In the hospital, he showed Esther how a baby was born by the mother.

"I was so struck by the sight of the table where they were lifting the woman I didn't say a word. It looked like some awful torture table, with these metal stirrups sticking up in mid-air at one end and all sorts of instruments and wires and tubes I couldn't make out properly at the other... I heard the scissors close on the woman's skin like cloth and the blood began to run down -- a fierce, bright red." (34-35)

Buddy showed Esther Greenwood a sight when a mother delivered her baby. Esther considered the process of baby – bearing as a very awful situation. It was very scary in Esther Greenwood's eyes. Later Buddy explained to Esther that the mother is under drug so she would not feel the pain of bearing a baby, "Buddy told me the woman was on a drug that would make her forget she'd had any pain..." (35).

Here, Buddy Willard gave an explanation to Esther how a woman who is bearing will not feel the pain because she is on drug. However, she will still realize what is going on that she was swearing and groaning when the baby was born. But seeing how the woman kept groaning when she was bearing her baby makes her think that the mother must still have felt the pain because she would not groan if she could not feel anything.

That situation makes Esther Greenwood hates the fact that a woman should bear the pain she gets from bearing a baby. This kind of Esther's distasteful feeling is resulted from her past when she was shown by Buddy Willard the process of bearing a baby in the hospital, "I thought if you had to have all that pain anyway you might just as well stay awake." (35). Esther Greenwood states that she does not like the idea that a woman should be under drug to forget the pain of bearing a baby because no matter what, she will always feel the pain. She has a different thinking with the society in general. When Esther's mental condition gets worse, Esther Greenwood receives a treatments and she has to say in the hospital until the treatments done. Some people even go visiting her including her mother, her brother, and some people on her past including a man named George Bakewell. Deeply on her heart, Esther does not want to stay at the hospital, "I felt silly in my sage-green volunteer's uniform, and superfluous, unlike the white-uniformed doctors and nurses..." (85). Esther does not want to be staying at the hospital because the uniform which she wears looks so silly on her. Her clothes are green and it makes her looks stupid.

"Esther: Why can't I see a mirror? (I had been dressed in a

sheath, striped gray and white, like mattress ticking, with a wide, shiny red belt, and they had propped me up in an armchair.) Esther: Why can't I?

The nurse: Because you better not. (The nurse shut the lid

of the overnight case with a little snap.)

Esther: Why?

The nurse: Because you don't look very pretty.

Esther: Oh, just let me see." (92)

Those are the conversations between Esther Greenwood and one of the nurses on the hospital, the place she has to be staying in for getting the treatments. After being visited by a man named George Bakewell who has known her since a long time then now he is working in the hospital, Esther asks the nurse to give her a mirror. She wants to know her reflection through the mirror. But then, the nurse says to Esther Greenwood not to look into the mirror because she looks so bad.

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Esther keeps looking into the mirror and she does feel so bad. This makes Esther feels distaste of being visited by others.

Esther does not like being visited by other people. She wants peace, "I hated these visits. I hated these visits, because I kept feeling the visitors measuring my fat and stringy hair..." (107). Those sentences state that Esther Greenwood does not like being visited. She keeps having feeling that those people who visit her always measure her physical appearance. She feels that those people always measure her fat and her messy hair. This is very disturbing for Esther Greenwood.

Actually, one of the causes of Esther's mental illness is her past experience with Buddy Willard. This influences later Esther in seeing something relating to virginity. Esther was being overhyped towards Buddy Willard. Till then, Buddy makes her disappointed. In Esther's eyes, Buddy has lost his virginity and it was unexpected for her, "And that's how Buddy had lost his pureness and his virginity... At first I thought he must have slept with the waitress only the once, but when I asked how many times, just to make sure, he said he couldn't remember" (37). Esther feels more disappointed when Buddy did not even remember how many times he slept with other women. Something about it makes Esther sick since Buddy was pretending as a very pure man while in fact, he is not even able to keep his virginity.

This makes Esther states how she actually does not agree with the perspective of the society about a woman's virginity. Generally, the society sees a pureness is a must for a woman. Esther thinks that when a woman has been struggling to defend her pureness or virginity, but it turns out that the man she is marrying with has been doing sex with another women, it will be unfair for the woman. This is why she does not agree with the general opinion about the purity of a woman.

At that time, Esther Greenwood was reading an article "In Defense of Chastity". The article was written by a married woman lawyer with children. The article was talking about the reasons why a girl should not sleep with anybody before her husband and this could be only after getting married. The article tried to persuade people how a man always wants a pure woman to be his wife. Men want their wives to have sex for the first time with them (42-43).

Esther shows her disagreement with the article she read. Everything sounds so skeptical. She does not agree that a woman should be virgin before their married because it will be ridiculous if one day after married, the one who is not virgin is the man, just like what happened to Esther and Buddy, "It might be nice to be pure and then to marry a pure man, but what if he suddenly confessed he wasn't pure after we were married, the way Buddy Willard had?..." (43). Buddy was acting out as an innocent man until Esther finds him ever slept with some women. This will make the woman disappointed and this is absolutely unfair for woman.

Esther Greenwood also hates the situation she is currently living in. In the first chapter of the novel, it explains how Esther feels uncomfortable towards the electrocution of the Rosenbergs, "the summer they electrocuted the Rosenbergs, and I didn't know what I was doing in New York. I'm stupid about executions. The idea of being electrocuted makes me sick, and that's all there was to read about in the papers..." (01).

Here, we can see how Esther dislikes the situation around her. She is sick with how the situation is constructed towards the electrocution of the Rosenbergs. Esther cannot avoid it because every day what she sees is only the Rosenbergs on the cover of every papers' headlines. She feels like being electrocuted is the worst thing to ever happen for people.

The last thing that is a little bit bothering for Esther Greenwood is the world itself. This summarizes the whole thing above as her distaste to the society or the situation around her. As being entitled the Bell Jar, Esther also thinks her world as being isolated in the bell jar. Everything is a bad dream for her.

"A bad dream. To the person in the bell jar, blank and stopped as a dead baby, the world itself is the bad dream. A bad dream. I remembered everything." (124)

As someone who feels like being trapped in the bell jar, Esther Greenwood explains this world as a bad dream. She hates everything as the whole of it. And all of Esther's distasteful feeling is caused by her unconscious mind which she is unaware of (Cloninger 35).

3.2 The effects of Esther Greenwood's distaste of life

Esther Greenwood lives her life with a lot of distaste. Those distasteful feelings are caused by her unconscious mind which is influenced by Esther's disappointment towards many kinds of thing in her life, such as her disappointment to some men coming to her life, to her friends, to her mother and to the way her social surrounding sees something which is different from her own perspectives.

Esther Greenwood might be freely to have her distaste in her life, but as a girl who lives along with the society, Esther's distasteful feelings cannot be fully expressed since it may put her in both anxiety and conflict with others because Esther's distaste would disturb her life and it also will make her relationship gets worse with other people. As the effect of this, Esther Greenwood then tends to use defense mechanisms in her daily life. Sigmund Freud and his daughter, Anna Freud divided defense mechanisms into some. Below is explained some kinds of defense mechanisms used by Esther Greenwood every time her distasteful feelings showed up.

3.2.1 Repression

Repression is a very common defense mechanism to do. It is done by repressing thoughts and feelings of a person. Repression was done by Esther when she does not let her feelings about her mom shows up. As being explained before that Esther has a distasteful feelings to her mother as a result of Esther's disappointment to her mother. In fact, Esther keeps repressing it unconsciously so that it will not reach her conscious mind. She dislikes her mom's visits when she is on her treatments in hospital. But in fact, Esther does not say to her that she dislikes her visits, she repressed her feelings because she knows once she lets it comes to the reality, this will result in a conflict between her and her mom.

Then, as a part of her distaste to her friends around her, Esther then throws a repression towards her feeling for Joan Gilling. This could be resulted by her distaste to her friends on her past including Doreen, Betsy. When she meets Joan on the hospital for treatment, she does some talks with Joan. They talk about the time when Joan will leave the hospital.

"Joan grew wistful "You'll come visit me, won't you, Esther?"

"Of course."

But I thought, "Not likely." (118)

Esther does not let her feeling that she will not visit Joan comes to her conscious mind. She repressed her thoughts. Here, Esther does the repression by saying another statement to Joan. So, she does not let what is really on her mind comes in reality.

3.2.2 Reaction formation

Esther Greenwood also experienced a movement from a good behavior to bad behavior because of her distaste of life. Esther did reaction formation when she lets a man named Constantin seduced her. "I felt so fine by the time we came to the yogurt and strawberry jam that I decided I would let Constantin seduce me..." (41). She was with Constantin who is an interpreter. Before, Esther was a type of girl who thought that virginity is everything (120). She will not lose her virginity before getting married.

Esther was going to keep herself for her husband later, but her disappointment towards Buddy which then grows in a form of distaste changes her perspective. After knowing that Buddy has had an affair with other women, she also wants to sleep with somebody, and in this time, it is Constantin. Clearly,

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there is a shift of Esther's behavior from good behavior to bad behavior by letting her being seduced by Constantin.

Esther also performed reaction formation when she was with Buddy Willard. Esther has known how hypocrite Buddy is but she keeps treating Buddy as a man who should be praised. She takes everything told by Buddy as if it is the right thing to do. "My trouble was i took everything Buddy Willard told me as the honest – God – truth..." (30). Then, even after knowing how bad Buddy is, Esther still acts as if he is a good man when she visited Buddy in the sanatorium. She still pretends to smile in front of Buddy Willard (47-48). Esther was adoring Buddy very much but after she knows how hypocrite Buddy is, she still treats him well but it was not coming from her heart. She was just pretending. Things done by Esther here is more socially acceptable. So, Esther's good treatments to Buddy here does not come sincerely from her heart. Her "love" for Buddy therefore is not genuine.

Just like what happened to Esther's distaste towards Buddy, Esther also showed reaction formation when she treats her mother well even though Esther has been feeling disappointed with her mother since she was a child. Deeply, in her heart she feels disappointed because her mother did not cry for her father's death (88). Here, Esther tries to change her distaste into something more acceptable because treating a mother well is a good thing and well – received by all people. Same thing goes to Esther's treatment to her friends. Even though she has been feeling uncomfortable with some of her friends, she still gives them a good treatment because that is more acceptable.

3.2.3 Displacement

Esther Greenwood sometimes does displacement relating to her distaste to other people or things. First, regarding to her distaste to men, Esther has a habit of looking at men down. She would criticize their appearances. Here is the situation when she met Constantin, the simultaneous interpreter of Mrs. Willard. "Probably Mrs. Willard's simultaneous interpreter would be short and ugly and I would come to look down on him in the end the way I looked down on Buddy Willard. This thought gave me a certain satisfaction..." (28). Esther displaces her distasteful feelings for Buddy Willard to other men, in this case is a UN interpreter named Constantin. In Esther's mind, Constantin, as someone who she does not know at first, could be another man to throw her distasteful feeling.

Another displacement by Esther was when she really enjoys watching people in crucial situations. "I liked looking on at other people in crucial situations. If there was a road accident or a street fight or a baby pickled in a laboratory jar for me to look at, I'd stop and look so hard I never forgot it..." (09). Esther stated this when she was with Doreen, Lenny Shepherd and Frankie. This could be the effect of Esther's distaste to her friends.

Esther has friends in New York yet she could not help but always feels like inferior every time she is with her friends. She feels like being isolated while watching Doreen and Lenny Shepherd clinging one to another. This is why she likes looking at people's crucial situations because that is how she learns. She cannot learn otherwise that way (09). She displaces her distasteful feelings to her friends by enjoying looking at other people being in crucial situations. As someone who frequently hides her feelings and thoughts, Esther Greenwood indeed does displacement a lot. When she dislikes being surrounded by the news about the Rosenbergs execution. Esther displaces her feelings by buying some uncomfortable clothes (03). She does not realize and know why she keeps buying clothes. But, this could be a displacementacre by Esther Greenwood as she dislikes to be surrounded by the situation where the news about the Rosenbergs' execution keep showing up.

Then, as being explained before that Esther Greenwood also has distaste to the visits she received when she is on her treatment at hospital. Esther was visited often by her mother and even other people she does not want to meet. Unexpectedly, she was also visited by a man named George Bakewell. As the effect of this distaste, Esther projects her uncomfortable feelings to the nurse of the hospital. She did something rudely to the hospital's nurse (96-97). She did it on purpose because she did not like being in the hospital and got visited by many people.

3.2.4 Denial

Esther Greenwood sometimes denies the reality happened in her life. She mostly performs denial when her distasteful feelings to men show up. The example of it was when she met Lenny Shepherd and Frankie on her way to the party with Doreen. Full of anticipation, Esther feels that she has to be careful with those two men only by looking at the way they laughed (06). But then, a moment after that, Esther also denies her own feeling and reduces her distaste by stating that it must be natural for Lenny and Frankie to laugh exactly like the way they did in front of Esther (06).

Actually, Esther Greenwood seems like having habit in denying the reality happened in her life since she was very young. Esther got a lot of disappointment from her boyfriend, Buddy Willard. Buddy has made an affair with other women. Esther tries to cover her disappointment by denying the fact that it was Buddy who started the affair. "Of course, somebody had seduced Buddy, Buddy hadn't started it and it wasn't really his fault. It was this waitress at the hotel he worked at as a busboy the last summer at Cape Cod…" (37). Esther convinced herself that it was the waitress first who seduced Buddy. She denied the fact that Buddy is indeed a hypocrite man who has an affair with other women.

Another thing done by Esther because of her denial in reality happened in her life relating to her disappointment with Buddy is when she lets everything being forgot about Buddy Willard forgotten. "Before I came to New York I'd never eaten out in a proper restaurant. I don't count Howard Johnson's, where I only had French fries and cheeseburgers and vanilla frappes with people like Buddy Willard..." (14).

She indeed went to a restaurant with Buddy but Esther denies it as the effect of her distaste to Buddy Willard. At that time, Esther just ate French fries, cheeseburgers and vanilla frappes. These foods are nothing compared to what Esther eats when she is on New York where she can get so many free luncheons with various visiting celebrities. Moreover, Esther Greenwood's favorite foods are full of butter and cheese and sour cream (14). So, her denial here is resulted by a mix between her distaste towards Buddy because he could not afford Esther's favorite dishes and her distaste to Buddy for whatever he has done to her.

Esther Greenwood's denial that also shows up is when she told her friends that her name is Elly Higginbottom. "My name's Elly Higginbottom," I said. "I come from Chicago." After that I felt safer. I didn't want anything I said or did that night to be associated with me and my real name and coming from Boston..." (08). Esther met Lenny Shepherd and Frankie for the first time. As a result of her distaste to men, Esther covers herself safely by denying her own identity. She said that her name is Elly Higginbottom and she comes from Chicago not Boston. She denies the fact about herself because it can make her feel insecure as she is a girl full of achievement in her academic life. So, Esther does denial to make herself feels safer. She does not want others to know about her real identity. 3.2.5 Fantasy

In dealing with her distaste of life, Esther Greenwood also tries to gratify her unfulfilled needs by imagining the things that make her feeling satisfied. Relating to her distaste to men, Esther ever imagined that her love story with Buddy would be like a love story between a Jewish man and a nun.

"It seemed to me Buddy Willard and I were like that Jewish man and that nun, although of course we weren't Jewish or Catholic but Unitarian. We had met together under our own imaginary fig tree, and what we had seen wasn't a bird coming out of an egg but a baby coming out of a woman, and then something awful happened and we went our separate ways." (30) Esther describes her relationship with Buddy with the story of a Jewish man and a nun she read from *Ladies' Days*. The story itself talks about a Jewish man and a nun who met under the fig tree for picking the figs until one day they saw the little bird peck its way out of the egg, they touched the backs of their hands together. Then suddenly the nun was not coming anymore for picking the figs. They were separated.

As the effect of Esther's distaste of Buddy, she made her own fantasy that her relationship with Buddy will be over just like what happened with the Jewish man and the nun. Of course, it is not exactly the same as that story but it might be turning out that way. In Esther's imagination, her story with Buddy will be over after they both witnessing a woman gives birth to her baby not after watching the little bird peck its way out of the egg. By having this kind of imagination, Esther feels satisfied about it.

Esther also has a fantasy when she met Doctor Gordon for the first time. As the effect of her distaste towards men, Esther then sees Doctor Gordon as an ugly person. "I had imagined a kind, ugly, intuitive man looking up and saying "Ah!" in an encouraging way, as if he could see something I couldn't, and then I would find words to tell him how I was so scared, as if I were being stuffed farther and farther into a black, airless sack with no way out..."(68). This kinds of fantasy by Esther about Doctor Gordon clearly exists because Esther has distasteful feelings to men. She tends to underestimate every man she meets on her life because she still cannot get over her disappointment to Buddy Willard and also other men she knows.

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Esther Greenwood also performs fantasy in covering her distaste to her mother. Esther dislikes her mother for always saying everything nicely to Esther. Esther thinks that her mother always lies to her. She then avoids her distaste by imagining as if Jay Cee, her boss in New York, becomes her mother. "I wished I had a mother like Jay Cee. Then I'd know what to do…" (21). Her distaste to her mother makes Esther has an imagination as if her boss named Jay Cee is her mother. Jay Cee is indeed a role model for Esther.

Another fantasy performed by Esther when her distaste to her friends shows up. "I said to myself: "Doreen is dissolving, Lenny Shepherd is dissolving, Frankie is dissolving, New York is dissolving, they are all dissolving away and none of them matter anymore..." (12). From her statement, we could see that Esther has a fantasy about Doreen and her other friends by imagining that they are dissolving. She imagines as if her friends disappear because her friends keep making her disappointed. Just like what has been explained before that Esther feels uncomfortable towards Doreen then after knowing Lenny and Frankie, Doreen becomes closer to them while Esther is just isolated in her own world (10). By having an imagination, Esther gets more comfortable from her distasteful feelings towards her friends.

3.2.6 Acting out

Acting out is a kind of defense mechanism in which a person will perform an extreme behavior to express his or her feelings. Firstly, Esther Greenwood does this when she cannot bear to stand strong with her situation anymore. In covering her distaste towards many things in her life including her mom, friends, men and also her different perspectives from the society, Esther commits suicide. She does try to kill herself for many times.

Esther always feels curious about suicide. She collects some papers in which they talk about suicide (72). "I thought drowning must be the kindest way to die, and burning the worst...That morning I had tried to hang myself..." (83). So, not only reading papers about suicide and the ways to do it, Esther has also been trying to kill herself. "The only thing to do was to drown myself then and there..." (85). She was trying to commit suicide by drowning herself when she was swimming with her friends.

Besides committing suicide, Esther Greenwood also becomes more pathetic after deciding neither to wash her clothes nor her hair. "The reason I hadn't washed my clothes or my hair was because it seemed so silly... It seemed silly to wash one day when I would only have to wash again the next. It made me tired just to think of it..." (67). She feels silly for washing her clothes and hair when she will likely do it again later. This happened when her mental condition becomes worse because of her distaste of life.

3.2.7 Rationalization

Rationalization is done by making something seem more rational by thought. Esther Greenwood is a type of a girl who has an opposite perspective that a woman should be virgin before she got married. This is resulted by her experience when she felt like being fooled by Buddy Willard that makes her think woman should be a virgin before getting married but in fact the one who is not virgin is Buddy. Here is Esther's statement, "I couldn't stand the idea of a woman having to have a single pure life and a man being able to have a double life, one pure and one not..." (43).

Esther cannot stand the idea that women should be virgin till they got married. Her choice is that she loses her virginity. She rationalizes her own perspectives. Esther defends herself by stating that a girl should not be virgin, because it is unfair if the girl is virgin while the men they want to get married are not virgin. It is like fooling a woman. By making her own statement, Esther tries to rationalize that it is indeed an unfortunate for a woman who keeps her virginity till getting married while her partner is not virgin anymore.

3.2.8 Undoing

Esther Greenwood shows undoing when at first she hated her friend named Betsy but then she takes is back by stating that Betsy resembles her more than her another friend, Doreen. "Deep down, i would be loyal to Betsy and her innocent friends. It was Betsy i resembled at heart..." (12). Before Esther was like having a distasteful feeling towards Betsy's personality who easily gets interested just because of a simple thing (04). But then, when she feels disappointed towards Doreen, she takes her opinion back and states that she has more similarities to Betsy than Doreen. It is obvious that Esther does this because she is afraid that her own thoughts about Betsy will make harm because of having no friends. 3.2.9 Sublimation

A person does sublimation when she or he changes the unpleasant impulses into more acceptable directions. This is done mostly by doing positive things. As being explained before that Esther has a distasteful feelings to men. When she broke up with Buddy, Esther covered her feeling by working so hard. "When I stayed in to study on Saturday nights they were extremely kind to me because they thought I was so brave, working the way I did just to hide a broken heart..." (39). Here, Esther Greenwood changes her distasteful feelings by working hard till others think that Esther is indeed a hard – working girl while in Esther's mind, she does it because she wanted to hide her broken heart.

In conclusion, Esther Greenwood's distaste of life is caused by her unconscious mind in which she got influenced by things happened on her past. This relates to her disappointment towards man, friends, mother and the general social perspectives. Even when her experiences happened on her past, Esther is still affected by those things. She gets disturbed easily, even by a small thin. Esther also shows a lot of anticipation in her life. She is really prepared for what is likely to be happened next. Esther's distaste then results in some defense mechanisms she uses every time her distasteful feelings show up. Esther uses defense mechanisms because she knows that if she expresses her distaste, it will make her relationship with others in danger and also result in her insecurities.