

A FREUDIAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ISSUE OF WOMEN CHARACTERS IN DAPHNE DU MAURIER'S NOVEL *REBECCA*

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ABSTRACT

A literary work can be appreciated through some ways. A psychological literary approach is made within the work. A creative process model is discussed in this subject since a work of literature often be considered as writer's creation which is sometimes related to psychological symptoms such as obsession, contemplation, sublime and some neurosis. A determination of Sigmund Freud theory mostly occurs in psychological approach applied to literature. By identifying human unconsciousness, it can be found through Du Maurier's novel, *Rebecca*, that Id, Ego and Super Ego as personality theory appeared to be psychological aspects in fictional women characters. It reflects how those characters react to conflicts through the story.

Keyword: psychology, unconsciousness, personality theory, women characters

INTRODUCTION

Psychology is the science of behavior and mental process including the experiences of human and animals. An ancient Greek philosopher, Aristotle called the experience as growing, sensing, remembering, desiring, knowing, thinking and reacting (Wright, 1984). Today a theory which is mostly applied within psychological approach is a determination of Sigmund Freud where he assumed that all unconscious mental symptoms are covered by consciousness.

Kiell (1974) states that fiction as a part of literature can be pointed as a fruitful field for exploration in the study of human personality. He also adds that Freud admired artists, especially writers, for their intuitive access to the unconsciousness. In psychology they usually know many things about heaven and earth that the academic wisdom does not ever dream of. It is also said that poets and philosophers took the first steps of the unconscious long before Freud's time. Moreover, Coleman (1964:13) quotes from what Freud said that the recurrent themes of great novels and drama are often the expression of fundamental human conflict that is reflected unconsciously in the author's mind. Oedipus

theme of Sophocles is perhaps the most appropriate example.

According to Kiell (1974:15), novel is a work of art. It does not merely invent, it perceives. As a novelist Elisabeth Bowen once said that novel intensifies human experience; it gives power, extra importance, greater truth and greater inner reality to what may be ordinary everyday things. Great writers know how to give a unified picture of a whole personality through minute observation of meaningful expression, a characteristic mannerism or an unconscious habit. At last it can be said that there is an intimate relationship between psychology and literature. Psychology helps to clarify some literary problems and literature presents insight to psychology.

Psychoanalytic Criticism

One of effective literary research methods is psychological analysis. Psychoanalysis is a system of psychology proposed originally by a physician, Sigmund Freud. The key concept of psychoanalysis is the ideas which are unconscious processes, operations in mind that cannot be represented. Repression is the action

that produces the unconscious by rendering experiences, thoughts, desires, and memories irretrievable. Therefore, psychoanalysis is the process whereby clues to repression are recognized and represented in a way, which can be understood by the conscious mind.

Psychoanalysis consists of three kinds of related activities, they are: (1) a method for research into human mind, particularly thoughts, feelings, emotions, fantasies and dreams, (2) a systematic accumulation of a body of knowledge about the mind, and (3) a method for the treatment of psychological or emotional disorders. As a physician, Freud usually told his patients through the interpretations of what was going on inside their unconscious minds, thus making the unconscious become conscious.

In his theory of psychoanalysis, Freud conceptualized how the unconscious mind operates into a particular structure of human mind. He then advanced the understanding of mind by proposing the idea of motivations of such unconscious mind. These motivations are divided into three parts, where the human mind comes to consist this way. Freud believed that people consciousness is only a small number of their thought, feeling and desires. Others are just beneath their awareness. The unconscious as Freud saw contains motives which Freud referred to as instinct as well as personality part of fiction memories of early experience and repressed conflict.

Freud developed a more formal structural model for psychoanalysis, the *id*, *ego* and *super ego*. The *id* represents the biological substratum of humans, the source of all drive energy. It operates based on the pleasure principle and shows no regard for reality and can seek satisfaction through imagination.

The *Ego* stands between the *Id* and *superego* to balance human primitive needs and

moral beliefs. The *Ego* usually comprises all the ordinary thoughts and functions needed to direct a person in his or her daily behavior. It emerges in the developing child according to Freud to handle transaction with the environment. One of the *ego's* main tasks is to locate object in the real world that are appropriate for the *id's* need. An *ego* deals with both demands of the *id* and reality. It also controls realistic and logical thinking.

The *Superego* stands in opposition to the desires of the *Id*. It is part of unconscious mind itself. *Superego* develops a learned sense of right or wrong, good and bad automatically after some periods of time. According to Freud, *superego* tries to force the *ego* to pursue moral goal instead of simply realistic one and force the *id* to inhibit its animal impulses. The *Id* constitutes part of one's unconscious mind. It is organized around instinctual urges of sexuality, aggression and the desire for instant gratification or release.

Freud's psychoanalytic literary criticism as Wardoyo suggested can be developed by psychoanalyzing the characters of certain literary work as if they were real people with a past, repressed desires, and unfulfilled wishes. Based on all theories above, the writer finds correlation between the theories and the topic of the study; how female characters in *Rebecca* a novel by Daphne Du Maurier reveal psychological aspects.

An Analysis through Female Characters in *Rebecca*

"Last night I dreamt I went to Manderley again"

Rebecca begins with the description of Manderley, a beautiful old mansion, with its menacing woods, rising turrets and long winding drive. The principle characters mentioned in the novel are *Rebecca*, Manderley's late mistress,

Max De Winter, Manderley's new mistress, De Winter's second wife and Mrs. Denver, the maid.

Max De Winter's naïve, shy young second wife whom he meets at the Hotel Cote d'Azur in Monte Carlo starts the story. She was companion to a snobbish old lady Mrs. Van Hopper whose main occupation is playing bridge and concerning herself with the lives of the distinguished visitors at the hotel. It is through one of Mrs. Van Hopper's calculated meetings that her companion met Max de Winter who was pointed out by her as "the man who owns Manderley..." and a widower who could not get over from the reminiscence of his wife's death. Their relationship began from the next day when Max invited her to join his table for lunch and subsequently on a drive. They fell in love and married in haste arriving at Manderley eight months after Rebecca's death.

The second wife of De Winter is everything that Rebecca was not and so conversely. Her days at Manderley were filled with apprehension and anxiety. Rebecca's shadow loomed large over her, her presence filled the house kept alive by Mrs. Danvers who, she found to her horror, preserved Rebecca's room just as it was the night before her drowning accident.

Analysis will be focused on female characters of *Rebecca* in their psychological aspects; they are Rebecca, the second Mrs. De Winter and Mrs. Danvers. As the reader can easily find out that Rebecca is the late Mrs. De Winter who was loved by all the people in Manderley except Maxim. She was very beautiful and kind; clever people would say that.

... she was a lovely person. So full of life. Everyone loved her.'

'she was so good at everything too,' I said. 'clever, beautiful and fond of sport.'

Rebecca was certainly beautiful ... her skin was very white and she had such a lovely dress.' (46)

'Was Rebecca very beautiful? ...

'Yes, he said slowly. 'yes, I suppose she was the most beautiful woman I ever saw in my life.' (48)

Nobody knew how the character of Rebecca was indeed, Maxim did. No one realized that despite her beauty and wonderful reputation, she was in fact a creature of utter evil and that Maxim never loved her, that Rebecca only loved herself ...' I hated her. We never loved each other. Rebecca never loved anyone except herself .. (90), that Rebecca was careless with so many terrible things about herself and that she made love with some men. The story of Rebecca, Manderley's late mistress ended when Maxim finally killed her after she told Maxim about her "pregnancy". It was her Id that urged her to tell Maxim about her "pregnancy" and not her illness, so she could convince Maxim that the baby was their boy and this would be her buried pleasure that she brought until her death. Her dreadful illness symbolizes the castration of herself behind her triumph over Maxim, while Rebecca itself did not suffer from that castration anxiety, since she never lost what she never had, a Maxim de Winter.

... 'If I had a child Max," she said," everyone would think it was yours. You would like a son, wouldn't you? A boy to grow up at Manderley. And you would never know who his father was" ... (92)

The next principle character is the Manderley's new mistress, De Winter second wife. This young girl is symbolically nameless who came to Manderley and found herself competing with the shadows of her husband's

dead wife. This shy girl has recently become Mrs. De Winter, but Rebecca was still Mrs. De Winter' first and in the novel we can see the second Mrs. De Winter attempted to escape and cast aside those shadows.

The struggle of Mrs. De Winter present wife to fight against the oppressive presence of the first wife reminds us of the central Freud's theory through an Oedipus/Electra complex dimension. Referring to the psychological complex that a young boy is quarreling with his father and wants to be closer to his mother, through the story we know that in marrying Maxim, De Winter second wife left the mother figure of Mrs. Van Hopper, but then she still found herself be forced to "kill" the presence of Rebecca in their life. Her Id to posses Maxim whom she really loved, urged her to prefer to go and live with him at Manderley.

Maxim wanted to show me Manderley. Suddenly I believed everything. I would be Maxim's wife. We would walk in the gardens of Manderley together. We would walk through that hidden valley to the sea. Mrs. De Winter – I would be Mrs. De Winter. (18)

... I did not say anything. I was young and shy, I knew that. But I was going to be Mrs. De Winter. I was going to live at Manderley. And I was going to make Maxim happy. (19)

All above were the dreams of the character as the parts of their unconscious personalities, since the dream itself is pure Id.

During her early marriage with Maxim, she thought that she could never make him happy like Rebecca did and concluded that her marriage was a failure. The superego as a moral censor and ego seemed to be lost by the Id, for she could not balance the drives of her Id toward the reality, the fact is Rebecca has died and

Maxim never loved her, but the second Mrs. De Winter got frustration by the "ghost" of Rebecca.

... my marriage was a failure. It had failed after only three months. I was too young for Maxim, I knew too little about the world. The fact that I loved him made no difference. It was not the sort of love he needed. Maxim was not in love with me. He had never loved me. He did not belong to me, he belonged to Rebecca. Rebecca was the real Mrs. De Winter.

...'I knew you were thinking about Rebecca all the time. How could I ask you to love me when I knew you loved Rebecca?' (90)

The third principle character is Mrs. Danvers who finally burned the beautiful old mansion, Manderley. Mrs. Danvers appeared in that big mansion as a loyal, faithful servant to Rebecca. At first meeting with the second Mrs. De Winter, the sinister Mrs. Danvers often scared and intimidated her about her existence in Manderley.

...'why did you ever come to Manderley?' she said.' Nobody wanted you. We were alright until you came.' (79)

...'why do you hate me?' I asked. 'what have I done to you?' 'you tried to take Mrs. De Winter's place,' she said. (80)

Mrs. Danvers tried to persuade the new mistress to leave the Manderley, dressing her in Rebecca's clothes and convincing her to do suicide on the day of the Ball, for the reason that De Winter did not love her.

... she pushed me towards the open window. I could see the stones of the terrace below. Beyond the terrace was a white wall of fog.

... don't be afraid,' said Mrs. Danvers. 'I won't push you. You can jump. You're not happy. Mr. De Winter doesn't love you. Why don't you jump now?' (82)

The suicide as Mrs. Danvers ordered to Mrs. De Winter portrays a symbolic castration. It was the Id of Mrs. Danvers to ruin Mrs. De Winter's marriage, to eliminate her and to ask her to leave the house because Mrs. Danvers love, loyalty and allegiance dedicated only to the beautiful Rebecca. So that's why it is difficult for her to accept the second Mrs. De Winter and to let her take Rebecca's place in Manderley.

All the feelings of Mrs. Danvers has toward Rebecca insist her Id to displace both Maxim and Mrs. De Winter, though that Manderley deserves only for Rebecca, dead but not forgotten. Her superego and ego could not any longer control her action over Mrs. De Winter. She could not realize a reality of Manderley after the death of Rebecca for her id leads Mrs. Danvers to envy Mrs. De Winter. Her superego could not determine whether she did right or wrong toward Mrs. De Winter. The whole conflict then subsides when Maxim and his wife must pay for their loves and all that matters by suffering the destruction of their beautiful home as burned by Mrs. Danvers.

CONCLUSION

Rebecca by Daphne tells about the relation of a boundary among three ladies mentioned on the story, they are Rebecca, the second Mrs. De Winter and Mrs. Danvers. As the reader found out through the character of Rebecca that she was charming and beautiful but unfair to her husband, Maxim, while the second Mrs. De Winter tended to be modest and naive, even she was a sexual inexperience, therefore De Winter totally oppressed her.

Mrs. Danvers whose presentiment of evil tightened her heart played role as a person who determined the existence of both Manderley and the second Mrs. De Winter which she never expected to come. The whole story reflects how Mrs. Danvers required much efforts to displace the new mistress as urges of her ego and her Id, that nobody was permitted to replace Rebecca's position in Manderley because the memories of Rebecca would be forever kept alive by this woman, and that neither Maxim nor his wife may have not lived happily by the death of Rebecca. That is the reason why finally Mrs. Danvers decided to burn the Manderley for the sake of her lady, Rebecca.

Based on the concept of personality theory represented by id, ego and superego as proposed by Freud, women characters in the *Rebecca* reflect a portrait of life which is full of emotion, disappointment, determination, hatred, and revenge. A human unconscious leads those characters toward psychological conflict which occur throughout the story. In short, when a character could not activate an ego or superego to control the Id, to encourage individual into a real life, an energy that should be endured, then he/she would be obliged to go by force of circumstance and would not be able to survive within the environment.

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