

The Projection of Subconscious through Symbolism: An Analysis of Mansfield's "The Voyage."

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Abstract – The association between Psychoanalysis and projection of human expressions has been a point of discussion and debate for a long time. Literary art, with a perspective of treating symbols in fictions as expressions of aesthetic human thoughts, becomes a platform of analysis for the same. The link between Katherine Mansfield and this Freudian thought, on various grounds, can be discussed in order to provide a clarified thought of the same association. This study takes the fictional writing "The Voyage" by Mansfield and by using Textual Analysis method attempts to study the symbolism used in the story in order to understand the connection it bears with Psychoanalysis. The symbols are read as expressions of the subconscious, while the narratives of incidents are looked as the conscious expressions. The research study provides a positive alignment towards this thought. The analysis of the text shows that Mansfield has used a plethora of symbols as expressions of the subconscious and has also used the narratives of the incidents as expressions of the conscious mind. The study also paves way for further studies to be conducted on other literary techniques used in the text to elaborate the link between the narrative and the Freudian perspective of human thoughts.

Index terms – Psychoanalysis, Katherine Mansfield, Symbolism, Subconscious, Expressions, Literary Technique, The Voyage.

I. INTRODUCTION

The separation from the loved ones is a common phenomenon which is seen in the human life. This separation is both physical and mental in which people are driven under psychological influences or rather disorders throughout their lives, especially when someone is physically separated from his or her parents by a death of either of the parents or both, that can lead into a psychological struggle in the particular person's mind. When the loved ones are physically no longer with such persons, they begin to have a psychological struggle and what they see in their day to day life stirs their emotional struggle in which they are undergoing as their separation from the loved ones. The voyage is a short story written by Katherine Mansfield in which she connects this psychological separation of a girl from her most loved ones, her parents, and

how this psychological separation and its consequences are seen of what she sees and personally experiences during a voyage with her grandma.

The book *Katherine Mansfield and Psychology* edited by Gerri Kimber, W. Todd Martin and Clare Hanson explores the multiple ways in which Mansfield's fiction resonates with the landscapes opened up by psychology and psychoanalysis. The book as a whole claims the possible influence of the Freudian concepts on the fictional writing of Mansfield. In line with the recent surge of critical interest in early psychology, the contributors read Mansfield's work alongside figures like William James and Henri Bergson, opening up new perspectives on affect in her work. While these essays trace strands within the intellectual milieu in which Mansfield came of age, others explore the intricate interplay between Mansfield's fiction and Freudian theory, seeing her work as emblematic of the uncanny doubling of modernist literature and psychoanalysis.

In the close descriptions following a detailed study of the literary art of Katherine Mansfield, Claire Tomalin has placed a valid argument. In "An introduction to Katherine Mansfield's short stories" Tomalin has described Mansfield as 'an original, both in her technique as a writer and the way she chose to live her life; a modernist, an innovator, an experimenter'. Other notable critics have assessed her contribution to literary modernism, and Clare Hanson has also argued persuasively that the central concerns of Mansfield's fiction 'resonate powerfully with the landscape opened up by psychology and psychoanalysis.' This perspective offers a space for a research attempt to where one of the literary arts could be tested and analyzed in search of such resonations that are obviously and outwardly projected in the writings of Mansfield.

The Katherine Mansfield Society, for an introduction of its essay competition, provides an initiating argument that says as follows. "Katherine Mansfield distanced herself from the 'mushroom growth of "cheap psychoanalysis but affirmed her belief that 'with an artist one has to allow – oh tremendously for the subconscious element in his work'. Her engagement with the models of subjectivity emerging from contemporary

psychology was both complex and ambivalent: this volume invites papers that engage with all aspects of the interplay between Mansfield's fiction and contemporary psychology and psychoanalysis." Thus, it is perceivable that there are research potent gaps that demand a further understanding of the same.

Patricia Moran and Patricia L. Moran, in their book *Word of Mouth: Body Language in Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf* comment as following, while showing the importance of understanding the influence of the way in which Mansfield was perceived in the backdrop of her contemporaries. With severe importance given to the updated theories of their contextual periods, the writers always preferred to bring in the latest in their humanistic perspective of expressions. Thus the comment claims the following. "For Mansfield undoubtedly felt isolated from her male contemporaries, whose literary energies she felt to be misdirected. At the same time she was asking Ottoline Morrell! "do you feel it too?" Mansfield was asking S. S. Kotliansky, her collaborator on Chekhov translations, if he had read Joyce and Eliot and these ultra-modern men." "It is so strange that they should write as they do after Tchekhov," she puzzled. "For Tchekhov has . . . given us a sign of the way we should go. They not only ignore it: they think Tchekhov's Stories are almost as good as the 'specimen cases' in Freud." Mansfield alignment of the "ultra-modern men" with Freud is telling. For Mansfield deplored "the sudden 'mushroom growth' of cheap psycho-analysis" in fiction; "these people who are nuts on analysis seem to me to have no subconscious at all. They write to prove-not to tell the truth". Here Mansfield carefully distinguishes her dislike of psychoanalytic doctrinarism from a 'dismissal of everything psychoanalytic. She questions the facile substitution of psychoanalytic concepts for narrative plots, the reduction of story to case history. She does not question the value of what she called 'the subconscious element.'" The above reference and the study clearly explains the need to venture into the facile substitution of psychoanalytic concepts for the narrative plots that Mansfield had taken coupled with her subjects.

In "A Study of the Conscious and Unconscious Perception of the Status of Happiness in Katherine Mansfield's Short Story Bliss" by Ala Eddin Sadeq, we find a statement that clarifies a parallel but specifically referring to another text of Mansfield. The researcher comments "as a modern writer, Katherine Mansfield adopts different means, such as magic realism, symbolism, psychoanalysis, Marxism and feminist theories in delineating her female protagonist's real dilemma. This paper attempts to examine the different techniques that are used by Mansfield in dealing with her central character's dilemma. The paper also aims to shed light on the female predicament in the late Victorian era and to promote a clear understanding of the true meaning of happiness in human life. The nature of the heroine's moral, personal and social crisis and her progression to a state of maturity will be thoroughly investigated in the paper."

II. SYNCHRONIZATION OF THEORY

This study attempts to apply the psychoanalytic theory to short story "The Voyage" and tries to show how far the theory can be applied in reading a literary piece. The researcher always wears a pair of spectacles, which is psychoanalytic theory, and through which frame he reads and brings out the explanations. He has also been very careful to apply the basic concept of the theory, which means the theory as it was explained by Sigmund Freud, who is known as the pioneer man of this theory. Hence the later editions and amendments to the theory such as Lacanian additions etc. have not been brought up to the consideration. So basically this study is an application of the basic theory of psychoanalysis to the short story "The Voyage."

The opening paragraph of the short story is filled up with lot of curiosities and if someone reads it at his or her very first time he could rarely figure out symbolical meaning of some of its parts since they have been linked with forthcoming paragraph of the story. If someone has read the story more than once he/she might be able to pick up what really first paragraph means in the story. So the point here is that the real meaning of the first paragraph is not fully understood without having several time of reading of the short story. Assuming that the reader has gone through the story numerous times the researcher brings out the fact that the entire first paragraph of the story is a replication of psychological collapse of the protagonist, Fenella, as she has lost her parents physically and mentally. The psychological collapse of the protagonist has been imaginatively brought out by Mansfield by relating the denotative and connotative words of darkness. The author brings lot of information to establish a dark environment at the Wharf. [...] It was dark on the Old Wharf, very dark; the wool sheds, the cattle trucks, the cranes standing up so high, the little squat railway engine, all seemed carved out of solid darkness. Here and there on a rounded wood-pile, that was like the stalk of a huge black mushroom, there hung a lantern, but it seemed afraid to unfurl its timid, quivering light in all that blackness; it burned softly, as if for itself [...] (Mansfield 165)

This entire explanation about the atmosphere of Old Wharf is highly symbolical of showing Fenella's mental condition that she undergoes in this period. Readers are told that everything around Fenella is carved out of solid darkness. Her entire life is in a serious question mark. As Sigmund Freud states in his psychoanalytic theory human mind is basically consisted with two section namely conscious and unconscious mind. He has further explained the unconscious mind and its functionality. Whatever behaviour is seen to the outer world, belong to the conscious mind and these behaviours are governed and controlled by the unconscious mind. In fact in terms of functionality of the unconscious mind physical behavior of human being flittered into an accepted level and expressed by its body. When it comes to a deeper analysis of unconscious mind, he has subdivided into three sections namely id, ego, and superego. Freud also has found

out that four kinds of things that would have been deposited in human unconscious mind such as

1. Painful experiences and emotions.
2. Fears
3. Guilty Desires
4. Unresolved Conflicts

As Freudian concept of psychoanalytic mentions, anything out of above four listed contents can be there in human unconscious mind. Thus, when a sharp attention is given to the first paragraph of the short story it is able to see that readers' mind are filled with considerable number of adjectives that associate darkness. The author further directly says that the word Solid Darkness. What can be meant by the word darkness? When this darkness is put up to the theory of psychoanalysis it is possible to say that it symbolizes the painful experiences and emotions of Fenella's unconscious mind as her mother passed away and she is going to live her rest of the life without her father.

As Freud mentions in his theory, painful experiences and emotions of human are repressed inside human mind. Indeed a death of a parent is a painful experiences to a child and it is an emotional struggle in his/her mind. This bitter experience is carved inside Fenella's unconscious mind and that disturbs her a lot within her life. This entire first paragraph is highly symbolical of revealing this unconscious side of her mind. It is also important to note that there is a mechanism in human mind to control to pop up such experiences to conscious mind. This process is 'Defense Mechanism', according to Freud. Author mentions in the first paragraph that the entire surrounding of Old Wharf is filled with solid darkness which means that the bitter experience of her mother passing away is highly affected inside her unconscious mind .

The inner struggle as a little girl, what Fenella went through is described under various clues that function as techniques that provide an understanding of the same mental environment of Fenella. [...] and one tiny boy, only his little black arms and legs showing out of a white woolly shawl, was jerked along angrily between his father and mother; [...]. (Mansfield 165). She has been set in the middle of these elder characters, namely her father and her grandmother and she has to keep up with their pace. Right at the beginning of the story itself, she is set to overcome the struggle of keeping up the pace of the elders as she moves on. This particular imagery also prefers to explain the struggle she would have undergone as a person who does not have the clues about the intentions of her travel. The purpose was unknown and she was being mentally carried into a voyage that she was not convinced with.

III. METHODOLOGY

Method of textual analysis has been used in this study and it has been done by sticking with the fragmentations. According to the orderly steps of the journey, story has been broken in to major three divisions and meaning of the incidents and happenings with regards to the theory of psychoanalysis has

been found within this three sections. The protagonist's behaviors in each section and her reactions and thoughts on what occur around her have been considered for psychoanalytical explanations. A special attention is given to the usage of imageries in showing psychological collapse of the protagonist.

IV. ANALYSIS

The entire short story is told in the third person omniscient point of view and the story can be read in three different sections. With centralizing the main plot of the story, which is the voyage of the protagonist, it is possible to have the story analyzed under three divisions.

1. Prior to the Voyage
2. The Voyage
3. After the Voyage

A girl, whose feelings of adolescence are just arising in her, has been the protagonist of *The Voyage* and she is Fenella by name. In the first section of the story, readers are told that this girl is on her way to the harbor with her grandma to get the *Picton* boat which is to leave to Strait. Readers are given a set of information on Fenella and her grandma's walking towards the harbor which comprises a series of scenes and creates an imaginative picture in their minds about the time in which they walk and the atmosphere they are surrounded with. These series of scenes are probably what Fenella could see until they get to the harbour. The above mentioned idea is reflected in the following passage of the text:

"[...] only when they got out of the cab and started to walk down the Old Wharf that jutted out into the harbour, a faint wind blowing off the water ruffled under Fenella's hat, and she put up her hand to keep it on (hidden) It was dark on the Old Wharf, very dark; the wool sheds, the cattle trucks, the cranes standing up so high, the little squat railway engine, all seemed carved out of solid darkness. Here and there on a rounded wood-pile, that was like the stalk of a huge black mushroom, there hung a lantern, but it seemed afraid to unfurl its timid, quivering light in all that blackness; it burned softly, as if for itself" (Mansfield 168)

Instantly Mansfield says that Fenella had to grab her hat just to stop flying it as the wind shows its influence on her. What Fenella could see in either side of the way towards the Old Wharf in the solid darkness was the wool shed, the cattle trucks, the cranes and the little squat railway engine. Fenella could also see a wood-pile along this way and a lantern is hanged on it. This reflects the initial platform of symbolism that the author is trying to establish in order to provide a deeper understanding of the mindset of the protagonist. The unsettled feelings that try to overcome her thoughts are described through the symbolism created through the hat that tries to fly away. The possessiveness and the loss that would show up later in the story are provided with a prelude in order to set the stage for the emotional preparation. Moreover, Fenella had the additional burden of dealing with two grown

up people, literally with two of her earlier generations. This effect is created with a symbolical representation that explains the feeling as follows:

Fenella's father pushed on with quick, nervous strides. Beside him her grandma bustled along in her crackling black ulster; they went so fast that she had now and again to give an undignified little skip to keep up with them. As well as her luggage strapped into a neat sausage, Fenella carried clasped to her her grandma's umbrella, and the handle, which was a swan's head, kept giving her shoulder a sharp little peck as if it too wanted her to hurry . . . (Mansfield 168)

The referred text clearly mentions that Fenella had to "give an undignified little skip" in order to adjust to the pace of the elders with her. Even though the elders did so, it was not out of the ignorance of the childhood difficulties of Fenella, but it was out of the hurried time restriction that they were into. This reflects the constraints that the lifestyle around Fenella was demanding on her, even in the midst of two elderly people, namely her father and grandmother. To keep up to the expectations of these elders, Fenella, instead of complaining, had to adjust and to make herself available for flexibility.

Fenella's father has also joined with these two ladies and he only goes up to the harbour just to drop them. He helps out Fenella and his mother to get into the boat and with their luggage. Soon after the official whistling of departure were horned the Picton boat sails towards Strait which is the destination of this voyage. Fenella find it bit difficult to accept the fact that she is going to be with her grandparents her rest of the life. Fenella also couldn't bear up that she is going to miss her father for so long, almost forever.

The second section of the story is the voyage. During the voyage what Fenella experiences really matters and the people and the incidents she meets inside the boat guide the reader to realize her psychological situation at that time. After getting into the boat grandma makes a prayer and Fenella waits until she finishes. They both are then driven in search of their cabin along the salon of the boat where Fenella is interested in having a sandwich from the seller in it. Since it is too expensive grandma buys none of those and walking further passing the salon to find their cabin. A young shrewdness came for their help and accompanied them to their respective cabin. Once grandma and Fenella are shown their cabin and the stewardess takes her leave and grandma undressed herself in the cabin. For Fenella, this is a quite unusual scene since she has never seen her grandma in this manner. While she was getting undressed Fenella also laced her shoes. In this small cabin a bunk has been placed and these two are to sleep for sometimes until the boat reaches to the destination. Fenella is given the down bed and grandma climbed on to the upper bed. After sometime the young stewardess comes there and initiated a talk with grandma and Fenella hers what they talk though the grandma was under the impression that Fenella is sleeping. The boat reaches to its destination and Fenella and grandma was accompanied by a man called Fenreddy to Fenella's Grandfather's home. Readers are provided much

environmental information about the way to Fenella's Grandfather's home and its surrounding. Finally they get their selves to the destination and Fenella was joined with her Grandfather with a kiss. By providing a brief information about a poem written by her grandma which is hung on the wall Mansfield ends the story by leaving space for an open discussion.

By giving a special attention to the so called story this paper attempts to seek the psychoanalytical relationships of the protagonist to the incidents happened in and around within the story. Each section of the story is carefully considered with the psychoanalytic literary theory and its application to this story context is seen for a better understanding of Fenella's psychological collapse.

The sea as a symbol of mental transition.

The sea on which the entire voyage takes place becomes a symbol of the subconscious transition that takes place in the inner self of Fenella. The past experiences through which she had come through, and the saturation over the voyage, helps her to have her mental environment transformed. This change that takes place in the subconscious is indicated through the voyage. From this side of the shore to the other a significant subconscious change is indicated through the sea being utilized as a symbol. Thus, the sea becomes the medium through which the necessary transition is done while the two shores become the different states of mind where Fenella finds her new home to be on the other shore. She had left behind a childhood that was probably traumatic and painful to bear as a child and she find her new world on the other shore with her grandparents.

The Picton boat.

The boat becomes the symbol of the inner calamity that was being shown as the reflection of the subconscious of Fenella. The sea, peaceful around, but there was a lot going on within the boat. The boat, as it sailed off from the shore, had so much within, and the entire narration of the place and the incidents described by Mansfield show the amount of calamities within this little girl, through the busy but random activities that were happening within the boat. But the most appearing symbol that outwardly refers to the struggle within Fenella is the small cabin within which Fenella and her grandmother find peace. The heart of Fenella, the subconscious mind, was in constant search for the little space within herself where she would find some peace in the midst of the inner calamities.

The new hope found in grandfather.

Extending the symbolism further, finding grandfather becomes the symbol of a new hope in Fenella's life. In the post-transition period of the mind, the subconscious makes it possible to reflect upon the new changes that have taken place. Leaving father, without a proper farewell, clueless of what she is up to in this journey, Fenella displays the much needed affection with grandfather. But the entire environment, even though may not be child-friendly, finds hope for the little girl. An initial indication of her fascination towards grandfather is brought forward through the conversations and images with

which the meeting of the two, namely Fenella and grandfather takes place. Thus, grandfather becomes a symbol of the new hope that Fenella builds in her inner-self.

The environments in both the ends.

The significant change that is observed in both the ends of the voyage further extends the symbolism in order to provide a vivid idea of the entire change that has taken place in the life of Fenella. The shore from where she started, which represent her past life is symbolized by the author as following. [...] It was dark on the Old Wharf, very dark; the wool sheds, the cattle trucks, the cranes standing up so high, the little squat railway engine, all seemed carved out of solid darkness. Here and there on a rounded wood-pile, that was like the stalk of a huge black mushroom, there hung a lantern, but it seemed afraid to unfurl its timid, quivering light in all that blackness; it burned softly, as if for itself.[...] (Mansfield, 168). And from this dark, and disturbed environment, she moves into a new and refreshingly colourful environment. The path that leads towards their destination on the other shore is presented as following. [...] And now the little horse pulled up before one of the shell-like houses. They got down. Fenella put her hand on the gate, and the big, trembling dew-drops soaked through her glove-tips. Up a little path of round white pebbles they went, with drenched sleeping flowers on either side. Grandma's delicate white picots were so heavy with dew that they were fallen, but their sweet smell was part of the cold morning [...] (Mansfield, 180).

The change is significant. And the projection of the subconscious is evident in the above symbols presented in grandeur by the author.

V. CONCLUSION

The study focused on the symbolism used in “The Voyage” by Katherine Mansfield and how this literary technique has been effectively used to project the psychoanalytic diagram of the subconscious mind of Fenella. The Textual analysis of the text, using the psychoanalysis-subconscious, as the theoretical framework finds that there are few significant symbols that are used by Mansfield which either project or indicate the subconscious mind of Fenella. Thus, it can be concluded that there is an effective projection of the subconscious through the literary technique of symbolism. The study further encourages researchers to venture into parallel literary techniques that are used effectively in the text to project the inner-thoughts of Fenella.

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