

# Psychoanalytical Conflicts of the Selected Characters in *The Addams Family*

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**Abstract:** Dramatic pieces are often investigated vis-à-vis their structure over the past decade. However, few are examined according to behavioural standpoints. As such, an investigation is conducted in order to reveal the psychoanalytical conflicts of the characters in the theatrical production *The Addams Family* using qualitative method. This study adheres on two aspects: keeping of secrets and portrayal of love. The selected characters under investigation are as follows: Wednesday, Morticia, and Gomez. This paper includes Freud's concept of psychoanalysis. In connection with the said objective, detailed discourse analysis is utilized in order to arrive at the imperative result. The study shows that the selected characters are governed by the more structured parts of mind: Id, ego, and superego. The study further reveals that the selected characters are manipulated by Freud's concept of repression, aggression, and sexuality. Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that aforesaid musical reveals psychoanalytic conflicts of the selected characters concerning secrecy and affection. The results give a noteworthy contribution to literary and theatrical study.

**Keywords:** psychoanalytical conflicts, Addams family, characters, secrets, love, musical.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

*The Addams Family* is a musical based on the book written by Marshall Brickman and Rick Elice. This musical recounts the story of the family members of the Addams. They are in trouble upon knowing that Wednesday, daughter of Morticia and Gomez, is in love with Lucas, a member of the Beineke family. However, Wednesday's terrified bearing towards her mother causes her to confess her secrets to her father, and prod him not to tell her mother. The father, on the other hand, is hesitant whether to follow his daughter's suggestion of keeping a secret or confess right away what is concealed to his furious wife; he, however, chooses not to confess it to his wife. The undying love as a core idea of this masterpiece alters them from being chaotic into an open, reunited family. This musical is indeed a resonating portrayal of the characters.

This paper is an attempt to discuss and investigate the psychoanalytical issues concerning secrecy and affection of the selected characters in the aforesaid musical. The investigation further utilizes related scholarships concerning keeping of secrets and portrayal of love. This study is beneficial to the people in the field of literary research. Significantly, this will be a reference and supplemental information to educators, literature major students, researchers, enthusiasts, and critics in comprehending the psychoanalytical conflicts in this masterpiece.

## II. PSYCHOANALYTICAL THEORY

Psychoanalytical theory focuses on the human mind and behaviour. This theory is postulated by the psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud who spends much time on exploring the unconscious mind. In an on-line article the "Unconscious Mind," Mcleod ventures to say that Freud uses an analogy of an iceberg to elucidate the three stages of mind: conscious, preconscious, and unconscious [1]. The conscious stage portrays the behavioural process which involves mental awareness. Another level is the preconscious; it serves as the waiting area for awareness. The unconscious mind, on the other hand, is the opposition of conscious mind. Inside the unconscious mind is the repressed, or the hidden emotions. For psychoanalyst, the psyche of human, however, comprises the conscious and the unconscious area wherein most of the

spaces are occupied by the unconscious, and there is only less portions for the conscious mind [2]. Critics who are using this theory are keen analyser of the characters' trepidation, wish, want and drive [3].

Moreover, this theory encompasses not only on the stages of the mind but also on the conceptions of hidden secrets and wishes, the three parts of human psyche (id, ego, and superego), the Oedipus complex and Electra complex, and the psychosexual stage. The concepts of hidden secrets and desires are connected to the unconscious mind. Freud claims that these suppressed desires will be buried in the unconscious spheres of human. The proposition emphasizes that due to repression, a person acts unknowingly in a certain instance. The repression happens due to the societal norms and the progression of defense mechanism. In repression, there is the holding back of "real self." Those suppressed wishes and desires will be hid in the unconscious mind. On a related note, Freud claims that the unconscious mind becomes the fountainhead of human's behaviour [1]. Freud further affirms that the humanpsyche composes of two or more constituents [4]. The more structured parts of human mind are as follows: id, ego, and superego. Id is the animalistic part of human psyche. It is the source of one's desires and motivations; itcomprises impulses in the unconscious mind which are sensual and obtrusive [1]. Consequently, the Id is solely the unconscious mind; whereas the superego is the conscious mind that tells the person the right and wrong things to execute. The ego, in addition, serves as the mediator of the Id and superego. Other conceptions that arise in psychoanalytic theory are the Oedipus complex and Electra complex. Oedipus complex refers to the concept of son and mother sexual relationship. In this complex, the sonacquires desire with his mother and starts developing hate with his father [5]. Electra, on the other hand, is the counterpart of Oedipus complex. It centres on the standpoint that a daughter develops sexual desire and affection with her father and starts hating her mother. Moreover, psychoanalysis delves into the human stages that affect the mental development. Suri mentions the psychosexual stages: oral, anal, phallic, latent, and genital stage [6]. The oral stage's chief basis of interface is mouth, the anal stage's main adherence is on the bowel movements and urinary functions, and phallic stage's primary attention is on the genitalia. In fact, the Oedipus complex and Electra complex often occur on the phallic stage because of the sexual and genital desires of the child. More so, the latent stage occurs during puberty wherein the superego development carries on. Essentially, the repression of feelings and desires often take place during this stage. The final stage of psychosexual is the genital stage; during this stage, the desire of human on the oppositesex continues. Cherry declares that the ego and superego function more compared to id during this stage [7].

In fact, this theory is used by many critics in analysing the behavioural facets that affect the development of the characters in a narrative composition. Freud mentions Hamlet as one of the plays that can be decoded using the aforementioned approach. Critics and researchers trace the psychoanalytical conflicts which are evident on this play. Consequently the instance shows that psychoanalysis is interconnected to theatrical production[8].

### III. RELATED SCHOLARSHIP: KEEPING OF SECRETS AND PORTRAYAL OF LOVE

The related literature and studies of thismusical include journals, and on-line articles that focus on the psychoanalytical conflicts and theoretical conceptions of this masterpiece.

This musical delineates behavioural struggle among the characters. Freud's psychoanalytical theory gives prospect on analysing the literary characters in fiction [9]. Critics claim that the conflicts of the theatrical production encompass psychoanalytical conception of Electra complex. After reviewing the aspects of love, Khan and Haider infer that the daughter commences on developing sexual desires towards her father, and begins to hate her mother after she ascertains about not having a male genitalia; this is, in fact, due to mutilation [10]. The daughter, on the other hand, starts mimicking and following her mother out of fear of missing the maternal love. On a related note, Cherry asserts that the occurrence of paternal affection grows during the psychosexual development. In the production, Gomez tries toshow dominance over his daughter and wife. In fact, the fight for supremacy isan issue associated to unconsciousness regarding sexuality [11]. However, the matter on sexuality is not the only struggle in this dramatic piece. The issues of the level of minds are also profoundly stressed out. After studying some works from the literary authors using discourse analysis, Hossain mentions the three levels of human psyche: Id, ego and superego [12]. The three levels, in fact, exist uponscrutinizing the characterization of Gomez and Wednesday. The lifespans of the selected characters are affected by the Id, ego, and superego. Upon investigating the psychoanalytical conflicts of selected fiction, Isaoglu concludes that the studied characters have a hard in equalizing the three levels of the human psyche [9]. The unsteadiness and the abnormal

function of the levels upshots to distortion of human personality and chaos in the household. Akin to *The Adams Family*, Gomez and Wednesday have an arduous time balancing their Id, ego, and superego.

The issue of secrecy also occurs upon the intervention of Morticia. In an on-line article "The Secrets life of Secrets," Burdick points out that a typical person hides over thirteen unrevealed things and five of these things are not disclosed to any person [13]. Furthermore, in "Keeping Secrets is bad for you, this is why," Markman declares that the struggling part of keeping a secret is when one conceals something to a close individual [14]. On a detailed inquiry regarding the basis of concealment, Quinn claims that personal guiltiness, apprehension, and reprisal are the causes of secrecy [15]. This dramatic piece, on the other hand, is traced according to hidden wishes and desires. Critics affirm that the storyline in the production presents psychoanalytical disclosure that is controlled by the unconscious mind and Freud's concept of repression. On a related note, Burdick writes that "a great deal of research has explored the psychoanalytical effects that secrets have on their keeper---stress, anxiety, depression, loneliness, low self-esteem" [13]. Consequently, the findings after conducting a comprehensive research, researchers find clear evidence that keeping a secret is an extra anxiety to the person who does it, and the pressure will result to the reduction of authenticity of oneself [14]. In a thorough analysis concerning psychoanalytical conceptions, Leader ventures to say that the domains of the unconscious mind and repressed desires are unhealthy; this is because chaos and issues of sexuality will target close individuals [16].

#### IV. METHODOLOGY

This paper uses qualitative method of discourse analysis in order to answer the main problem raised in this study. Researcher using this method adheres not on the interpretation of the numerical data but on the investigation and elucidation of the text. Moreover, the primary source of data is the musical *The Addams Family* written by Marshall Brickman and Rick Elice which is published in 2010 by Theatrical Rights Worldwide. On-line articles and journals are also used as an additional source of this thorough investigation. The sub-problems and specific objectives are revealed in two phases: phase 1 is the keeping of secrets; and phase 2 is the portrayal of love.

#### V. DISCUSSION

##### A. Keeping of secrets

Morticia is the mother of Wednesday. Critics assert that Morticia possesses a perceptive bearing. She strives in making strategies to prove the hidden concerns done by Wednesday. Her keen demeanour manifests in Act 1, scene 2 as she goes on declaring that there is something wrong with her daughter [17]. In the following scenes, she states emphatically that her daughter falls in love with a lad. As she goes on investigating, her Id is stimulated. She desires on discovering what is concealed by her daughter. She prods Gomez, her husband, to tell the truth. Now, the husband is puzzled about their confidence with his daughter. Brickman and Elice [17] write in Act 1, scene 2:

##### GOMEZ

There are three things I would never do

Lie to my wife

Lie to my daughter

Or tell the truth to either one-

Morticia does not deem much about the consequences of her actions. Some scholarly journals affirm that it is Morticia's unconscious mind that pushes her to act aggressively. The superego is hence not activated. The effect of Morticia's demeanour is turmoil in the family. As the story line carries on, critics, on the other hand, assert that the superego with the aid of the ego succeeds at the end of the theatrical production. This is apparent when Morticia allows Wednesday to marry Lucas, suitor of Wednesday [17]. This is further manifested when she and her husband danced to strengthen their love [18]. In the concluding part of the show, her husband asks her if she is delighted of the happenings, and she responds in affirmative manner. Her husband kisses her hand with full of affection thereafter [17].

Wednesday is an upset and fiery woman. This evinces when she covers up herself with yellowish apparel alike to her beau's parents [18]. Critics believe that Wednesday is affected by suppression of feelings and desire. Wednesday's deeds are buried in the unconscious mind. Freud theorizes that the unconscious mind is the basis of human personality, and thus literary individuals profess that the assertive behaviour of Wednesday is "driven by fear and desires locked in the

unconscious [mind]" [16]. Wednesday keeps a secret to Morticia. According to Burdick, stress and anxiety are the bottom line of secrecy. The desires of keeping a secret are, in fact, caused by personal guilt [15]. The juvenile matter is a facet of guiltiness demeanour of Wednesday. Critics claim that the anxiety is another factor that pushes her to keep a secret. The fear comes from the thoughts of having an indifferent family and will be mixed rashly by the Beinekes: an ordinary people. More so, the classified personality of Wednesday is caused by retaliation. Prior to coming of the suitor of Wednesday, Morticia has already portrayed an aggressive approach. As a sign of revenge, Wednesday keeps a secret to her mother. Generally, the deeds of Wednesday is governed by the unconscious mind. As the story line continues, her ego, on the other hand, calls the attention of her superego; this is obvious when Wednesday finally exposes an accepted demeanour in the latter part of the show.

### **B. Portrayal of love**

Wednesday, daughter of Gomez, is also a devoted, yet a demanding girl. The instances of the show are the components of tracing the psychoanalytical issue of Wednesday. Critics see Wednesday as adamant upon demanding to Gomez of keeping a secret. Moreover, numerous scholars view Wednesday's characteristic as factor of Electra complex. The depiction of daughter-to-father relationship is apparent as the plot progresses. This is manifested in Act 1, scene 2 when Wednesday beg to her dad of not telling her mother about their tiny little secret:

**WEDNESDAY**

*(getting desperate)*

Daddy, please!

**GOMEZ**

But—

**WEDNESDAY**

If you love me.

**GOMEZ**

But—

**WEDNESDAY**

Do you love me daddy?[17]

The intimate relationship of Wednesday with Gomez adds a desiring and wishing factor. Khan and Haider infer upon investigating the notion of Electra complex that a daughter acquires sexual desires towards her father [10]. Finding out that during juvenile stage for not having male genitals, Wednesday develops sensual bearing towards her father. This is shown when Wednesday shares right away to Gomez about the desires of getting married out of the belief that Morticia will never allow this kind of thing to happen [17]. The Electra complex is undesirable without associating it to the father. Jain asserts that the superiority is linked with the unconscious mind [11]. Gomez, on the other hand, is driven by the notion of supremacy that is caused by his Id. However, Gomez's wife wants to takeover of controlling the family. Morticia possesses an aggressive bearing. Denne claims that the self-guarded impulsion and coital aptitude are the root of person's aggressive demeanour [19]. Morticia's aggressiveness is due to sexual and self-preservative impulse towards his husband. Her self-preservative impulse occurs when she wants to keep her family safe from harm. In fact, she really cares for her daughter. This is evident in Act 1, scene 3 when she utters to his husband that she does not want her daughter to be afflicted by unwanted happenings [17]. Morticia's sexual impulse, in addition, comes about due to her affection for her husband. Notwithstanding, her aggressive conduct alters in the latter part of the show. This is shown in Act 2, scene 10 when her daughter asks her approval of getting married. She openly gives an affirmative answer thereafter [17]. Her superego triumphs over her Id. This is evident when she finally forgives her husband and portrays a womanish sympathetic consciousness [17].

Furthermore, critics view the Id of Gomez as component of desire towards Wednesday. However, the two remaining levels of mind remain essential feature to contradict the notion of desire. Gomez's ego occurs when Morticia wants to discover about the secrecy happens in the household. In Act 1, Gomez asks himself many times of whether to follow his

daughter or not [17]. Critics see the instance as the ego of Gomez. On the other hand, Gomez fulfils her daughter's wish because his ego only adapts to the real world and does not cease his Id. In fact, it is his Id that pushes him to do it out of affection towards his daughter. In the concluding part, however, Gomez's superego helps to abate his impulses. This is evident when he shows a delighted deed prior to the marriage of Wednesday. He even declares that love succeeds after all [17]. Isaoglu goes on averring that the three levels of minds must be balanced [9]. Consequently, the three levels of human psyche are equalised at the end of the storyline.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The major parsonages of keeping of secrets and portrayal of love in *The Addams Family* are Wednesday, Gomez, and Morticia. This study gathers the following results: Morticia is a clever yet aggressive woman who is affected by the Id, ego, and superego, and Freud concept of aggression; Wednesday is an impassioned and affectionate, yet assertive woman who is manipulated by the unconscious mind, and Freud's concept of repression; and Gomez is a proud and puzzled thinking character who is governed by the Id, ego, and superego. The exhaustive investigation further reveals that Wednesday and Gomez are influenced by the conception of Electra complex. This qualitative research concludes that there are psychoanalytical conflicts regarding affection and secrecy in this theatrical production. The study's results concerning keeping of secrets can be used as reference for educators and scholars in their literary discussion. More so, the results regarding portrayal of love can be used as supplemental information for critics, researchers, and enthusiasts in their theatrical and literary investigation.

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