

## An Analysis of Main Character in Miss Brill Short Story by Katherine Mansfield: A Psychological Approach

Eka Wilany

English Department  
University of Riau Kepulauan

ekaluney@yahoo.co.id

### Abstract

*The objective of this research was to describe the psychological approach of main character in Miss Brill short story by Katherine Mansfield. The result of the research was analyzed by using Freud Theory about Id, Ego, and Superego. Based on the result, the main character Miss Brill has a strange behavior that is only for attracting the people around her. She can not ignore her subconscious. She looked like happy but in fact she felt lonely. She wanted to be respected and loved by people around her and has relationship with someone. Moreover, she is an independent woman who feels lonely. Id that influences it is the happiness or willingness to get a present from someone special; she is unaware that she needs it. However, because of her loneliness Miss Brill never thinks about it. It is influenced by the superego. The superego can be understood as reflection of Miss Brill loneliness and her willingness to have relationship with other in her life. The individual Ego can differentiate itself from surroundings; it combines to form the core of the personality. Ego controls the direction of action, deciding which one will be satisfied. Characteristics do not change by the time. Moreover, the superego is the moral aspect accordance with the norms of society. It is suggested for the next researcher might be maximize the literary study for this short story to another approach.*

*Key Words: Psychological Approach; Id; Ego; and Superego*

### INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, literature is not something new for many people. Literature can be as entertainment to use spare time when someone intends to have relaxed. Many types of literature make the interest of literature increase. Literature involves imagination and creation of writers about their experiences and knowledge in their life. Literature theory can not ask the attention of the society but it has to prove that it has advantages for them. Even, if the politician want to learn literature, the world will be better. Life is full of problems, even though types and kinds of problems are different. It is because in the theory of literature, psychoanalysis is known to help the readers of literature for assessing and reviewing the problems showed in literature work psychologically. Therefore it can be reference materials or lessons of life that are precious for life of literature lovers. Because in a literature work, it is usually lifted on reality of life that are always found and faced by all of human being. In

the study of literature, Sigmund Freud theory (id, ego, super ego) is often use as the references of a research.

In this research, the writer chose a short story by Katherine Mansfield entitle *Miss Brill*, to be references or material analysis because the short story has many physical states that writer considered less reasonable and should be examined. Meanwhile, this novel was chosen as analysis materials because the writer is convinced that the study of the short story use psychoanalysis felicitous and eventually it will give life lessons that are very beneficial for the writer as well as the reader later. In the story, Miss Brill is a woman lives alone. She feels happy by her life that she has, even though she lives alone. She always talks to things around her, such as her old fur shawl and accessories she usually wears. These habits are a major problem in this research. Besides Miss Brill habit of strolling to enjoy her life also notice carefully everything and all activities done by people who passing her in the park. Based on the Miss Brill habit, it is essential that the writer concern to find out what happened to Miss Brill physically.

Based on the explanation above, the writer entitles this research **An Analysis of Main Character in Miss Brill Short Story by Katherine Mansfield**. This is a psychological approach.

## **MATERIALS**

### **Theory of Personality Psychoanalysis**

In analyzing Miss Brill short story, the writer used objective research theory and psychoanalysis theory to study this short story deeply. Objective theory of basic approach was chosen because in studying and analyzing the short story, the writer only focused on the literature itself. Based on Abrams (1953) said that objective criticism deals with a work of literature as something which stands free from what is often called “extrinsic” relations to poet or to the audience or to the environing world. It means that criticism objectively only relates to the literature itself and considers releasing from extrinsic element, neither the writer, the reader and environment or atmosphere at the time the literary work written.

The second theory is psychoanalysis theory by Sigmund Freud. Freud in Milner (1992:43) stated that consciousness is a small portion of mental life meanwhile a large portion is unconsciousness. In this study, it is discussed about personality psychoanalysis consists of three elements of psychosis. They are id, ego and superego. Id is the most basic of

human personality system or the only mental element that is present at birth. Endaswara (2003:101) told that Id is dark aspects of personality in the human subconscious that contains instinct and lust unknown value and rather be a “blind energy”. Id operates based on the pleasure principle and looks for immediate pleasure. In its development, it grows ego.

Ego is events that are based on the reality principle. Ego is the mind that operates based on the reality principle satisfying the urge of id by ways can be accepted by society. Ego is a personality system which acts as an individual influences to the object world of reality and carrying out its functions based on the reality principle. Ego is implementative personality formed of contact with outside the world.

Moreover, superego formed through identification process of the middle childhood, is a part of moral values and operated according to moral principle. Superego improves to control the blind encouragement of id. Superego is a personality system contains values or regulation which is evaluative (concerning the good and bad).

Based on the explanation above, it is known that there is relationship between literature and psychoanalysis. There are two relation. They are there is the similarities between hidden passion in every human cause the presence of literary work that are capable of touching people’s feeling, because literature provide solution of these secret desires. Then, there is parallels between dream and literature. In this case, it can be related by elaborating of literary works and the process of dream.

### **Synopsis of the Miss Brill Short Story**

The short story of Miss Brill tells about a middle aged woman who is not married. She is an English teacher in French. At a glance, she is described as a woman that enjoys her life. Every Sunday afternoon, she visits a park to enjoy the atmosphere of a beautiful Sunday afternoon. She Sits in the park to chat and watches the concert of her favorite band every Sunday. She feels that she has perfect life. In the other hand, many people around her think that she is weird. The oddity of Miss Brill is reasoned because she often talks to inanimate objects around her, such as her fur necklace or her accessories that usually used. It is considered ironic, how happy she shows in other hand it shows that it covers up the real situation.

## **METHODS**

This research used descriptive qualitative research. According to Kothari (2004: 3) qualitative research was concerned with qualitative phenomenon relating to or involving quality. There are three steps of analyzing process. Sugiyono (2010: 15) also states that qualitative research was research methodology that use to take research for natural object, where the research as the key instrument, and concerned to the quality of the result of the data. In analyzing the research there are three elements described. They are psychological approach, character or characterization and conflict.

## **RESULTS**

### **Intrinsic Elements of Miss Brill Short Story**

#### **1. Character and Characterization**

In this short story, it was only found one character, it is Miss Brill. Miss Brill is described as a heroine who lives independently and relies on herself. She tried to be looked happy, even though she always feels lonely. As in the quotation below:

*“She unclasped the necklet quickly; quickly, without looking, laid it inside. But when she put the lid on she thought she heard something crying”.*( 1920: 4)

From the quotation above, it was shown how Miss Brill assumed that her necklace is like her boyfriend. She very reluctantly parted from it. The sound of her crying is from the deepest of her heart because she really felt lonely. Beside that, Miss Brill also is considered weird by people around her, the data can be found in the quotation above:

*“its her fu – fur which is so funny,” giggled the girl. “its exactly like a fried whiting.*  
*“(1920 : 3).*

From the data above, one woman around Miss Brill considered that she was weird and how the woman laughed at Miss Brill eccentric style. Miss Brill in the short story is also described as someone that obsessed to be an artist. She thinks that she were a part of the concert in the park where she usually enjoys her Sunday morning. It can be seen in the data below:

*“ ... and Miss Brill smoothed the newspaper as though it were the manuscript of her part and said gently : “ yes, I have been an actress for a long time.” (1920:3)*

From the Data above, it can be said that Miss Brill convinced she is an artist. Even though she is an English teacher.

## **2. Setting**

The setting of Miss Brill short story is in France. It is in city park named Jardins Publiques. Besides, the short story is also taken in a small apartment of Miss Brill. The short story lifted someone's life that comes from England stayed in France. From the short story, it was seen that social and culture in the society that has started advanced life. This short story wrote in 1920 was the beginning of European construction after World War II. At that time, Economic development, technology and drugs grew rapidly especially in France. Many expatriates in England pioneered their carrier as an artist and also successful author.

## **3. Plot**

Plot is series of the story arranged systematically that form a good story. Plot in Miss Brill started by describing how the situation and atmosphere in the sunny Sunday afternoon was, and how Miss Brill prepared herself to walk on the park happily and complete with fur necklace that she loves. At the beginning of the story, it can be seen how Miss Brill accustomed to talk with her favorite things, and how she interacted with other people around her in that park. The story started to find conflict when Miss Brill was alone in the park and looked at many couples in the park; an old man and old woman frolicked, also some girls acquainted with the young soldiers and the others sat in a group with their friends as done by a group of band that they had a show every Sunday. Because Miss Brill did not have a friend, she thought that she was part of the band; she felt that she was an artist like them. In fact, she is a teacher who always tells to her students that she has a happy and fun in her life, Even though it is only her fantasy and hope. Climax of the short story is when the point of view move from Miss Brill into the park visitors. Moreover, from the conversation of teenagers in the park, it is known that they said Miss Brill weird and too flashy. They laughed at Miss Brill directly. However Miss Brill was always smiling as if she is always fun and can be accepted by the society. Finally, Miss Brill went home and did not forget to buy bread that has almond nut in it. Almond nut in the bread is the same

as getting a big present that can make people happy . At the end of the story it was described how she was alone, felt like listen to the crying of someone in herself. It might be the true feelings of Miss Brill in reality.

### **Psychoanalysis seen from Miss Brill Short Story**

In analyzing the data of Miss Brill short story, the writer used psychological approach by Sigmund Freud. It is about unconscious mind. The unconsciousness mind examined three important aspect underline every behavior, they are id, ego and super ego. In this research, the writer took some data from Miss Brill short story by Katherine Mansfield and then discussed three psychological aspects of literature from the short story.

#### **As seen in Data 1:**

*“ Dear little thing! It was nice to feel it again.” (1920: 1)*

The data above is a part of conversation between Miss Brill and her necklace. It is often done by her. She treats her favorite things as if it was her boyfriend. Being seen from superego, in fact Miss Brill wants someone to share, however she is alone and do not have relationship with someone else. It is because she thinks that her favorite things are faithful wherever she goes. Moreover, from the id, the data above can be concluded as the willingness of Miss Brill to have someone she loves. In the contrary, it is not accomplished that she can not have a boyfriend, she redirected to the objects or things she has.

#### **Data 2**

*“ An actress – are te?” and miss Brill smooths the newspaper as though it were the manuscript of her part and said gently: “ Yes, I have been an Actress for along time.”(1920: 3)*

Based on the data above, the id is in the willingness and encouragement of Miss Brill to be respected and loved, because she obsessed being an artist like she always meet in the park every Sunday afternoon. However, in the superego, it can be as her statement that she really hates being alone and wishes being an artist that loves by many people. While the ego

was seen physically, she is Miss Brill who is excited to tell that she is a superb and glorious artist in her field.

### Data 3

*“If there was an almond it was like carrying home a tiny present – a surprise – something that might very well not have been there.” (1920: 4)*

From the data above, it can be seen the ego shows how happy she is even though she only got an almond nut in her bread. It looks weird. Id that influences it is the happiness or willingness to get a present from someone special; she is unaware that she needs it. However, because of her loneliness Miss Brill never thinks about it. It is influenced by the superego. The superego can be understood as reflection of Miss Brill loneliness and her willingness to have relationship with other in her life.

### Data 4

*The box that the fur came out of was on the bed. She unclasped the necklet quickly, without looking, laid it inside. But when she put the lid on she thought she heard something cry. (1920:4)*

## DISCUSSION

At the end of the short story, everything, which Miss Brill covered, come to light. It can be seen when she refused to put off her fur necklace that she thought it was her boyfriend, as if she will separate with her boy friend. Even she only stores it. The explanation can be categorized as ego. While the id is her desire to be always with someone she loves without a second's never left. She did not realize that the loneliness made her hurt. The superego in this data is her consciousness that the fur necklace is the only one that understand herself because she did not find anyone loves her.

## CONCLUSION

The analysis of Miss Brill short story by Katherine Mansfield used theory of psychological approach, seen that the subconscious of Miss Brill influences her to be weird. Based on the explanation above, id, ego, and superego found in the short story, it can be said that the strange behavior is only for attracting other people around her. In fact, she really

wants to be respected and loved by many people. Her subconscious might not be ignored. She always tried to enjoy her lonely life happily. However, it influences to her behavior in her neighborhood and her lifestyle to get away.

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