

THE INFLUENCE OF PHILIP CAREY'S EMOTIONAL ISOLATION IN WILLIAM SOMERSET MAUGHAM'S *OF HUMAN BONDAGE*

Adila Wandari

English Study Program: Faculty of Communication Science
Universitas Katolik Widya Mandala Surabaya Kampus Madiun
adilawandari98@gmail.com

Abstract

Emotional isolation is one of defense mechanism which is used to protect ones from emotional distress by stop communicating with people. It can be triggered by social isolation, infidelity, abuse, fear of abandonment and other trust issues where emotional bonds have been broken. Hence, this paper aims to analyze Philip Carey's suffering from emotional isolation in the novel W.S. Maugham's Of Human Bondage. The theory used is psychoanalysis theory: personal principles and defense mechanism by Sigmund Freud. These contains about conscious and unconscious side of human and the application in their behavioral life. The research design used in this paper is qualitative method. The technique of collecting data is library research and in the form of written text. As for the approaches are psychological approach and sociological approach. In the end of this paper, there are results that are shown in Philip's behavior. These are as following; becoming self-conscious, fail to control his most burdensome bondage: passion, and wondering about his life: seeking freedom from every bondages.

Keywords: *emotional isolation, personal principle, psychoanalysis*

1. INTRODUCTION

Emotional isolation is a common thing that happens to anyone, especially people who are antisocial. Cordeiro (2009) states *solitude is a chosen separation for refining your soul, isolation is what you crave when you neglect the first*. Being emotionally isolated is when someone's defense mechanism kicks in, and to protect themselves from emotional distress, they stop naturally communicating with people.

Emotional isolation can be characterized by the subjective experience of a shortfall in one's social resources such as companionship and support. Feelings of loneliness and not belonging, for example, indicate a perceived inadequacy of the intimacy or companionship of one's interpersonal relationships compared to the relationships that one would like to have (Van Baarsen et al., 2001)

Emotional isolation is triggered by social isolation, infidelity, abuse, fear of abandonment and other trust issues where emotional bonds have been broken. Being emotionally isolated creates self-centredness, insensitivity and anxiety. This kind of thing can be found on William Somerset Maugham's story, *Of Human Bondage*. One

of the characters, Philip Carey, suffers from emotional isolation. Hence, analysing the influence of Philip Carey's suffering from emotional isolation by using *psychoanalysis theory* from Sigmund Freud is the goals of this study. Once this problem are answered, it will be useful to help readers who are looking for the behaviour of emotional isolation's sufferer and how it affects one's life cycle as illustrated through Philip Carey in the novel.

The theory that will be used to analyze the problem is psychoanalysis theory, including personal principles theory and defense mechanism theory, founded by Sigmund Freud. Freud believes that people can be cured by making conscious their unconscious thoughts and motivations, thus gaining insight. In *The Anatomy of the Mental Personality* (cited from Boris Chandra's undergraduate thesis), Freud discriminates between the level of conscious and unconscious mental activity:

The oldest and best meaning of the word "unconscious" is the descriptive one; we call "unconscious" any mental process the existence of which we are obligated to assume –because, for instance, we infer it in some way from its effect –but of which we are not directly aware. . . . If we want to be more accurate, we should modify the statement by saying that we call a process "unconscious" when we have to assume that it was activate *at a certain time*, although *at that time* we knew nothing about it (2011: 99-100).

Freud further emphasizes the importance of the unconscious by pointing out that even the "most conscious process are conscious for only a short period; quite soon they become *latent*, though they can easily become conscious again" (100). In view of this, Freud defines two kinds of unconscious:

one which is transformed into conscious material easily and under conditions which frequently arise, and another in the case of which such a transformation is difficult, can only come about with a considerable expenditure of energy, or may never occur at all. . . . We call the unconscious which is only latent, and so can easily become conscious, the "preconscious", and keep the name "unconscious" for the other (101).

According to Freud in *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature*, there are three elements which composes human's mind: id, ego and superego. Each of these three elements of personality emerges at different points in life. However, these aspects of personality are dynamic and always interacting with a person to influence an individual's overall personality and behavior.

Whereas defense mechanism is a defense against harmful thoughts by preventing the self from allowing these cognitions to become recurrent and possibly damaging self-concept. Therefore, the first step of defense mechanism is driving an *id push* to the boundaries of consciousness. Concerning the normal conditions between the ego and the drive, Freud (1937: 52) gives the following evocative picture:

The individual drive excitations always penetrate out of the id into the ego; there they provide access to the movement apparatus with whose assistance they can implement their satisfaction. In the more fortunate cases the ego has nothing to object to the intruder, yields it its powers and is limited to perceiving it: the ego feels the urges of the drive movement, the rising tension

with the accompanying unpleasurable feeling and eventually the solution of the tension in the satisfying pleasure experience ... The id stirrings must on its way to the satisfaction pass the terrain of the ego. They come into a foreign environment.

Furthermore, Valliant (1993) in *Ego Mechanisms of Defense and Personality Psychopathology*, states that:

Defense mechanism refer to innate involuntary regulatory processes that allow individuals to reduce cognitive dissonance and to minimize sudden changes in internal and external environments by altering how these events are perceived. Defense mechanism can alter our perception of any or all of the following: subject (self), object (other), idea, or feeling.

The objectives of this study is to elaborate the influence of emotional isolation reflected on Philip Carey's behavior by using *psychoanalysis theory*. This study suits the theme of the conference which is talking about *the expression of today's society*. Language may can be a bridge but at the same time can be a barrier for everyone depends on the circumstances occur. Language not only help ones to express but also influence them rather physically or emotionally.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

The research design used in this study was qualitative method. Punch (2000, p. 58) states that *the possibilities for data in qualitative studies include document, diaries, and journals, other written materials*. The data of the research were taken from some quotations in the novel entitled *Of Human Bondage* written by William Somerset Maugham. Qualitative research seeks primarily to describe a situation as it is, without formal testing or hypothesis, and it makes little or no use of numbers but rather focuses on thick description.

The technique of collecting data in this research was library research because the data of this research were in the form of written text. It was also accompanied by document analysis technique. Bowen (2009) states that document analysis is a form of qualitative research in which documents are interpreted by the researcher to give voice and meaning around an assessment topic.

In conducting the research, some steps were being used. The first step was reading the novel, *Of Human Bondage* by W.S. Maugham, several times in order to understand and got some information from the story. The second step was finding the topic to be analyzed which was analysing the influence of Philip Carey's suffering from emotional isolation. The third step was looking for an appropriate theory. The fourth step was analysing the influence of Philip Carey's suffering from emotional isolation by using *psychoanalysis theory*. The approaches that will be used were sociological approach and psychological approach. The last step was concluding the result of research.

The first approach was psychological approach. According to Guerin (2005, p. 152-153) in the book *A Handbook of Critical Approaches* assures:

The crucial limitation of the psychological approach is its aesthetic inadequacy: psychological interpretation can afford many profound clues

toward solving a work's thematic and symbolic mysteries, but it can seldom account for the beautiful symmetry of a well-wrought poem or of a fictional masterpiece.

It means that a psychological approach is an approach which is used to enhance the understanding of human mind and behavior. Most of the actions are caused by psychological forces that cannot be controlled on the whole.

The second approach was sociological approach. Scott (cited from Sekar's undergraduate thesis) states:

Sociological approach is art is not created in a vacuum, it is the work not simply of a person, but of an author fixed in time and space; answering to the community of which he is important, because of articulate part. A social milieu that extends to which and manner in which the artist responds it.

It means that sociological approach is used to determine the relationship between the characters who involve in the story.

Hence, these two approaches would be used to analyze and solve the problem about the influence of Philip Carey's suffering from emotional isolation.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Philip Carey, the major character in William Somerset Maugham's *Of Human Bondage*, is an ill-equipped boy to cope with passion. Philip Carey is described as a boy having born with clubfoot, which becomes a source of ridicule among school boys, and having lost both parents in childhood so he has to stay with his uncle who is cruel to him. Upon having experience a catastrophe on his life, he becomes emotionally isolated and oblivious about the world. Philip Carey then developed emotional isolation as his defense mechanism due to the hostility of his life. Emotional isolation, first proposed by Sigmund Freud, is characterized from the subjective experiences, can be triggered by social isolation, infidelity, abuse, fear of abandonment and other trust issues where emotional bonds have been broken.

Analysing the influence of Philip Carey's suffering from emotional isolation by *psychoanalysis theory* is the goal of this research.

1. Changes in Philip Carey's behavior.

Sigmund Freud (1856) believes that life was built around tension and pleasure. He believes that all tension was due to the build up of libido or sexual energy and the all pleasure came from its discharge. According to Freud, the unconscious mind was a storehouse for unacceptable repressed desires specific to the individual and that past experiences, particularly in childhood, have a great influence on adult lives, shaping the personality. For example, anxiety originating from traumatic experiences in a person's past is hidden from consciousness and may cause problems during adulthood in the form of neuroses such as melancholia, hysteria, or obsessive or compulsive behaviors. Freud states that there are three basic structures of personality: *id*, *ego*, and *superego*. These three elements work together to create complex behavior and have a powerful influence on individuals. Each of these three elements of personality emerge at different points in life, but comprises unique

features, interact to form a whole and each part makes relative contribution to an individual's behavior. This theory helps the writer to analyse the change behavior in Philip Carey's life upon after suffering from emotional isolation.

1.1 Becoming self-conscious and delusional

Having suffered from emotional isolation affects Philip's behavior. Since, he only seeks company from books, he is becoming unconscious about many things and being self-conscious. Consider the following quotation:

But he had grown self-conscious. The new-born child . . . And experiences of the same kind are necessary for the individual to become conscious of himself; . . . The feeling of apartness from others comes most with puberty . . . (OHB, 1960: 24-25)

Philip passed from the innocence of childhood to bitter consciousness of himself by the ridicule which his club-foot had excited. . . . and he was forced to think for himself. The many books he had read filled his mind with ideas which, because he only half understood them, gave more scope to his imagination. Beneath his painful shyness something was growing up within him, and obscurely he realised his personality. But at times it gave him odd surprises; he did things, he knew not why, and afterwards when he thought of them found himself all at sea (OHB, 1960: 25).

It shows that the *id* of Philip which is bound from his birth drives him into primary process, which makes him imagine things in his life for his pleasure experience. He denied the reality principle since he is suffering from emotional isolation. Reality principle means something that is forced to consider risks, requirements, and possible outcomes. It is based on Freud's theory which is quoted on *Ego, drives, and the dynamics of internal objects* by Boag S. (2014: 3). Freud states that "for the ego, perception plays the part which in the id falls to instinct. The ego represents what may be called reason and common senses, in contrast to the id, which contains the passions", means that ego is a component of personality that deals with the demand of reality. The lack of company also makes him oblivious, because he can only rely on himself. He also suffers from the lack of morality, since that is how *id* or the *unconscious* work. It can be proved from the quotation below:

"Supposing you'd asked God to do something," said Philip, "and really believed it was going to happen, like moving a mountain, I mean, and you had faith, and it didn't happen, What would it mean?"

"What a funny boy you are!" said Aunt Louisa. "You asked about moving mountains two or three weeks ago."

"It would just mean that you hadn't got faith," answered Uncle William.

Philip accepted the explanation. If God had not cured him, it was because he did not really believe. . . . But perhaps he had not given God enough time. He had only asked Him for nineteen days. In a day or two he began his prayer again, and this time he fixed upon Easter. . . . But now Philip added other means of attaining his desire: he began to wish, when he saw a new moon or a dappled horse, and he looked out for shooting stars; during exeat they had a chicken at the vicarage, and he broke the lucky bone with Aunt Louisa and he

wished again, each time that his foot might be made whole. . . . (OHB, 1960: 30-31).

The quotation shows that Philip becomes delusional upon his desire to have a complete feet, the perfect one. Therefore, after his uncle says that he has to be more faithful to God, then He will grants wishes, Philip accepts the saying and becomes griddier in praying. It shows the first influence of Philip's suffering from emotional isolation, that is, he becomes imaginative and making no sense of how reality works, since he only prioritizes his desire.

1.2 Fail to control his most burdensome bondage: passion

Philip is described as a boy who has big dream in his life. He is smart even though he is not perfect like any others. He has always been passionate with his life whether it is in the context of pride or love. He is in such a hurry to leave school and start life that he does not stop to consider the effect it can have on his future. If he had stayed he could have been given a grant to go to Oxford. He leaves school and the Vicarage and decides to go to Heidelberg. He is not satisfied with his present life and sets off in search for something better. He feels completely out of place in the society he is living and sets off to find himself, to fulfill himself. From Heidelberg, he went to London; from London to Paris, to go back to England more mature than he left but without having found what he was looking for. Considering the quotation below:

. . . It would be pleasant to end up his school-days with glory and then go to Oxford: in a flash there appeared before him the life which he had heard described from boys who come back to play in the O.K.S. match or in letters from the University read out in one of the studies. But he was ashamed; he would look such a fool in his own eyes if he gave in now; his uncle would chuckle at the success of the headmaster's ruse. . . . (OHB, 1960: 57).

. . . His school-days were over, and he was free; but the wild exultation to which he had looked forward at that moment was not there. He walked round precincts slowly, and a profound depression seized him. He wished now that he had not been foolish. He did not want to go, but he knew he could never bring himself to go to the headmaster and tell him he would stay. That was a humiliation he could never put upon himself. . . . (OHB, 1960: 57-58).

It can be seen above that actually there is a clash within his *id* and his *ego*, but Philip choose to neglect the *ego* and go on with his passion. Philip, who had been feeling oppressed by difficulties due to his disability and also the unsupportive social environment, felt he had to defend the only thing he had left, namely pride. He choose to follow his passion in protecting his pride rather than accept the reality which is lies in front of his eyes.

The second condition also goes to his passion in love. Philip prefers loving others to being loved. He is pretty reckless, and even though he knows he will be in great pain, Philip still choose to live it because he thought it was the best for him. He choose to settle with Mildred Rogers, a barmaid who once abandoned him and having affairs with a man named Miller. Philip choose to have an affair with Mildred rather than stick with Norah, a woman who love him. Mildred is not worthy at all, she is

cunning, lacking in many areas, yet Philip cannot stop his heart from yearning her. It can be seen at the quotation below:

. . . While she talked he thought that she was worth ten of Mildred; she amused him much more and was joller to talk to; she was cleverer, and she had a much nicer nature. She was a good, brave, honest little woman; and Mildred, he thought bitterly, deserved none of these epithets. If he had any sense he would stick to Norah, she would make him much happier than he would ever be with Mildred: after all she loved him, and Mildred was only grateful for his help. But when all was said the important thing was to love rather than to be loved; and he yearned for Mildred with his whole soul. . . . (OHB, 1960: 197).

Philip knows for sure that Mildred is not worthy for him but he cannot control his passion to stop loving her. The idea of loving ones matter more for him and that he is willing to suffer rather than be happy with what he already has.

He did not care if she was heartless, vicious and vulgar, stupid and grasping, he loved her. He would rather have misery with one than happiness with other. (OHB, 1960: 198).

Norah too knows well that Philip cannot love her back like she loved him.

“Of course I knew you never loved me as much as I loved you,” she moaned.

“I’m afraid that’s always the case,” he said. “There’s always one who loves and one who lets himself being loved.” (OHB, 1960: 207).

It follows the concept of *id* which neglecting the consequences of an act, only focus in fulfilling the needs and desires.

1.3 Wondering the meaning of life: seeking a freedom from every bondages

One of the topic in *Of Human Bondage* is misery. It is described along with the journey of Philip’s life while he was suffering from emotional isolation. Starting from the death of his mother when he was merely a child, having a club-foot, living with his cruel uncle, being abandoned by Mildred Rogers, and so on. Philip is wondering the meaning of life and it leads him to act impulsively. He is never satisfied with what he has, with the present moment; and so, he is always imagining what the future will be like. But, when the future comes, it only brings disappointment. He has to learn an important lesson before he can put an end to all his misery. Philip is going to suffer much more before he comes to understand life. The truth is that his suffering is not always inflicted on him, it is something for which he, himself, masochistically searches; it is a kind of punishment for his pride. Summarizing, it can be said that the causes of Philip's unhappiness are the miserable conditions of his life at the Vicarage, his wretchedness at school, and the burden of a strenuous relationship with Mildred. All of this, apart from his attitude to life which at the same time, is motivated by the circumstances which surround him. These circumstances make him feel an outsider; and as such his chief desire is to cease to be one and to find his way back to himself. His problem is the problem of freedom. In order to get this freedom, what he has to do is to free himself from all the bondages which suffocate him. Philip cannot see what a life is since the meaning of life is life

itself. He has to going through a hard life before realizing that what he wants is not what he has been thinking all this time. Considering the quotation below:

He realised that he had deceived himself; it was no self-sacrifice that had driven him to think of marrying, but the desire for a wife and a home and love; and now that it all seemed to slip through his fingers he was seized with despair. He wanted all that more than anything in the world. . . . Always his course had been swayed by what he thought he should do and never by what he wanted with his whole soul to do. . . . He thought of his desire to make a design, intricate and beautiful, out of the myriad, meaningless facts of life: had he not seen also the simplest pattern, that in which a man was born, worked, married, had children, and died, was likewise the most perfect? It might be that to surrender to happiness was to accept defeat, but it was a defeat better than many victories. . . . (OHB, 1960: 372-373).

Philip Carey lives in a world of illusions which are never fulfilled. In his unhappiness state, he puts too much faith in the future, and this attitude is, according to Freud, typical of unsatisfied persons. However, he does not realize that the solution to all his problems lies inside himself. Nobody can help him discover the meaning of life, because only himself can does. He acknowledges in the end that putting away his desire and following his heart is more important. His suffering from emotional isolation leading himself to go through his journey of life and discovering things he does not realize before, the importance of *reality principle*. He himself is the one who capable to free himself from every bondages in his life. There is no need escaping the reality to fulfill endless desires, life is what you make of it.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to analyze Philip Carey's suffering from emotional isolation by using *psychoanalysis* theory by Sigmund Freud. The changing of Philip Carey's behavior was founded. There were several of them. First, he was becoming self-conscious and delusional. He behaved like this due to the lack of social company. Second, he failed to control his most burdensome bondage: passion. Philip was prideful which was oftentime lead him to do foolish things. He realized that but he chose to be ignorance. Last, he was wondering the meaning of life: seeking freedom from all of the bondages. Philip's life was misery. He was never satisfied with what he had, with the present moment; and so, he was always imagining what the future would be like. But, when the future came, it only brought disappointment. His problem was the problem of freedom. In order to get this freedom, what he had to do was to free himself from all the bondages which suffocate him. He had to go through a hard life before realizing that what he wanted was not what he had been thinking all this time. Philip could not see what a life was since the meaning of life is life itself.

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