

MALLORIE COBB'S EXISTENCE AS A DISTRACTION IN DOMINIC COBB'S UNCONSCIOUS MIND REFLECTED IN THE FILM *INCEPTION*

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ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on the movie, *Inception*, specifically on one of the character, Mallorie Cobb, as a distraction in Dominic Cobb Unconscious Mind. The purpose of this study is to reveal Mallorie Cobb character as a projection of the “real” Mal and her motives as the distraction in Dominick Cobb unconscious mind. The writer uses library research to collect the data with the film as the main data and several relevant books, journals, articles, also online documents and websites are used as the supporting data. The intrinsic aspects cover theme, characters, and conflicts. In the extrinsic aspect, the writer uses Sigmund Freud's Unconscious Mind and Dream Theory, which will apply in the thesis to analyze the problem. The result of this thesis proves that according to Sigmund Freud's Unconscious Mind and Dream Theory, Mallorie Cobb uses her projection to get Dominick Cobb follow her into the Limbo.

Keywords: Distraction, Dream Theory, *Inception*, Projection, Limbo

A. INTRODUCTION

1. Background of the Study

One of the human biggest problems is the feeling of dissatisfaction with what they already have. Wealth, power, and high status cannot guarantee one's happiness. On the other hand, there are some people who are unlucky to get what they need. Most of them are searching for a diversion. Running away from the reality and living in a

dream world can be an instant diversion. Ernest Harttman suggested in *Scientific American* (1995: 213) that "...a possible function of a dream to be weaving new material into the memory system in a way that both reduces emotional arousal and is adaptive in helping us cope with further trauma or stressful experience." According to the quotation above dream can help release stress.

Meanwhile, consistent with the psychoanalytic viewpoint, Sigmund Freud's hypothesis of dreams mentioned that dreams described unconscious desires, designs, and inspirations (Cherry, 2016). The unconscious mind is still seen by numerous psychologists as the shadow of a "genuine" conscious mind (Bargh and Morsella, 2008). One of the movies that depict the dissatisfaction of reality is *Inception*. *Inception* is a science fiction movie combined with action content based on the screenplay by Christopher Nolan. Therefore, the writer is will use this theory very to analyze a thesis entitled "Mallorie Cobb's Existence as a Distraction in The Dominic Cobb's Unconscious Mind Reflected in The Film *Inception*". In conclusion, the writer found the major reason why Mal keeps distracting Dom in his unconscious mind.

2. Aims of the Study

The purposes of this study are to identify Mallorie Cobb's as a distraction in Dominic Cobb's unconscious mind and too analyze the motive behind Mallorie Cobb's as a distraction in Dominic Cobb's unconscious mind.

2. Method of the Study

In order to conduct this study, the writer uses library research in collecting the data. Furthermore, she is using the *Inception* movie itself as the main data. To add more evidence and information the data are collected from various books and articles that are related to the film *Inception*.

Moreover, the writer uses the psychological approach to answer the rest of the research question in this study. Psychological approach is use in analyzing the extrinsic aspects. Essentially, the main role of this approach is to expose the conflict, which caused by Mal's existence as a distraction in Cobb's unconscious mind and the motive itself.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter contains intrinsic and extrinsic aspects as the shell to analyze the film. Intrinsic aspect is the factual foundations that build the literary work itself, this will be focusing on narrative element which consists of theme, character, and conflict. The cinematic element will discuss about the mise-en-scene, cinematography and sound.

Meanwhile, extrinsic aspect is the various components that are beyond literature scope, but indirectly affect the composition or organism system of the literary works. On the extrinsic aspect, it will analyze about Mal's existence as a distraction in Cobb's unconscious mind. The theory that is used as a tool to reveal this analysis is the unconsciousness and dream by Sigmund Freud.

2.1 Intrinsic Aspect

In brief, Rene Wellek and Austin Warren (1956: 139) state that intrinsic analysis is the understanding of a deep investigation of the work of literature.

2.1.1 Narrative Elements

Narrative can be divided into several parts, namely; character, setting, theme, plot and conflict. Therefore, this study will be focusing only on the theme, character, and conflict.

2.1.1.1 Theme

The theme is the common bases that sustain the ideas of a literary work and are contained in the text as a semantic structure and concerning the similarities or differences (Hartoko & Rahmanto, 1986:142). Theme is a guidance line to keep the content visible and valuable. Therefore, it helps the writer to decide the exact appropriate theory to analyze the film.

2.1.1.2 Character

In brief, as well as the theme, character is also an important component in the narrative elements. As stated by Jones (1968:33), characterization is a clear picture of someone featured in a story. A character of a fictional story can be divided into several types based on the point of view.

In terms of the role and the level of importance of a character in a story, there figure categorized as the major character or displayed continuously so that will dominate most of the story, instead there was a minor character that is raised only

once or a few times in the story, and it was probably in the portion of the story that relatively short.

2.1.1.3 Conflict

According to Meredith and Fitzgerald, conflict is an event that was not be expected to happen or suffer by the characters of the story (1972: 27). The brief definition of conflict is a situation or problem that is unpleasant but must be faced by the characters concerned.

2.1.1.3.1 Internal Conflict

Internal conflict is a conflict inside of the character's mind in the story. Moreover, it is the conflict experienced by human with their personal thoughts. Particularly it occurs due to a conflict between two desires, beliefs or choices to be made by such figures (Stanton, 1965:17).

2.1.2 Cinematography Elements

Cinematography is the lighting and recording of a video or film creation. It also contains of suggesting extreme emotions of joy, sorrow, or anxiety to develop the feeling in the film itself.

2.1.2.1 Angle

According to Pratista (2008:106), camera edge could be characterized as the point perspective of objects that are in the frame. Angle can also be said as the camera position to balance the composition between the objects and the backgrounds. Angle

technique can be divided into several parts, namely, high angle, straight on angle, oblique angle, and low angle.

2.1.2.2 Distance

The major object in a movie is normally a person. In short, technically distance is a scale to measure the distance of person's gesture. There are several types of distance namely; extreme long shot, long shot, medium long shot, medium shot, medium close-up, and close-up.

2.1.2.3 Sound

Pratista finds that sound can be defined as the effort of the film that could be comprehended through sense of hearing (2008:149). Sound in the film is comprised of three essential ingredients: the human voice or dialogue, music, and sound effect.

2.1.2.4 Mise-en- scene

According to Boardwell and Thomson in *Film Art: An Introduction*,

“Film scholars use the term to signify the director's control over what appears in the film frame. As you would expect from the term's theatrical origin, mise-en-scene includes those aspects of film that overlap with the art of theater: setting, lighting, costume, and the behavior of the figures” (2008: 169).

As stated from the quotation above, mise-en-scene is containing all the important details in a filmmaking. However, the writer only focus on analyzes setting, costume and make up in *Inception*.

2.2 Extrinsic Aspect

Extrinsic aspects is all the aspect that are beyond the scope of literary work, but indirectly influence the story through all social aspects relating to the content (Nurgiantoro, 1995: 23).

Above all, as has been explained previously, the author chooses to discuss the psychology aspect to examine extrinsic aspect. Specifically, this aspect will be analyses by using the theory of unconsciousness and dream proposed by Sigmund Freud.

2.2.1 Unconsciousness

The unconscious mind comes as a library or a "cauldron" of primitive wishes and ambition that we keep under the preconscious state. Freud (1915) found that some few occasions and cravings were regularly difficult for his patients to recognize, and accepted such data that secured away in the unconscious mind. This could happen through the procedure of suppression.

Freud believed that the impacts of the unconscious uncover themselves in an assortment of ways, including dreams, and in slips of the tongue, now prominently knows as 'Freudian slips'.

3.2.2 Dream

Freud believed that the unconscious is an explanation of the meaning behind dreams. Freud (1900: 4-5) viewed dreams as the golden gate to the unconscious as it is in

dreams that the self-defenses barriers are brought down so that a portion of the stifled material comes through to mindfulness yet in twisted form.

Dreams perform vital capacities for the unconscious mind and fill in as substantial pieces of information to how the unconscious mind works (Freud, 1900: 5). Freud divides the aspect of mind into three parts, namely Id, Ego, and Superego.

2.2.2.1 Id

The id is the primitive segment of personality. It comprises of all the natural instinct component of personality present during childbirth, including the sex (life) intuition or Eros (which contains the libido), and the forceful (death) impulse or Thanatos. The id is the incautious (and unconscious) portion of our mind that reacts straightforwardly and quickly to the instincts (Freud, 1920).

2.2.2.2 Ego

According to Freud, the ego is a part of the id that has been reformed by the direct encouragement of the external world (Freud, 1923: 25). The ego develops in order to separate between the unrealistic id and the external real world. It is the decision-making and problem-solving component of personality.

2.2.2.3 Superego

The superego's purpose is to control the id's desires, specifically those which society prevents, such as sex and aggression (McLeod, 2007).

C. MALLORIE COBB EXISTENCE AS A DISTRACTION IN DOMINIC COBB'S UNCONCIOUS MIND REFLECTED IN THE FILM *INCEPTION* ANALYSIS

1. Mal as a Distraction in Cobb Unconscious Mind

In this film, Mal's projection is a form of Cobb's traumatic memories and painful emotions of losing her. Mal's projection is similar with a virus in Cobb's unconscious. She haunts Cobb in every mission. It can be seen in the beginning of the film when Mal shoots Arthur. Moreover, she also sabotages Cobb's with their children's projection. In their last mission, Eames gave an idea to the team's about going into 3 layers dream. It is a deeper unconscious level, but Mal always has a way to distracting Cobb.

The main idea in the last mission is about Fischer who will split up his father's empire. Cobb explains that the inception will be successful if it is deep enough to be planted. Each layer has different ideas to plant. Arthur and Cobb have to go deeper to plant the idea. Therefore, the team has to plant 3 different ideas. Unfortunately, Mal's projection distracts Cobb in his unconscious in a different way.

2. The Dream

Basically, this film is all about dream that wants to escape from the reality. Therefore, it will get dangerous if there are no more gaps between dream and reality. It can be seen in Mal's character that has failed to differentiate between the both worlds, until she realizes that they do not have to live in the reality if they can continue living in dream world. They are able to act as the "God" in the dream world. The only reason

why they are inventing the dream sharing technique is to escape from the reality. The dream keeper says that dream world has been a reality for them. They choose to live in a dream rather than the reality. Similar with Mal, he cannot differentiate between his realities and dream anymore because they build the layouts of their dream based on memories.

Sigmund Freud's hypothesis of dreams mentioned that dreams symbolized unconscious desires, feelings, and enthusiasms (Freud, 1900: 5). This is why Mal does not believe it when she was in the real world. She can easily fulfill her desires, feelings, and enthusiasm in dream world. In the dream world they can freely choose wherever they want to live without thinking about the bill and the taxes. Mal and Cobb are possible to fulfill their promise to grow old together as a marriage couple. Meanwhile, Cobb has a total control to design their dream world layouts.

2.1 Id

Id revolves around primal forces, pleasures, needs, and desires. The reason why Mal and Cobb drown into a deeper dream is because they can easily fulfill their desires. Both of them create the world for themselves. Therefore, Cobb realizes there is something wrong in their lives for about 50 years.

2.2 Ego

The ego develops in order to separate between the unrealistic id and the external real world. At first, Mal's ego still can differentiate between reality and dream with her

totem (Picture 4.20). Therefore, she chooses to put her totem into a secret case and locked it in order to forget about the reality.

2.3 Superego

Superego plays an important role to influence the ego to turn into moralistic goals rather than realistic ones and to attempt for perfection. Cobb's guilty feeling of losing his wife is hard to remove. Therefore, he has to let go of Mal.

D. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, according to the analysis in the previous chapter, Mallorie Cobb is the main factor of the distraction happens in Dominick Cobb's unconscious mind. In this film, Mal's projection is a form of Cobb's traumatic memories and painful emotions of losing her. Mal's projection is similar with a virus in Cobb's unconscious. Mal's projection is an evil form that has no mercy.

She haunts Cobb in every mission. Mal's projection gets the power to keep distracting Cobb's unconscious from Cobb's guilty feeling. Mal's projection repeatedly appears in form of Cobb's dark past. As a projection, Mal only can distract Cobb in the dream world. She can manipulate Cobb's mind with his child projection and other stuff related to their memories.

Mal's dream world is become her reality and she want Cobb to stay. This is Mal's main motive to keep distracts Cobb in every change she gets. She often tries to distract Cobb to get him back to the dream world. Moreover, she wants to spend the

rest of their lives and get older together in the dream world. There is no revenge issue on her motive of distracting Cobb's unconscious mind.

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