

## **Investigating Projection in Lorca's Play *the House of Bernarda Alba*: A Jungian Perspective**

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### **Abstract**

*In daily life, the concepts like denial, catharsis, slip of tongue, and neurosis are used to cure psycho cases. The psychoanalytical theories instigate to probe into them. This study aims to explore the issue of denying one's shadow and its impact on the personality when one fails to understand the dark side of his/her personality. Lorca's play *The House of Bernarda Alba* constitutes the sample of the study. The framework comprises 'Projection', an aspect of Jung's theory of personality which human beings use as a defense mechanism to avoid their shadow. Textual Analysis has been used to collect and analyze data. The findings reveal that the characters particularly Alba undergo suppression due to internal and external forces. She suppresses the desires and the instincts of her daughters as a defense mechanism because the social forces and their will to satisfy the aspects of their desires are in direct conflict. Her attempt to overpower shadow brings destruction being unable to understand it and get insight from it. She suppresses shadow strictly and, eventually, the whole family suffers from personality imbalance.*

**Keywords:** Defense Mechanism, Denying Shadow, Personality Imbalance, Psycho Cases, Social Forces, Suppression of Desires.

### **Introduction**

Human beings have an illusion that they can overpower their soul. The realization that emotions are uncontrollable occurs to them after the personality has suffered a disaster. Unconscious has a crucial role in controlling human actions (Barry, 2017). Jung (1968) avers that people are inclined to evil being an amalgamation of evil (shadow or anti-self.) and good (self), negative and positive (Dehing, 1992) They are under the power of free will; evil suppresses good or vice versa.

Jung (1968) claims that the dark or negative side of human personality is shadow. Most people move with positive intention, the basic step for the completion of a mission. If a person attempts to overpower himself to avoid pain, shadow dominates. It competes with human goodness. Generally, human beings are unaware of their positive and negative characteristics. They oscillate between them befitting to the situation. At times, they cannot control their intentions and lose the vigor of life. Jung views shadow as a secret dark side of personality as an individual tends to remain ignorant of it. It is a conscious as well as the unconscious part of the personality having unknown and known qualities of ego.

Because of the aforesaid ideas, there is a need to investigate the behaviors of human beings when they face their shadow and deny it as a defense mechanism, projection. Being literature a reflection of life as it discusses aspects of human life and its sufferings, this study analyzes the behaviors of the characters of Lorca's (2019) play in the light of Jung's *Theory of Personality* taking them representative of human nature.

This study aims at investigating the circumstances in which shadow arises in Lorca's characters, discovering the forces responsible for suppressing desires as a defense mechanism, and the likely repercussions on their personality. It also aims to explore why human beings deny their shadow

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and how they Project it on others. It also finds out the situations in which it takes command of an individual's conscious mind.

### **Research Questions**

To achieve the aforementioned purpose of the study, the following research questions have been devised:

1. Why does shadow arise in the characters of Lorca's play *The House of Bernarda Alba*?
2. How do the characters employ projection as a defense mechanism?

### **Literature Review**

Human beings have always been fascinated by the study of the unconscious part of the mind. The psychological patients and their trials invite such studies. In our observation, the term 'Shadow' is highly powerful. It plays a vital role in the eternal conflict between heart and mind (Jung, 1968). Another term 'Unconscious' is also quite prominent in psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis takes into account the struggle of individual versus society. For Barry (2017), psychoanalysis is a therapy for the treatment of psycho cases. He claims that the aspects of psychoanalysis are used as a tool to understand and analyze literary texts. It also guides to delve deep into the minds of the authors and the representative characters (Mahesar & Mashori, 2018)

Johnson (1991) claims that human beings have positive and creative qualities in their shadow. He claims that "Pure gold of personality is transferred to shadow because it can find no place in that great leveling process that is culture" (p. 7). Mostly, people tend to fight with the noble aspects of their personality with more power than they try to hide the dark side. They attempt to suppress shadow as it is a "part of us we fail to see or know" (p. 4). Marie-Louise (1995), influenced by Johnson's ideas, propound claims that paying attention to the creative side of shadow makes life easy and constructive.

Ricoeur and Savage (2008) believe that shadow consists of everything that is in one's conscious and has been repressed. He argues that everyone has positive and negative qualities but human beings often repress them which are, later on, stored in the unconscious part of their mind. Mellon (1991) declares it a combination of an inner figure represented in myths and dreams, and the outer figure in the form of concrete reality. He claims that the recognition of the positive side of shadow plays a crucial role in the growth of personality and leading a life with full potential. He asserts that "for complete realization of self an individual has to assimilate the Shadow" (p. 240).

According to Rabstejnek (2011), Schopenhauer, Kant, Hartmann, Freud, and Hegel contributed their philosophies about different dimensions of the concept of the unconscious. They developed their ideas that foreshadowed the modern idea about it. Among them, Schopenhauer and Kant have a great influence on Freud. Therefore, their views find expression here.

Kant (1996) splits up the self as he splits up the rest of the world. He claims that there are apparent things that lie in space and time and always follow the laws of nature whereas Noumena objects do not appear in space and time and never follow the laws of nature. He claims that human beings have two aspects; phenomenal characteristics that link to the forces of the natural world, and noumenal characteristics that lift them to another realm beyond the physical forces of nature. That is why man's faculty of reason distinguishes the world of sense/s from the world of understanding. He refers to the "Noumenal self" as unconscious spontaneous activity of the mind. Self is not known to the conscious self, but it plays a vital role in influencing the sense of self-experience. He avers that an attempt to change anything is to destroy reason itself. Ellenberger (1970) has described three layers of the unconscious: 1) Absolute Unconscious, a source of the other forms of the unconscious, 2) Physiological Unconscious, helpful for the origin, development, and evolution of the living beings, and 3) Psychological Unconscious, a source of our conscious life.

Hegel's (1817) dialectic theory explains the activities of the mind; how the unconscious mind is responsible for both disease and mental health. He states that 'Aufheben' means a canceling effect but it also means to preserve. His concept of Aufheben explains that the mind operates in three ways; to cancel, to preserve, and to elevate, which means that the stored data can move from unconscious to conscious.

Freud's milestone work in psychoanalysis is the exploration of the unconscious part of the mind. He considers unconscious a source of childhood repressed contents, an area of repressed emotions and experience. He aims at analyzing the unconscious and brings it under conscious control so that it may be replaced by self. Jung (1968) offers a revolutionary reinterpretation of the

unconscious part of the mind which is sufficiently half of the self that constructively as well as positively helps and controls the conscious half. He proposes that the unconscious is dominant and can be controlled and there is no need to replace it with the conscious. Later on, Lacan (2006) declares that the unconscious is like language because of its structure, the other. It lies in the conscious as an absence. He defines the unconscious as "that part of the concrete discourse, in so far as it is transindividual that is not at the disposal of the subject in re-establishing the continuity of his conscious discourse" (p. 49).

According to Jung, dreams function at two levels; to compensate for the imbalances in the dreamer's psyche, and to provide prospective images for the future. They are used as a tool for studying the repressed desires, experiences, and memories which we do not like to disclose and they become a part of our unconscious (Abu-Arja, 2018). Dreams look backward as well as forward to anticipate the developments of the dreamer's future. Jung calls this process 'Individuation' that is the complete actualization of the whole human being. In this process, conscious and unconscious mutually integrate which ultimately results in physiological stability and health. For performing mental activities, energy is provided by the conflict of opposites in the mind which are constantly at fight and clash. Human beings build a relationship with the unconscious and come to terms with the different and often conflicting elements of their psyche. Jung perceives this act as essentially a moral journey. Tyson (2014) is of the view that explains that the unconscious comprises suppressed desires, hidden fears, instincts, and conflicts that people do not know.

Tornyai (2003) points out that drama therapy plays important to understand the hidden part of the mind that is shadow. It consists of imagination, personal stories, monologues that evoke images with the help of masks and costumes. The images and role can be used to stick with the internal image which gives a vision of the shadow's side. The straightforward environment created by drama therapy helps to discover and embrace its side.

Various researchers have applied theories of psychoanalysis in their studies. Adelman (1997) makes a distinction between the self that is Othello and the anti-self, Iago. At the outset, Iago appears in darkness means he is opposed to light. Being in a split form, the same is the case with his nature and plans; to destroy others' lives. He calls Othello Black and assumes himself White but his actions prove that he is Black having a monstrous mind. Thus Iago transfers his sense of hidden contamination to other characters using projection.

Iiff (2013) explains the reasons for Othello's downfall in the light of Jung's theory. Iago works like an outside voice that drives Othello to believe that Desdemona and Cassio are evil despite the fact Othello himself is slowly turning into a monster. Iago creates chaos and implants evil ideas into an individual's mind and turns Othello's hidden nature against himself. He considers Iago a projection of Othello's hidden nature because of his complete control over Othello's mind. Othello reflects man's nature and his/her incapability to get self-awareness which drives him to evil.

Colin (2003) applies the theory of Girard on Camus' *The Stranger*. Girard defines desire as a triangular form that consists of the desiring object, the desired object, and the prestigious mediator. The other makes the thing desirable and becomes its rival. The prestigious mediator not only makes the thing desirable but also stands in the way of achieving it. The beach incident explains that desire establishes the triangular relationship; Meursault is the desiring object, Arab is the desired object and Raymond is the prestigious mediator. Meursault desires to possess Arab which is already possessed by Raymond. Meursault's attempt to murder the Arab is his secret struggle to restore contact with humanity.

Sedivi (2009) discusses the role of the unconscious in the life and works of Pollock. Pollock painted several Jungian motivated paintings especially birds which reflect his desire for completion of the individuation process. He painted the eye on the upper portion of the portrait which denotes self-discovery of enlightenment. It refers to Jung's archetypal images. The portrayal of the dark side of the moon can be interpreted as the shadow which we do not like, and often Project on others.

Marakova (2015) has explored the strong images of basic archetypes and symbols related to Hemingway's real condition which he projected in *The Old Man and The Sea*. It can be assumed that Hemingway projected his circumstances and fears into the character of Santiago. The author's feelings and fears tend to be expressed but suppressed by a rational evaluation. Ego harmonizes with fear and the superego suppresses it to keep the social face. The character of Manolin reflects the author's inner psychological defense mechanism through the motif of a baseball game. Santiago

compares his wounds with Joe's. It helps in bearing his pain. The baseball motif is a representation of a defense mechanism, a way to escape from the sad reality.

Recently, Junejo and Malik (2020) studied Ali's *Twilight in Delhi* (2000) and examined the role of repressed desire, internal conflicts, and dreams of the characters, Mir Nihal, Asghar, and Bilqeece. The characters exhibit sexual urges but they repress them to contest against their id and suppress what they dream of.

### **Research Methodology**

Textual Analysis has been used for collecting and analyzing data from the text. The text of *The House of Bernarda Alba* has served as a sample of the study. While Jung's theory of personality has been employed as the framework, Content Analysis (CA), a technique of textual analysis, has been used as a technique to collect and analyze data. This is a qualitative study, the "subjective interpretation of the content of text data" (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278). CA as a research technique helps "making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use" (Krippendorff, 2012, p. 24) as the study takes into account the interpretation of messages rooted in the text and underlying meanings in the content. Further, it employs a close reading technique to find out the pieces of evidence from a text and infer their meanings (Brummett, 2018).

Jung's (1968) conception of shadow and the denial of shadow (projection) serves as the framework for this study. He states that shadow is responsible for showing human beings' sinful desires, thoughts, unpleasant behaviors, and socially disagreeable feelings which are hidden in the unconscious and appear in situations of crisis and weakness. Shadow appears in dreams and visions in different forms. Mostly, it appears as a person of the same sex. It is the first archetype that encounters in dreams. Jung asserts that two factors are responsible for the rise of shadow:

- a. External forces like patriarchy, tradition, society etcetera.
- b. Internal forces like suppressed desires, effects of suppressing the desires, and the lack of psychic integration

Shadow is irrational in its behavior and inclined to psychological projections. The projection reveals how people deny their Shadow and cast it on other people because they want to avoid the confrontation with it. Being a dark side, human beings like to get rid of it through projection (Jung, 1958). Jung points out that projecting agency is not the conscious subject but the unconscious. One of the consequences of projections is that the subject becomes isolated from the environment.

Jung notices that projections mostly occurs on the individual level but it can also be observed in the world; he refers to the Great Wars. It is one of the human defense mechanisms through which an attempt is made to transfer personal aspects of desires to other persons, things, groups, objects, and situations.

Jung asserts that, in projection, another person is perceived as dehumanized, enemy, outsider, and evil incarnate. Projection as a part of the defense mechanism helps in the development of personality. It shatters the bitter realities of life. To project, the person represses his undesired traits and then overthrows them on others. By repressing the instincts, the personality gets disturbed. The mind tries to work on it and finds a subject to overthrow it to prevent the disturbance. Once, it is shifted to the next person, one does not face anxiety or frustration. They transfer the personal aspects of desires to other persons, things, and situations where they are visible. The mechanism of projection occurs in transformations:

- 1) Through Persons (Character).
- 2) Through situations like Secrets and the use of gossips, inside as positive and outside as negative and confinement.
- 3) Through objects.

### **Discussion and Findings**

According to Jung (1968), human beings suppress their desires because of internal and external forces which transform into shadow. Lorca's female protagonist suppresses desires because of strict social codes and, ultimately, result in destruction. She fights against instincts and the destructive forces by challenging the cycle of nature. Patriarchy and traditions cause suppression of the sexual desires in Lorca's characters. The internal and external forces are at a clash. The conflict arises when one force suppresses the other for its fulfillment.

After her husband's death, the protection of five daughters from negativity is hazardous as adultery is a crime that results in punishment and death. Women have become a victim of male desire

in search of honor and love. It is evident in the act of penetration of a burning hot instrument into Librada's vagina for having a relationship with a man. She kills her illegitimate child and hides it under the stones but dogs expose it at her doorstep. Her secret is revealed. People of the village drag her in the streets for breaking the rules. Alba suggests punishment to put a burning coal in the place of her sin and kill her. As a precautionary measure to safeguard her daughters' punishment, she closes her house and suppresses their desires. Society and mother (Alba) are two forces affecting the lives of the daughters. Patriarchal norms also contribute to the suppression of their instincts. This suppression of desires results in the development of shadow.

Tradition functions as an external force. One has to follow traditions to bear the burden of life. Alba's family has a tradition of eight years of mourning after the death of the head of the family. It serves as a force of society. Alba intends to keep her daughters unaware of conjugal bliss. Therefore, she announces mourning to ban the entry of all the external things into her house. She gets all the windows and doors closed with bricks so that no one may interrupt their privacy. It is the first step toward suppression, the rise of shadow.

In Act I, Adela gives Alba a colored fan but she throws it aside with anger and announces to use only a black mourning fan. Black symbolizes death, darkness, and denial of life. It is a hint for the daughters to live a colorless life. Adela wears a green frock at her step-father's funeral. Alba declares black color as the only color of their life, the house will remain shut the way as it was in her father's and grandfather's days, advises them to get used to the heat of the house and spend the time doing embroidery. The daughters consider embroidery unnecessary as they can never get married.

Alba's orders to cover their heads in the mourning period forces Magdalena to obey orders, bring thread and needle for the women, and a mule and crop for men. Thread and needle limits women's role in her house; to be busy with it and no other activity is allowed in leisure time. Symbolically, she attempts to bury her daughters in the womb of the house so that they may never see the light of day. Adela shows her hatred as "this mourning period has come at the worst time in her life" (2019, p. 18). Alba incarcerates their freedom using physical imprisonment. The mourning period results in a destructive end because none could live to fulfill the will.

The analysis reveals that, for survival, there are strict rules for women. Glancing at a male becomes. Alba beats Angustias with a stick for gazing at the male mourners through a crack. Alba declares it unreasonable for a woman of her class to attract a man on her father's funeral day. Angustias powders her face at her step-father's funeral. Alba, making it a sin, punishes her and violently rubs her face with a handkerchief.

The daughters were grown up but unmarried. Ignorant of the upcoming destruction, Alba declares "For a hundred miles around there's no one good enough to come near them" (p. 41). Being well-to-do, she is headstrong and never welcomes the suitor/s and declares their "blood will not mix with that family because his father is a farmer" (p. 39).

According to Jung (1968), the shadow is irrational in its behavior and inclines to psychological projections; how people deny their shadow and cast it on other people. People like to get rid of it by projection. Jung claims that human beings impose it on others. They criticize them but unconsciously avoid identifying the reflection of the dark side. Jung defines this defense mechanism as a projection which people use as a defense mechanism to shift their aspects of desires to secrets, use of gossips, inside as positive and outside as negative, and confinement which have been analyzed in the following sections.

Alba, secretly, desires is to be praised; the whole village should consider her family a symbol of pride and honor. To fulfill this desire, she imposes strict rules and suppresses her daughters' desires. She engages her daughters in embroidery to channelize their sexuality and to avoid disclosure of family secrets. She feels fear of others knowing of the secrets like the extramarital affairs of her husband with a servant or madness of Maria Josepha.

To safeguard family repute, Alba gathers neighbors' secrets which she uses in gossips to damage their reputation and control them. Alba has hired servants for this mission. La Poncia shares with another servant that she peeps through the cracks to spy on them and bring news for Alba. Alba controls and teases them. She emotionally blackmails them. They are fearful of it.

A girl sees Pepe le Romano and announces his presence in Alba's house but Alba does not like it and ignores tactfully to keep her silent. She responds to the girl "his mother is there; she sees

his mother.... Darajali, the widower is there. Very close to your aunt and everyone see him" (p. 6). Alba makes her silent by mentioning the secret relationship of the girl's family.

Alba criticizes her neighbors but, unconsciously avoids recognizing her shadow. Her strict control over her neighbors is a defense mechanism to avoid disclosure of her secrets which is evident in the conversation between Amelia and Martirio. Amelia states that Adelaida is not present at the funeral ceremony because of the secret Alba time and again uses in her gossips. She has a bad time. Martirio utters that Adelaida is afraid of Alba because she knows Adelaida's family secret. Whenever she comes here, "mother twists knife in her wound" (p. 14). Alba rather than confronting her own shadow makes a projection on the people for concealing her dark self. A person unconsciously acts as he/she is fooled by the illusions when he sees everything but he/she is not conscious of her/himself.

The relationship between the oppressor (Alba) and oppressed (neighbors and daughters) is reciprocal. Alba's tyranny over neighbors in return fears her. Her dictatorship becomes her daughters' tyranny. If sisters are oppressed, they also oppress one another. Adela complains of Angustias, and Angustias gets punishment from Alba. This punishment further proceeds to Martirio. She keeps an eye on Adela and gets jealous of her love with Pep el Romano. Martirio takes revenge from Adela. She destroys their love relationship by disclosing everything to Alba. Their secret is revealed and ends with the death of Adela and her illegitimate child. The oppressed transforms into an oppressor and does not allow anyone to have the freedom of will. This is the way, in the world, human beings damage one another.

When Angustias finds out that the picture of Pep le Romano is stolen, Alba articulates revealing the secret to neighbors and the fear of gossip; "What is this noise in this house. The neighbors must have glued their ears to the walls" (p. 35). Alba expresses her method of protection from the others; "If the people in the village want to make false accusations they will find her hard as a rock. Nobody will speak of this matter anymore. Sometimes people throw mud at others to destroy them" (p. 41). Alba forbids to become the gossip of the neighbors. She even locks her mother in the room because of fear of neighbors because she wants to get married to a handsome young man. Alba orders her servants "neighbors can see her from their window so lock her" (p. 14). Ironically, she is a prisoner in her house. Alba's fear of losing her power over neighbors becomes her tragic reality. The fear of losing Alba's power over neighbors is evident in the dialogue of a servant that the neighbors are awaking. The neighbors are physical and emotionally aroused. She will no longer control them because a scandal is revealed in her house. At the end of the play, when Adela commits suicide, Alba wants to make the world believe that her daughter dies a virgin (p. 61).

The analysis of the play proves that Alba skillfully adjusts situations to project her shadow on others and make them carriers of it; dehumanized, enemy, outsider, and evil incarnation. Instead of examining herself, she finds faults within everyone else.

Another technique of projection is using an object as a defense mechanism. Lorca's characters use projection as a defense mechanism by shifting the personal aspects of desires into objects. Adela's wearing green dress in the mourning period and the intention to go outside for eating suggests her desire for freedom. In Europe, green is the color of nature and sexual connotations (Lawless & Klein, 1991). It may refer to fulfill her sexual instincts as she secretly meets Pepe le Romano. In short, Adela has transferred the personal aspects of desire into objects of green dress and melon.

Martirio advises her to dye the dress black. Her desire symbolizes death and repression of Adela's instincts. Her secret desire to act as a barrier in the fulfillment of her sister's desire turns into jealousy and rivalry. Martirio has shifted the aspects of her desire into a black object. The use of powder at her father's funeral, refusal to stop, and insisting on going with the powdered reflects her internal desire for liberty which is possible after marriage. Alba's advice to get used to the heat of the house, to spend time doing embroidery reflects her attempt to channelize their sexuality by transforming into objects. The drinking phenomenon refers to quenching sexual instincts. Time and again, the daughters drink water and complain of the heat in the house which symbolizes their sexual frustration. The object of a hothouse represents sexual heat.

### **Conclusion**

To conclude, the thoughts and actions of Lorca's characters denote that they suppress their desires as a defense mechanism and to keep the social face. The curbed desires ultimately deny their shadow with the help of the technique of projection.

Alba secretly desires of becoming a symbol of grace and honor in society. She maintains a strict code of life on her family due to the fear of disgrace. Further, she collects secrets about her neighbors to shield herself. Alba deftly uses neighbors' secrets with exaggerated colors to hide her weakness and flaws. She controls her neighbors. It is not because of ignorance but unconsciously Alba avoids recognizing the shadow. Projection as a mechanism forces Alba to blame her neighbors for what she unconsciously dislikes in herself. The denial of Alba makes her mentally and spiritually sick. Instead of understanding their own shadow, the characters make projections on others. It is getting rid of shadow with the technique of projection. They adjust in situations in such a way as they project their own Shadow on other people.

In Short, the feelings of the characters, their fears of the state of the ego, and content appear in the projected forms. The awareness of characters' imperfection hurts their ego but awareness arises the integration process into the personality and leads to its acceptance. While analyzing the text, it is evident that Lorca's characters never accept or become aware of their imperfections.

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