

# Psychoanalysis of ta- na- e- ka

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The short story entitled “ Ta-Na-E-Ka,” by Mary Whitebird tells us about Mary, an Indian Kaw girl who tried to avoid the Indians’ old tradition which was called as Ta-Na-E-Ka.

The reason why I choose this story to analyze is because I am interested in the existence of the old tradition of Indian living people within the modern culture which is very contrast with the tradition itself. The tradition I am talking about is a tradition of the Kaws that children at a specific age-usually 11 years old-make “ Ta-Na-E-Ka”, an initiation rite that makes them to men and women, in the other word, to adults. This story becomes very attractive after Mary, the main character designed by the author, failed to avoid Ta-Na-E-Ka, willy-nilly attempt to do five-days surviving in the forest as her grandfather asked her before. But Mary had her own way to survive. This is the point which the author tries to convey, about how to exist in a world, in a modern world that wasn’t made for Indians. Everybody has to survive in any time, under any circumstances.

That’s why I argue that what Mary had done in this story was not entirely wrong. On the contrary, she had shown that she was good in surviving. So, in order to understand and comprehend the characteristic of Mary, I would like to do the Freud’s Psychoanalysis model of the figure of this Indian Kaw girl. ?

CHAPTER II CONTENT As we know, every literary work has something we called as psychology of literature. Therefore, in this paper, I would like to analyse the Freud’s Psychoanalysis model of the figure of Mary, a young Kaw girl who lived in 1947. The first one is about its model of psyche.

It includes id (pleasure principle), ego (reality principle), and superego (moral censors). In this story, it is clearly stated that Mary really did not want to join the endurance ritual her grandfather commanded to do. But she realized that she had no choice, and she had to do Ta-Na-E-Ka which would bring her to become an adult. Then she decided that she would pass Ta-Na-E-Ka differently, she wanted to survive by her own way, which she claimed as a modern way in surviving instead of staying in the forest, eating grasshopper or rottenberries, and hiding from the enemies as the ancient ritual of Ta-Na-E-Ka taught her. The modern way in surviving” here, can be classified as Mary’s id, the pleasure principal she preferred to do. Then, to realize it, firstly she borrowed five dollars from her teacher, who was a white woman named Mrs.

Richardson. She thought if she had five dollars in her hand, she could get meal and place to stay easily. This is what we called as ego, a reality principle of hers, including the way she got food, hamburger and milkshake in Ernie’s, climbed to the ladies’ room and sleep there when the restaurant was closed, and all the way she “ survive” untill five-days survival had been completed. Here, we can also find something that we called as superego, a moral censor. Her grandfather, the living Indians, and the tradition itself were her superego.

But she ignored them by lying and doing the survival by her own way instead of doing her grandfather instruction. The second one is about the concept of repression. Related to the analysis above, I state that Mary was able to fulfill her pleasure principle. She could do what she preferred to do, something that she claimed as the most proper way to exist in a world, in a modern

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world that wasn't made for Indians. It means that her "want", the concept of repression, is manifested. The last one is about the sexual instinct of the character.

Actually, there are two roles of sexual instinct, they are Oedipus complex (symbolic mother figure) and Electra complex (symbolic father figure). In this short story, Mary tends to have Electra complex. Why do I say so? Because as we have seen, Mary really enjoyed her time with Ernie, the owner of The Ernie's Riverside. There was the place where she stayed for the entire period. I was sorry when the five-days were over. I really enjoyed every minute with Ernie.

... Those statements clearly showed that she liked Ernie, a middle age- man who looks similar to the figure of a father. Therefore, I infer this behavior as the indicator of Electra complex. ? CHAPTER III CONCLUSION Psychoanalysis is a "knife" to observe the characteristic of human and the reason why they behave the way they do. By analyzing the character using Freud's Psychoanalysis, we will be able to identify its aspects, including the ids, egos, superegos, moral censors, concepts of repression, and the role of sexual instinct. After analyzing this short story by using this approach, I finally conclude that overall, Mary was a smart girl who had an open-minded to face the modernization in 1947. She had a pleasure principle then she did her reality principle perfectly by ignoring her moral censors.

But as I have said in the very beginning, all of the things that Mary had done in this story were not entirely wrong. On the contrary, she had shown that

she was good in surviving, and she could finally prove to her grandfather that she did not have any trouble in surviving.