

Joan's Neurotic Trends and Idealized Image in Margaret Atwood's *Lady Oracle*

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ABSTRACT

This research attempts to figure out the development of neurosis in Joan Elizabeth Delacourt's case, the leading character of Margaret Atwood's *Lady Oracle*. It applies Karen Horney's theory of neurosis as the basis to determine whether the main character of the novel is adequately portrayed as a neurotic person. This research focuses on four basic elements of neurosis: basic anxiety and hostility, neurotic trends, neurotic conflict, and idealized image. It begins with the analysis of Joan's childhood and teenage experiences which are believed to be the primary step of her basic anxiety and hostility formation. The next part is Joan's neurotic trends development which will be analyzed at the moment when she finally met her future husband, Arthur. Accordingly, neurotic conflict and idealized image appear to complete the evidences that Joan is a neurotic.

Keywords: *anxiety, hostility, idealized image, neurosis, neurotic conflict, neurotic trends.*

INTRODUCTION

Margaret Atwood is a prominent Canadian female poet and novelist who has published nine novels, three collections of short stories, two collections of short fiction, and fourteen volumes of poetry. She was born in 1939, Ottawa and spent most of her early life in northern Ontario and Quebec. Some of her works such as *The Circle Game* (1966), *The Handmaid's Tale* (1994), *Cat's Eye* (1989), and *Alias Grace* (1996) have gained her awards and prizes. She won the Governor-General's Award for *The Circle Game*, her first volume poetry, *Sunday Times* Author of the Year in 1993, and also both Arthur C. Clarke Award for Science Fiction and the Governor-General's Award for *The Handmaid's Tale*.

Lady Oracle is one of Atwood's novels which was first published in 1976. Atwood begins the novel with a captivating paragraph which successfully draws the readers in a curiosity and desire to read more. The opening paragraph of the novel gives the readers a clue of what they are going to expect in the rest chapters. *Lady Oracle* focuses on the leading character named Joan Elizabeth Delacourt who fakes her death in order to bury the past and gain a brand new life in Terremoto, Italy. The plan to make up her death is prompted by the ordeal she has been going through in the past. Joan is raised by a mother who does not give a motherly affection which Joan should have been received at the early stage that seems to determine her personality when she grows up. Her mother is always complaining of Joan's fat body even though she is just a little kid. Her mother despises Joan's

fatness and perceives it as a disgrace. Aunt Lou, the only person from whom Joan gets attention is dead of a heart attack. Finally, at the age of almost twenty Joan encourages herself to run away from home to live in England. In other words, she sets herself free from her mother's domination and unpleasant attitude regarding her physical appearance.

Living alone by her own seems accustomed to her since she has no friend and parents who she does not really care much in her previous life. Joan is writing novels for a living and publishes them under a pseudonym. She starts a relationship that does not smoothly run until she meets Arthur, the man who will be her husband and with whom she spends the life. Joan goes back to Canada after receiving the death news of her mother and gets married to Arthur. However, fortune has not come to her yet. After several years of living together with Arthur, things are getting complicated. She lost Arthur's figure, the beloved and sweet Arthur who Joan met for the very first time in England. Joan is trapped in an affair with a guy who seems crazily in love with her. This is the moment in which Joan decides to plan her fake death. She is leaving all the past behind, starts a new life, and never looks back.

The bizarre case of the main character, Joan Elizabeth Delacourt is interesting to research. Several studies have examined *Lady Oracle*. First, *Lady Oracle: The Politic of the Body* (1991) by Marilyn Patton argues that the fears felt by the main character, fear of being fat and large, fear of being powerful, fear of devouring and overpowering lovers and children, are intentionally created by the society which uses the body of women to constraint their role in private and social life. *Eco-feminism in the Selected Novels of Margaret Atwood* (2012) written by Sonia Khajuria claims that eco-feminism here is when a woman is living in an objectifying culture and their physical self is gradually influenced or shaped by an observer's perspective. *The Politics of Survival in the Novels of Margaret Atwood* (2004) by Pauline Das argues that to survive in modern society, a woman needs to strengthen her inner directives and weaken her dependent behavior. Women should not exchange their real-life with a pseudo-security offered by men. *Connecting Theory and Fiction: Margaret*

Atwood's Novels and Second-Wave Feminism (2004) by Fiona Tolan believes that Joan in *Lady Oracle* is the embodiment of postmodern parody because in writing her epic poem, *Lady Oracle*, and her last costume gothic novel, *Stalked by Love*, these works are conflated with her personal life experience. *Woman's Search for Identity in the Novels of Margaret Atwood* (2012) by Vijay Singh Mehta claims that Joan is searching for an identity. She has developed several false identities to be accepted by the patriarchal society and people around her.

Compared to the studies above, this research is trying to see *Lady Oracle* from a different perspective. Instead of feminism, politics, or identity, the researcher finds psychoanalytic issues quite remarkable based on the main character's life journey. The researcher analyzes neurosis development based on the main character's experiences from early childhood to adulthood using the neurosis theory by Horney.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Horney (1937) stated that neurosis is caused by conflict which influences the emergence of anxiety. The term conflict refers to a condition when an individual's desire is in feud with most people's expectation. Consequently, it provokes outside hostility projected to the individual because of the incapability to fulfill people's expectations. This condition leads to anxiety which can only be allay by developing neurotic trends. The incompatibility, compulsiveness and indiscriminateness of each trend cause the emergence of neurotic conflict which can be solved by constructing idealized image. Therefore, in order to analyze the main character's neurosis development, there are four main elements of Horneyan theory which will be elaborated in the following paragraphs. They are hostility and basic anxiety, neurotic trends, neurotic conflict, and idealized image.

Hostility and Basic Anxiety

Horney (1946) defines basic anxiety as a feeling of being isolated and helpless in a potentially hostile world (p. 41). A child feels this way because some

adverse conditions are primarily imposed by parents and possibly others who have a close relationship with the child. Consequently, a child will develop a hostile attitude toward the parents as an expression of protest, but he or she seldom openly expresses or projects hostility toward them. A child would choose to repress the hostile feelings toward parents and to stay unconscious of them (Feist & J. Feist, 2006). If hostility is suppressed, it will become dissociated and its expansion will penetrate to a person's dream. There is also a possibility for a person to project his or her hostile impulses to the outside world. Nevertheless, the projection of hostility is done under an excuse that others have become hostile to him or her at the first place. An individual thinks as if the destructive impulses do not come from him or her but from someone or something outside, thus he or she is justified to become hostile to them as a payback.

There are three basic questions to interpret an individual's anxiety. They are what is endangered, what is the source of danger, and what accounts for the helplessness toward the danger (Horney, 1939). The thing which its endangerment can induce anxiety is something considered as the vital values of personality. It depends entirely on the individual's environment and personality structure (Horney, 1939).

Neurotic Trends

Basic anxiety emerging due to an unfavorable environment causes children to feel insecure. To gain a sense of security, children have to create particular tactics developed under specific forces operating in their environment. Thus, they can cope with the bad condition of what they perceive as a hostile world (Horney, 1946). In Horneyan theory, the tactics are termed as neurotic trends functioned to allay basic anxiety. The neurotic trends are divided into three different movements; moving toward people (compliant type), moving against people (aggressive type), and moving away from people (detached type).

The compliant type is characterized by an inexorable need for affection, approval, and need for a partner; a lover, friend, husband or wife, someone who can provide all life expectations and take responsibility for good evil (Horney, 1946).

The aggressive type perceives the world as a competition arena in which the strongest is the survival (Horney, 1946). The domination over others can be achieved in diverse ways. It might be an outright exercise of power, an indirect manipulation through oversolicitousness, imposing obligation on people, using power behind the throne, or by way of the intellect who is applying a belief that by foresight and reasoning everything can be controlled (Horney, 1946).

The detached type develops some compulsive and indiscriminate needs which are the need for privacy, independence, self-sufficiency, and the need to feel superior. These needs have to be fulfilled; thus, the sense of security can be preserved by avoiding every possible thing which can endanger the presence of security. The needs become neurotic because they are aimed to put emotional distance between themselves and others (Horney, 1946).

Neurotic Conflict

The neurotic conflict lies in the fundamentally contradictory trends that a neurotic person applies to having or building a relationship with others. One predominant trend can be seen on the surface, but in some lower degree the other two are also adopted in every neurotic individual. The two minor trends are not evidently observable since they are expressed in a more indirect way.

The existence of the three trends in one same neurotic individual can trigger the presence of a more acute anxiety. A neurotic person will lose the compulsive means to preserve security since all the three forces are equally strong and aiming at different goals. In this situation, a neurotic person feels threatened, torn apart, vulnerable, defenseless because there is no defense system to protect from the hostility of the world. In order to avoid this kind of apocalypse, they have to maintain their equilibrium and avoid the threat of disintegration by creating the illusion of harmony, integrity, or unity (Ivimey, 1946).

Idealized Image

The idealized image has a large degree of influence in the life of neurotic persons. Its distinctive

features are determined by the individuals' personality structure, whether they are compliant, aggressive, or detached (Horney, 1946). An idealized image is created to provide realistic self-confidence and real pride and as a means to measure up and compare themselves with other people (Horney, 1946). It is needed since neurotic people are incapable of building up initial self-confidence due to the disadvantageous experiences they have been subjected. They do not feel weak in isolation, but they will in a world in which people are ready to humiliate, defeat, cheat, and enslave them. The idealized image is significant to give meaning to their life as purposeful and guided.

The neurotic people will be very persistent in preserving the idealized image to bear with reality. The neurotic people's position will remain safe and stable as long as the idealized image stays intact. Thus they will always feel significant, superior, and harmonious (Horney, 1946). On the other hand, when the idealized image is loosening up, they will feel insignificant and weak. They will be exposed to their conflicts and encountered with the hideous feeling of being torn to pieces. Additionally, the disparity between the idealized image and the true self or the despised image will worsen the neurotic conflict.

METHODS

The primary data source is taken from the novel *Lady Oracle* by Margaret Atwood. The data are qualitatively collected from the novel by taking notes of the significant evidence regarding neurosis's basic elements. This evidence is taken by considering their relevance with the research goal mirrored in the research questions. The researcher's secondary data sources are book references, journals, articles, essays, and any other sources that provide knowledge of the theory applied to assist the research. These sources are used to support and strengthen the researcher's arguments to achieve reasonable and accurate research results. The secondary data source's supportive function is also crucial to minimize the possibility of misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the research result by the readers.

In line with the library research method, the primary data source data is analyzed using the qualitative method. The data's analytical process is assisted by applying the theory of neurosis as proposed by Karen Horney, which is gained from secondary data sources. The analytical approach primarily aims to prove that Joan Elizabeth Delacourt is a neurotic by sequentially elaborating the basic elements of neurosis: hostility and basic anxiety, neurotic trends, neurotic conflict, and idealized image according to her childhood experiences and her behavior and attitudes as she grows up.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to Horney (1950), neurosis is formed by the presence of conflict, which can induce anxiety. In Joan's case, the conflict appears because her desire is not in line with people's expectations. Reflecting the setting of time in the novel, people in society will positively appraise a woman if she is thin. However, Joan's condition is far from being called skinny. In short, the reality of Joan's physical appearance does not meet most people's standards at the time. Consequently, the world outside is felt as hostile by Joan because people around her start to treat her unpleasantly as she is incapable of turning into a person they expect her to become.

Outside Hostility

Since her early childhood, Joan has been through a great ordeal, the determining stage in which a child should have developed a robust core of personality. Nevertheless, this stage is also very vulnerable; thus the child should have a supportive and affectionate environment. If these kinds of conditions are inadequately provided, the child would not be able to grow according to the real self (Feist & J. Feist, 2006). Joan perceives the outside world as hostile due to an unfavorable environment caused by her parents, friends, and teacher.

Based on Joan's childhood and teenage experiences, there are several unfavorable conditions caused by different individuals. Mostly it is caused by her mother through her domination and authoritarian parenting, excessive expectation

over physical appearance, lack of genuine warmth; love; and affection, physical punishment, and verbal abuse. Additionally, she has to also deal with her father's lack of real guidance and communication, weight discrimination from her dancing teacher, and friends' bullying.

The first adverse condition imposed by Joan's mother is domination and an authoritarian parenting style. Joan's mother always insists on her daughter to go to the best school. She wants her daughter to have a good environment. Nevertheless, her intention does not consider her daughter's safety. When she applies for high school, her mother wants her to get into a private girls' school, but this time Joan strongly resists her mother's plan. Instead, she goes to the nearest high school. Her mother finally gives her consent since they already lived in a respectable neighborhood. It can be seen that her mother is controlling Joan. Her mother's domination blocks Joan's capability in expressing what she truly wants.

Consequently, she feels like a product while her mother is the creator, the manager, and the agent. In many cases, neurosis is caused by parental authority's pressure, to which the child has to become very submissive (Fromm, 1944). The implementation of the authoritarian parenting style through which Joan's mother puts her daughter under domination has cost a great deal of injury to Joan's self-esteem and self-confidence. These injuries lead her to have no chance to decide and initiate an action that is supposed to be based on her own will. Over time, when Joan gets used to her mother's dominating attitude in making a decision, she can hardly rely on her initiative. By obeying all of her mother's orders, it starts to appear that something is considered right only if it meets a certain standard created by her mother. This idea seems to leave a terrible scar in Joan's life. Even if Joan is given a chance to create a plan which has to be reflecting her desire, she will make it according to the unwritten standard agreed by her mother.

The second apparent adverse condition imposed by Joan's mother is an excessive expectation over physical appearance. Her mother named her Joan since she is obsessed with the mortal beauty of Joan Crawford. Joan Crawford

represents a physical perfection and talent which should have been possessed by a woman.

The relationship between Joan and her mother is adult-centered. Joan's mother emphasizes domination and discouraging open communication because her greatest fear is losing control over Joan. Her high demandingness can be seen through her attitude toward Joan's physical appearance, precisely her body size. Every possible effort has been made, but none of it shows a significant and satisfying result. However, she never counted Joan's feelings about her struggles in making her thinner into consideration. She seems to block every possibility for Joan arguing her excessive demands over her physical appearance. Joan's mother is applying her standard to her daughter to be seen as beautiful and thin.

The next adverse condition imposed by Joan's mother is the lack of genuine warmth, love, and affection. Joan and her mother's closeness is bound to be professionalized. Joan personally feels that she is treated just like a product while her mother is the manager, the creator, and the agent. Therefore, instead of giving a genuine love as a mother, she treats Joan as a puppet to fulfill her desire.

Horney (1937) once stated that in examining many neurotic individuals' childhood history, their adverse conditions show various combinations centered on a lack of genuine warmth and affection. Therefore, the unaffectionate state inside Joan's relationship with her mother has become a fertile soil for neurosis to grow. When an unaffectionate and unloving environment surrounds a child, they tend to have lower self-esteem, feeling unworthy, hostile, antisocial, and alienated (Schwartz, 2017). These are pretty much representing what Joan thinks about herself. Her mother never cared about whether or not Joan has a friend. Therefore, Joan remains friendless and lonely during her entire childhood, causing her to feel insecure.

Besides lacking love, her mother also physically hurts her by slapping her face. This terrible experience happened when Joan was an elementary school student. There are many negative impacts caused by physically punishing children as a means of control and discipline. In terms of psychological health, a child who is punished physically tends to have antisocial behavior, anxiety

disorders, personality disorders, mania, or depression. It can also disturb the relationship between the parent and the child (Bassam et al., 2018). Joan's relationship with her mother has never been harmonious. She always disagrees with her mother's attitude even though she cannot reveal her protest and anger.

Joan's mother also uses inappropriate terms to humiliate her daughter. She will inconsiderately say right in front of Joan that she is stupid, fool, disgusting, has no brain inside her head, or Joan's sight makes her sick. For example, after Joan told her mother what her friends did to her the other day, her mother said she is such a fool to let the girls do such mean things. Using offensive words will burden Joan with guilt, and she will lose self-confidence because she thinks there is no good quality in her but fool and fecklessness.

Besides, Joan lacks real guidance and communication neither from his mother nor father. Both of them are imposing adverse conditions. Both are distinguished by her mother, who is too involved, controlling, and critical regarding Joan's life, while her father is too uninvolved and ignorant.

Joan longs her father to teach her about life by giving her advice, warning her, and instructing her, but he never did one of these. Even when he lets Joan participate in planting, they do not talk. Joan has lost interest in perceiving her mother as a role model. Therefore, she shifts to her father as a surrogate, which only leads her to another disappointment.

Father figure is significant for child development by having direct interaction or providing emotional and instrumental support (Khan, 2017). Unfortunately, Joan's father does not fulfill it, which causes Joan's mother to complain of his absence. No suggestion or argument ever came out of him. Most of his time is spent in the hospital and study room.

His attitude has imposed a more significant negative impact on his daughter. When children face maternal domination, fathers have to be a protector who can spare their kids from the oppressive condition (Khan, 2017). If they are

incapable of doing the role, the children will potentially be disclosed to the danger of mental disturbance. She guidance to strengthen her self-esteem, but it can be obtained neither from her mother nor father. After that, she feels anxious because she has no reliable figure.

Besides having no support from her parents, she also suffers terrible treatment from her teacher due to her physical appearance, specifically her weight. Her teacher's attitude of changing her role from butterfly to a mothball elicits that physical attractiveness is valued far beyond skill. It is not a matter of Joan's incapability in dancing. She even excels all of her friends in class, but her fat body seems to overcome it. A different treatment has been addressed to people based on their physical attractiveness. A physically attractive child is viewed more positively than the physically unattractive one

Joan's self-esteem and self-confidence are getting lower along with the growth of others' negative views about her. She feels lonely and unworthy because of the rejection from her dancing teacher, school friends, and even places in which she ever applied for a part-time job. She thinks nobody ever wants to befriend a fat girl like her.

Due to her physical appearance, Joan is often bullied by her girl friends in a very unpleasant way. Once they find out that Joan is easily crying, they start to create various possible ways to make her cry. They usually run off down the hill and leave her behind in the middle of the quiet ravine. The cruelest is when Joan is tied up with Elizabeth's skipping rope to the post at the end of the bridge, the one they usually cross to go to school.

The exposure to bullying has imposed a psychological impact to Joan. As a victim of bullying, Joan inclines to feel sad, hurt, unhappy, and has difficulty forming a relationship as the consequences of being rejected by her peers. After all of the adverse conditions she has been through, her self-esteem, self-worth, and confidence have been badly injured. She does not deserve to have a friend or care because of her weight. Her parents, who should have been the source of support, happiness, love, and guidance, become the main suspects of her misery.

Joan's Hostility

The incapability of parents in providing genuine love and warmth makes their child feel unsatisfied and insecure. In an adverse environment, parents often dominate, overprotect, neglect, reject, or overindulge. When parents do not fulfill the child's needs for safety and security, they develop feelings of hostility towards the parents or others who impose the adverse conditions. Horney claims that people who repress their hostility tend to pretend that everything is all right. Thus they refrain themselves from fighting when they ought to fight or when they wish to fight because they lose sight of the real danger and enemy or the one who represents a real menace to the person. Consequently, defenselessness is undeniable because this person inclines to be submissive, compliant, friendly in situations in which he should have been on his or her guard (Horney, 1939).

In Joan's case, her life has been dominated by her mother and neglected by her father. These two opposite attitudes of her parents are very destructive. Indeed, it causes her to develop a feeling of hostility toward mainly her mother. The feeling of hostility has even been indicated in her early childhood when she is only seven years old. It is possible regarding her parents' behavior and attitude which have induced disadvantageous conditions for her.

Additionally, the possibility of developing hostility toward others is higher since Joan has received unpleasant experience of being rejected due to her weight problem. As elaborated in the previous part, the rejection is found to be initiated by her dancing teacher and school friends. In brief, Joan's hostility is provoked by various adverse conditions or what the researcher terms as outside hostility during her childhood and teenage life.

Joan's Repressed Hostility toward her Mother

The relationship built between Joan and her mother is always between the authority and the subordinate. Joan is always the one who has to obey every rule and instruction. The decision of getting in a dancing class and Brownies, drinking diet pills,

going to a psychiatrist are all her mother's idea. Ever since Joan was still a child, she has to live with her mother's authoritarian behavior. There is no way she can pick other than obeying her mother. To overcome her helplessness, she has to gain security. The only possible thing to do is by relying on her mother even if she has to live up with her demanding expectation.

The little Joan can never rebel against her mother as she needs to secure her mother's love and agreement. When her role as a butterfly was suddenly replaced with being a mothball, she is upset, but she has no power to show her resentment to her mother verbally. As long as she can bear, Joan will never cry in front of her mother and obey every single decision she makes. This condition is formed because Joan is repressing her hostility, which means pretending that everything is in order. By suppressing her hostility, Joan acts that her mother's domination is normal.

Joan's Repressed Hostility toward Her Dancing Teacher

Joan was told that her role would be replaced with a more special one. The special role is only a euphemism made by her dancing teacher for the role as a mothball. Miss Flegg does not expect that the change will deeply hurt the little Joan. Unfortunately, Joan does feel badly hurt and betrayed. It is entirely unfair because it is not that she cannot dance, but she cannot properly fit into the butterfly costume. This made her believe that physical appearance is valued far beyond someone's skill and capability.

Instead of directly projecting her anger toward Miss Flegg, Joan seems to direct the hostility toward herself. Joan's hostility is repressed because it is unbearable to be aware that she is hostile to other people who have a considerably close relationship with her in a particular situation. In this case, Joan is too helpless to be hostile because the idea of being despised by Miss Flegg is unbearable. Thus refusing the role as a mothball and quitting the performance is impossible. Since she cannot project her hostility toward Miss Flegg, Joan dedicates her dancing as an expression of destruction to discharge her rage.

Joan's Repressed Hostility toward Her Friends

In high school, some girls used to walk home with Joan. They are gorgeous, and many guys want to ask them out. Being close to them, Joan feels that she is being used as a pawn. When an unwanted guy asks one of them to go out, Joan is used as an excuse. They will leave him with Joan. However, when a charming guy wants to get close to the girls, they can't help but look good beside the fat Joan.

She pretends to listen to her friends' stories enthusiastically. She is repressing her envy and curiosity when she is not invited to their party. Her pretense of becoming incredibly friendly to them is because she needs their confirmation of her existence. By becoming their friend, people will see her exist even though in a different way as they see the girls. It seems to be the only available way for Joan to be invisible and recognized.

The Consequences of Repressing Hostility

Reflected in Dream or Fantasy

Whenever she represses her hostility, her rage is reflected through her dream. Joan struggles to remain unconscious about her hostility because being hostile to people she needs approval and affection is unbearable. However, the unfavorable conditions seem to be unstoppable and gradually intensify Joan's repressed hatred. Inside she is tortured by her incapability of discharging or projecting hostility to the outside.

Joan is having a horrible dream about her mother. She sees her as a three-headed monster. It is possible to happen because she cannot project her hostility while intensified by outside sources. If her pretense of perceiving everything as all right keeps going on, then the outside hostility addressed to her also becomes more relentless. It is because Joan is too helpless to defend herself. At first, Joan's dream is pictured as seeing her mother's true identity as a three-headed monster while there is a man who is watching from outside the door. Joan is afraid of the man knowing the truth about her mother, but then she hopes that the man will find out what her mother truly is. The shift of Joan's attitude toward her mother indicates that her hostility is getting

more prominent along with adverse conditions imposed by friends and her dancing teacher.

Projected Hostility

If hostility is repressed, a person has no slightest idea of being hostile. Over time the repressed hostility will be highly explosive and tend to be discharged because the outside sources intensify it. In Joan's case, her mother and friends' unpleasant treatment are the main outside sources that have gradually intensified her repressed hostility.

Joan realizes that her mother's happiness is seeing her daughter as a thin and beautiful girl. In her mother's defense, she overthinks about what can be done by Joan in the future with her fat body. It will be challenging to find a desirable husband and job if Joan does not lose her weight. However, in Joan's defense, her mother's authoritarian parenting is way too dominating and cruel. At first, Joan is properly playing her role as an obedient daughter. Joan is not lucky enough since every effort she makes comes along with a failure. At some point, Joan realizes that she can never be the person who meets her mother's standard.

At last, it comes the time when Joan decides to quit her mother's game. She stops trying to please her mother by being submissive and obedient to get her acceptance and agreement while all she wants is a thin and beautiful daughter. Instead, Joan turns her direction to gain acceptance from the popular girls in her high school. She sees herself as older and independent enough to disapprove her mother's domination and authoritarian behavior. Her first rebellion is evident when she resists her mother's idea to study in a private girls' school.

Joan represses her hostility toward her parents and friends. However, Joan eventually discharges her explosive rage by projecting her hostility toward her mother rather than her high school friends. As explained previously, she does not need her mother's approval and acceptance anymore. Instead, she gains them from her friends. Therefore, projecting hostility toward her mother is more unbearable than to her friends. Her mother has been first hostile to her. Thus, it is justifiable to pay her with hostility. By this time, she is eating steadily, doggedly, and stubbornly every day. Joan is

getting fatter and rounder right before her mother's eyes. Her relentless growing fat is the symbol of Joan's victory. She successfully defeats her mother by yielding her to frustration that it is impossible to get Joan any thinner.

Joan's Anxiety

The primary source of her anxiety is her self-esteem; self-worth and self-confidence. In Joan's case, her self-esteem has been badly injured by her parents, teacher, and friends. She will regain her self-worth and self-confidence if she can see herself as favorable to others, which can be done by acting in a way that preserves and improves others' positive views. It means Joan's self-esteem depends on how far she can meet others' expectations. Because she feels incapable of fulfilling people's demand of being a thin and beautiful girl, Joan clings to another way of earning others' positive views; becoming an over compliant and submissive person.

Before she loses her weight, she preserves her self-esteem by becoming a super nice, understanding, and enthusiastic companion even though she knows her friends do not consider Joan as a friend. However, this seems to be the only way to keep Joan visible and accepted by them. Swann and Bosson (2010) stated that positive self-evaluation is needed to satisfy the desire for communion and interpersonal connectedness with others (as cited in Stets & Burke, 2014). Joan prefers to remain sweet and compliant regardless of how deeply she wants to project her jealousy and hatred to them.

The possession of self-esteem is very significant for Joan; thus its endangerment renders her anxious. Self-esteem is believed as men's armor in dealing with or coming face to face with the world which is perceived as hostile (Branden, 1969). Therefore, Joan tends to repress and distort her true feeling, judgment, and desire to diminish the possibility of others' adversely appraising her. An individual will even follow an irrational standard even though the individual will be driven to pursue a self-destructive goal. If men feel a lack of self-esteem, they will be forced to fake or create the illusion of it (Branden, 1969). Joan herself creates an illusion of her self-esteem. It depends on how far

she can maintain her compliance and submission as she thinks others expect her to become. Thus, feelings of being visible, positively valued, and accepted can be obtained.

After she ran away from home, she stayed at a hotel and opened a new bank account under her aunt's name, Louisa K. Delacourt. She puts all of her best efforts to lose her weight to get the money. She uses a different name because she wants to completely leave behind anything related to her old life, mainly the unpleasant treatments and experiences. She moves to London where no one knows who Joan Elizabeth Delacourt truly is.

When she is still fat, Joan is maintaining her self-esteem by repressing her hatred and jealousy. She has to be a compliant and submissive person to be visible and accepted. After she becomes thinner and builds a new identity, her old identity becomes a threat to her self-esteem. If her old life is revealed, she is afraid that people will see her as a disgraceful and disreputable person. Shortly, the source of danger that can anytime put her self-esteem at stake is the disclosure of her old identity, thus it provokes her anxiety.

In London, Joan meets her future husband named Arthur, who is originally a Canadian. Arthur travels to London to satisfy his deep interest in politics. Joan is deeply in love with Arthur. She will never be able to bear his judgmental and disdainful look if he finds out about her past life. Therefore, she never told him anything related to her parents.

Joan's anxiety appears whenever she unintentionally meets someone or something related to her past life. She feels sick and sweating. For example, when she accidentally reunited with Marlene, her childhood friend who had bullied her, and when she has to go back to her old neighborhood in Braeside.

After she successfully reduced her weight, she perceives her old life of becoming a fat person as shameful and humiliating memory at which she would never look back. Therefore, it seems like fear of being disclosed or found out is intensely felt by Joan. Evidently, according to Horney, this kind of anxiety felt by Joan is provoked by her shady past. By her pretense, she has found a path to belong to a community. Consequently, she has to do whatever

it costs to defend her new position as the new Joan and keep alienated from her unsavory past life.

The danger of her past life being disclosed will render her helpless because there is no way she can fight. Joan sees her past life as a disgrace. When she was still fat, Joan tried to build her self-esteem as a compliant and submissive person. These qualities are believed to grant her positive appraisal. Therefore, even after she became thinner, Joan remains a compliant individual. If her past life is revealed and persists in defending herself, others will see her as a more unlikeable person. The more she does to protect herself, the more she looks disagreeable before others' eyes, especially in front of Arthur. Therefore, after she got married to him, she keeps herself low-profile and less conspicuous. Thus, it prevents people from being curious about her past life and renders them focused on her present identity. She always puts others' interests before everything concerning herself to distract their attention from wondering who Joan truly is.

Joan's Neurotic Trends

Individuals fail to build a relationship with others based on their real feelings' spontaneity due to the basic anxiety (Horney, 1950). The only way for a neurotic person to cope with it is by developing neurotic trends. Basically, Joan develops all three neurotic trends. However, as a neurotic, Joan can't harmoniously use all neurotic trends. They are incompatible with each other, which means the presence of the other two can endanger one trend. This condition can induce the emergence of conflict, which potentially makes Joan's basic anxiety more acute. Consequently, she needs to make one of them the most dominant.

There are three elements of basic anxiety which are helplessness, hostility, and isolation. Horney (1946) believes that neurotic trends are developed according to which one of these elements is being overemphasized. If helplessness is overemphasized, an individual will tend to move toward people or the compliant type. Since Joan was a child, she never dared to openly disapprove of the attitude of her mother, Miss Flegg, or her friends. She likes others' idea of her as a sweet and obedient child since she cannot meet their expectation to be a thin and beautiful girl. Joan's compliant tendency

even gets conspicuous after she met Arthur. As a compliant type, Joan clings to Arthur to fulfill her needs of affection and approval.

As explained in the previous part, moving toward people or the compliant type is believed to be Joan's predominant neurotic trend. It is featured with several neurotic needs: affection, approval, and a partner. The neurotic trends are indiscriminate and compulsive. Therefore, Joan is bound to use all of her energies and thought to fulfill the predominant trend she adopts. Joan loves Arthur and believes that he is the one to whom she belongs. Everything she does is directed to make her feel liked, accepted, wanted, loved, desired, needed, and approved by Arthur.

The first conspicuous tendency, Joan tends to become very sensitive to the needs of others. She will be totally aware if there is someone who needs for sympathy or help, especially when there is something to do with Arthur. She dictates herself that she has to live up to Arthur's expectations or what she believes what Arthur wants her to be. Therefore, Joan becomes oblivious of her feelings and desires to be loved by Arthur. Thus she has to be over-understanding, less demanding, unselfish, and self-sacrificing. In her life, Joan never once properly learnt to cook because her mother will never let her touch anything in the kitchen while cooking. However, she willingly cooks for Arthur because he refuses to eat outside and prefers her cooking. Moreover, Joan is wholeheartedly devoting herself to cheer him up. When Arthur is upset because the political revolt he runs in London is fallen to pieces. Besides, Joan reads theories book to meet with Arthur's thoughts and understand what he is related to his political revolt even though she despises doing it. She does all of these because her self-esteem depends on how Arthur thinks of her.

Joan tends to subordinate herself, keeps herself low-profile, and leaves the limelight to others. She represses any aggressiveness to excel and self-assertive behavior. She thinks people will condemn all of these. Thus, she shies these behaviors away because she cannot risk her self-worth for other's condemnation of unaccepted actions according to her perspective.

Joan is considered as placid, sloppy and rather stupid by other women. However, she is adored by

Arthur's friends as a desired woman. These friends complain as their woman's attitudes often resent them as they are very demanding, self-absorbed and spending most of the time explaining their sensitivities, anger, and inadequacies. Therefore, Joan has one conviction that she has to remain helpless beside Arthur.

Joan remains being subordinate since Arthur is dominant. It can be seen when Joan publishes poetry. Arthur is a little surprised and dismayed when Joan tells him about it. Arthur has this idea to celebrate the good news with his friends. It is not a celebration Joan has been picturing in mind, which is supposed to be a lot of drinks and candles, but it is better than no celebration. However, in the restaurant, Arthur barely mentions Joan's book. Arthur exploits his friends' attention to talk about their political revolt. It shows that he will not let Joan take away his spotlight.

The third characteristic of the compliant type is the tendency to shoulder blame automatically (Horney, 1946). The compliant type like Joan prefers to repress her genuine feelings. Regardless of whether or not she feels guilty, she would rather accuse and scrutinize herself than others and be apologetic. Joan has done everything to please her husband and to meet what he expects her to become. However, Arthur often gets easily upset whenever he hits trouble. When something good is heard regarding his political revolt, he will get enthusiastic and dedicate all of his best efforts. On the contrary, at his low point, he will barely make it out of bed and spend most of the time sitting on a chair. Joan sees these as her incapability of fulfilling her responsibility as a good wife. Instead of thinking all of these are entirely up to Arthur, she believes her inadequacies cause his resentment and anger to support and make him happy. However, Joan will never let him down because the idea of losing his affection is unbearable.

The compliant type is helpless, and it will be their threat. Therefore, they need someone who loves them to protect them (Horney, 1946). Joan is featured herself with this conviction. She believes that she can rely on Arthur's protection as long as she remains helpless. She even inclines to be subordinate, apologetic, self-blaming, and self-

sacrificing. She regards others as more superior, more intelligent, and more attractive than her. All these are aimed to allay anxiety concerning her self-esteem. This security feeling can be gained when she already has others' affection and approval, which are maintained by identifying herself with the characteristics of the compliant type or the tendency to move toward people.

Moving toward people is the neurotic trend chosen as the defense against her anxiety concerning her self-esteem. It will be torn apart if people find out about her past life. Therefore, this trend is adopted to keep her less conspicuous and low-profile. Having a husband who likes to be the center of attention is also beneficial for Joan because he spends most of the time talking about his parents and becomes less curious about Joan's past life. She will never protest against his dominant character because becoming a good listener and paying her full attention to Arthur's story make her old identity remain a secret. For Joan honesty will only lead to a catastrophe. She seems to be bound for not showing what she truly feels and desires because she has no intention to risk Arthur's love. Joan never externalized her rage because her security depends on how she can handle her voice to be calm, undemanding, and receptive.

Joan's less dominant neurotic trends are moving against people and moving away from people (detached type). The main idea of moving against people is callously pursuing self-interest to gain control over others because the world is perceived as a battle arena (Horney, 1946). This idea does not overtly apply in Joan's case. Instead of aiming her aggressiveness to gain control over others, it is mainly to discharge her repressed feelings and desires. She has voluntarily subordinated herself, but eventually, she feels sick of Arthur's domination, self-righteousness, and moodiness. At a certain point, she has been beaten so hard by these unpleasant qualities of him.

Her aggressiveness can be seen when Joan is finally showing her disapproval over Arthur's attitude in running his political revolt. He spat on a policeman. Joan has been all along repressing her despicement on politics about which Arthur has a concern. She disagrees with the way Arthur and friends in voicing their ideas. In her perspective,

what Arthur and his friends have done is not for the sake of others' interest but to seek people's attention. It is about making their ideas look right and justifiable by degrading and undervaluing the others.

Joan's decision to publish her poetry entitled *Lady Oracle* is the second indication of her aggressive type. She is excellent at writing, but she never told Arthur about it. She does not want to make Arthur feel excelled by her. She needs to live up to his expectations to secure his affection and approval. Then she throws every bad assumption away of what is going to happen if she publishes the book. This action is believed to be one of the aggressive type's characteristics because Joan publishes it under her real name, and she reveals it to her husband. It signs her need to succeed to gain recognition from people. At some point, Joan feels tired of being subordinate.

Besides, Joan is faking her death when she assumes that Arthur had found out her affair with an artist. She believes that Arthur sends the terrors as a way to get rid of her. She is terrified. Therefore, she has to get rid of him first, which is done by faking her death. Every detail is arranged by herself though she needs help from Sam and Marlene in executing the plan. After her plan is successfully done, Joan feels proud of it because this is the time when she finally can outwit him. He often scorns her for not being in order and disorganized. At last, she can do something complicated without making a single mistake. Her tendency to become aggressive in gaining admiration, success, and satisfying the need to excel is evident.

Joan's second less dominant neurotic trend is to move away from people. It can be seen after she decided to fake her death and flew to Terremoto, Italy. She feels her privacy is at risk. The first reason for Joan becoming a detached person is because of her unreasonable accusation of Arthur. Joan is terrified when Fraser Buchanan threatens her with the information he got about her. She is afraid if Arthur finds out all information that Fraser has. Everything will be fallen apart, and Arthur will think of her as an unworthy and despicable person, which she has been feared all along.

The researcher believes that privacy is crucial for Joan. She even decides to detach herself from

Arthur because her privacy has been threatened. The decision to fake her death and fly to Terremoto must be problematic because of the idea of being far away from him. However, she is prompted by the situation that the best choice is to run her death plan.

In her new life in Terremoto, Italy, Joan feels reborn. She feels safe because she thinks nobody recognizes her and therefore, her privacy regarding her old life will remain secret. Nevertheless, Joan is not entirely secure as she has been in Terremoto with Arthur. There is always a possibility people may recognize her. Consequently, she has to make some efforts to make her less conspicuous and familiar such as wearing sunglasses and covering her hair with a scarf. She even introduces herself with a different name. She cuts her remarkable long hair. Joan also buries the wet clothes she wore when she was running her death scenario by drowning herself in Lake Ontario. She feels like she is burying her own dead body, but then she is reborn as a new person.

In Terremoto, Joan is isolating herself inside her flat. She only goes outside when she needs to buy groceries and to the post office. She is a little reluctant to get involved with the people around her. She is avoiding to endanger her new identity from being found out. Therefore, she remains independent and as detached as possible.

Joan's Neurotic Conflict

The predominant trend developed by Joan is the compliant type. It means Joan's security depends on the affection and approval from her partner, Arthur. Muriel Ivimey claimed that regardless of which trend is predominant, the other two neurotic trends have also developed, although they may be less conspicuous or less dominant (1946). In the previous part, it has been elaborated on the three neurotic trends developed by Joan. Consequently, it induces a conflict because they are incompatible with each other. If Joan shows her aggressiveness or detachment, it will endanger her predominant trend. There is a possibility to repress the less dominant trends, though they are still potential in putting the predominant trend at risk. The conflict between the predominant trend and the less dominant trends is likely subjecting Joan to

experience anxiety because the predominant trend's endangerment will make her defenseless. In other words, if she shows a tendency to become aggressive and detached, Joan will potentially lose Arthur's affection and approval only by which she can obtain a feeling of security.

Joan always has hesitations after she shows her tendency to become aggressive and detached. Once she shows her aggressiveness by openly voicing her disagreement and despisement, she becomes apologetic after all. Besides, when she decides to publish her poetry and tells Arthur about the great news, Joan's mind is filled with hesitation and uneasiness instead of being happy.

In the previous part, it has been proven that Joan also tends to move away from people. Faking her death and running away to Italy indicate that she wants to detach herself from people she is familiar with to protect her privacy. Nevertheless, it seems impossible for her to free herself from Arthur's control. It is not that Arthur himself can control Joan by far, but it is because Joan can never detach herself from Arthur. It is Arthur's affection that she needs. Her security depends on the presence of Arthur right beside her. The researcher can conclude that whenever the two less predominant trends appear, they only put Joan's safety in danger. For a neurotic like Joan, developing all three neurotic trends is dangerous because they cannot be reconciled. She has to choose one of them and repress the other two. Once she is stepping out of her predominant trend, she becomes defenseless.

Joan's Idealized Self-Image

In a world that is perceived as hostile and their self-confidence has been impaired, they have to develop defenses (neurotic trends) to cope with other people. All of their energies are directed toward preserving the neurotic trends; thus the effort to create their real selves is overridden (Ryckman, 1989). In line with this statement, Joan builds her idealized image because she needs to acquire a stable sense of identity. Her self-confidence has been impaired by various adverse conditions imposed by her parents, dancing teacher, and her friends. If favorable conditions surrounded

Joan, she would be able to relate herself with others based on her real feelings' spontaneity.

On the other hand, under her mother's domination, Joan gets used to the idea that she has to meet her mother's or others' standards. Joan's genuine feelings and desires are neglected or even abolished. Therefore, she has to develop neurotic trends in building a relationship with others, which induces neurotic conflict.

In the previous part, the researcher has claimed the tendency of moving toward people as Joan's predominant trend. Joan dictates herself to be completely inept, apologetic, vulnerable, modest, highly patient, and self-blaming to be accepted by people. It is very significant for her because in her perspective, her predominant trend is her only hope to gain security over anxiety. However, because Joan is entirely relying on her predominant trend to cope with others, all of her energies are directed to be totally compliant.

As stated by Horney (1950), developing trends as the way to deal with others will force people to neglect their genuine thoughts, feelings, and wishes. Consequently, Joan is dragged away from self-realization or growing according to her true self-image. Her chance of developing her true self is overridden. Therefore, the researcher concludes that idealized self-image has two main functions. The first is to solve Joan's neurotic conflict by strengthening her predominant trend to be firmer compared to the other two. The second function is to fulfill her longing for a hold or a feeling of identity. Despite all of the adverse conditions, poor self-confidence, and impulsive neurotic trends, Joan can gain a sense of power and significance by building an idealized self-image.

After she decided to fake her death and flew to Terremoto, Italy, Joan begins to recognize herself as a sensible girl, discreet, warm, honest, and confident, with soft green eyes, regular habits, and glowing chestnut hair. These qualities are actually the combination between her compliant tendency and her hidden desire of what kind of person she truly wants to become.

The idealized image's particular features are determined by which trend she has been developing (Horney, 1946). Because Joan develops the compliant type, her idealized image is likely

featured with qualities indicating her compliance. They are discreet, sensible, and warm. Another characteristic of an idealized image is its grandiosity. Consequently, the realization of the idealized image is often impossible. There are two grandiose images that Joan mentioned, which are honest and confident. Others may see them as regular qualities, but they are grandiose because of their impossibility. Being in Terremoto for the second time, Joan seems oblivious that the people there still remember who she is despite her disguise as another woman. Now it can be seen that her desire to be honest and confident is in contrast with her pretense of becoming another person. Joan's self-confidence has been impaired ever since she was a child. She could be defined as a confident woman if only she could feel just fine whenever people found it out.

CONCLUSION

According to the profound analysis in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that the leading character of *Lady Oracle*, Joan Elizabeth Delacourt, positively develops neurosis or is a neurotic person. This conclusion is based on the sequential analysis of the four basic neurosis elements: hostility and basic anxiety, neurotic trends, neurotic conflict, and idealized image.

During childhood, Joan has been experiencing various kinds of adverse conditions. The most prominent adverse conditions come from her mother: domination and authoritarian parenting, excessive expectation over physical appearance, lack of genuine warmth; love; and affection, physical punishment, and verbal abuse. Additionally, she has to also deal with her father's lack of real guidance and communication, weight discrimination from her dancing teacher, and friends' bullying. All of these are rooted in Joan's problem with her weight.

Joan's anxiety embarks from the unfavorable condition mentioned above. To allay her anxiety, she has to develop neurotic trends, which cause the emergence of neurotic conflict. This conflict is formed because each trend is equally compulsive and indiscriminate. Consequently, Joan has to create an idealized self-image to strengthen one predominant trend. Creating an idealized self-image

is also functioned to provide Joan with a sense of an intact identity. Living with anxiety and neurotic trends as the defense has made her lose the chance to grow in line with her true self and desire.

According to Joan's case, it is evident that social environment plays a paramount role in shaping a person's personality. If only Joan was surrounded by a supportive and affectionate environment, she could be a normal person who has no difficulty in relating herself with others. She could have many friends and be accepted by people without becoming overly compliant and subordinating herself. Additionally, a person who has anxiety is not necessarily growing up as a neurotic. A person is indicated as a neurotic if only he or she is stepping on the phase of developing neurotic trends to ally the anxiety.

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