

THE EMERGENCE OF DEATH INSTINCT DUE TO DULL LIFE
IN THE NOVEL *THE VIRGIN SUICIDES* BY JEFFREY EUGENIDES

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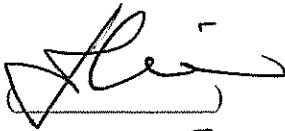
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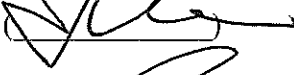


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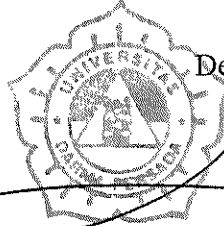

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PREFACE

The very first gratefulness is delivered to the Almighty, Allah SWT for the gracious mercy and tremendous blessing that enables me to finally complete this term paper entitled *The Emergence of Death Instinct Due to the Dull Life in the Novel the Virgin Suicides by Jeffrey Eugenides*. The term paper serves as a partial fulfillment for obtaining S-1 Degree in English Literature Program at University of Darma Persada.

I would like to express my special appreciation to Dean of Faculty of Letters, Mr.Syamsul Bahri, S.S, M.Si for his approval to this term paper. To the Head of English Department, Mr.Tommy Andrian, S.S, M.Hum for his permission to accomplishing this term paper. The latter also acts as my second supervisor, therefore, I also like to offer my gratitude for his time and guidance throughout the process of writing this term paper.

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I like to give my deepest appreciation to my beloved family. My parents, for their endless love, patience, and support. They have been the biggest supporters in my life and I can not thank them enough for that. My gratitude also goes to my grandmother, older sister, and younger brother who were always there for me no matter what. To my late niece, Kika, who passed away at the age of two, I miss you little angel. To my other niece and nephew, thank you for giving your aunty many reasons to smile and laugh.

I would also like to address my appreciation to my fellow comrades: Nisa, Deby, Ary, and Aning. Thank you very much for all the joy you guys bring to me during all the years we spent together. To Olla, Widia, Nando, and Agus, I

sincerely hope that all of you can finish your study soon. My gratitude also goes to my other friends and acquaintances in Unsada.

To my dearest friends: Dwi, Yenni, Fadilla, Nina, Nessia, Debby, Ella, and many else whose names I can not mentioned one by one, thank you so much for all your presence in my life. You guys have lighted my life, and I just want to say thank you for all the ups and downs throughout the time we spent together.

Last but not least, I like to offer my condolences and gratitude to one of my long time friend, Ulan, who passed away on January 18th, 2015. You were gone too soon, dear and I will be missing you. Thank you for everything.

I hope that this research will be beneficial for those who has interest in literature, especially in applying psychological approach in literary works. I am well aware that nobody is perfect, therefore constructive criticisms are welcome.

Jakarta, 23 February 2015



Ruri Novita Hastuti

ABSTRAK

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Judul : *The Emergence of Death Instinct Due to the Dull Life in the Novel the Virgin Suicides by Jeffrey Eugenides*

Penelitian ini membahas kemunculan naluri kematian yang tercerminkan oleh para karakter dalam novel The Virgin Suicides karangan Jeffrey Eugenides. Metode analisis yang digunakan adalah pendekatan sastra dengan unsur intrinsik, seperti konsep perwatakan, alur cerita, dan latar. Sedangkan unsur ekstrinsik melalui pendekatan psikologi menggunakan teori psikoanalisa dan naluri kematian oleh Sigmund Freud. Jenis penelitian ini adalah kualitatif, yaitu metode yang menggunakan bahan-bahan penelitian yang berasal dari novel itu sendiri sebagai sumber utama dan didukung oleh buku teori dan artikel yang terkait dengan konsep penelitian. Temuan dari penelitian ini adalah adanya hubungan antara lingkungan yang homogen dan kehidupan yang menjenuhkan memunculkan naluri kematian para karakter.

Kata Kunci: pendekatan sastra dan psikologi, naluri kematian, lingkungan homogen, kehidupan yang menjenuhkan.

ABSTRACT

Name : Ruri Novita Hastuti
Program of Study : Strata One (S-1) Degree of English Department
Title : *The Emergence of Death Instinct Due to the Dull Life in the Novel the Virgin Suicides by Jeffrey Eugenides.*

This research examines the emergence of death instinct which reflected through characters in the novel The Virgin Suicides by Jeffrey Eugenides. The used methods of analysis are literary approach through using intrinsic elements, such as characterization, plot, and setting. Meanwhile, the extrinsic element is through psychological approach by using psychoanalysis and death instinct theory by Sigmund Freud. The type of this research is qualitative which using the novel itself as the main source and other books or articles related as secondary source. The result of this research is the homogeneous environment and dull life bring the character's death instinct to the surface.

Keywords: literary and psychological approach, death instinct, homogeneous environment, dull life.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Research

Death is inevitable. That is one statement which I believe no one can deny. Every living creatures, including humans, will eventually die at some point. People live, do their best in their life, or the opposite, wasting their life away. Some become wildly successful, some become somewhat losers. These people with different achievement in life will eventually have the same route as their final destination, that is to die someday. No one knows when and how one will die. It just happens, like I said earlier, death is inevitable. There is also a concept of heaven and hell, which simply put if a person does good deeds while he lives then he gets to go to heaven, meanwhile when a person does bad deeds in his life then he goes to hell. This concept, in my opinion, is also a proof that people think about death conscious and unconsciously. A lot of them put big effort to do their best while they live in order to be able to get into heaven. A place that is always been told to be the nirvana after life, a place where anyone could sit back and enjoy their after life. While on the other hand, hell is a place where people who go there would suffer. The level of suffering there is allegedly above and beyond comparing to what happen in life.

Everyday in any countries, there are news regarding somebody's death which could be caused by natural cause or not. People are getting older then eventually die, people are getting murdered, and people commit suicide. Suicide is one form of death instinct which executed internally, and there are several known figures who did it, such as Heath Ledger, who took his own life after he played the character *The Joker* in the movie *The Dark Knight*. He was allegedly drown so deep into his character who was a cruel emotionless villain and I personally think that could possibly be one of the factors why he chose to end his own life. Other famous figure who quit his life by committed suicide was Robin Williams, a respected actor with a lot of acting experiences under his belt and was mostly known for his role in comedy films. He has a family and pretty decent life, but his death is unexpected and had shocked many people. There is no apparent reason on

why he did what he did. Thus, no one really knows what one thinks and experiences other than one self.

Suicide is the major event that lead the story of the novel entitled *The Virgin Suicides* written by Jeffrey Eugenides that I am going to analyze. The story of the novel revolves around five main characters, who are sisters and also in their teens who committed suicides one after another. There is no explicit explanation on why the girls did what they did. That is why I decided to give a shot and try to decode what are the main reasons which drove them to suicides and other things that related to this matter. Suicide is a part of death instinct. Generally, there are two types of death instinct, one that is executed internally, which the outcome is to harm oneself and the final product from it is suicide, while the other one is the one that is executed externally, which lead to aggression and a will to hurting someone else and the final product from it is murder. Like I mentioned earlier, no one can really understand what is going on in one's mind other than the person himself. A person does a skydiving for example, can be considered as an unconsciously attempt to commit suicide.

Jeffrey Kent Eugenides is the writer who responsible for the captivating novel *The Virgin Suicides* which first published in 1993. Eugenides was born in Detroit, Michigan on March 8, 1960. The novel *The Virgin Suicides* was his first ever novel to be published and has been adapted into a film directed by Sofia Coppola in 1999, six years after the novel first emerged into the world and starred by some well known actors today, like Kirsten Dunst and Josh Hartnett. The film was well received by the critics and that also boasted the novel itself, it caught mainstream attention and due to the new immense popularity, the novel has been reissued in 2009. Then in 2002, Eugenides published his other novel entitled *The Middlesex* which earned him Pulitzer Prize for fiction. Some Jeffrey Eugenides' other works are *The Marriage Plot*, *Air Mail*, *Find The Bad Guy*, *Extreme Solitude* and many else.

The Virgin Suicides revolves around the Lisbon sisters. The girls became a phenomenon due to the fact that each of them had committed suicide. The first one who did it is the youngest of them, Cecilia, by the age of thirteen. She had tried to kill herself by slitting her wrist but the paramedics were able to save her.

Then at some point she managed to end her life by jumping onto the fence from her window's room. Cecilia's death sparked more interest into the Lisbon family, the people were wondering what drove Cecilia to take her own life in such young age. The girls' parents, especially the mother, made a lot of rules that limited the girls' freedom. The Lisbon sisters were able to go outside only for school and go to church, other than that their parents did not give permission to them to enjoy their adolescence years. Since Cecilia's death, the situation at their house was getting more darker. In the end, the other remaining four girls followed their younger sister's footsteps by committing suicide.

Suicides which happened in the novel *The Virgin Suicides* by Jeffrey Eugenides relates closely to reality. There are numerous news regarding teenagers committing suicide. This is the reason why I chose the novel to analyze. I would like to know the reason that drove them towards death. Therefore, I use psychoanalysis and death instinct theory in order to be able to figure out the motives behind the characters' actions.

B. Identification of the Problem

Based on the background of the research I mentioned earlier, I would like to analyze some of the characters in the novel who reflected death instinct. These characters are responsible to carry out the story in the novel. Therefore, I would like to know more about the factors which shaped their personality and the reason behind their decision to execute their death instinct.

C. Limitation of the Problem

Based on the identification of the problem above, my theme assumption of the novel is the emergence of death instinct due to dull life. In order to prove it, I would analyze through intrinsic elements, such as characterization, setting, and plot. Other than that, I would also use extrinsic elements such as the concept of psychoanalysis and death instinct by Sigmund Freud as my source to analyze the content of the novel.

D. Formulation of the Problem

Based on the limitation I mentioned previously, I like to prove my theme assumption, therefore I formulate the problem with questions as follow:

1. How is the characterization of the main characters can reflect death instinct?
2. What are the factors that can cause the characters' death instinct?
3. Can the theme of the novel be constructed with the concept of psychoanalysis and death instinct by Sigmund Freud?

E. The Objectives of the Research

Based on the formulation of the problem the purpose of this research is to prove my theme assumption, and to be able to do that, I do steps as follows:

1. To analyze the characterization of the characters to prove that it reflected death instinct.
2. To analyze and describe which factors cause the characters' death instinct.
3. To analyze and construct the theme through the concept of psychoanalysis and death instinct by Sigmund Freud.

F. Method of the Research

The type of this research is qualitative method which according to E.G. Carmines and R.A. Zeller (2006), "*qualitative research is a research whose data are described in verbally and analyzed without using statistic technique.*" The novel entitled *The Virgin Suicides* by Jeffrey Eugenides is the main or essential data, while other books or articles related to this research functions as the secondary data.

G. Benefit of the Research

This research is for those who have interest analyzing the content of a novel through psychological approach in particular relating to psychological aspects of the main characters in the novel *The Virgin Suicides* by Jeffrey Eugenides and also in general daily life basis. It is also aimed for any students who also interested in doing their term paper with similar theme or concept. It is expected that the reader would gain further useful information relating to the subject in this

research. Other than that, it would be beneficial for those who have similar experience with the content.

H. Systematic Organization of the Research

Chapter I This chapter contains background of the research, identification of the problem, limitation of the problem, formulation of the problem, the objectives of research, framework of theories, method of research, benefits of research, and systematic organization of the research.

Chapter II This chapter contains extrinsic element that is the concept through psychological approaches which includes psychoanalysis and death instinct by Sigmund Freud.

Chapter III This chapter contains analysis and elaboration of the intrinsic elements through characterization, setting, and plot.

Chapter IV This Chapter contains the analysis and elaboration of theme, intrinsic, and extrinsic elements.

Chapter V This chapter contains the conclusion of this research.