



A Psychoanalytical Reading of Jordi Sierra i Fabra’s *Kafka and the Traveling Doll*

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Abstract

Drawing principally on Freudian classical psychoanalysis and Nathaniel Branden’s concept of self-esteem along with Susan Forward’s notion of toxic parents and Barbara De Angelis’s idea of emotional programming, this paper aims to cast light on Jordi Sierra i Fabra’s *Kafka and the Traveling Doll* (2006). According to Freud, the psyche consists of three parts the Id, Ego, and the Superego, and core issues define our being fundamental. In addition, this article uses modern psychoanalysis to examine characters’ behavior, especially Kafka. It will reveal that Kafka suffers from low self-esteem, which influences his behavior throughout the novel. It will also suggest that Kafka’s traumatic experiences in childhood psychologically incapacitate him. In addition, the article highlights and discusses several passages from the novel according to psychoanalytic theories, focusing on Kafka, Dora, Elsi, and the doll.

Key words: *Kafka and the Traveling Doll*; Classic psychoanalysis; Modern psychoanalysis; Core issues; Self-Esteem; Toxic parents; Emotional programming

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INTRODUCTION

Kafka and the Traveling Doll is one of Fabra’s most exciting works, published in 2006. It is the story of

Prague-born author Franz Kafka, who one day goes to Steglitz Park in Berlin and encounters a little girl (Elsi) who bursts into tears because of the loss of her doll (Brigitte). Kafka approaches and tells her that her doll is not lost but travelled. He introduces himself as the doll’s postman and brings several letters for the doll from different parts of the world. In the first letter, Brigitte apologizes for leaving her so suddenly, she informs her that farewells are sad, and she does not want to make her cry and informs her that she was in London. In the eighteenth letter, she informs that she was in Tanzania, fell in love, and engaged with Gustav, a tall and handsome man. In the last letter, she notifies that she and Gustav are husband and wife, pleased and name their first daughter Elsi, and she sends a doll as a gift for her. *Kafka and the Traveling Doll* can be analyzed in the light of psychological criticism whose assumptions and methods are established by Sigmund Freud (1856-1939). In this paper, one of Fabra’s most exciting works, *Kafka and the Traveling Doll*, will be analyzed according to specific Freudian concepts about the texts and with particular attention to exploring the novels’ main characters: Kafka, Dora, Elsi, and the doll. This paper also suggests how Freudian psychoanalysis develops through time to modern psychoanalysis.

TRACES OF ID, EGO AND SUPEREGO IN KAFKA AND THE TRAVELING DOLL

In *Kafka and the Traveling Doll*, the parts of the mind proposed by Freud, the Id, the Ego, and the Superego, are represented by three characters: Franz Kafka, Elsi and the doll. The Id is defined as being unconscious, uncontrolled, aggressive, and strong, having no moral norms and being ruled by sexual and violent urges that must be satisfied without caring about consequences. Freud defines the Id as “The power of the Id expresses the true purpose of the individual organism’s life. This consists in the satisfaction

of its innate needs" (An Outline of Psychoanalysis 30). The oddity of the Id can be associated with Elsi's behavior since she is described by Kafka when he saw her losing her dolls, "There she stood, crying her heart out, so distraught that she looked as if she wore all the woes and worries of the world on her face" (i Fabra a). Elsi as a child who is "crying her heart out" "distraught" and "looked as if she wore all the woes and worries of the world on her face" well demonstrates children's misery when separated from pleasure, that is the result of staying away from satisfaction. Furthermore, she is soon judged by Kafka as uncontrollable when staying away from pleasure, which has negative consequences. For example, when he approaches her, he sees, "She was wrestling with her grief, trying to come to terms with her new circumstances" (i Fabra d). This passage bespeaks that when the Id is not gratified, the consequence is a disposition of tension and anxiety. Lois Tyson claims that "The id is devoted solely to the gratification of prohibited desires of all kinds – desire for power, for sex, for amusement, for food – without an eye to consequences" (25).

Similarly, Elsi's Id starts to be high and dominant, which makes Kafka sure whatever Elsi does, she does not forget her pleasure. Kafka knows when waiting for Elsi in a park, "in the morning she would wake up and, whatever she did –whether she played, did her homework, went to school or whatever else made up her daily routine, when the time came, she would run to look for him in Steglitz Park" (i Fabra d). Elsi seeks self-interest and waits for letters from the doll that motivate the instinct of her gratification under any circumstances. By the same token, Elsi's behavior asserts the feature of the Id, which seeks only pleasure, not reality. Kafka brings letters for Elsi from different parts of the world daily, Elsi eagerly waits for the satisfaction that comes from letters; she never asks how they quickly arrive, "There were no awkward questions about the amazing speed with which the letters reached Berlin, regardless of where they were posted. No doubts or queries" (i Fabra j). Elsi's behavior motivates her Id that seeks pleasure. Since they met immediately, she did not ask many questions.

In a similar vein, Elsi's Id is dominant, and she achieves her gratification through it. When she comes a little late to the park because her mother is sick, she says to Kafka, "Oh, Mr. Postman, I'm so sorry, really, I am!" exclaimed the little girl, almost knocking him over as she ran up to him, "Mummy's not very well and I had to... But you are still here, I'm not too late!" she said, her eyes sparkling, "Where is today's letter from?" (i Fabra l). This passage shows that Id directs Elsi's behavior, which struggles to gain satisfaction in any circumstances. Since the postman's letters, which come from the doll, are the source of her pleasure, she is ready to visit the postman in any condition. Similarly, Elsi cannot be logical and considers what is moral. When Kafka comes to the park

fifteen minutes late, she doesn't ask about his delay what is important to her is the letters that her doll sends, "What really mattered to her were the letters. She could see the envelope peeping out of her postman's coat pocket, which was the only thing that interested her" (i Fabra o). Elsi's attitude and behavior depict the Id, which seeks pleasure under any circumstance; she does not care about what is moral or appropriate; the only thing she is gratified with is pleasure.

In contrast, Kafka's character is the opposite of Elsi since he is well-mannered and civilized, representing the Superego, a part of the mind determined for its morality, religiosity, parental and social prohibitions, and disapproval of misconduct. Freud describes Superego as "The long period of childhood, during which the growing human being lives in dependence upon his parents, leaves behind it a precipitate, which forms within his ego a special department in which this parental influence is prolonged. It has received the name of super-ego" (Psychoanalysis 28). These characteristics stand in stark contrast to the Id. Kafka encounters Elsi and her Id in the park, who always look for pleasure. Kafka wants to leave Elsi, but he stops to figure out the reasons for her crying, "what really would make matters worse would be for him irresponsibly to walk away and leave her in the middle of the park" (i Fabra a). The consciousness, considered an element of the Superego that comes into being in childhood by parents' advice and does not let Kafka, the representative of the Superego, leave the little girl with her grief in the middle of the park.

Moreover, Kafka represents disapproval of misconduct, a characteristic of the Superego that originates from childhood by parental advice. Kafka judges Elsi's mother based on his conscience "how could any responsible mother, however vigilant and careful, allow her children to play alone in the park, even if it was a peaceful, beautiful park like Steglitz?" (i Fabra b). Everybody's conscience is constructed in his childhood by his parents, according to psychoanalysis, and the parents make the child distinguish good from evil and judge people based on the behavior that gets from his parents. The Superego is in direct opposition to the Id. While the Id, which is looking for pleasure without an eye to consequences, the Superego takes responsibility and tries to take care. When Kafka encounters Elsi while she is crying, he can let go of her, but since he is civilized, he could not, "All he had to do was make an excuse, say 'I'm sorry', and he could go home again. Or offer a few words of advice, such as 'Go back home, little girl.' It was as simple as that. Why does the pain of a child affect us so powerfully?" (i Fabra b). This passage shows that Superego consciously or unconsciously directs our behavior.

Similarly, Kafka's behavior toward Elsi emphasizes the role of the Superego on responsibility and care for Children. When Kafka takes responsibility for bringing letters from the doll for Brigitte, "He was caught fast in

a trap from which he was powerless to escape, and now that he had started to play the game he couldn't quit. If he didn't show up at the park the next day, it would only make matters worse" (i Fabra i). This passage signals to us that parents are responsible for children's personalities and need to care for them. The Superego takes the responsibility to direct the Id and guide it through the process and level of life. Kafka reads the letter to Elsi, he makes her familiar with the development of personality "Well, that's what Brigitte has done. She has reached the age when dolls need to become emancipated" (i Fabra c). It is the Superego's task to make the Id familiar with another stage of life; Kafka telling Elsi that Brigitte "reached the age that needs to become emancipated" emphasizes the background of the development of personality and demonstrates how children pass from Id to Ego and the Superego stage.

In addition, Kafka's behavior and attitudes depict society and religion's role that form a large part of our Superego. Kafka has promised to bring letters for Elsi from Brigitte, he finds himself in a challenging situation that asks God to help him, "Heaven help me!" he exclaimed, cupping his face in his hands" (i Fabra d). Kafka begs, "Heaven help me!" demonstrates that our society, religion, and parental advice establish our Superego and rely on them in hard times.

Brigitte shows the Ego because of her rationality, her pursuit of the natural world, and her endeavors, evidently conscious, to control her natural position. Freud defines Ego concerning the Id as "by gaining control over the demands of the instincts, by deciding whether they shall be allowed to obtain satisfaction, by postponing that satisfaction to times and circumstances favorable in the external world or by suppressing their excitations completely" (Psychoanalysis 28). Brigitte endeavors to introduce Elsi to the real world. In the first letter between Brigitte, delivered by the postman (Franz Kafka), and Elsi, she says, "Dear Elsi, first of all, I want to apologize for having gone away so suddenly without saying goodbye. I'm truly sorry and hope you are not angry with me. Sometimes we do things without thinking, or we react unexpectedly to what our instinct tells us to do and, without wanting to, we cause others pain" (i Fabra g). Brigitte's "goodbye" suggests it presents the role of Ego and the time when it comes to exist, it shows that a person should not be directed based on her Id, which always seeks for pleasure, but according to the actual principal, which is apart from happiness. In addition, Brigitte demonstrates the role of the Ego, which follows the accurate world, when she addresses Elsi and says, "For each one of us, there comes a time when we have to leave our parents' house so that we can travel, discover life and the world, and perhaps find a wonderful future" (i Fabra c). Brigitte states every one of us can "discover life and the world" Brigitte's statement bespeaks her rationality, which is the characteristic of the Ego.

Similarly, Brigitte endeavors to control the natural position and makes Elsi get used to gaining control over the demand of instinct. Brigitte sends her first letter, she tells Elsi, "The thing is, farewells are sad, and I didn't want you to cry or try to persuade me to stay with you a little longer. You might even have refused to let me go, and, you see, I really had to" (i Fabra g). Moreover, Brigitte states to Elsi, "You might even have refused to let me go, and, you see, I really had to", this statement indicates that Ego helps control the drive of satisfaction and provides an appropriate direction for an individual's id desire. Brigitte depicts reasonableness through her behavior when she tells Elsi, "I hope that you are being very good now that I'm not there to keep an eye on you, and that you are eating properly and taking care not to upset." (i Fabra j). By telling Elsi "I'm not there to keep an eye on you, and that you are eating properly and taking care not to upset," Brigitte tells Elsi to direct her life according to real-world, not her instinct drive. Besides the Id, Ego, and Superego, Freud represents how core issues are the source of our self-destructive behavior, which can be applied to Kafka and Dora's behavior that will be discussed below.

CORE ISSUES: SELF-ESTEEM

Kafka suffers from poor physical condition throughout the novel. He struggles with Tuberculosis. Kafka's physical health is feeble, and his psychological health is not promising either. Plenty of evidence reveals Kafka's psychological core issue. Core issues are "those deeply rooted, psychological problems that are source of our self-destructive behavior" (Tyson 16). Kafka's sort of behavior suggests a type of core issue called low self-esteem. Self-esteem has two primary definitions. Firstly, self-esteem is the "confidence in our ability to think, confidence in our ability to cope with the basic challenges of life" (Branden, *Six Pillars of Self-esteem* 4), and secondly, "confidence in our right to be successful and happy, the feeling of being worthy, deserving, entitled to assert our needs and wants, achieve our values, and enjoy the fruits of our efforts" (4). Self-esteem determines our competencies in life, "how we operate in the workplace, how we deal with people, how high we are likely to rise, how much we are likely to achieve—and, in the personal realm, with whom we are likely to fall in love, how we interact with our spouse, children, and friends, what level of personal happiness we attain" (5). In other words, people with low self-esteem struggle with routine life.

Kafka seems to be incapable of dealing with daily affairs. When he visits Steglitz Park, he comes across Elsi. Elsi looks for her lost doll. Kafka seems utterly desperate and has no idea how to handle the situation, "He paused, not knowing what to do. Children were to be approached with caution, they were highly dangerous beings, laughing

and crying by turns, a cocktail of bubbling excitement and energy, endlessly asking questions and absolutely exhausting. It was not by chance that he had no children" (I Fabra a). People with low self-esteem seek, Branden notes, "the safety of the familiar and undemanding. Confining oneself to the familiar and undemanding serves to weaken self-esteem" (Self-esteem 6). People with low self-esteem cannot cope with the difficulties of life, even the basic ones.

Kafka approaches the little girl and tries to give her some comfort, however he finds himself in a confusing situation and wonders whether to leave or not, "Should he leave? He was trapped in the invisible circle surrounding the distressed protagonist of the scene. But, as for staying, what good would it do? He had no idea what to say to a little girl. Especially to a little girl who was crying because she had just lost her doll" (i Fabra b). A person with a healthy level of self-esteem is able to "respond to challenges and opportunities more resourcefully and more appropriately" (Branden, *Self-esteem* 5). However, Kafka's inability to deal with the situation reveals his low self-esteem, "The lower our self-esteem, the more muddled, evasive, and inappropriate our communications are likely to be, because of uncertainty about our own thoughts and feelings and/or anxiety about the listener's response" (6). Kafka's paralyzing psychological issue impedes his communication skills.

Kafka calls himself a "dolls' postman" (i Fabra c) and persuades Elsi to bring her a letter. Elsi stops crying and happily looks forward to receiving a letter from her doll, "She might be just a little girl, but she was certainly not going to forget about that letter. She would go home and spend the rest of the day thinking about it. All through lunch and supper, and later, when she went to bed, she would still be thinking of it. Nothing else mattered to her. Without Brigitte, all she had was the letter" (i Fabra d). However, a few moments later, Kafka overwhelms with fear. Kafka's anxiety is because he promises Elsi to bring her a letter, "It was only then that Franz Kafka realized what he had done. "Heaven helps me!" he exclaimed, cupping his face in his hands. He had just got himself into a fine mess! He was afraid of nothing and nobody except a little girl barely three feet tall who had touched him with her abject tears and soulful eyes" (i Fabra e). Despite being a writer, Kafka feels desperate to write a letter to a little girl, "He was a writer. But he had never before written a letter from a travelling doll to the little girl whose playmate she had been until they were parted" (i Fabra e). The way Kafka deals with the situation reveals his low self-esteem. Self-esteem consists of two parts, self-efficacy, and self-respect. (Branden, *Self-esteem* 26) Kafka seems to lack sufficient self-efficacy; as Branden says, "Self-efficacy means confidence in the functioning of my mind, in my ability to think, understand, learn, choose, and make decisions; confidence in my ability to understand the facts of reality that fall within the sphere

of my interests and needs; self-trust; self-reliance" (26). Kafka doubts his writing abilities and feels incapable of writing a fictional letter for Elsi. Kafka's lack of self-esteem is tantalizing and deprives him of functioning to full potential.

Moreover, it seems that Kafka lacks self-respect as well. Branden says, "Self-respect means assurance of my value; an affirmative attitude toward my right to live and to be happy; comfort in appropriately asserting my thoughts, wants, and needs; the feeling that joy and fulfillment are my natural birthright" (26). Kafka's lack of self-respect shows itself when Kafka decides to visit his neighbor. Kafka's relationship with his neighbors suggests that he is not a friendly man at all; "It was the first time that her neighbour had visited her or shown any inclination to talk to her" (i Fabra f). A careful examination of Kafka's behavior suggests he is isolated and tries to avoid unnecessary connections with people. For instance, after visiting his neighbor, Kafka returns home, and the first thing his partner asks is about his conversation with the neighbor: "I thought I heard you talking to someone. Yes, I was talking to Mrs Hermann. That was very sociable of you. I wanted... He wondered if he should tell her about having stopped to inspect a doll" (I Fabra f). Kafka's poor social communication suggests his low self-respect. As Branden states; "The experience of self-respect makes possible a benevolent, non-neurotic sense of community with other individuals, the fellowship of independence and mutual regard—as contrasted with either alienated estrangement from the human race, on the one hand, or mindless submergence into the tribe, on the other" (*Self-esteem* 27). As Branden suggests, a man with healthy self-respect should be approachable, socially open, and friendly.

Kafka's poor self-respect comes to the surface when he cannot express himself and share his ideas with his partner Dora, "Franz Kafka kissed the corner of her mouth. It might be rather complicated to explain, and Dora might laugh or think he was some crazy Good Samaritan for little girls who lost their dolls in the parks of Berlin. He preferred to take his time in all things. And now it was time to do what he felt he must. (i Fabra f) Kafka cannot "appropriately assert" his thoughts, even with Dora. He is afraid of being judged or mocked by his partner. Moreover, Kafka feels unworthy of love. Somewhere deep in his unconscious is embedded; I am unworthy of love. We trace this idea when Elsi tries to show her gratitude and kisses Kafka. After a while, one night, when Kafka struggles to sleep, he ruminates over Elsi's kiss:

That night, as he lay in bed, he realized that he was going to have difficulty getting to sleep. And it was not simply because of the letter he had written during the day. It was because of the kiss Elsi had given him. He touched his cheek. What was it that made a kiss from a child so special? Elsi had kissed him on the cheek before running off to play with her friend. It was given with the same spontaneity and affection as the first time:

a warm, unreservedly friendly kiss. A kiss he had earned. Can anyone deserve a kiss, he wondered? (i Fabra k)

Kafka's thoughts reveal his deep psychological issues. Branden illuminates this behavior and states, "if an individual lacked a basic sense of self-respect, felt unworthy or undeserving of the love or respect of others, unentitled to happiness, fearful of asserting thoughts, wants, or needs —again we would recognize a self-esteem deficiency" (Self-esteem 26). Feeling unworthy of love and affection is a symptom of low self-esteem. Despite his efforts to comfort Elsi, Kafka thinks he does not deserve pure childish gratitude from Elsi.

DORA

Kafka is not the only character with psychological issues. Once Kafka wants to visit Elsi as usual, Dora asks for company Kafka next time; however, Kafka disagrees, and Dora's reaction to rejection reveals psychological issues; Dora hugs him and kisses his tousled head. Franz Kafka felt her gentle touch and heard her whispering in his ear. "Tomorrow I'll come to the park with you and meet the little lady. No, I'd rather you didn't. Do you want her all to yourself? It's not that. Are you sure we are talking about a little girl?" (i Fabra m). Dora's question suggests she is suspicious. She thinks Kafka is lying, and he dates a woman. Psychoanalytically, this type of behavior is called "fear of abandonment" and "fear of betrayal" (Tyson 16). Fear of abandonment means "the unshakable belief that our friends and loved ones are going to desert us (physical abandonment) or don't really care about us (emotional abandonment)" (16). In addition, fear of betrayal means "the nagging feeling that our friends and loved ones can't be trusted, for example, can't be trusted not to lie to us, not to laugh at us behind our backs, or in the case of romantic partners, not to cheat on us by dating others" (16). Moreover, according to evidence, it is probable that Dora also suffers from low self-esteem. We can guess Dora's level of self-esteem by looking at Kafka's self-esteem. Branden states that:

Low self-esteem seeks low self-esteem in others—not consciously, to be sure, but by the logic of that which leads us to feel we have encountered a "soul mate." The most disastrous relationships are those between persons who think poorly of themselves; the union of two abysses does not produce a height. (*Self-esteem*, 7)

People with low self-esteem tend to choose poor love choices. Since Kafka's self-esteem is low, Dora's self-esteem is probably low as reasonably.

ROOTS OF KAFKA'S PSYCHOLOGICAL ISSUES

As already mentioned, this study investigates novel characters and casts light on their psychological issues.

Here, we face a question, why would the novel's characters, especially Kafka, suffer from psychological problems? Modern psychoanalysis can answer this question. The answer lies in early childhood. The novel's writer seems to be fully aware of Kafka's childhood experiences, and his characterization reflects real Kafka. Kafka provides clues about his childhood in Letter to His Father (1919). In his letter, Kafka reveals his traumatic childhood experiences. Kafka writes the letter to his father, Hermann. Kafka's descriptions of his father suggest that he is a toxic parent. A toxic parent is a parent, Forward asserts, "whose negative patterns of behavior are consistent and dominant in a child's life" (, Toxic Parents 5). In the letter, Kafka states about the life-long influence of his father:

I'm not going to say, of course, that I have become what I am only as a result of your influence. That would be very much exaggerated (and I am indeed inclined to this exaggeration). It is indeed quite possible that even if I had grown up entirely free from your influence, I still could not have become a person after your own heart. I should probably have still become a weakly, timid, hesitant, restless person, neither Robert Kafka nor Karl Hermann, but yet quite different from what I really am, and we might have got on with each other excellently. (*Letter*)

Kafka does not entirely blame his father for psychological issues; however, he does not forgive him either. Kafka compares his father with other relatives and finds them more approachable than his father, "in so far as I can compare you with Uncle Philipp, Ludwig, and Heinrich. That is odd, and here I don't see quite clear either. After all, they were all more cheerful, fresher, more informal, more easygoing, less severe than you" (Letter). Moreover, Kafka's father is not the only abuser and toxic parent. His mother is also a poisonous parent; Kafka states, "I am sure that Mother spoiled me too, but I cannot believe I was particularly difficult to manage; I cannot believe that a kindly word, a quiet taking by the hand, a friendly look, could not have got me to do anything that was wanted of me" (Letter). Parents of this kind are toxic since they are "Like a chemical toxin, the emotional damage inflicted by these parents' spreads throughout a child's being, and as the child grows, so does the pain" (Forward, Parents 5). Kafka's father is an abuser, and his mother is emotionally incapable of showing affection; they are both toxic parents.

Having toxic parents inflicts severe psychological damage that usually lasts until death. People with psychological issues have to undergo long-term therapy to recover. One of the major issues that toxic parents target is children's self-esteem; Forward claims that "Whether adult children of toxic parents were beaten when little or left alone too much, sexually abused or treated like fools, overprotected or overburdened by guilt, they almost all suffer surprisingly similar symptoms: damaged self-esteem, leading to self-destructive behavior" (Forward, Toxic Parents 6). As mentioned earlier, Kafka suffers from low self-esteem,

and he knows who is responsible for his sense of worthlessness and low self-esteem:

That was only a small beginning, but this feeling of being nothing that often dominates me (a feeling that is in another respect, admittedly, also a noble and fruitful one) comes largely from your influence. What I would have needed was a little encouragement, a little friendliness, a little keeping open of my road, instead of which you blocked it for me, though of course with the good intention of making me take another road. (*Letter*)

Kafka blames his father and believes that Hermann makes him feel worthless. Psychoanalytically, Kafka is right. Psychologists maintain that children who are grown in a toxic atmosphere with parent's incapable of showing affection feels the same way, "In one way or another, they almost all feel worthless, unlovable, and inadequate" (Forward, *Toxic Parents* 6). Toxic parents can abuse children physically and verbally.

Kafka claims that his father barely abuses him physically; however, the way he treats Kafka is more painful than physical abuse. Kafka relates one of the most tormenting moments of his life:

There is only one episode in the early years of which I have a direct memory. You may remember it, too. One night I kept on whimpering for water, not, I am certain, because I was thirsty, but probably partly to be annoying, partly to amuse myself. After several vigorous threats had failed to have any effect, you took me out of bed, carried me out onto the *pavlatche*,* and left me there alone for a while in my nightshirt, outside the shut door. I am not going to say that this was wrong—perhaps there was really no other way of getting peace and quiet that night—but I mention it as typical of your methods of bringing up a child and their effect on me. I dare say I was quite obedient afterward at that period, but it did me inner harm. (*Letter*)

Kafka states his father seldom uses physical abuse. However, he is a professional in verbal abuse. Psychologists maintain that never underestimate the power of words, "Insulting names, degrading comments, and belittling criticism can give children extremely negative messages about themselves, messages that can have dramatic effects on their future well-being" (Forward, *Toxic Parents* 92). There are two types of verbal abusers: "directly" and "indirect" verbal abusers. (93) Direct verbal abusers are those "who attack directly, openly, viciously degrading their children. They may call their children stupid, worthless, or ugly" (93). Indirect abusers "are more indirect, assailing the child with a constant barrage of teasing, sarcasm, insulting nicknames, and subtle put-downs. These parents often hide their abuse behind the facade of humor" (93). Kafka states that his father uses indirect verbal abuse:

Your extremely effective rhetorical methods in bringing me up, which never failed to work with me, were: abuse, threats, irony, spiteful laughter, and—oddly enough—self-pity. I cannot recall your ever having abused me directly and in downright abusive terms. Nor was that necessary; you had so many other methods, and besides, in talk at home and particularly at the shop the words of abuse went flying around me in such swarms, as they were flung at other people's heads, that as a little boy I was

sometimes almost stunned and had no reason not to apply them to myself too, for the people you were abusing were certainly no worse than I was and you were certainly not more displeased with them than with me. And here again was your enigmatic innocence and inviolability; you cursed and swore without the slightest scruple; yet you condemned cursing and swearing in other people and would not have it. (*Letter*)

Kafka demonstrates that his father is a professional verbal abuser. He also accompanies verbal abuse with threatening:

You reinforced abusiveness with threats and this applied to me too. How terrible for me was, for instance, that "I'll tear you apart like a fish," although I knew, of course, that nothing worse was to follow (admittedly, as a little child I didn't know that), but it was almost exactly in accord with my notions of your power, and I saw you as being capable of doing this too. (*Letter*)

Kafka also suggests how his father uses rhetorical abusing skills to smash him. His father uses irony with a smile at the end:

You put special trust in bringing up children by means of irony, and this was most in keeping with your superiority over me. An admonition from you generally took this form: "Can't you do it in such-and-such a way? That's too hard for you, I suppose. You haven't the time, of course?" and so on. (*Letter*)

Parents play a crucial role in children's psychological health. Humans, at an early age, are extremely susceptible. Psychologists believe that psychological health shapes from birth until the end of adolescence.

Barbara de Angelis believes that all humans develop psychological memory. She calls it "emotional programming," which develops early. Emotional programming is highly affected by primary caretakers (parents, etc.).

Your emotional programming is simply a set of decisions and beliefs you made about yourself, others, and the world in general when you were growing up. Each day that you are alive, you collect experiences, and each experience helps you form decisions about yourself, about people, and about life. In the same way you would program a computer with basic information, so you program your mind with these beliefs. For the rest of your life this 'program' affects how you think and behave. (*Are You the One for Me? Knowing Who's Right and Avoiding Who's Wrong* 47)

De Angelis states that a human child acquires fifty percent of "emotional programming" from birth until age five. (48) And gets another thirty percent from five to eight years old. (48) Humans are ninety-five percent programmed when they reach eighteen years old. (48) When a child is raised in a non-toxic atmosphere with psychologically healthy parents, the child will probably develop healthy emotional programming. Otherwise, parents ruin their children's emotional programming. There is a decision for every scenario that might happen through the child's emotional programming period. For instance, when a child faces the situation of "dad molested me" (50), the decision of "I'm bad and dirty and men who love me control me" (50) is inscribed in the emotional

programming. Another example would be the situation of “Dad never showed affection or praised me” (50), which leads to the decision of “I’m not lovable-I have to work hard to get people to love me” (50). Kafka’s toxic father affects His emotional programming.

We suggested that Kafka’s psychological condition is poor. Fabara is also aware of Kafka’s psychological health. He portrays Kafka’s issues skillfully and demonstrates Kafka’s character as real as possible. We also traced the source of Kafka’s psychological issues. The clues lead us to Kafka’s childhood. The result of the discovery is not surprising. Kafka’s father is a man worthy of blame and responsible for psychological issues.

VICIOUS CYCLE

In addition, we can pose another question. Why would Kafka’s father treat him in such a way? What makes a father fall into such apathy towards his son? What makes a father incapable of showing affection toward his son? Branden answers this question, “Students of child development know that a child who is treated with respect tends to internalize that respect and then treat others with respect—in contrast to a child who is abused, internalizes self-contempt, and grows up reacting to others out of fear and rage” (Self-esteem 48). People, who are psychologically healthy, treat others with benevolence; they are approachable, trustworthy, and friendly. Imagine how sick could be a man like Kafka’s father who treats him in such way, “If I feel centered within myself, secure with my own boundaries, confident in my right to say yes when I want to say yes and no when I want to say no, benevolence is the natural result. There is no need to fear others, no need to protect myself behind a fortress of hostility” (48). The way each person treats others is a scale for measuring his psychological health:

Empathy and compassion, no less than benevolence and cooperativeness, are far more likely to be found among persons of high self-esteem than among low; my relationship to others tends to mirror and reflect my relationship to myself. Commenting on the admonition to love thy neighbor as thyself, longshoreman-philosopher Eric Hoffer remarks somewhere that the problem is that this is precisely what people do: Persons who hate themselves hate others. The killers of the world, literally and figuratively, are not known to be in intimate or loving relationship to their inner selves. (48)

A psychologically empty person cannot fulfill others. Kafka’s father never shows affection towards him because he never received affection either. Someone who does not love himself is not capable of loving others. The sick father makes his child sick. The vicious cycle continues generation by generation. The cycle breaks when someone recovers from psychological issues.

CONCLUSION

This paper examined Freud’s psychoanalysis. Freud established the pillars of psychoanalysis. Although his theories are not flawless, he paved the way for the development of modern psychoanalysis. The paper’s findings represent that Elsi, Brigitte, and Kafka demonstrate the Id, Ego, and Superego in Fabra’s novel. The Id that is associated with the character of Elsie explicitly demonstrates its energy and impulsiveness. Elsie wishes to discharge her need regardless of any possible consequence. The superego, which is distinctive for its parental and social prohibitions and disapproval of misconduct, is well dependent on the character of Kafka, who tries to soothe the little girl and guide her in a good way. The Ego contributes to the doll’s character because it depicts her rationality and attachment to the real world. In addition, the paper examined Fabra’s characters - Kafka and Dora. It suggested that Kafka and Dora have psychological issues. Kafka’s self-esteem is extremely low, which paralyzes his life. We also traced Kafka’s source of low self-esteem. Kafka’s traumatic experiences in childhood affected his self-esteem.

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