

# The Analysis of Freudian Elements in *Hurry On Down*

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**Abstract:** The paper attempts to present a tentative study of John Wain's *Hurry On Down* in view of Sigmund Freud's theory for the purpose of exploring Lumley's psychological process. In *Hurry On Down*, there are many Freudian elements such as the libidinal energy, illusion, and anxiety; etc. These elements embodies the worldviews towards love. His two processes of falling in love reflect the two different attitudes towards love and morality. Charles Lumley's personal experience after graduation is constantly a process of knowing himself, self-fulfillment and self-realization. In this process his id, ego and superego conflict with each other. Eventually, it can be concluded that human being exists in the society, and you cannot escape the society you belong to. In order to live, you must learn to adapt to the society even if you don't like, even hate the society. Because human beings live in the society, and you have no choice.

**Keywords:** Psychoanalysis, Anxiety, Libido, Illusion, Superego

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## 1. Introduction

In the 1950s, a group of new literary army emerges—"Angry Young Men". This novel of John Wain is the first successful work of "Angry Young Men". The hero of the novel is at loose ends and uncertain about future. He swears to get rid of the control of money and status, and refuses the conveniences of climbing up that the education provides him. At last he bitterly discovers his trying of getting out of the society ends up with failure. This novel presents a series of truthful pictures of British society, which has profound realistic meaning. [1]

This article intends to undertake a psychoanalytic study of *Hurry Down On* in the light of Sigmund Freud's theory of the structures of mind.

## 2. Libido

Freud defined the term *libido* psychoanalytically in an addition, written in 1915, to *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905d): "We have defined the concept of libido as a quantitatively variable force which could serve as a measure of processes and transformations occurring in the field of sexual excitation". In *Group Psychology and the Analysis of*

*the Ego* (1921c), he further developed this concept: "Libido is an expression taken from the theory of the emotions. We call by that name the energy, regarded as a quantitative magnitude (though not at present actually measurable), and of those instincts which have to do with all that may be comprised under the word "love" [2].

The "libido theory" is present throughout Freud's works, of the notion of "psychical libido," as synonym of "psychical affect". This draft dates from June 1894—that is to say, before the appearance of Albert Moll's book, *Untersuchung über die Libido sexualis*, from which Freud claimed to have borrowed it. The theory of the libido was constantly revised and remodeled from three main angles: the developmental, the metapsychological (then associated with the theory of the instincts and the dynamic and economic points of view), and the psychopathological.

In related works, libido is a node, an indispensable dark line, a supporting point in the related works from the creation of works and the reader, which connects the author, the work and the readers together. This power we call it appetite of sex. [3] It powers the libido, formed in the works, and this appetite is recessive, including the author, stimulated by the readers. It has many layers, which includes the relationship between it and the author, among the characters, and also among the

readers, the author, and the inner relationship. Just because of the existence of this power, it creates the agglomerating power centered by libido, ultimately he joins the author and the reader together. That is to say, the author usually takes the libido, or takes the libido subconsciously to create works, so naturally the appetite will be formed in the works. This inducing libido for the author is the original power of the creation of works.

### 2.1. Lumley's Libido to Shelia

Lumley not only has all the qualities of the ego, but also is a hard proof of Freud's "Libido Hypothesis". According to Freud, libido is a kind of sexual energy, which may exist in at least three ways. First, the original lust is to be adjusted and overcome with the force of reason inside the psychological fabric, i.e. that of ego and superego. This is commonly seen in places where asceticism and established civilization prevail. Second, as usually done by artists, the desires are transferred to other objects, or sublimated to artistic images and decent spiritual products of humanity. Third, the libido is cast upon the opposite sex, which turns out to be the most primitive and easiest to carry out. Sometimes libido would retreat to ego again when such desire is not fulfilled. The failure in love affairs that Lumley has experienced adequately exhibits the third libido-type procedure as repression, projection, and regression.

The love towards Shelia is a definite proof of the existence of libido, she is his first lover, and we know this kind of lust for living with her is so strong that in order to meet her, he had to face the sister and brother-in-law he doesn't like. They are always trying to "help" her. She really hates this kind of help.

"In a swirl of resentment Charles saw the faces of those who had 'tried to help him': and behind the faces flickered a radiance, the color of dawn on snow-capped hills, that might (he suddenly knew) have been his life if he had been left alone to make it without 'guidance': if all the people who had cloaked their possessive fumbling under the words 'trying to help you' had been, by a miracle, persuaded to leave him in peace. And now she spoke, once again, of repayment!" [4].

Reason tells himself he couldn't marry Shelia, because Charles Lumley doesn't belong to the bourgeoisie Shelia is involved in. Reason tells him to do that. "I can't marry Robert!" "No more Shelia".

When the love towards Veronica can't continue, his desires are transferred to another girl who works in a hospital, and he really enjoys this kind of warmth successfully, here libido finds the suitable place to cast upon. Though this kind of likeness couldn't be called love, Lumley has his own words to explain that. 'Why shouldn't there be more than one way of loving someone?' he demanded. 'And why shouldn't one way be better than another? For that matter, why shouldn't one way be hateful and damaging? — and another healing, helpful, wonderful?' [4] Here the love towards Veronica in the past is almost forgotten. The repression is released successfully, and his libido is projected to Lora.

### 2.2. Lumley's Libido to Veronica

When Lumley really falls in love with Veronica that is a period that libido fully finds the object to project. "The image of the dark head and oval face had been particularly obsessive and cruel for some days past, and he had almost reached the stage of deciding on some course of action, however desperate. He was revolving a few ideas as the bicycle creaked and cranked its way between the sodden hedges. Apply to Mr. Roderick for a job-work fantastically hard-become managing director with the social entrée into the Roderick household-carry off the niece in legitimate courtship? The furrowed lines of his brow relaxed into a gentle sneer as the foolish notion unrolled itself. Even apart from his temperamental inability to rise to the top in an industrial concern, or even to get himself employed in one, there was the impossibility, even at the stage of his agony and despair, of swallowing the last hard kernel of his pride, and admitting that the life of a Tharkles was preferable; besides, he could hardly have become an important figure in the firm in less than ten years, by which time the girl would be safely matched, leaving him with the alternatives of walking out of the job or staying to witness the hateful complacency of the successful suitor." [4].

## 3. Illusion

Illusion is an error experienced by someone who is misled by the nature of evidence or the seductive appearance of something that deceives. The deceiver may be personified (Descartes's "evil genius") or limited to a physical or physiological cause (the illusions of the senses), or even an ontological structure (the Platonic myth of the cave). However, the subject can create his own illusion by taking his desires for reality. It is this last formulation that is embodied in the Freudian approach to illusion, defined as a belief primarily motivated by the realization of a desire. To that extent the illusion has much in common with dreams, where the philosophers of antiquity had situated it.

The concept of illusion in Freud is gradually developed, reaching its culmination in *The Future of an Illusion* (1927c). In the *Project for a Scientific Psychology* (1950c [1895]), illusion is confused with hallucination in the context of perceptual illusion. But with the *Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (1901b), the concept is further refined. In Freud's case it would be wrong to qualify the feeling of *déjà vu* or *déjà éprouvé* as illusion, because they correspond, through displacement and concealment, to an authentic unconscious daydream. Thirty-five years later in "A Disturbance of Memory on the Acropolis," Freud would refer to false recognition (*déjà vu*, *déjà raconté*) as a part of the "illusions in which we seek to accept something as belonging to our ego, just as in the derealizations we are anxious to keep something out of us" [4].

There is a certain amount of ambiguity concerning the simple criterion that defines illusion as something that doesn't exist in reality, to the extent that the concept of reality is

reconsidered in psychoanalysis as mental reality. Moreover, the single stable criterion used to define illusion in psychoanalysis is a belief motivated by the realization of desire: "[W]e will call a belief an illusion when a wish-fulfilment is a prominent factor in its motivation, and in doing so we disregard its relations to reality, just as the illusion itself sets no store by verification" [4].

Freud identifies illusion as being mostly associated with religion, art, and philosophy, but he also acknowledges the hypothesis that science itself could be an illusion, although he rejects it. In a deeper sense the greatest illusion would be the belief in the happiness and goodness of human nature. This pessimism, or realism, is first associated with the illusion that lasting sexual satisfaction is possible ("Civilized" Sexual Morality and Modern Nervous Illness," 1908d) and that social rules should be modified to procure happiness for individuals. Freud then assumes the position of a defender of a realist position, which includes negativity instead of ignoring it: "Because we destroy illusion we are accused of endangering idea. [4] In fact the only ideal he defends is that of truth. He further distinguishes two types of illusions: those that are not harmful since the illusion is obvious, and those that are dangerous because they take the place of an objective apprehension of reality (philosophy, ideology, and especially religion).

In the following two parts, we could see how illusion is embodied through the following two techniques. They are imagery and symbol.

### 3.1. Imagery

"At the thought of finality his mind was flooded with images: the irony bald patched behind her ears, the quivering of her pointed chin as she had raised her face to be kissed for the first time, her delicate wrists...his heart lurched over and over in his breast like a cricket ball lobbed along a dry, bumpy pitch; a shudder seized him, so violent that he flung off his balance and lurched against the stone wall of a prosperous man's garden. The rough solidity of the stone flicked his mind empty again, and a new set of images crowded in: he saw Shelia's face, pale, luminous, resolute, and behind her the meanly precise face of her father, the tame and lumpy face of her mother, Edith's spiteful plucked eyebrows, and presiding over the scene, Robert, with his detestable calf's head and waving plump hands." [4]

After totally broke up with the relatives of Shelia, he knew that there is no possibility between him and his first love. At this time the past memories of the beauty of Shelia appears again. In fact here is contradiction between id and superego; id says, "I really love Shelia, I don't want to lose her." Superego says that, "You too don't belong to the same society; you are a person without classes. However, she is a member belongs to middle class. You couldn't accept the standard that the family has". So breaking up is unavoidable.

Next part is the illusion in his mind, because he is deeply drunk, so his mind was totally confused.

"His new clarity came to him as a series of cleanly etched visions and a rapid reliving of all the major emotions of his life

in a series of sharp bursts. It was very simple: he saw himself bowed over books, listening to the instruction, submitting to correction, being endless moulded and shaped; edging his way for years between the delicate areas of other people's sensibilities. One step too far in any direction and some one or other of them will be 'hurt', offended, disappointed." "A line from a modern poem he had recently read fell like a pebble into his mind;

'And I a twister love what I abhor  
And I a lover twist what I abhor  
And twister I, abhorring what I love  
And I a whore, abtwisting what I love  
Love eye and twist her and what I abhor'" [4]

Here we could easily see what kind of person he is, he is quite a contradictory and capricious person. He love what he hates, that is because he couldn't get the thing he love. So this kind of love is changed into hatred. So we could comprehend it better now.

"The greatest surprise of all was that he did not find it difficult to avoid thinking of Veronica. In fact it was easier, as well as more comfortable, not to think of her. Once or twice, when he allowed his mind to recall their moments of profoundest happiness, of joy so deep that he had no means of telling whether he was remembering or imagining, the pain became, simply, intolerable: frightened, he lay back and allowed blankness flood over him. If in his day-dreaming he saw her at all clearly, the agony of lying helpless, not being able to go to her, was not to be borne; if she were merely there as a vague presence, the effect was comforting. Obviously his fierce mental shying away from the thought of her was, in origin, physical; his body, in the struggle to piece itself together, required the cooperation of his mind, and when insanity was threatened, took swift action by means of drowsiness or nausea. And so the impossible happened: he passed long stretches, amounting to hours, without thinking of Veronica." [4].

After the car accident, he is seriously ill and almost at the edge of death. Though it is really a suffering for him to think the second lover, he still couldn't control himself to stop thinking of her. Until he is near to the insanity, Charles will stop trying to piece the segments of memories.

### 3.2. Symbol

Symbol, in the simplest sense, anything that stands for or represents something else beyond it—usually an idea conventionally associated with it. Objects like flags and crosses can function symbolically; and words are also symbols. In the semiotics of C. S. Peirce, the term denotes a kind of sign that has no natural or resembling connection with its referent, only a conventional one: this is the case with words. In literary usage, however, a symbol is an especially evocative kind of image (see imagery); that is, a word or phrase referring to a concrete object, scene, or action which also has some further significance associated with it: roses, mountains, birds, and voyages have all been used as common literary symbols. It is therefore usually too simple to say that a literary symbol 'stands for' some idea as if it were just a convenient substitute

for a fixed meaning; it is usually a substantial image in its own right, around which further significances may gather according to differing interpretations. There are two symbols apparently appears in the novel, one is the handbag, and the other is bird. Now let's analyze it in detail.

"The object lying on the counter was the girl's handbag. It was of distinctive shape, square and chunky, with a clip that looked like a coiled golden serpent."

"It was a mistake, this couldn't happen to him, he was free, free, he had been free for a long time. He didn't care about the hand bag and whose handbag it was and who had one just like that, God, they couldn't be doing this to him The pain was beyond anything he believed possible. He clung to the bar. Waves of agony radiated from the centre, somewhere about the solar plexus, and splashed down as far as his toes and finger-ends. No one could do this to him, not really, not if they knew what they were doing. All these people in this bar, everyone in the world, if they only knew they would help him, they would find her if they could only realize that a man was dying, a man who had not deserved to die and go down to Hell." "Take your drink, move away from the bar. But the handbag! There could not be two like that. Had she stolen it? Perhaps this was Veronica's way of coming to him: she might be inside the handbag, shrunk by magic to the size of a white mouse, waiting only till he opened it and took her out. Then put her in water and she would become her real size. Dehydrated. He was going mad, in earnest this time." [4].

We could see clearly the importance of Veronica in his mind. In fact, he never forgets Veronica in her mind. Even a handbag could bring him the past memories of Veronica, so here we could see how the definition embodies. The single stable criterion used to define illusion in psychoanalysis is a belief motivated by the realization of desire. He is quite clear about the fact that Veronica is the ladylove of Roderick. Although she hurt him badly especially after he had a car accident, he still remembered the happy times that they spent together. Maybe that is the power of love. After he recovers, he meet a another virtuous girl—Rosa just as they are going to get married. A handbag reminds her of the past lover again. So we could see clearly the inner desire of Lumley, which cannot be eliminated, because the inner desire drives him to leave Rosa at last. So we could see the great power of illusion.

"If an animal that was tame, or born in captivity, went back to what should have been its natural surroundings, it never survived. If it was a bird, the other birds killed it, but usually just died. Here was his cage, a fine new one, air conditioned, clean, commanding a good view, mod. cons., main services. And she had snapped the lock and was calling him into the waving jungle. When he got there, he would die." [4].

At the end of the story, Lumley becomes a wealthy person, so this Miss Flanders—Veronica come to him again, "our thing hadn't got a chance. It looked as if there was simply no way of going on. But things have altered, altered so strangely." At this time he is quite clear about the quality of Veronica, a person who is peacockish and is crazy about money. Being with him again is totally wrong morally. He will face the danger of death. Here he compares himself as a bird, which is

quite vivid and active. It also reflects the contradictory mood of Charles Lumley.

## 4. Anxiety

Anxiety is an unpleasurable affect in which the individual experiences a feeling of danger whose cause is unconscious. Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) considered there are three types of anxiety. Real anxiety results from a real threat in the physical world to one's well-being, as when a ferocious-looking dog appears from around the corner. The other two types are derived from objective anxiety. Neurotic anxiety results from the ego feeling overwhelmed by the id, which threatens to express its irrationality in thoughts and behavior. There is a fear of external punishment for such expression. Moral anxiety is based on a feeling that one's internalized values are about to be compromised. There is a fear of self-punishment (e.g., guilt) for acting contrary to one's values. Moral anxiety is a function of the development of the superego. Whatever the anxiety, the ego seeks to reduce it. Operating at the unconscious level, it employs defense mechanisms to distort or deny reality.

### 4.1. Moral Anxiety

Moral anxiety, in short, is the condemnation of the conscience, which is the conflict between ego and superego. When you succeed in a thing act against the morality in order to satisfy your impulsion, your conscience-superego, will criticize you, which makes your upset. "He knew that he would commit any crime, that he would steal, kill, maim or ruin the lives of people who had never done him harm, for the sake, not of possessing her, but of giving himself even a remote chance of possessing her, but of giving himself even a remote chance of possessing her. He knew that neither his mind nor his body could recognize anything as evil, nor as good, except in direct relation to that desire. And he was helpless, and aghast." [4].

We could easily find that the inner impulsion is so strong that she couldn't judge the right or the wrong. He thinks that is equal. However, when he got the money as a drugpusher, he really feels quite bad. "Bunder had a way of making his moustache rise about an inch when he smiled, revealing long white teeth that gave a really horrifying impression of animality. They were like a dog's teeth." Now he really hates Bunder, he also has his own anxiety in his heart. [5] "Bunder—drugs Veronica happiness; love drugs in a water closet, huge dark eyes, dog's teeth, a pink pin, please, drink up partner, steady with that gearbox, someone to look after you, eh, Bernard?" [6] 124 The ego and superego conflict again, his id is criticizing himself heavily. Then a sentence appears again, "and I a twister love what I abhor."

### 4.2. Real Anxiety

Anxiety in the presence of actual danger, or "realistic anxiety," is a somewhat paradoxical concept employed by Freud in *Inhibitions, Symptoms, and Anxiety*, where (as we

have seen) he views anxiety as arising from a felt danger from within occasioned by object-loss. Freud himself resolves the ambiguity when he asserts, in discussing apparently external dangers such as the loss of the object's love, or castration anxiety, that the loved person would not care to love us nor should we be threatened with castration if we did not entertain certain feelings and intentions within us. And how do we avoid them, that is to change our own behavior, we try to avoid the dangerous situation to make sure we are in a safe situation.

When Lumley comes back home in Chapter One, we could see he is trying to avoid facing the situation of failure in finding his own job. "It was inevitable, then, that a sense of defeat should bow Charles's shoulders and line his forehead as her paid out his last pound note for a ticker to the town where his parents, relatives, and acquaintances were waiting to where he had been. If it were not for Shelia, he thought grimly as he waited for the few shillings' change that now represented his total resources, he'd hold out somehow, sleeping on park benches, selling newspapers for a living. But he had to see her, even though he had nothing to bring her that would make sense of his silence, nothing that would bring their marriage neared or make it more attractive. What a mess it all was! Charles sighed as he stuffed the ticket into his waistcoat pocket and gathered up the change." [7].

Lumley has the inner anxiety in his heart, because he can't face the failure in himself, so here he uses the replacement mechanism to let the libido flows into ego, he chooses to go back home to see Shelia to let the anxiety in his heart release, making himself feel more comfortable.

#### 4.3. Neurotic Anxiety

Neurotic anxiety results from the ego feeling overwhelmed by the id, which threatens to express its irrationality in thoughts and behavior. There is a fear of external punishment for such expression. Neurotic anxiety occurs when inability to cope adequately with threat is subjective—is due not to objective weakness but to inner psychological patterns and conflicts which prevent the individual from using his powers. Often this is rooted in early childhood. Horney, for instance, notes the conflict which may occur between dependence on parents and anger toward them.

"The need to see her, which he had fiercely repressed for months, flared up in his body and brain as the bus crawled through the leaf-green lanes; it was so much what he needed—a return, a recognition, a point of rest, which yet resolved no recriminations and no immediate practical decision. But this peace was still to be won, and the violence of his inner tension caught and shook him fiercely as he walked up the garden path." [8] Here this kind of anxiety belongs to neurotic anxiety, because this kind of eagerness to see Shelia has been hidden in his heart for a long time, although he is quite clear that he is not welcome by Shelia's relatives. Before making this idea come true, he has to struggling with himself. At last when he really goes to see her, the anxiety is really solved.

## 5. Conclusion

*Hurry On Down*, a young man's first novel, is a bustling kaleidoscope of a book, by an author fertile in expedient, keenly observant and occasionally probing the heart of darkness'—*Sunday times*. The book that was the pioneer of the new kind English novel which appeared in the fifties, linking the names of John Wain, Kingsley Amis, Iris Murdoch, and later John Braine. [9]

As a novelist, John Wain had great success with his early novel, *Hurry on down* (1953), entitled *Born in captivity* in the United States, which was an amusing but critical view of post-war British society. It tells of a university graduate, Charles Lumley, who turns his back on his enhanced prospects as a result of his education to seek employment in a series of menial jobs in order to discover his own identity.

The thesis attempts to present a tentative study of John Wain's *Hurry On Down* in view of Sigmund Freud's theory of personal structure for the purpose of exploring Lumley's psychological process.

Besides the personal structure of Freud in *Hurry On Down*, there are also many Freudian elements such as the libidinal energy, illusion, and anxiety; etc. Lumley not only has all the qualities of the Ego, but also is a hard proof of Freud's "Libido Hypothesis". According to Freud, libido is a kind of sexual energy, which may exist in at least three ways. First, the original lust is to be adjusted and overcome with the force of reason inside the psychological fabric, i.e. that of ego and superego. Second, as usually done by artists, the desires are transferred to other objects, or sublimated to artistic images and decent spiritual products of humanity. Third, the libido is cast upon the opposite sex, which turns out to be the most primitive and easiest to carry out. The love towards Shelia is a definite proof of the existence of libido. When the love towards Veronica can't continue, his desires are transferred to another girl who works in a hospital—Rosa. There are three lovers in this novel. They are Shelia, Veronica and Lora. Of three of them, two of them come out directly. They are Veronica and Shelia. Both of them shows their feelings quite directly.

Illusion is embodied through the following two techniques. They are imagery and symbol. We could easily find them in the novel. One image emerges when Lumley rememorize the first kissing scene with Shelia. Another one appears when he is totally disappointed towards the relationship with Shelia. The two definite symbols are handbag and the bird. Through the vivid description of them, the author could easily find his deep love towards Veronica; it is hard to let him give up Veronica. At the end of the novel, he founds his neutral position in the society. The running fight between Lumley and society has ended in a draw. [10]

Charles Lumley's personal experience after graduation is constantly a process of knowing himself, self-fulfillment and self-realization. In this process his id, ego and superego conflict with each other. Eventually, it can be concluded that human being exists in the society, and you cannot escape the society you belong to. In order to live, you must learn to adapt

to the society even if you don't like, even hate the society. Because human beings live in the society, and you have no choice.

Through the deep analysis of Freudian elements in *Hurry On Down*, we can have a clear mind about the psychological changes of Lumley during the process of finding himself, although he can't adapt to the environment firstly, at last he compromises. This method of analysis goes directly into people's mind, and can't be replaced by other theoretical critical theories.

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