

# BECK MERCHANT'S REVENGE AS REFLECTED IN SANDRA BROWN'S *WHITE HOT*: A PSYCHOSOCIAL STUDY

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**Abstract :** The *White Hot* is the novel from American writer. She is Sandra Brown, was born in Waco on March 12 1948. She began her writing carrier in 1981, since then she has published 68 novels. *White hot* was released in August of 2004 and became the best seller novel in many bookstores. This novel tells much about revenge, where revenge becomes phenomenon that booming in our daily life. It describes Beck Merchant as the protagonist who had a motive to seek revenge. This research entitled "*Beck Merchant's revenge as reflected in Sandra Brown's white Hot: A Psychosocial Study*" is intended 1) to describe the motives of seeking revenge of Beck Merchant in the novel *White Hot* 2) to describe the way how Beck Merchant solve his problems.

The type of this research is a library research. The researcher uses the primary data and secondary data. The primary data is the novel *White Hot* written by Sandra Brown. With the primary data, the researcher reads and observes the novel *White Hot* carefully and critically. The secondary data of the research are taken from other sources such as some critical books from the library and also data from internet are used to help the researcher to interpret the novel *White Hot*. The data analysis technique used in this research is descriptive qualitative method. In doing this research the writer uses psychoanalysis theory by Sigmund Freud. It is the theory which analyzes Beck Merchant's revenge related to Id, Ego and Superego.

Key words: revenge, psychosocial study, library research, descriptive qualitative method

## INTRODUCTION

God has created human being as social creatures, so that they can not live alone in this world, they need to create a good relationship with each other. It is due to the fact that a good relationship can make the people's life better and happier. But in the other hand, it can not be denied that in a relationship is not always going smoothly. There are many problems that should be faced. Love, hate and feeling anger are problems that can not be separated from human's life. And taking revenge is a result for someone's feeling anger, and anger is a common human emotion. We all feel hurt or irritated when someone or something obstructs our needs or desires. Anger refers to the desire to take revenge on, the cause of the hurt. Revenge is the situation where someone does something impulsive to get satisfaction for an offence to one self or another (Hornby, 1974:726).

Revenge consists of primarily relation against of person or group in response to perceived wrongdoing, although many aspects of revenge resemble the concept of justice, revenge usually has a more injurious than harmonious goal. People seek revenge when they are humiliated, especially if they are made to feel powerless, foolish, ridiculous, stupid or ashamed. It also happened when they feel they have been attacked

and suffered some unjust or injury. As a result they are feeling mad, hate, jealousy, envy or shame.

The state of revenge is also closely linked to sickness or what the so called neuroses. Neuroses are relatively mild psychological disorders and may often be seen as extensions of the psychological problems that all of us occasionally experience (McNeil, 1977: 481). Philosophers considered whether revenge is inevitably a bad thing; they have also considered whether it is irrational. Freud (2002:32) developed various models of the human psyche that became the changing bases of his psychoanalytic theory and practice. In early of his career, he posited the dynamic models, asserting that our mind area dichotomy consisting of the irrational and the rational.

In Chinese literary work, the stories are usually built up upon the revenge, the story of White Snake for example. Besides these stories above, Indonesia also has many folktales which telling much about revenge. For example is the story of Keris Mpu Gandring, the story of Loro Jonggrang, the origin of Maninjau Lake, the history of Majapahit, and many others. All of those built up upon the revenge.

From the explanation above, which recently revenge becomes phenomenon that booming in our daily life, the writer influenced by this phenomena and thinks why not to analyze novel that has the same theme.

Revenge also happens in the story of the literary work produced by the American. The American novel that told about revenge is *White Hot* written by Sandra Brown. *White Hot* was released in 2004 and becomes the bestseller in many bookstores. In the *White Hot* novel, we can find a fact about revenge.

The discussion about revenge is very interesting. In this research the writer would combine both approaches, psychological and sociological, under the term psychosocial study. Psychologically, revenge is the situation where someone does something impulsive to get satisfaction. We all feel hurt or irritated when someone or something obstructs our needs or desires. Anger refers to the desire to "get even with" that is, to take revenge on, the cause of the hurt. For example, when you feel hurt by another person, adrenaline pumps into your bloodstream and your heart rate jumps. These things are just immediate physical response to a perceived threat. But then as a psychological reaction to these immediate physical responses, indignation and animosity over run your mind. You give a dirty look, you scream a curse, and so on. And you get angry to someone that in your eyes has injured or obstructed you. So the psychological process is clear and simple. If a person hurts you, then, in your anger, you want to hurt him back, just as you have been hurt. But remember, once you notice that you feel hurt, you have a choice. You don't have to accept blindly the unconscious slide into revenge. You can feel compassion for the person who hurt you, and you can be forgiving. In some societies, it is believed that the punishment in revenge should be more than the original injury, as a punitive measure. Sociologically, when the person hurt you and you want to hurt him back, there is no end from this act. This action can lead a conflict because revenge replied by revenge. Furthermore, it is able to cause endless social conflict.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalysis

Psychoanalysis is the dynamic form of psychology as a means of therapy for neurosis. Psychoanalysis is developed by Sigmund Freudian, late nineteenth century (1886-1939). He is known as a father of psychoanalysis (Abrams, 1993:264).

According to Freud, psychoanalysis falls under the head of psychology, not of medical psychology in old sense. Nor of the psychology of morbid process, but simple of psychology. Freud is here speaking of psychoanalysis as a theory of personality. Psychoanalysis is also a method of psychotherapy. It might be wise, therefore the distinguish between Freudian psychology as a theoretical system of psychology and psychoanalysis as a method of psychotherapy (Hall, 1954:19)

The concept of unconscious mental process was central to Freud's early description of personality organization. However, during the early 1920, he revised his conceptual model of mental life and introduced three basic structures in the anatomy of personality: id, ego and superego.

a. The id, the ego, and the superego

Freudian psychological reality begins with the world, full of objects. Among them is a very special object, the organism. The organism is special in that it acts to survive and reproduce, and it is guided toward those ends by its needs (hunger, thirst, the avoidance of pain, and sex).

1) The Id

The word "id" comes from the latin word for "it" and refers exclusively to the biological component of personality. According to Freud, we are born with our Id. The Id is an important part of our personality because as newborn. When Id wants something, nothing else is important. The newborn child is regarded as being completely 'Id-ridden', in the sense that it is a mass of instinctive drives and impulses, and demand immediate satisfaction. The Id is responsible for our basic drives such as food, sex and aggressive impulses, and demands immediate satisfaction.

2) The Ego

In modern day society, ego has many meanings. It could mean one's self esteem; an inflated sense of self-worth; or philosophical terms, one's self. However, according to psychologist Sigmund Freud, the ego is the part of the mind which contains the consciousness. The ego is the mediator between the id and superego; trying to ensure that the needs of both the id and superego are met. The ego is that portion of the psychic apparatus that seeks to express and gratify the desire of the id in accordance with the restrictions of both outer reality and the superego. The ego acquires its structure and functions from the id, having evolved from it, and proceeds to borrow some of the id's energy for its own use in response to the demands of the environment. Ego thus assures the safety and preservation of the organism. In its battle for survival against both the external worlds and the instinctual demands of the id, ego must continuously differentiate between things in the mind and thing and the outer of the world of reality. The hungry man is search of food, for example, must distinguish between a mental images of food and actual perception of food if tension reductions to occur.

3) The Superego

Freud divided the superego into two subsystems the conscience and the ego ideas. Conscience is acquired through the use of punishment by the parents. It concern with things that parents say are "naughty" behavior and for which the child is reprimanded. It includes the capacity for punitive self-evaluation, moral prohibitions, and guilt feelings when one fails to live up what is believed to be ideal. The ego ideal is derived from whatever the parents approve and reward. It leads the individual to set up goals and aspirations which, if achieved, generate a sense of self-esteem and pride.

4. Psychosocial in Psychology

Psychosocial involves both psychological and social aspects, relating social condition to mental health. Social influences such as parental support, cultural and religious background, social economic status, and interpersonal relationship, all help to shape personality and influence psychological make up. Individuals with psychosocial disorders frequently have difficulty functioning in social situations and may have problems in communicate with others.

## RESEARCH METHOD

### A. Type of the Study

Research is a careful study or investigation. Especially in order to discover new fact or get additional information and method etymologically, means a way or technique. (Hornby, 1995: 995). Whereas method is the ways or strategies to be employed in the effort to collect, to find develop and to verify the correctness of knowledge by using research method. (Sutrisno, 1904:3). From both definitions above, the writer concludes that the research method is the ways or strategies to discover correctness of knowledge to be a new fact or information for human life.

The type of the study is a literature research, which consist of main data and supporting data. Those two kinds of data will be separately explained as follows:

#### 1. Main Data

The main data is also called the primary data or the most important data related to the study being analyzed. The source of the main data taken from the novel entitled *White Hot* written by Sandra Brown.

#### 2. Supporting Data

The supporting data of the research are taken from other resources such as some critical books which related to the topic, some interesting available data that helps the writer to find out the information about Sandra Brown's life and career. All those data are compiled together as supporting data.

### B. Data collecting Technique

The method of collecting data is reading and taking note. The main data, the novel of *White Hot*, is read carefully and repeatedly in detail, and then is recorded in the data card. This is also a documentation method, which the data collected from books that are related to the research. The writer identifies the point that is relevant to the subject matter in order to know the correlation between novel and other documentation.

This research is characterized with the main data of the novel entitled *White Hot*. Therefore, the researcher formulates these following steps:

1. Gathering the relevant data
2. Selecting the available data
3. Analyzing data
4. Composing the data research.

### C. Data Analyzing Technique

In technique of analyzing data, the writer uses technique through text analysis, which is described in sentences. The writer tries to provides clearer information and describe the problem of the searching various kinds of sources that deals the topic being analyzed. After the data collected, the writer makes an analysis and interpretations using psychological approach.

The gathered data are analyzed under the psychological approach; they are described by using the descriptive qualitative method.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this research, the researcher is going to discuss about the motives of seeking revenge of the main character on the novel *White Hot* using Sigmund Freud's psychological analysis which consists of three aspects; the biological aspect (Id), the mental aspect (Ego), and the sociological aspects (Superego).

### a. The Biological aspect (Id)

Freud acknowledges that the Id is the hidden and accessible part of personality. However, the researcher can see the Id in action whenever a person does something impulsive. Usually someone seeking revenge because of love betrayal, the murder, hurt by someone and others. Furthermore, the motive of revenge is also observed in the novel by one of the main character, Beck Merchant. This case is done by him it is because of his father's death. His father's death is not because of suffering an illness or because of an accident. But it is because of killed by someone. The motive of Beck Merchant seeking revenge described in quotations below:

"May be not from a legal standpoint, but I'm convinced that Huff did precisely what was alleged. The machine with the white cross painted on it, the one I saw yesterday, that's where Sonnie Hallser died, isn't it?"

"That's what they say"

"It's a behemoth, capable of crushing a man. Huff pushed Hallser into it and watched him die."

Propping his hands in his hips, Beck bent slightly at the waist and took several deep breaths. When his straightness up, he said, "the authorities conducted a through investigation, Sayre."

"The authorities were bribed"

"No criminals charged were ever field"

"Which doesn't mean a crime wasn't committed"

"Huff was cleared of all suspicion."

"The case was swept under the rug."

"Because no one could prove any wrongdoing," he shouted (Page 267).

Based on the quotation above the researcher knew that Huff killed Sonnie Hallser abusively. Unfortunately, the authority did not find any proof to throw the killer to the prison because of Huff's bribe to the jurors not to investigate farther. Sonnie Hallser was arguing with Huff about the lack of safety orders and demanded Huff to shut down the machine temporarily in order to install some safety tools in the production area.

Beck tried to enter to the Huff's family. Ultimately, he had received and joined Huff's family when he had defended Chris in fighting against Slap Watkins. Since then, he succeeded got credibility to become a lawyer in Huff's family. Sonnie was Beck's father, He was the worker's appointed spokesperson. When employees worked two ten-hours shifts, with a four hour break in between for maintenance and so forth, Huff was about to change it. Go to three eight-hour shifts, eliminating that important time for inspections and repairs. That was the substance of quarrel between Huff and Sonnie. Sonnie was a stand up kind of guy, everybody like him, even Huff. In the end, Huff didn't like Sonnie's point of view, it was the reason why he decided to kill Sonnie.

"I'm Beck Merchant. But Merchant was my stepfather's name. He adopted me when he married my widowed mother. I took his name because, even as a boy ten

or twelve years old, I was plotting your downfall, and I knew my real name would be a tip-off."

"I can't hardly wait," Chris said caustically. "What's your real name?"

"Hallser."

Chris gave a start, and then nodded as thought commending Beck for his cleverness. "That's certainly enlightening."

"Sonnie Hallser was my father."

"Then it's really Huff you want to revenge on, not me."

"It goes deepest than revenge, Chris. I want you and everything you represent destroyed." (Page 564).

Sonnie Hallser is Beck's father who was killed by Huff but it made like an accident. After knowing that his father was killed by Chris' father harshly and when had enough evidence for it, he tried to reveal it to Chris and he told Chris that he wished to take revenge for the deed.

The quotation below supports the statement that Beck wants to take revenge to Huff's family:

"I've waited years for this day, Chris. My father's life was cut short by decades. And why? Because he stood in Huff's way, so Huff eliminated him. Everyone knew it. But Huff got away with it. The same as you did with Iverson. Well, guess what, Chris?" he said, lowering his voice to a menacing whisper. "It's over." (Page 565).

Apparently, Beck never forgot the way how his father's death. He tried hard to find a way to make Huff get a punishment from what he did. After all, he succeeded to make Chris confess of what he and Huff had done in their past.

"Huff will atone for my father. You learned from him, and he coached you well because you even exceed his depravity. You killed your own brother. And for that you're going down, Chris."

Chris's gaze moved beyond him. "It's about time you joined us, Huff."

Beck slowly turned around to confront the man who had been his adversary for almost as long as he could remember. If ever, during all those years, his resolve had weakened, he needed only to remind himself that he never got to tell his father's good bye. Neither he nor his mother even got to see him in his casket. It would be too gruesome a sight, the funeral director had told her.

Because of this man's greed, his mother had been widowed, he had been orphaned, and his dad had been dissected. As Beck faced him now, animosity coiled inside him as sharp and deadly as razor wire (Page 566).

Despite of Chris' fear that Beck would send him to the prison, Huff's sudden appearance built back his courage and pride. All his wrongdoings had been forgiven and even it was supported by Huff. Therefore, Chris said such things to confronted Beck although he was in the erroneous position.

Beck's feeling mad to Huff was not only because of his father's murder, but also because of the bad procedure in the Hoyle Enterprises, where there were many workers got a bad treatment and arbitrary action from their superior, Huff. Beck wanted to fight for their freedom, for their rights. It can be seen in the quotation below:

This was met with jeers from the picketers sent by Nielson and those townsfolk and workers who had joined them outside the chain link fence. The majority of

Hoyle employees, who were either quitting their shift or reporting for work, loitered between the two camps, clearly weighing their decision of which to join.” “One of Nielson’s paid agitators was also speaking into a bullhorn, urging the Hoyle employees not to return to work until demands were met and their workplace was brought up to OSHA’s standards.” (Page 485).

The quotation above shows that Beck sent many demonstrators against Hoyle Enterprises. They submitted demands to the Hoyle Enterprises and their workplace was brought up to OSHA’s standard. Their reclamation eventually makes Hoyle’s workers faltered. They confused of what decision they would take, whether join the demonstrators for improvement of their own safety or continue working with the risk of getting hurt.

b. The Mental aspect (Ego)

The ego is controlling the Id and the Superego, it is also maintaining the commerce with the external world. It means that the Ego now is related with real principle. So it must be able to postpone the tension until the appropriate behavior is discharge.

The realization of Beck’s feeling mad for his father murderer is the mental aspect. Beck Merchant tried to take revenge for his father’s murderer. In this case, Beck Merchant used many ways to realized it. Here the writer will give more details about the ways how the main character, Beck Merchant, tried to take revenge. The quotations below will give more information about it.

Beck laughed. “Maybe. But I owe Slap a debt of gratitude. If it hadn’t been for him, I wouldn’t be here sharing Sunday dinner.”

Huff looked across at him with as much affection as he showed his own sons. “No Beck, you were meant to become one of us, by hook or by crook. Finding you made that whole Gene Iverson mess worthwhile. You were the only good thing to come out of it.” (Page 8).

The Hoyles and Beck got used to dinner at Huff’s house. They were talking about the old times when Beck finally hired by Huff to become Hoyle’s lawyer. By the time, Beck indicated as a good worker, and it made Huff so proud of having Beck at the enterprise. Beck won Huff’s attention, trust, and even his love. It goes a lot better.

“Does delivering messages fall into your job description? I though you were their lawyer.” She is said.

“Lawyer, errand boy.....” (Page 22).

Besides got the trust in legal matters, Huff also trusted Beck to convince Sayre, Huff’s daughter that deliberately left her family and swore would never return to ask her attend her brother’s wake at the house. Despite of Sayre’s insults and stubbornness, Beck succeeded.

“I know who he is. Everybody does. He is a top dog at the foundry. He and Chris are thick as thieves.” (Page 85).

Beck was a Huff’s family lawyer. He became a loyal employee. He ensconced on the bosom of the family, a trusted ally and confidant. He never wanted to practice law and only did so in order to get close to the Huff’s family and finally found their dirty secrets. And to beat them, he had to think like them, acted like them and had to

become one of them. Out of love for his father and his sense of duty toward him, Beck had become the reviled advocate for the Hoyles.

"Ever heard of a man named Charles Nielson?"

"Don't think so. Who is he?"

"A labor advocate."

"Bastard"

"Synonyms for sure," Beck said with a wry smile. "He is written us a letter. A copy of it is in the folder. I need to know how you want me to respond. Its not urgent business, but it needs to be addressed, so don't wait too long to give it a look."

Together they moved toward the door. "Is he good, this Nielson?"

"He's building a reputation in other parts of the country," Beck said. "But we can handle him." (Page 37).

Beck created an imaginary union lawyer namely Charles Nielson and acted that he would fight legally to the sake of the company. Confidently, he told Huff that he could handle that particular lawyer. It convinced Huff that Beck was a good lawyer. Therefore, Huff would never suspect of who Charles Nielson really was.

"Beck looked at the card Huff had given him. "With deepest sympathy, Charles Nielson," he read. Then, looking across Huff, he laughed shortly." He sent flowers to Danni's funeral?" "The man has got guts. Have you had a chance to look through the file I left you?"

"I read enough to know that Nielson is only trying to build a name for himself. Those newspaper articles read like press releases he wrote." (Page 131-132).

Beck introduced someone namely Charles Nielson to Huff as their foe. Nielson was a labor advocate who bringing the union into the companies and Hoyle Enterprises was his target, where the foundry had some work related accidents and death.

"Ordinarily I would agree with you, but AliciaPaulik isn't acting alone. She's recruited Charles Nielson to lead the charge. I received a fax from him today. I won't bullshit you, it's your worst nightmare." (Page 328).

Billy Paulik was Alicia's husband, who got an accident in the foundry. Mrs. Paulik refused to file an insurance claim for Hoyle Enterprises. She would like to sue Hoyle Enterprises by recruited Charles Nielson to lead the charge. And it was a good chance to Beck to devastated Hoyle Enterprises.

"We want this area cleared immediately. Any employee of Hoyle Enterprises who doesn't report to work by seven thirty will be docked a full shift's wages."

This was met with jeers from the picketers sent by Nielson and those townsfolk and workers who had joined them outside the chain link fence. The majority of Hoyle employees, who were either quitting their shift or reporting for work, loitered between the two camps, clearly weighing their decision of which to join."

"One of Nielson's paid agitators was also speaking into a bullhorn, urging the Hoyle employees not to return to work until demands were met and their workplace was brought up to OSHA's standards." (Page 485).



The quotation above shows that Nielson sent many demonstrators against Hoyle Enterprises. They submitted demands to Hoyle Enterprises until it met and their workplace was brought up to OSHA's standard. Their protests eventually make Hoyle's workers faltered. They confused of what decision they would take, whether join the demonstrators for improvement of their own safety or continue working with the risk of getting hurt. Chris threatened them if they did not get back to working, their wages would be deducted. However, the workers seemed did not worry about it because of they had mental support from the demonstrators.

"There is the guy named Nielson."

"His name was mentioned at the salon. You dropped it at the other night. Who is he?"

"Trouble for companies like Hoyle Enterprises."

"Apparently Billy Paulik's wife has been in contact with him."

"And because of that," Beck said, "He's called in the heavy artillery. He's recruited union men to picket and incite our workers to strike." (Page 364).

Virtually, there was no one named Charles Nielson. He was just a name on a letterhead, the subject of a few press releases that Beck's wrote and distributed himself. His name was an anagram of the name of Beck's dad with his middle initial, C. He did it was only for crushed Hoyle's.

#### c. Sociological aspect (Superego)

Superego is a moral code of person. Superego represents the ideal rather than reality, and it leads to perfection, it gives observation to the ego. It consists of two sub-systems such the ego ideal refers to good moral and conscience refers to bad moral.

The function of superego is to determine whether thing is right or wrong, appropriate or inappropriate and moral or immoral. Superego is the result of socialization and traditional of culture.

Beck's Id is full ambition; it is because of his life without father's affection, because of his father's murder. While, the ego of Beck is revenged, this is controlled and developed by the Id. Furthermore, the superego of Beck is found when he realizes that his investigation makes suffering other people is not a better way to solve the problems.

"The OSHA inspection had supplanted Charles Nielson as his main concern, but Nielson had been integral to the shutdown, and by God, he was going to pay for that." (Page 551).

The quotation above told that Charles Nielson was the cause of the closure of the foundry, where there were many of people worked there and their life depends on their work, it was the only their livelihoods. And now, they were threatened to lose their job.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the result of study to the novel *White Hot*, the writer concludes as follows:

Beck Merchant's motive of revenge based on Freud's psychoanalysis theory in the novel *White Hot* is because of his father's death. Also, realizing that there are many problems in the foundry where his father works, where Huff as the employer run the authoritarian leadership there, and Beck wants to fight for it, he wants to struggle for the Workers' right. It is the Id of Beck Merchant. In addition, his Ego is rising up after he

heard about his father's death. Furthermore, he worked in Huff's family as a lawyer is the only way to take revenge for his father's death. However, the case never goes into the court. Huff was cleared of all suspicion. Because no one could prove any wrongdoing about his father's death. Therefore, he tried to found his father's murderer. He also creates a new character as Charles Nielson to against his father's murderer. Both of them are controlled and developed by the Id. And the superego of Beck to be found when his realization that his investigation makes suffering other people.

### SUGGESTIONS

By reading the literary works like novel from other nations, our understanding of the world deepens. Also our sense of humanity and interrelationship increases. Reading literary work, especially novel is advantageous and interesting, it can help the readers to enhance vocabulary, experience, and enrich the knowledge about literary work and give entertainment or enjoyment. The characteristics of the novel teach the readers how to avoid the willingness to seeking revenge.

Teachers, teaching language will be very easy done if we use media. Literature does not only play a role as a media in teaching English but also helps us understand English better through culture and aesthetic point of view. Reading literature can develop student's emotions and built their interest. Students can widen their knowledge about the world since literature may cover different side of the world. Literature helps the students solve their limitation of speaking and writing English by stimulating their language acquisition in wider scope. It makes the language learning process more fun and encouraging.

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