Volume 22 Issue 5
Originally issued as A1



Global Journal of human-social science: A
Arts & Humanities - Psychology
Volume 22 Issue 1 Version 1.0 Year 2022
Type: Double Blind Peer Reviewed International Research Journal
Publisher: Global Journals
Online ISSN: 2249-460X & Print ISSN: 0975-587X

Sublimation and the Unconscious in *The Forty Rules of Love* and *Three Daughters of Eve* by Elif Shafak

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Abstract- One of the importance of literature is that it serves as an avenue for the study of human predicaments and solutions. Human life itself is a series of endless crises from birth to death. Therefore, based on a Freudian psychoanalytical approach to Elif Shafak's The Forty Rules of Love and Three Daughters of Eve and by exploring some of the psychological musings of the main characters in ways that portray emotional crises among other things, this paper attempts to highlight the ambivalence attached to their seemingly prime personality. The paper is tailored around the nuances of the characters' minds and the way they negotiate their present realities with their emotional quests and tribulations where they unconsciously apply certain defence mechanisms in their daily lives to protect their ego by creating a balance between their id and their superego. It explores the manifestation of the unconscious through sublimation, memory and nostalgia.

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GJHSS-A Classification: *FOR Code: 130205p*



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Sublimation and the Unconscious in *The Forty Rules of Love* and *Three Daughters of Eve* by Elif Shafak

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I. Introduction

Defence mechanisms are cognitive processes that function to protect the individual from excessive anxiety or other negative emotions. Every individual feels things differently hence process and react differently and with the growing number of new research on defence and coping mechanisms, it is quite problematic to single a certain or type as the illumination of what these mechanisms entail. However, Anna Freud's *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defence* (1936) gave a blueprint on the core idea that we instinctively try to protect our ego (acceptable image of who we are) using certain defences, but in the act of protecting ourselves against pain in the immediate term, we harm ourselves in the long run by limiting our realistic processing of life and therefore not maturing as a result. These mechanisms are regression, repression, reaction formation, isolation, undoing, projection, introjection, turning against the self, reversal and sublimation (39).

Sublimation is one of the defence mechanisms the characters in *The Forty Rules of Love* and *Three Daughters of Eve* used to create and maintain their image in the society. People, in general, have dark impulses and desires and we are constantly trying to keep them at bay, or conveniently, substituting them with socially acceptable acts. A person may get the urge to steal, to hurt, to cheat, but instead of acting upon such negative thoughts, that person would rather go out of their way to put their energy and time into worthwhile projects such as working hard in their job, providing for their family, and helping others. This is called sublimation; it "allows an indirect resolution of conflict with neither adverse consequences nor marked loss of pleasure" (Vaillant 94) and Freud described it as putting primitive, egoistic, and destructive energy into good use, that is, it takes non-socially acceptable urges, thoughts, and impulses and converts them into socially acceptable positive behaviour.

Sublimation in Freud's opinion was a sign of maturity and civilization, allowing people to function normally in culturally acceptable ways. He defined sublimation as the process of deflecting sexual instincts into acts of higher social valuation, being "an especially conspicuous feature of cultural development; it is what makes it possible for higher psychical activities, scientific, artistic or ideological, to play such an 'important' part in civilized life. (Strachey 79-80) Wade and Carol present a similar view, stating that sublimation occurs when displacement "serves a higher cultural or socially useful purpose, as in the creation of art or inventions" (Wade and Carol 478). Freud got the idea of sublimation while reading The Harz Journey by Heinrich Heine. The story is about Johann Friedrich Dieffenbach who cut off the tails of dogs he encountered in childhood and later became a surgeon. Freud concluded that sublimation could be a conflict between the need for satisfaction and the need for security without perturbation of awareness. In an action performed many times throughout one's life, which firstly appears sadistic, thought is ultimately refined into an activity that is of benefit to mankind (Geller 125).

This paper studies some traits of sublimation as a defence mechanism in the primary texts. It explores the life experiences of the characters and their expressions of the unconscious through sublimation. The unconscious is "the truth behind or beneath the distorted representation which we call consciousness (Bennet and Royle 253-254). This kind of reading is extended to the personality of the author who is also considered to be undergoing sublimation. This is possible because psychoanalysis is primarily author-based and includes the author's impulses and subjectivities into the analysis. But the authorial intention is not accepted as a priori. As argued by Bennet and Royle "authorial intention in the light of psychoanalysis… can always be considered as subject to the

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unconscious workings of the mind" (21). Hence it is possible to see the author's suppressed desires manifesting in the texts. In this study, Shafak's sublimated views are also foregrounded as a window of having a glimpse into her unconscious mind that defines her interests, prejudices, hidden desires, etc. However, for most people, sublimation is only possible to a certain degree. Other problems usually arise from the sublimated impulses. Because usually, the "instincts are poorly tamed" (S. Freud 16) and this results in the return of the repressed. That is, the sublimated impulses return to the behaviour of the person in another form.

As registered above, the unconscious resurfaces in people's everyday lives in several ways. The essence of the unconscious lies in the fact that it is a prism through which the human personality avails itself. This personality defines by the unconscious as often the true nature of being that is buried and repressed due to social pressure, religious prohibitions, societal laws, and other reasons. Freud is interested in the way sexual drives are sublimated for something of higher ends. According to him, "[S]exual desire relinquishes either its goal of partial gratification of desire, or the goal of desire toward reproduction, and adopts another aim, genetically related to the abandoned one, save that it is no longer sexual but must be termed social" (S. Freud 303). These drives often return in another form when they undergo sublimation. This return takes the form of interference. They are transferred into other activities that do not necessarily have direct links to sexuality but are related to it.

a) About the Author

Elif Shafak was born in Strasbourg, France, in 1971 to philosopher Nuri Bilgin and Shafak Atayman, who later became a diplomat. After her parents' separation, Shafak returned to Ankara, Turkey and was raised by two women: her mother and maternal grandmother. She says growing up in a dysfunctional family was difficult in many ways, but growing up in a non-patriarchal environment had a positive impact on her. ("Turkish Writer"). She is an award-winning writer who has published 19 books, 12 of which are novels. She is a bestselling author in many countries around the world and her works translated into 55 languages.

Perhaps the contributing factor on her areas of interest is the struggle she had as a child and even as an adult to fit in only one category. She identifies as a bisexual, a group in the LGBTQ+ community that is "the least understood and most ignored even within the LGBT movement itself" (Ertan). Hence, she focused on illuminating subjects that are constantly overlooked. The Sunday Times remarked that "Shafak is passionately interested in dissolving barriers, whether of race, nationality, culture, gender, geography or a more mystical kind," The Irish Times called her, "the most exciting Turkish novelist to reach Western readers in years" and Vogue Magazine stated that, "Elif Shafak has been building a body of work that needles her country's historical amnesia". Her nonfiction covers a wide range of topics, including belonging, identity, women's empowerment, cosmopolitan encounters, daily life politics, multicultural literature and the art of coexistence ("Turkish Writer").

II. Summary of the Texts

The Forty Rules of Love (2011) is Shafak's most famous novel, and it has been along with other novels by her, translated into more than forty languages. It emphasizes the human need for spiritual fulfillment and love as the most important element of it: the love for God, love for one's self, and love for others. Polyphonic in nature and having stories within a story, the novel tells two parallel stories that cross two very different cultures and seven centuries apart. Ella Rubenstein is a middle-aged woman living a bland and monotonous life as a housewife and a mother. Living with an unfaithful husband and alienated children, her life took a drastic turn when she was given a manuscript titled *Sweet Blasphemy* to appraise as her new job in a literary agency. The manuscript, written by Aziz Z. Zahra, a first-time novelist, tells the story of the 13th-century poet Jalaluddin Muhammad Rumi, and his beloved Sufi teacher Shams of Tabriz. As Ella reads the story, she began to draw similarities between Shams and Aziz, and question the many ways she has settled for a mediocre life devoid of passion and true love.

Three Daughters of Eve (2017) tells the life story of Nazperi (known as Peri) Nalbantoğlus, both the past and the present in parallel. It starts with her present, an ordinary spring day in Istanbul bickering with her daughter while stuck in traffic trying to get to a dinner party at a seaside mansion uptown. While at it, a number of street beggars snatched her handbag from the backseat and in an impulse, she went chasing after them. After a dreadful encounter with their leader, a tramp, where she narrowly escaped a rape attempt, came to a startling realisation that she is capable of murder and sporting a nasty knife wound on her right palm. An old photograph falls from her wallet while the tramp is emptying her bag and an avalanche of emotions; regret, guilt and the sadness of unrequited love that she so desperately tried to forget and it served as a catalyst for her life in story in the past hit her.

III. Sublimated Desires in Ella

Ella is the main character in *The Forty Rules of Love*. As a reviewer with an unnamed literary agency, she gets to know Aziz Z. Zahra through his submission of a draft story titled *Sweet Blasphemy*. Ella develops feelings for Aziz whom she later contacts via email. Getting bored of her crumbling marriage with David, Ella

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begins to feel connected to Aziz. It all begins with Ella's marital relationship. She is a woman worn out by the tiring task of maintaining a family. As she nears the age of forty, she feels the burden of marriage and family becoming more unbearable. What makes this feeling more saddening is the fact that Ella feels betrayed by the behaviour of her husband who compensates her sacrifices with infidelities. Reading *Sweet Blasphemy*, Ella's feeling of betrayal begins to surface in the early part of the novel. She reminisces her failed dream in this way:

> Though Ella had graduated with a degree in English literature and loved fiction, she hadn't done much in the field after college, other than editing small pieces for women's magazines, attending a few book clubs, occasionally writing book reviews for some local papers. That was all. There was the time when she had aspired to be a prominent book critic, but then she still simply accepted the fact that life had carried her elsewhere, turning her into an industrious housewife with three kids and endless domestic responsibilities. (Shafak, *Forty Rules* 5-6)

In Ella, we see a woman who has sacrificed everything to build a family, which is quite rare among Western societies; opting to be a fulltime housewife, despite a degree in English literature that qualifies her to work. The decision not to get a career is informed by the need to establish a family and to be there for the family. This investment in her family ought to provide her with security but it becomes the very point of her weakness and her loss of individuality.

As narrated in the text, everyone closer to her is in one problem or another. At some point, she started developing a feeling of guilt and self-loathing. She begins to feel that things are chaotic because she has not handled them well and is not in control as she feels she should have been. At this point, it becomes obvious that these became daunting and reading of *Sweet Blasphemy* brings a return point. She does not stop at reviewing the novel. She feels the urge to write her own stories as a way of sublimating the problems that she confronts. She believes that the yet-to-be-written novel should be titled *The Forty Rules of the Sedentary, Suburban, Earthy Housewife*. She tells the reader what would eventually become the first rule of the text "[S]top looking for love! Stop running after impossible dreams! There are surely more important things in life for a married woman about to be forty" (Shafak, *Forty Rules* 44). But this urge does not sublimate the desire to quit her family. Finally, this need to quit from what she has spent decades building, her family, is sublimated into contacting the author of the novel that she is reviewing – Aziz. She searches for his website and writes him an email. She finds herself telling a stranger her marital problems.

The inability of any of her family members to listen to her makes her reach out to Aziz, a man she has never seen and has never known before this time. Ella and Aziz become quite intimate. She files for divorce and joins Aziz who has already confided in her that he suffers from terminal cancer. But that does not dissuade Ella from joining him and travelling around the world with him. The sublimated desires, in the end, were not fully addressed. They were initially disguised into email flirtations with Aziz. But these desires return with full force before the end of the novel. Ella leaves the life she has built for decades and joins Aziz. She considers her decision wise though the society does not appreciate a woman who terminates her marriage with three kids for someone less rich, seemingly older than her husband, and who is terminally ill. Her decision is informed by her inability to suppress her hidden desires that built up in her unconscious over the years.

IV. Baybars, the Sinful Masochistic Warrior of Faith

In *Sweet Blasphemy*, the reader is introduced to a character called Baybars the Warrior. The text is set in the past to recreate the lives and experiences of Rumi and the wandering Dervish who became his teacher and companion, Shams of Tabriz. It recounts the meeting of these two and the transformation of Rumi from a scholar into a Sufi poet on the religion of Love. Rumi abandons his scholarship and immerses himself in the lessons of Sufi mysticism taught to him by Shams. However, one character who exemplifies the battle with the unconscious is called Baybars the Warrior. Baybars suffers from his human failings. His faith is not strong as he often gives in to his temptations. In his unconscious, he seeks a life of sexual freedom and all kinds of perversion. At the same time, he feels responsible for cleansing his community of all immoral acts committed by its citizens, which is encouraged by his influential yet bigoted uncle.

Therefore, he is constantly battling an inner conflict between indulgence and piety. Baybars comes to possess two opposing identities. He guards the mosque in the days' time and visits brothels during the night. He is very cruel and rapacious to beggars who frequent mosques in the town to beg. He presents himself as pious and as someone invested with the custody of the moral codes of Islam and the authority to impose them. He is often violent to people who cross his way. He seems to harbour his version of Islam devoid of mercy, sympathy, tolerance, and patience. At one point in the text, a Desert Rose, (a whore) decides to attend one of Rumi's sermons that takes place in the mosque. She disguises herself as a man and enters the mosque. However, things spiral wrong when her identity is recognized. She is pursued by a mob led by Baybars. What stopped them from lynching her is the appearance of Shams of Tabriz who intercedes on her behalf. They query him for shielding a whore and he questions their attention to the sermon.

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Shams decides to apply logic to restraint the mob from sparking violence. He believes that if they were listening to Rumi, they would have no business paying attention to anyone's presence in the mosque. This helps to douse the tension, especially in the mob, if not in Baybars, their leader. The mob started retracing, shy at their behaviour on a woman. Lynching is a common thing in the town, mostly organized and led by Janus faced people like Baybars, who believe that they must cleanse the town of all immoral acts while committing those same acts. But one of the questions raised by Shams gives an insight into the true identity of Baybars that he struggled to suppress. He is the first person to recognize the Desert Rose. He identifies her and notifies the people around to stop her from running out of the mosque. How did Baybars recognize the woman? She gives a piece of information about it. She successfully disguises herself as a man and remains comfortably in the mosque, her attention wholly on the speech of Rumi. Then she notices someone pointing in her direction. According to her:

> […] when I raised my eyes again, I saw a young man in the front row, looking at me intently. Square face, lazy eye, sharp nose, sneering mouth. I recognized him. He was Baybars. Baybars was one of those pesky customers none of the girls in the brothel wanted to sleep with. Some men have a way of wanting to sleep with a prostitute and yet at the same time insulting them. He was such a man. Always cracking lewd jokes, he had a terrible temper. Once he beat a girl so badly that even the boss, who loved money more than anything, had to ask him to leave and never come back. But he kept returning. (Shafak, *Forty Rules* 132)

Through this internal focalisation, the reader is suddenly aware of the factual nature that Baybars represses through his violent treatment of immoral people and his frequent visits to the mosques. He possesses a double, contradictory identity that enables him to be a pious man in the day and a sinner at night. In the character of Baybars, Shafak takes the reader into the life of people who project themselves as saints. This indicates that behind violent impulses in the name of protecting social morality there is something more sinister lurking behind. Baybars has demonstrably been caught by the reader in all the acts that he beats others for committing. He fornicates, drinks, hurts people, and takes part in committing murder.

One of the characteristics of Shafak's texts, such as *The Bastard of Istanbul* (2006), *Honour* (2011), *The Architect's Apprentice* (2015) and *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in this Strange World* (2019) is that she uses heterodiegetic focalization to draw the reader to the ills of religious fundamentalism. In *The Forty Rules of Love*, she exposes the fundamentalists' moral hypocrisy. In her description, they are no better than the people they consistently condemned and terrorized. There is a certain appeal to tolerance throughout the text. It is done by showing the ugly side of the moralists and the fundamentalists vis-à-vis the weaknesses and vulnerability of the moral deviants. In religious terms, Shafak seems to favour plurality – the need for the acknowledgment of religious freedoms and the absence of religion in public matters.

Her riposte to religious fundamentalists is that they should observe self-introspection and self-criticism. Poole argues that Shafak's writing borders on frontiers of "sexuality, self and the other, individual and collective, (including) the past and present Turkish history… Turkey's 'turbulent days', the dissolution of the Ottoman empire and the fabrication of Turkish Republic" (173). This call for reflection on the positionality of the Self with the Other has been one of the recurrent concerns of literature, as argued by Bennet and Royle that:

> Literature, like art more generally, has always been concerned with aspects of what can be called the unconscious or 'not me' or other: it is and has always been centrally concerned with dreams and fantasy, hallucinations and visions, madness, trance, and other kinds of impersonality or absences of self. (131)

Therefore, *The Forty Rules of Love* is a journey into the mind of the Other, into the unconscious impulses that determine characters' actions and inactions. Shafak is interested in the workings of the mind of people with dual or multiple identities that are often contradictory. This interest and other personal troubles led Shafak into becoming a novelist as she states, "I started writing fiction… not because I wanted to become a novelist… but because I was a lonely and hopelessly introverted child… There was a gap between my inner space and the outside world that I was painfully aware of" (Shafak, "Storytelling" 39). Therefore, her writing is also personally therapeutic to her – an attempt to address her problems.

V. The Return of the Repressed: Unconscious Desires and Impulses in *Three Daughters of Eve*

The text's temporal setting is the 21st century with its post 9/11 politics of religion. The story is told through foreshadowing by the central character Peri who discovers her unrestrained unconscious as the story goes back and forth. Through these characters, Shafak portrays the challenges encountered by the modern Muslim Turkish woman in the transition between traditionalism and modernity. The text foregrounds Shafak's major preoccupation – religion. It stages warring factions into the same setting to demonstrate religious crises bedevilling families and relationships among people. This is sharply demonstrated in the family of Peri with her secular father and fundamentalist mother. The family is depicted in perpetual crises: secularism and religiosity are in a confrontation in the house. Peri's character is moulded as the person in the

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middle ground. This tendency to refuse the extreme side continues to manifest continuously throughout the text.

The three major characters and many others around them demonstrate different forms of dealing with the unconscious. It is important to note that repressed desires accumulate in the unconsciousness. Some of these characters are so much away from their unconscious that they thought they have erased and eliminated it. However, the unconscious returns in many strange ways in the text. The return is so strange in some ways that the personality of the characters becomes altered forever. They find themselves capable of certain things they never dreams of doing including murder. This unconscious mode reinscribed itself after decades of repression by the characters. As would be revealed sooner, these characters take different routes to sublimate their unconscious.

VI. Memory, Nostalgia and the Unconscious

In psychoanalytic criticism, these concepts have an intertwining relation where one is influenced by the order and apparent in an autobiographical context. Memory is an important skill that human beings need to navigate their everyday lives. It assigns meaning to what has occurred in the past and how that past informs the present and shapes the future. It is through memory these three different stages of time; past, present, and future are sutured in the continued effort to understand human experience. Yates sees memory as "a glorious and admirable gift of nature by which we recall past things, we embrace present things, and we contemplate future things through their likeness to past things" (58). Thus, there could be no progress without memory and its fulcrum enables us to make critical decisions.

In an autobiographical project, memory enables the autobiographical agent the agency to decide what to recall and how to put into use. It involves the power of selection. In this way, the past does not just come seamlessly. It is recalled in relation to the present. The recollection is done to achieve certain goals of the present.

Therefore, there is agency involved in the recollection of memory that characterised autobiographical project. Susanna and Schwarz argued about the essence of memory in today's world. According to them, "[T]he idea of memory runs through contemporary public life at high voltage, generating polemic and passionate debate in the media, in the spheres of politics and academy." (1) However, despite its importance in knowledge production, memory is often not as reliable as taken to be because it involves selection, it fades with time and other experiences could erase other forms of memory.

Nostalgia occurs during the recollection of memory and according to Walder, it "was first named in the mid seventeenth century, and first emerged widely during the rise of industrialisation in modern Europe, when the writings of the European Romantics challenged what was happening in the world by exploring…the restorative, nurturing potential of memory for the threatened individual" (1-2). Nostalgia is an important concept in autobiographical project. It involves recollection of experiences to alleviate the pain of loss and despair that characterise the present. It is caused by so many factors, including absence of belonging and loneliness. It is a craving for a past that is gone because the present is full of sadness and despair. However, nostalgia could "actually be problematic and intensify feelings of loneliness because it reminds people of social connections from the past that are not presently available." (Routledge 58). In this way, it improves people's needs to be socially connected by reminding them of their belonginess concerns.

In autobiographical project, nostalgia is important in discovering both public and personal past. People recreate the past and long for it in an effort to understand the present and assign meaning to it. Nostalgia unites people and create a common past for them. This usually happens when the present is no longer interesting. The past is foregrounded to address the loneliness produced by the present. In personal experiences, nostalgia could be invoked in order to relive the past that is no longer in the family members. It is also important in creating a unity among people by reproducing a nostalgic public past.

Consequently, the unconscious "is the gathering place of forgotten and repressed contents, and has a functional significance" (Read et al. 3). It is important in the understanding of hidden desires, unexpressed motivation and other impulses that are socially unacceptable. The unconscious is central in the investigation of human mind. It is considered as the best and truest access to the human mind. The unconscious tells the reader the motivation behind autobiographical work. It reveals the author's hidden intention, hidden fears, and hidden desires. It is adequate in the study of both the author's psyche and the characters' internal motivation.

The unreliability of language and the intention of the authors make psychoanalytic criticism crutial in the study of these works. This is because, as argued by Eagleton and Beaumont, "[I]ntentionality for Freud is by no means always conscious. The text has an unconscious because, like any piece of language or any human subject, it is by virtue of its performative statements inevitably caught up in a network of significations that exceeds and sometimes subverts that performance, and which it can't control." (127) In essence, most of what happens in the human mind is unconscious and what is acted upon moves from there to the subconscious before finally getting to the

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conscious level. The unconscious serves as a repository of all human thoughts: the unfiltered and the socially acceptable and it establishes contact with the subconscious on enables people to sieve through those myriads of emotion and thoughts in order to carry themselves in a way that is deemed adequate.

In *Three Daughters of Eve,* an example of how of how memory, nostalgia and the unconscious has an effect on Peri's psyche is in the recollection of her childhood memory in the different types of books each of her parents kept on their shelves. This can be interpreted as a marking of their territory in the house and a representation of their contrasting characters and the ideals they have about religion and society One interesting character in the text is Peri's father, Mensur. His mood is mostly melancholic. He lives in the present moment but with a deep feeling of longing for the past. As a ship's engineer in his youth, he has travelled the world and has experienced what it is to be in a "democratic" setting. He cherishes the Turkish secular past built by Atatürk. He merges the Turkish past into his own and recalls with melancholy how all the good systems and institutions built by Atatürk are being erased by people he considers as religious fundamentalists. His failure to detach his own history and past from the collective Turkish history will create in him a certain hatred of the religious presence everywhere in Istanbul, including his own home. This nostalgia built up to become a psychological longing for the past and a certain resentment for the present. He resents religion and doubts the future it offers which is why he and his wife Selma hardly see eye to eye. Mensur is essentially an agnostic; someone who acknowledges the existence of a supreme being but does not accept people's definition of what that being is or what it represents. He believes in God, reward, and punishment but he does not understand why God allows human beings to commit atrocities on one another. He knows he is a sinner due to his incessant drinking yet he validates this inadequacy with it being his only sin. He says "I don't gamble, I don't steal, I don't accept bribes, I don't smoke and I don't go around chasing women; surely Allah will spare His old creation this much misdeed" (Shafak, *Three Daughters* 17). He is a spiritual freelancer and indifferent towards Islamic ideals. He sublimates his resentment for religion with drinking and blasphemous remarks in his house.

Every evening, while drinking *raki,* he sits with a couple of friends to discuss the things they do not like in Istanbul – the resurgence of religion in Turkish public places. Due to this constant drinking, be became an alcoholic and as the youngest child of three, Peri grows up to see her father engulfed in sadness almost all the time. Readers are informed of his state of mind right at the beginning of the story:

> Sitting by herself in a corner, a heaviness of heart would come over Peri. She often wondered what it was that made her father so sad. She imagined sorrow sticking to him like a fine layer of black tar under the sole of his shoe. She could neither find a way to lift his spirits nor stop trying, for she was, as everyone in the family would testify, her father's daughter. (Shafak, *Three Daughters* 17)

Through the description above, Peri tells the reader a lot about her father's psychological state. He has a bleak aura filled with sorrow, which originated from his constant pessimism about his country. Even among Mensur's friends, they only speak about the things that make him sad. They do not speak about their shared happiness. His sadness and endless sorrow are derived from what he considered as the erosion of Turkish values in the seemingly and unstoppable taking over by Islamic extremism in history. He finds solace in the past with its heroic figures. He sublimated this fear of the taking over of Turkish socio-political settings into hero worship.

Everywhere in his house is dominated by the presence of Atatürk, the father of modern Turkey. He wants to imbue this nationalist feeling into his children and make his house one of Turkish identites. The narrator tells us a lot about his blind nationalism that is supplanted in every corner of his house. She says:

> From the ornate picture frame on the wall, Atatürk – the father of the Turks – would glance down at them, his steel-blue eyes flecked with gold. There were portraits of the national hero everywhere; Atatürk in his military uniform in the kitchen, Atatürk in a redingote in the living room, Atatürk with a coat and kalpak in the master bedroom, Atatürk with silk gloves and flowing cape in the hall. On national holidays and commemorative days, Mensur would hang a Turkish flag with a picture of the great man outside a window for everyone to see. (Shafak, *Three Daughters* 17-18)

Mensur develops an obsession with Atatürk. There is a twist in his relationship with the former leader of Turkey and all the ideas he represents. The same dangerous feeling that Mensur associates with religious extremists seem to resurface in his idea of Turkish identity and the image of its founder. In this character, the author seems to demonstrate that extremism is not the preserve of the religious. People who are atheists are also bound to be extremists. Mensur displays the same hatred and disdain toward religion, especially Islam and anyone who faithfully practices it. His image of Atatürk is informed by the way the latter disrupts the religious order in Turkey.

However, this extreme agnosticism in Mensur undermines his attempt to efface religion in his household. The more he blasphemes the more Selma believes in Islam. She is also consistent in preaching to him and reminding him of his ingratitude to God. As he goes far away from Islam, she seems to go nearer to it. She does this in all her activities. She changes her attire, clad in covering her head fully when outside. She counteracts his display of nationalism with her display of Islamic arts on their shelves. There are two shelves

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above their TV stand; the first belonged to Mensur while the second to Selma as recounted by the narrator. The first contains Mensur's books from which his ultranationalist ideas spring from, while the second shelf that belongs to Selma is a world entirely apart compared to what Mensur has. It contains the Islamic books about virtue, piety and eternal punishment for the unrepentant sinners.

She also openly displays her hatred of her husband's drinking habits and his attempts to recruit their daughter into his ways. Peri becomes a space for the ideological war staged by her parents. Each of them is in dire need of winning the girl to their side. Each of them also loathes seeing Peri by the side of the other. Everything in the house becomes doubly contested between agnosticism and monotheism. Every corner of the house is a demonstration of the contestation between Islam and its opposition. The house becomes, "divided into her zone and his zone – Dar al-Islam and Dar al-harp – the realm of submission and the realm of war" (Shafak, *Three Daughters* 20). Peri comes to wonder how people who agree to be married could live such a hate-filled life with vendettas and unrestrained verbal assaults thrown across the wife and husband.

In general, what the Nalbantoğlus family demonstrates is that repressed desire has many ways of returning to the experiences of the individual concerned. Mensur's fear of rising Islamic fundamentalism has given rise to the emergence of a fundamentalist under his roof – his wife with whom he spends decades. His fear of extremism also returns to manifest itself in his mind. He harbours the same disdain that he sees in fundamentalists. His burning desire for the return of a foregone past, the age of Atatürk has reproduced hatred, intolerance, and disdain on religious people. This has shown that often the words tolerance, fundamentalism, and extremism are very much relative to the agency speaking at a particular moment. Otherwise, both religious fundamentalists and their critics harbour the same tendency to be extremists. Extremism could be found among both the theists and the agnostics.

Another interesting character is Peri, the central character who is poised as the tolerant and open type. She is the antithesis of both her father and her mother. She refuses to be conscripted into any of the ideological camps. Instead, she becomes tolerant of the two and at the same time confused. She begins to ask herself why people could be so toxically hateful of the other in the name of religion or the lack of it. This confusion leads her into the study of religion at Oxford University where she joins others to speak freely about different religions in the world and the perception of people on them. Peri's character is an example of how a repressed desire can force itself back into the human mind. Throughout her encounter with others, readers are led into her empathic treatment of others and her altruism regarding others' feelings and wellbeing.

However, what Peri forgets to take note of is that she too, like all other human beings, possesses an unconscious mind that sometimes takes over her conscious state. This terrible reality hits her in the face on two accounts. One in Oxford and the other in Istanbul decades after her unfortunate exit from Oxford. In the first one, she develops an interest in a course taught by Professor A. Z. Azur, the professor of religion. Peri's interest in the course spills over to the Professor teaching it. But Azur is already in a relationship with her friend, Shirin. Peri's repressed part, the jealousy in her, takes over. She becomes too engrossed in her feelings for Azur to the point of obsession but he could not be there for her because the feeling is not mutual even though he is aware of her infatuation towards him.

When Azur is wrongly accused of sleeping with her, she is asked to appear before a panel to either confirm or disprove the allegation. Her jealousy coupled with her inclination to avoid confrontation gets the best of her and instead of appearing before the panel, where on one hand, people such as Shirin and Ed (a student Azur helped solve a personal problem by making him think and act outside the box) who care about Azur were counting on her, to tell the truth, and refute the allegation which will save his career and reputation. On the other, people like Dr. Raymond, Peri's academic adviser and Troy Azur's former student who despises Azur due to his provocative unorthodox method of teaching and some personal reasons, were looking forward to Peri confirming the allegations which will be an unrecoverable hit on Azur's professional and personal life. Despite what is at stake, Peri decides to shun the panel; – implying that the allegation was true. She decides not to testify because she felt it was their problem, not hers and since her feelings for Azur are not mutual, she does not owe him anything. This decision of course leads to Azur's destruction – he loses his job and becomes physically and emotionally isolated. Both Shirin and Peri lost him.

After the incident and years later, Shirin still resents Peri for destroying her lover Azur. While he on the other hand, regrets the way he treated Peri during her time in Oxford. Likewise, Peri feels guilty throughout those years for what her absence at the panel cost him. Her absence during the panel is fuelled by her jealousy of his relationship with Shirin and her hatred for him because she realises she hated him just as much as she loved him, which is created by an unfulfilled desire to have him and sometimes she feels manipulated by him. Here again, Peri is surprised at what she did. She never believed that she is capable of destroying people out of spite. Until this time, she was not even aware that she tends to be jealous, let alone destroying someone else's decades-old career.

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The second episode happens on Peri's way to a party where she is invited alongside her family. Her husband goes there to wait for her and their daughter. On the way there, Peri wonders about the sexual assaults women face every day in Istanbul where an accidental eye to eye contact with a man is considered an invitation for flirtations. While waiting for the traffic lights, one of the street beggars snatched her handbag and hand it over to a tramp nearby. It is at this point that Peri's unconscious takes over. She never before thinks she is capable of violent tendencies. But she pursues the tramp who runs into a deserted alley. Peri goes after him. In her efforts to recover her bag and the items inside it, the tramp attempts to rape her. This attempted rape provokes violence in her and she descends on him. She is not scared when he attempts to murder her with his knife. Instead of being afraid, she becomes more determined to recover her bag. It is at this point that she discovers the violent part of her being. This unknown, unconscious but violent space in her mind emerges from nowhere and takes over. It appears to her like a trance or a jinni, as she would describe it.

This violent nature is quite unknown to Peri. She has always seen herself as an ambassador of peace. She eschews violence and cautions others against it. She sees herself as the very idea of the United Nations in human form. Arbitration defines her roles among people she encounters. She arbitrates between her parents during any of their common and almost daily confrontations. At Oxford, she arbitrates between her two friends, Shirin and Mona. It has been the same fight between the forces of religion – Mona and the forces of atheism – Shirin. Mona and Shirin present the ambivalence in the perception of the 'other.' Both of them are othered by the Britishness around them. Shirin responds by developing hatred about her Iranian-Islamic identity and looks for every opportunity to reject it. Mona responds in the opposite. The more she is reminded of her difference the more she displays more eagerness to be different and to confirm her otherness from the mainstream.

She is a perfect example of how people can respond to otherness in a foreign land as put forward in an interview by Shafak that, "foreigners cling to their religious or national identities as a reaction to this process of 'otherisation'. In a way, the more they are 'othered' because of their national background, the more they glue themselves to it" (Shafak, "Migration" 57). But to her surprise, Peri realises, in her encounter with the tramp, that she is equally capable of murder. She sees herself transformed from the peaceful type that she knows and the violent one. The transformation is described in this way. Right from early childhood, when in danger, as a defence mechanism from a strange instinctive drive, she experiences a guardian angel sort of phenomenon. Where a baby in the mist appears to protect her and save her from something awful.

The last time she had such an experience was when she attempted suicide back in oxford. As an adult, she thought those experiences as over until her encounter with the tramp:

> That was when she saw a silhouette out of the corner of her eye. Soft and silken, too angelic to be human. She recognized it – him. The baby in the mist. Rosy cheeks, dimpled arms, sturdy, plump legs; wispy, golden hair that had not yet turned dark. A plum-colored stain covered one cheek. A cute little infant, except he wasn't. A jinni. A spirit. A hallucination. A figment of her wired, fearful imagination. (Shafak, *Three Daughters* 42)

After this experience, the conscious mode of restraints, peace, and arbitration escapes Peri. She becomes wild as her unconscious takes over. This unconscious mode is free from all forms of control. It justifies itself as the projection of those human impulses that have all been repressed by the codes of ethics of society, of religion, of an appeal to civilisation, and all other conscious modes. "Peri launched herself at the man. Caught by surprise, he tumbled rearwards and fell on his back. Lithe and agile, she jumped and kicked him in the crotch. He keened like a wounded animal. Peri felt nothing – no pity, no rage… she felt powerful. Unhinged. Dangerous" (Shafak, *Three Daughters,* 43).

This transformation from the refined to the wild registers in Peri a stark truth about her own identity – the discovery of her dark impulses that she always represses. The repression was taken to the extreme that is why when it resurfaces, it nearly led her into committing murder. She nearly killed the tramp by kicking him and beating him repeatedly. She does not use the knife that he wanted to use to stab her. She uses her own hands and legs to beat him to submission. Had her daughter not to have arrived at the scene just in time, Peri would have killed the tramp. This sudden and violent transformation reminds her of all the negative things that she thought she has forgotten throughout her life.

This forceful re-emergence of the unconscious enables a surprising realisation in Peri – the existence of the violent part in her that makes itself present in a moment of crisis. Peri never thought she possesses this trance-like identity that overrides all her restraints and control built over the years. This moment further memorialises the troubled parts of her experiences. All the things that she thought she has erased in her mind suddenly foreground themselves during this transformation. Put simply, this moment registers the simple fact in Peri that she did not and could not erase the unconscious part of her. She is made up of three elements as explained in Freud's works – the unconscious instinctive and impulsive part with its raw, violent nature that knows what it wants regardless of what is right or wrong (id), the conscious part of discipline, control, restraints; identifying right and wrong based on what she learned to be socially acceptable

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(superego) and the conscious decision on how to behave by moderating between basic instincts and what is socially acceptable (ego).

VII. Conclusion

There is a bone of contention around psychoanalysis itself by psychologists and literary theorists such as Freud's theory that during childhood, humans spend a lot of time unconsciously focusing on each of their erogenous zones, or that children work through sexual frustrations with their parents of the opposite sex and women suffer from penis envy. Regardless of its flaws (after all, no tool of criticism is perfect), his clinical method of neurotic treatment and subsequently of literary criticism is still relevant today due to his ground-breaking theory about unconsciousness. It popularised the idea that people are influenced by their unconscious mind, that their thoughts and behaviour are not completely under their conscious control. Psychoanalytical criticism studies the unconscious drives of characters in a text in order to explain their behaviour and to elaborate on their authors' intentions and psychology as well.

Therefore, using this method of analysis, this paper examined some characters' application of certain defence mechanisms that keep them safe from the guilt and anxiety they would feel if they gave into their innermost desires. In *The Forty Rules of Love*, Ella sublimates her impulse to abandon her family by starting what started as a harmless curious relationship with the author of the novel she was reviewing which later turned into an affair. The sublimation of her desire to leave everything behind was inadequate, (this resulted in the return of the repressed desire to put herself first and follow her heart regardless of family obligations and social judgements. In the end, she did give in to that impulse). Baybars also sublimates his inadequacies of alcoholism, fornication, and violence with his cynical and narcissistic moral policing of his hometown.

Likewise, in *Three Daughters of Eve* Mensur sublimates his agnosticism with nationalism. Peri has always been confused about God due to the incessant war between her parents with each parent occupying a position at the extreme end of two opposite sides. Being the mediator of the two early in her life, she subsequently suppresses and abandons her wants and desires to make those around her happy. However, years later as an adult, she gets the staggering realisation that suppressed emotions do not disappear, rather, they accumulate over a while and come forth even uglier. This illuminates one of Shafak's forte in writing; focusing on marginalised people, ideas, or concepts proving that they are just as much important as the clichéd or centralised issues, concepts and ideas. It also shows her perpetual fusion of the past with the present, and how the former heavily influences the latter. In addition, her advocacy on the need to embrace Otherness is evident. For example, Peri is the Other in her even in her family as she struggles to find a belonging with her family and Baybars' scathing distain towards Shams of Tabriz is impractical that only illuminates his bigotry and pettiness.

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