

## Original Paper

# Critical Application of Psychoanalytical Theory on the Children Literature ‘Rapunzel’

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### Abstract

*The study has discussed the key ideas of Freud's theory of dream work and psychoanalysis on the fairy tale Rapunzel written by Grimm brothers. The character of husband, wife and witch shows the Freud's theory of id, ego and super-ego. Rapunzel reflects the psychosexual development theory of Freud, as Rapunzel is a girl who spend her life in a tower, which has no door, and windows in it. She does not touch ground or green grass in her lifetime. She lacks relationships all her life. When she met a prince, she was terrified at first because she never met any human in her life except her mother, but she drawn towards him because of her basic needs. The careful examination of the linguistic and visual text of the data indicates that Rapunzel is perfect example of the Freud's psychosexual development in all his theoretical concepts. The investigative framework adopted for this study was case based exploratory research in which data was collected analysed and interpreted qualitatively. The sampling strategy drawn for this study was typical and critical case sampling technique.*

### Keywords

*children literature, psychoanalysis, ID, ego, super ego*

### 1. Introduction

Rapunzel is a story that revolve around girl, who is blond and a witch. It begins with married couple king and queen who were childless and want a child. Rapunzel represent the dream work element because she dreams about the outer world and light to see from the palace. Witch represent the element of super ego. Queen represents the ‘id’ element while king serves as a moderator. As the story begins, it shows that king and queen lived in a house form where a beautiful garden can be seen where a

beautiful flower Rapunzel was cultivated as a vegetable. This was the witch's garden, king and queen are not allowed and strictly forbidden to enter the garden. One day, queen was looking out of the window where she saw the most precious Rapunzel and made her mind that she must have to eat that otherwise she will die. As the days passed the queen starts to feel sick. Husband waited for the nightfall and jumped into the garden through the wall to take that fruit for his dying wife. But this was not enough for her wife as she wants more. To save her life that guy went to the garden again to take that Rapunzel. He was caught by the witch there and witch threatens the husband to punish. Husband start begging for forgiveness when caught by Witch. Witch agreed to forgive him on one demand. She set him free only if they gave the witch their first child for forever. The husband agrees at once. When their first child born, witch came and take that child with her. The witch lock the young girl in a tower away from humans with no doors and windows. She named the girl Rapunzel as the name of vegetable. Rapunzel had a long golden silky hairs. When wants to enter the tower with no door she calls out the Rapunzel to let her hair down, she then climb the tower with the help of Rapunzel hairs. One day, a prince happened to pass by the tower. He heard a song sung in a beautiful voice by some woman. He came near to the tower to see the lady who has this beautiful voice. He tried to go into the tower but there was no door or any other to go up to top. Prince came back in helplessness. The next day, he came again to the tower to hear the beautiful voice where he saw a witch from behind the bushes calling out O, Rapunzel O, Rapunzel let your hairs down. Shen then uses the hairs to climb up. Prince found out the way to get to the tower. On the next morning, he came near the tower and calls out the same words as he learnt from the witch. Rapunzel after hearing the same words as her mother said, sheet her hairs down. Prince finds it only way to meet the lady with beautiful voice. When Rapunzel saw the prince for the first time she got scared as she never seen anyone except her mother in her lifetime. Prince was so handsome and charming that she proposes Rapunzel to marry her. Rapunzel agrees and makes plan with prince to escape from that tower. According to their plan, prince has to carry a piece of silken rope with him, as she will make a ladder with this rope to descend the tower. So, prince visits her every evening and bring a piece of rope with him. One day, Rapunzel mistakenly revealed in front of the witch that why she takes too long to climb up while prince takes little time. Witch becomes angry and cut off her hair as she thought someone found her here. On the next day, when prince call our Rapunzel to shed her hair down, the witch yells at him and he followed the witch and climb the tower to meet her ugliness than his beautiful wife to be. When he finds that her love has been snatched from him, he jumps out of the tower and become blind after hitting a stone. Prince travel the world without eyes until he finds the Rapunzel home where she lived with her twins, which she had with the prince. She starts crying when she him without eyes. Her tears fall on his face and magically his sight comes back. In the end, he takes Rapunzel and the children back to the palace.

### *1.1 Rationale of the Study*

The aim of this study is to help people suffering from mental sickness by understanding their personality, behaviour and thoughts. Freud made a therapy to uncover those unconscious drives

because he thought that these are the main cause of mental illness. According to this theory, everyone has unconscious emotions, thoughts, memories and wants. This research will help the people to reveal these suppressed desires. Rapunzel is a good example for this research because of her interest in the outer world and desire to see the floating lights. Rapunzel is story with main female character which will help other women to learn the best style of living and to learn from their mistakes that they made in the past and to not repeat them in future.

### *1.2 Research Questions*

- 1) How do Freud's concepts of ID, Ego and Super ego relate with the linguistic-visual content of the movie Repunzel?
- 2) What kind of personality do characters portray in Repunzel?
- 3) What is the level of thematic consciousness portrayed by the characters in Repunzel?
- 4) To what extent Freud's concept of psychosexual development has been narrated in the kids' literature 'Repunzel'?

### *1.3 Purpose of the Study*

The findings of the study will help the readers to understand the different elements of psychoanalysis theory of Freud with proper application. Commonly stating, Freud's theory holds that unconscious emotions, thoughts and drives shapes the human behaviour. Based on this theory, 'Ed, Ego, and Super-ego' are three main components. The ego works in conscious mind while id works in unconscious mind. Super-ego works on both sides conscious and unconscious. With the help of this story, Grimm brothers want to teach the young girls and women to learn from their mistakes and not to repeat them in future and to live a good life based on the bible rules. To avoid such kind of disasters that Rapunzel made in her life, it is necessary for young girls to live a biblical life.

## **2. Literature Review**

The study by Catania (2015) has explored the dimensional changes that paly a role in expressing the desire and authority in the story. This can determine if the story that is under study have tragic or pleasant ending. This article will study the Freud's piece of work that is sadism to explore the dimensions of desire. He used two stories to reference first short story is Nathaniel Hawthorne's Raplaccinis's daughter and second is Grimm brother's fairy tale Rapunzel to study these dynamics. In spite of the fact that women are restricted in these situations, time and self-determination are opposite to each other, women have more freedom of choice in selecting her man when there is smaller space. This study wants to prove that romance scenes in the settings of the story directly tells if the story has happy or tragic conclusion.

Similarly, this article by Carhart-Harris and Friston (2010) will study the concept that the conceptions of Freud have neurological intervals. This study argues that what Freud describe as primary and secondary structures are connected to the neural system and are lined with person's organized activities. This study holds that brain system works independently with the situation and have superordinate

levels. It is not always our will to do things without thinking about them. This independency of brain system lower our free energy and that's how we learn to control our desires or how to handle energy that produce within us. This shows that id, ego and super-ego are not the energies beyond our approach but somehow our brain produces them and then make them under control of us because superior of them is brain system.

Furthermore, a study by Klein (1952) explored the presence of initial hereditary mutations in the ego in his book "Analysis of Terminable and Interminable". This book contains most of his observations on the ego that he made or think. Klein believes that ego develops when a child is born. It depends on the child how he perceives things and how he reacts or handles worries. In this work, he argues that when ego tolerate worry or any situation, it is done through inherent power or similar things. In addition, he said that when ego interact with outer world it creates relations with other objects. He currently said that the wish of consolidation is one of the ancient work of the ego. Now, he would think about the fight or flight impulses that plays important roles in the function of ego. Ego serves as the source of impulses, which is important for the life and death theory of Freud. Nevertheless, he differs in idea from Freud. He thought that anxiety comes from the fear of death, which comes from the death impulses working within ourselves. The both id and ego are involved in the battle of impulses between death and life.

Similarly, an essay by Blass (2012) discusses the main points of Klein idea of ego by doing a complete study of Klein work and his companions. This study discusses the three main problems. First is the conceptual foundations of Klein's idea of ego. Second includes the steps that are done in the development of ego and its competency. Third is the idea that ego is an introspective thing. This study shows that concept of Klein about ego is strongly rooted in the theory of Freud on ego. This rejected the thought that Klein only study and give assumptions about the clinical teachings and was not interested in theories and had no clear concepts. In clear means, it disapproves the concept that Klein has not understanding on the concept of ego in clear manners. This essay focuses on the points from there these false assumptions came. At last, by clearing these false concepts about Klein, we can understand Kelvin better and her connection with the theory of Freud and psychoanalysis.

Another study by Boag (2014) mentions the connection between id, ego and inner objects. The psychology of ego holds that ego is free from the desires but another theory holds that ego comes from the drives produced in our body. This point gives rise to a thought that drives are something that are known within us and consist of Freud's theory of ego. We can suggest that our personality is composed of various knowers. This is because we have multiple desires within us. Thus, according to the Freud's theories, ego is made up of independent thoughts while id is made of suppressed desires. In this regard, self-identification is built and potential for many personalities established. Many Philosophers from the continent study Freud's metapsychology. Different famous philosophers from different fields like feminist and psychoanalytic directions are made to sit yoga to study and analyse the Freud's theory. Due to many critics from English speaking community, Freud's theory was misunderstood and

represented falsely. This study by Mills will give credits and honour to the Freud's contribution to the understanding of human psyche. Jon Mills is a psychologist and Philosopher who took interest and concentrate on important beliefs of Freud like structure of dreams, drives, defence, development of ego, death and issues regarding race.

Groot (1962) underwent the concept of Freud on ego and super-ego. At first, Freud practiced the terms ego and super-ego as exchangeable terms. This certainty has an ancient apology. Freud concludes that ego may be rival of itself making demands and punishing it. This shows that super ego develops as an element of the ego in an identification procedure. We have an example of this study in Oedipus complex where super-ego serves as an heir. It consists of the child's wish to imitate their parent's perfection and to attach to their expectations. This theory surrounds and clarify a wide range of beyond normal behaviours of humans.

The article by Monahan (2018) explores the interaction of author with a girl. Her name was Elva. When she was fourteen, she first approached her and worked for three years with her. She told that she try to separate and differentiate from her parents which led her in isolation in her room. She compares this situation with Rapunzel like the one she was trapped in a tower. Elva just started to start her journey without being dependent on her parents and was ready to begin a new chapter in her life same as Rapunzel when she came out of latency cycle. As Elva get matured her reality changes. Her anxiety strokes become severe.

Written for young readers the significance of stories is undisputed. In certain, the essential place of the fairy tale in widespread culture is undoubtedly renowned. Although, these stories are times old, but they are modified by the values of the tellers to be extra well-matched with the philosophical interpretations of the viewers. This study by Smith (2015) will discover how feminism has prejudiced two kinds of the similar story, issued by the alike issuer for equivalent age clusters by an examination of the Ladybird forms of Rapunzel, which were published in 1968 and 1993 respectively. This will display how there are delicate variations in the writing that do not disturb the general tale structure. However, it can suggest a vision into the means in which culture has ideologically placed men and women.

For young readers fairy tales are always captivating. They create stereotypes and highlight traditional gender roles, because most of these fairy tales have their origin in oral folktales. Just like Nikolajeva (2003) states that fairy stories imitate its specific society and time. Development in audience has headed to a revolution in these replications. Rapunzel is known for her long blond hair and is one of the iconic story. Hairs are linked with femininity and transmits symbolic allegations. They also display how social control effects how he/she attires their hair. The authors portray a modification in the traditional gender roles by the change of her hair in the editions. In a fairy tale, Rapunzel hairs are of great importance. The whole story revolved around her hairs. Long hair itself depict feminine effect in the story as the girls are supposed to have long hairs and should not cut them short. Also long hair are

considered as a symbol of beauty for girls and they have to carry these hairs no matter if they like it or not.

In literary studies, conversation about masculinity is yet to be discuss as specific topic of research. In everyday life, masculinity is a theory of work or action. In society this concept acts as authority that how men should behave and react to problems and ideas. This creation is frequently initiate in love stories. This is where the male character behaves like somebody who is appreciated or entitled as a hero. The type of love is habitually set up in a fairy tale that typically has masculine and womanly characters. The typecast of the fairy tale itself support the male character, though the key personality is a female character. This is thought to be a masked masculinity. Yet numerous people are ignorant. The exploration practices masculinity as a subject and notion in the fairy tale Rapunzel by Grimm Brothers, as well as practices a hereditary structuralism methodology, which is by Lucien Goldmann. This method is appropriate as it blocks the arrangement in one piece in the information and narrates it to the societal circumstances that trigger the formation of the work.

This study depicts advancement in cinema, education, literature and in its characters. The descriptions monitor the societal developments, gaining the features of the diverse eras and, subsequently, there is a modification in the representation of the characters. To authenticate this development, a judgement is prepared between Rapunzel of Tangled and Rapunzel of the Grimme Brothers. The utmost outstanding progress in current years is in connection to the outline of the women and their labels. We can witness this advancement from the variations of the old-style tales like the tales of Grimme Brothers that turn into prodigious and widespread plots of the current times. The woman's sketch is characterised by the character of princess, that is somewhat which symbols the life of teenagers largely, as they act as an ideal to trail especially for girls. They transfer memos and permit beliefs, by their activities and from the entire story. Hereafter there is a countless inconsistency between the princesses of the Modern Age and the princesses of the Classical Age.

### *2.1 Description of the Theory*

Sigmund Freud is known for his psychodynamic approach towards psychology. This approach deals with unconscious emotions to explain behaviour of humans. Because of psychological drives, Freud believes that our mind is responsible for our both conscious and unconscious decisions. According to Freud, our brain is made up of three parts that are id, ego and super-ego. Freud thinks that we are actors in our own mind, who works according to the desires that are produced in our minds. What we are outside and what our personality is, all depend upon our internal struggles that are hidden. According to the theory of psychoanalysis, our personality is divided into three main functions. First is id, which is initial unconscious desire if basic needs of human, aggressive or addictive impulses. Second is ego, which works according to the norms of society and moral standards. Third is super-ego, which deals with the reality of present days and desires or needs of psychic mind that creates conflict. This literature tells us that how pain stops the basic desires and release the righteous sentiments. These desires are unable to express themselves. Id creates in our minds desires unconsciously which we want

to do it without considering anything in our surroundings which later on suppressed by ego element to think of it whether it is right or wrong. In the end super-ego overtake our unconscious drives and turn according to the present day reality.

### *2.2 Description of the Cartoon*

Many years ago, a girl was known for her beautiful long golden hairs. Unfortunately, a cruel witch locked her in a tower facing no doors. Her parents gave her to witch in exchange of promise they made before her birth. She lived here alone and in sadness. One day, a charming prince happened to pass by the tower. He heard a song she was singing in her beautiful voice. He became obsessed and what to meet the woman up in the tower but there was no door to enter in the tower. He became hopeless. On the next day, he came there again and a Witch there. He hides himself in the bushes and heard a witch calling O Rapunzel, O Rapunzel let your hair down. He thought this is the way to reach to the tower. They both met and made a decision to leave from here. However, the witch found out about this somehow. The witch cut the Rapunzel long hair and descend her to live in a desert alone. The Prince was also the victim of this spell, which let him blind. After few years, prince and Rapunzel met again somewhere. Rapunzel began to cry when she saw prince. When some of her tears fell on the face of prince, his sight restored. Then they lived happily after. If something is written to happen, it will happen no matter what. According to the fairy tale, prince and Rapunzel were meant to be together and they became so.

## **3. Research Methodology**

This study adopted qualitative method. Primary data is taken from the story of Rapunzel and the Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis theory of id, ego and super-ego. All the primary data is from these sources and no other material is used beyond these in this research. Secondary data sources are random books of similar interests, internet, magazine and articles. These tools are used for carrying out the research. All the material used is relevant and accurate for the research. The investigative framework adopted for this study was case based exploratory research in which data was collected analysed and interpreted qualitatively. The sampling strategy drawn for this study was typical and critical case sampling technique.

### *3.1 Thesis Statement*

Psychoanalytical study of female characters in a fairy tale Rapunzel considering the Freud's id, ego, and super-ego.

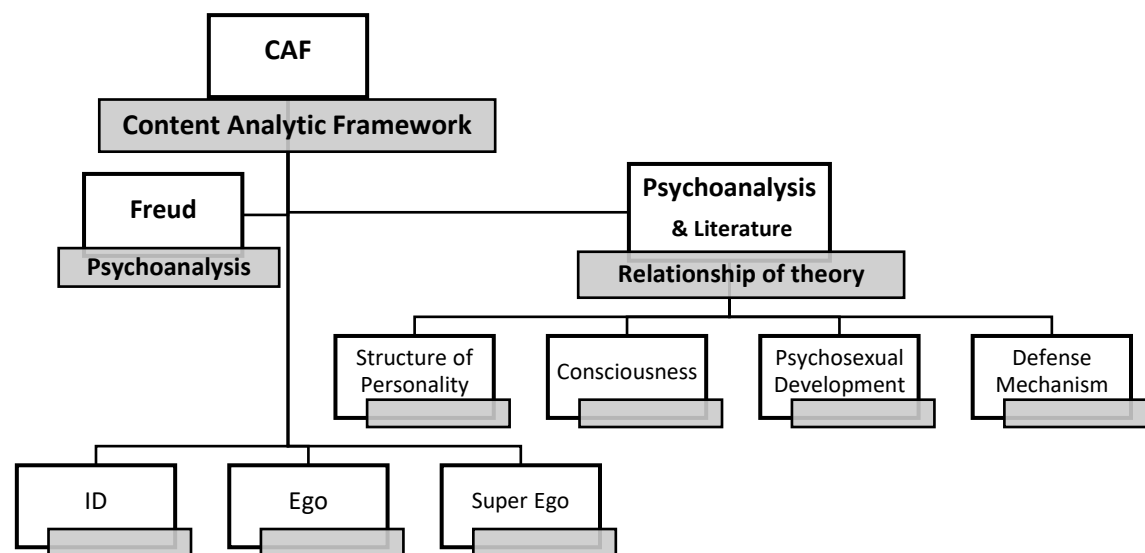
### *3.2 Conceptual Description*

A fairy tale Rapunzel is explored by looking at it through the lens of psychoanalytical theory of Sigmund Freud. In this research, observations, which are made on characters of the fairy tale, are done through qualitative research. Those characters best describe the elements of the Sigmund Freud theory. Id, ego and super-ego are studied thoroughly in this research article. Each character has its own importance regarding the theory. Witch represent the super-ego element, Rapunzel represent the

dreamer or psychosexual element, and Rapunzel's mother represent the id element in the story while her father is being shown as mediator.

### 3.3 Content-analytic Framework

When story begins, it shows that a couple is wishing for having a child. It is true that everyone wants to have children in their homes. According to the Freud, this is the result of unconscious element id. Wife sees a beautiful flower that was used as a vegetable and start longing for it. If she does not have this fruit, she will die either. This shows another incidence of id in that home. This shows the wife's selfishness also as she just want to eat that vegetable which she finds a moat beautiful one no matter what. There was no name given to the wife in the story because she was not a complete character. She depicts the id element of the Freud's theory in a fairy tale Rapunzel. How she just wanted a fruit or otherwise she will die shows the person's attitude towards their drives that our mind makes. On the other hand, husband serves as a mediator because he forbid the laws and rules to save her wife's life. He jump into the garden that was under the command of cruel witch. Witch had a rule of not to enter in the garden and touch the forbidden fruit ever otherwise there will be punishment. This shows the ego element, which controls the super-ego and id further to make decisions. The witch represents the super-ego, while wife represents the id and ego element in the house.



**Figure 1. Content-analytic Framework (CAF)**



#### 4. Findings and Discussion

This research helped the people especially women to understand their psyche and to better their lives. The main character of the fairy tale is female. Rapunzel is a strong and firm young lady. She as a strong urge to see the worldly things outside the tower. Rapunzel's life and the sufferings she goes through in her life and how she overcome these circumstances is a message for other women to how to go through the difficulties of life. Women should learn from the mistakes that happened in the past and not repeat these mistakes in future for a happy life. It will also help the males instead of females, how to overcome the challenges of life. Rapunzel face many obstacles in her life but she never loosed hope and rather overcome these challenges and in the end lived a happy life with her loved ones. It is a famous proverb that life is not a bed of roses. It will not always give you ease and comfort but rather it brings lemons in your life as well. A wise person is one who made something of worth from these situations that life put them in and do not panic at the obstacles. Because after every difficulty there is, ease which demands patience and wait. On the other hand, Rapunzel's mother long for a Rampion vegetable that grown in the witch garden. This is same as the Adam and Eve, when they drawn to the apple in Eden's garden. This is an example for the bible. This is because she was not able to eat that apple which was on the other side of the witch's garden, she starts becoming obsessional. She will either die of she does not eat some of the vegetable. She wants more when her husband brings her some. She agrees on giving her daughter when her husband caught by the witch while stealing that vegetable for her thirst.

Similarly, jealousy is another theme that is also under study. Self-doubt is the main reason of jealousy. The results of jealousy are mostly negative. This is because jealousy is connected to possessiveness, which ruin the relationship. When witch found out that Rapunzel had guest in the house, she said to Rapunzel a wicked child what you have done to me. She believed that she had saved her from others. A desire of child to be free from the parents is the third theme of the story. This witch done a mistake by locking her in a tower and do not let her to meet anyone until she was twelve. This is return ruin their relationship for forever. This also gives a lesson to parents to give their child some freedom to live and think on their own. Rapunzel might not accept to wed the first man she ever met in her life and to have children with him if she was not that lonely and inexperienced. This is because how she was grown that made her think that she loved him more than his mother. To be aware of prohibited fruit, avoiding jealousy and let your children have some freedom are the some main themes or moral lessons from the story. Everything happens on time, you just need to wait for it and to show patience. Rapunzel and Prince seem to be impossible to be together but somehow fate let them together in the end. The witch ruined her relationship with Rapunzel because of jealousy; and to keep Rapunzel away from everyone. Another theme of this fairy tale is attraction towards the forbidden. One of the reasons why prince admire her and want to marry her because she is out of the reach of prince. Despite of marrying any other women in the kingdom whom would be happy to marry him he wanted to earn Rapunzel love. This is because prince had to work of Rapunzel's love rather than for any women that make him fall in

love with her. Rapunzel agrees to marry prince because he had everything from which she had been neglected. If she was given the choice for someone else, she might not choose prince at the first meeting to marry. The Grimm brothers want to tell the readers we all want what we cannot have even if it make us suffer for a lifetime. This outlook towards life makes us suffer more wherever we go. This story gives us more knowledge about life, and how does it work. It is based on realities of life as well as its cruelties. It has message for women, children, parents, and for individuals as well. Human from all corners of life can find something in this tale. It is not only for children to find it amusing but also for adults to learn from this and make changes in their lives to live a happy peaceful life instead of regretting for their decisions in future. This is human nature to attract to the things that are not in the reach or that are forbidden for them. They find it amusing and built curiosity in them to have it. This attitude might prove harmful for all of us. After going through the story we need to learn that this attitude need to be changed. Sometimes what is looking pleasant from the distance might be poisonous or dangerous or maybe it will ruin our life. It is up to you if you want to live a happy life or miserable life. If you learn from the mistakes of others and implement these rules into your life you will be save from the hard lessons that life teaches and what life teaches there is no mercy then.

### **5. Justification of the Research Questions**

Findings reveal that witch is the powerful character in the story. She has powers and authority over others to mend them the way she like. She represents the element of superego in the story. She does not like if someone enter in her garden and touch the forbidden fruit. She said that they only belong to her and no one else. If someone tries to enter in her garden and steal the forbidden fruit, she will curse them with her magic for a lifetime. The same situation happened in the story. Rapunzel's mother had a strong desire to eat the forbidden fruit, which only grows, in the witch's garden. If she had not eaten this fruit, she will rather die. Therefore, her husband jumps into the witch's garden and bring the fruit to fulfill her desire. However, that was not enough, as she wants more otherwise she will die. Her husband went again into the garden but that time the witch caught him. Witch wanted to curse him at that moment but he beg her to forgive him. He was just trying to save his pregnant wife. Witch agrees to free him on one promise that he has to give her first child for a life whenever he\she will born. Both the king and queen agrees because they have no other choice before the witch. This satisfies the first question of this research that how witch represents the superego element, which creates in someone's mind regardless of any obstacle. According to the second question of this research, another element of Sigmund Freud's theory id is also represented in the poem. Rapunzel's mother represent this element while logging for a forbidden fruit which she know only grows in the witch's garden who is not mercifull. Nevertheless, a desire produces in her mind that she wants to fulfill without considering anything or otherwise she will die if her desire will not fullfilled. Id element represent the desire, which came into our mind at once and stays regardless of the circumstances. On the other hand, rapunzel who is main character of the tale represent the dreamer element and the psychosexual element of the Freud's theory. Her wish to see the

stars twinkling in the night and the lights rising from the palace represent that she is a dreamer. While falling in love with a boy she saw for the very first time and then having children with him at the end of the story shows the psychosexual element. This satisfies the third question of this research. Rapunzel's mother represents another element in the story that is ego. She does not care of her husband when he jump into the witch's garden that witch might caught him and will put him to death. Furthermore, after having the fruit she demands for more. She doesn't care for anyone even for her husband. She just to fulfil her desire.

## 6. Conclusion

Readers especially children should learn from Rapunzel's short story to have faith and steadfast and to never give up on your goals. Everyone should be persistent while chasing goals no matter how many obstacles came your way. This is because no one is going to stop you from what you want to do. The story Rapunzel is complicated tale of success, failure and bad lucks. When prince discovered a woman of beautiful voice and desire for her, complexity between husband and wife relationship, and a Witch behaves as id, internal self and super-ego differently. The important elements of fair tale is Rapunzel's long hair, utilisation of a child as bargaining piece, the cruel step mother and the happy ending. Many fairy tales excessively use the involvement of child as a victim. Sometimes, child is bearing the product of parent's error.

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