

**ANXIETY OF WILL KEAN REFLECTED IN JOAN CHEN'S
AUTUMN IN NEW YORK MOVIE (2000):
A PSYCHOANALYTIC APPROACH**



RESEARCH PAPER

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

In reality, human being cannot avoid from their needs, there are many kinds of necessities of life that must be fulfilled to survive their life because human as an individual creature that is able to fulfill their needs themselves and to create what they want. When they fulfill their needs, they face the problems which come from themselves. Those problems can derive from both internal factors and external factors. Some individuals may see problems as a challenge and drive them to solve them. Meanwhile some individuals give different views, they may see those problems as a burden and have no clues to solve them. To meet his or her needs, an individual has to adapt himself or herself to the surrounding environment.

However it is worth nothing that the environment does not always meet what the individual needs at once. That is to say that the individual has to adjust their instinct that comes from their personality to the reality. When the adjustment is so hard to do, the individual feels uneasy and threatened. Then, such a feeling leads the individual to an anxiety. Anxiety is indeed a psychological problem, for many people. According to Hall (1985:41) anxiety is “a key variable in almost all theories of personality. The result of conflict, which is an inevitable part of life, anxiety is often seen as a major component

of personality dynamics”. In the concept of psychoanalysis theory, anxiety is the most important. In defining anxiety, Freud emphasized that is ‘a felt affective, unpleasant state, accompanied by a physical sensation that warns the person against impending danger.

The unpleasantness is often vague and hard to pinpoint, but the anxiety itself is always felt” (Freud, 1933/1964 : 81-85). In the daily life, we often find people who are anxious, it might be easy for us to know the anxious person in a story or movie, because through those media we will know about this problem that we never know in a real situation. Movie is a kind of media that represents individual problems can be occurred through the characters, the one of is anxiety. Movie has the same position as another literary work like novel, drama and poetry. Nowadays, movie has become part of daily life of the people around the world, even movie becomes popular at this time. Through the movies we can find the interesting fact, such as plot of story, characters and characterization, theme setting, etc.

Sometimes movie gives the moral messages for us, it depends on the story of the movie, and a movie usually has normal sense of real-life experience. Making a movie is different from making a novel or drama. Making a movie needs along time and needs a team work which cooperates with others, a team work involves many people as a crew. A crew has own duty and function in the process of making movie. Movie has many elements, such as director, script writer, producers, artists, music composer, costume designer, lighting, cameramen, etc. Besides, it also needs some techniques and

terminologies to understand it, including signs, mise en-scène, cinematography, editing and sound. Following the popularity of movie at that time, some directors create a movie with their imaginations and their own styles.

To be a director is not always a man but also a woman can be a director, such as Joan Chen. She was a Chinese movie director, she was born in Shanghai, China on April 26th 1961. Chen subsequently proved popular in several others Chinese movies, acquiring the sobriquet of “The Chinese Elizabeth Taylor”. Recognizing that good roles were not coming her way and also the industry is emphasized on youth, Chen returned to school and earned her bachelors degree in the movie production. In 2000, she became a director through her movie an *Autumn in New York*. This movie was nominated as worst screen couple, shared with Richard Gere in Razzie awards.

Chinese actress Joan Chen has certainly come a long way since reaching these shores over twenty years ago. Born into a family of doctors, Chen started her acting career in her native China at the age of 14 by playing a 'guerilla girl' in a state-produced propaganda movie. By her late teens, she had already gone on to star in several commercial productions, which culminated in being awarded a best movie actress award for her role in "Little Flower".

However, at what seemed to be the pinnacle of her movie career in her native China, she followed her parents to New York City in 1981, where they had accepted fellowships at a local hospital. For the next few years, she

attended college at the State University of New York, and eventually went on to study moviemaking at California State University in Northridge. She managed to find a few small roles in movies and television, her North American movie career kicked into high gear when she was then literally 'discovered' while walking through the Lorimar parking lot by producer Dino De Laurentis, who cast Chen in "Tai-Pan".

Though the movie ultimately tanked, her participation put her on the radar of Hollywood casting agents, which landed her two high-profile roles: her critically-acclaimed performance in "The Last Emperor", and her regular role on David Lynch's "Twin Peaks". Unfortunately, her acting career saw a major downturn in the years that followed, with forgettable roles in a number of big-budget flops, including "Judge Dredd". With a dearth of decent Asian female roles in Hollywood, Chen decided to go back to school, where she earned a degree in moviemaking and re-emerged into Hollywood as a director. Finally, in 1999, came her directorial debut, "Xiu Xiu: The Sent Down Girl", a critically acclaimed, memorable, and personal movie about a girl sent to the countryside for reeducation during the Cultural Revolution. Chen returns to the director's chair this year with her sophomore effort "Autumn in New York", a decidedly more mainstream offering.

Unfortunately, her latest movie was mired in controversy in the days leading up to its release, which was triggered by distributor MGM's refusal to grant press screenings, usually a telltale sign of a bad movie. The damage was further exacerbated when the 'Page Six' column of the New York Post quoted

an attendee at the movie's foreign press screening as saying that the movie was a 'real turkey', adding credence to the speculation that "Autumn in New York" was a bad movie. Fortunately, Chen's second movie is not as bad as the negative publicity would lead one to believe. However, "Autumn in New York" is not great either-at best, it is a passable (and extremely predictable) blend of romance and melodrama that is short on emotion. As one can deduce from the title, the movie takes place in Gotham in the fall.

Will Keane (Richard Gere of "Runaway Bride"), a shameless womanizer, is the 48-year old owner of the city's trendiest restaurant. He believes himself to be happy, moving aimlessly from one woman's arms to the next, he finds himself oddly smitten by Charlotte (Winona Ryder of "Girl, Interrupted"), a young woman more than a quarter-of-a-century his junior. And as expected, this May-December relationship is fraught with complications, the most pressing of which is the fact that Charlotte is dying from a terminal illness. Unfortunately, scribe Allison Burnett (who got her career started writing "Bloodfist III: Forced to Fight") plays it safe with the material, following the staid and stale conventions of such a romance. In addition to the story's utter predictability (this was one of the few movies where I was able to anticipate every plot twist with more than a 90% degree of accuracy), Burnett gives her characters the most mundane and banal things to say, with little being left to interpretation or the imagination. Gere and Ryder share some semblance of chemistry, despite the vast chasm between their

ages, the superficial dialogue they are forced to utter strains the credibility of their supposed romantic relationship.

Thus, what you end up with is a pretty, but empty-headed valentine to the city that never sleeps. With little meat in the script, Chen is relegated to filling out the running time with music montages (old standards where possible) and picturesque postcard shots of famous New York landmarks. Mind you, with the help of her cinematographer Changwei Gu (who lensed "Hurlyburly" and "Ju Dou"), the images are quite stunning, but pretty pictures alone do not make for a good movie. You need credible characters to care about and a script that not only entertains, but inspires at the same time.

Unfortunately, one out of three is not good enough. In the acting department, Ryder clearly does the better job in trying to make the chemistry work, but the limits of her abilities become quite evident in a couple of scenes. As was seen in "Girl, Interrupted", Ryder's acting deteriorates when she attempts to express outrage (check out the scene where she freaks out in the bathtub), and in this latest movie, Ryder's performance begins to waver in her two big 'whig-out' scenes.

Meanwhile, Gere does the same bland emoting he illustrated in last year's "Runaway Bride", and there were a number of areas where his character actually comes off as insincere because of this. And as for the most memorable actor in the whole movie, that honor would have to go to Anthony LaPaglia ("Summer of Sam") as Will's confidant, who seems at ease with the

material and gets some of the best lines. "*Autumn in New York*" is a disappointment, considering the potential that actress-turned-director Joan Chen showed with "*Xiu Xiu: The Sent Down Girl*".

Unfortunately, she is saddled with a lackluster script and two actors of limited range, and this is probably the best that she can do. Audience members in search of an old-fashioned romance, especially ones that romanticize New York, may find this movie somewhat satisfying, it is difficult to overcome the movie's emotionally cold ending. Hopefully, this is merely a blip in Chen's directing career, and her next offering will more than make up for it. This movie is produced by Ronald M. Bozman and distributed by MGM Distribution Company. In her movie, Joan Chen was trying to give different touch into her love story. *Autumn in New York* is directed by actress – turned moviemaker Joan Chen.

This movie tells about love story between older man namely Will Keane (Richard Gere) with beautiful girl namely Charlotte Fielding (Winona Ryder) a girl who is suffering a tumor in her heart. His anxiety grows since he knows what happened to Charlotte that she has a serious illness and does not have a chance to live longer. He becomes anxious with her health, while her doctor tells to Will repeatedly that there is no hope, that no one will perform a potentially life saving operation. He becomes anxious of himself. He is so afraid if someday she will leave him because he really loves her. The passion and poignancy of classical romance take on a contemporary edge in *Autumn in New York*, the story of a once-in-a-lifetime love affair that unfolds in a single

brief season. The pairing of an aging man who doesn't believe in forever with a younger woman who has only a moment to give produces a resonant story about the risks that must be taken to truly live and love. *Autumn in New York* follows the sexual exploits of Will Keane (Richard Gere) - New York restaurateur, infamous verging-on-48 playboy, master of the no-commitment seduction - until he runs into an unexpected dead end when he meets Charlotte Fielding (Winona Ryder). Charlotte is half Will's age and twice his match, a 22-year-old free spirit yearning to get out and taste the excitement of adult life. Will indulges his interest in Charlotte, expecting yet another quick and easy romance. But nothing about Will and Charlotte's encounters are quick or easy; instead they are rife with intergenerational clashes, differing philosophies and an inexplicably urgent sense of sensuality and connection. Then, just as Will attempts to escape from the relationship with his usual line about "*not promising forever,*" Charlotte provides a surprise response: she has her own reasons to believe things absolutely can't last.

Freed for a moment from the confines of time, Will and Charlotte pursue an affair unlike any other. It is a season-long encounter that will shatter Will's preconceptions about women, sex and responsibility as real love - exhilarating, heartbreaking, enduring love - changes everything.

Love, in all its most delicious and devastating, frightening and challenging qualities, is a theme that runs throughout *Autumn in New York*, becoming the hidden fuel that lights up the rushing city. Chinese-born director Joan Chen brings a lush, unique perspective to Manhattan, rediscovering the

city as the center of luminous romance after decades of gritty realism in cinema.

Chen, who made her directorial debut with the award-winning Chinese movie *Xiu Xiu: The Sent Down Girl* (1998) - a wondrously unsentimental story of a girl's heart-wrenching betrayal - felt drawn to Allison Burnett's gripping screenplay, which seemed to bring the exquisite, aching quality of Hollywood's classic 1940s romantic dramas to the modern era. Whereas *Xiu Xiu: The Sent Down Girl* (1998) had the power of a mythic fable, Chen saw *Autumn in New York* as having the bittersweet enchantment of an old-fashioned love story set in today's hyper-fast world of celebrity chefs, commitment-phobic bachelors, frequent May-December romances and independent young women. The screenplay seemed to emphasize the primacy - no matter what age, lifestyle or beliefs - of being loved.

Autumn in New York is the success movie and interesting many people. There are four reasons that make this movie interesting. Firstly this movie is not like usual drama movie before. This is sentimental melodrama that has been done many times before, but it least it is well made. Secondly there are many good messages which can be found in this movie. One of these messages is about loyalty. Thirdly there is major character which is interesting to be studied. Fourth this movie tells about love.

Stimulated by all of fact clarified above, the writer proposes a psychoanalytic approach to study about the major character's anxiety using

Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory and entitled this research paper:
**ANXIETY OF WILL KEAN REFLECTED IN JOAN CHEN'S
AUTUMN IN NEW YORK MOVIE (2000): A PSYCHOANALYTIC
APPROACH.**

B. Literature Review

The writer is not the first person who analyzes this movie. To prove the originality of the research the writer found several previous research. The movie *Autumn in New York* by Joan Chen is an interesting movie. As far as the writer knows, the research on the movie *Autumn in New York* has been conducted by two students.

The first research is Kalila Gemala (2003, Petra Christian University) has conducted a researcher entitled "A *descriptive study on the use of American-English address terms in the movie entitled Autumn in New York, a psychoanalytic approach*". This research is a kind of research that takes account on the discussion of address term by taking the data from the movie manuscript. The data are all of the dialogue which contains address terms used by characters of the movie. The analyzes is limited to the main character, Will Kean and the other supporting characters. This research paper elaborates about script conversation and studying about mistake in script conversation in *Autumn in New York*. The present writer wants to focus on analyzing the anxiety reflected in the movie using psychoanalytic approach. She finds the structural elements of Will Kean's in *Autumn in New York* and also he finds the anxiety reflected in *Autumn in New York* movie is the personality reaction.

Furthermore, Lia Oktavia (2005, Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta) in her research entitled “*Anxiety In Autumn In New York Movie directed by Joan Chen and written by Allison Burnet, a psychoanalytic approach*”. The data of this study are taken from the expression in drama movies. The movie is *Autumn in New York*, This movie tells about love story between older man namely Will Keane (Richard Gere) with beautiful girl namely Charlotte Fielding (Winona Ryder) a girl who is suffering a tumor in her heart. In collecting the data, the writer uses two techniques of collecting data, they are observation and library research. She analyzes the anxiety of the main characters using psychoanalytic approach. She finds the structural elements of Will Kean’s in *Autumn in New York* and also she finds the anxiety reflected in *Autumn in New York* movie is the personality reaction.

Based on the previous research above, the positioning of this research is to try extending previous studies on psychoanalysis. This study focuses on Anxiety of Will Kean, one of the major characters in the movie by psychoanalytic approach. In the study the researcher gives title “*Anxiety of Will Kean reflected in Joan Chen’s Autumn in New York Movie (2000): A Psychoanalytic Approach.*”

C. Problem Statement

Based on the research background above, the writer purposes the problem of the study “How is anxiety reflected in *Autumn in New York* movie directed by Joan Chen?”

D. Limitation of the Study

In this study, the writer only analyzes the anxiety of the main characters, which appears using psychoanalytic approach.

E. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

1. To analyze the structural elements of *Autumn in New York* movie.
2. To analyze the anxiety of the main characters using psychoanalytic approach.

F. Benefits of the Study

This research is expected to give some benefits as follows;

1. Theoretical Benefit

To give some contributions to the body of knowledge, particularly the application of the psychoanalytic approach in literary study

2. Practical Benefit

To get better understanding about the movie, especially the main character in *Autumn in New York* from the psychoanalytic approach.

G. Research Method

1. Type of the Research

In this research the writer uses descriptive qualitative method

2. Object of the Study

The object of the study is the movie *Autumn in New York*. This movie is directed by Joan Chen and the writer by Allison Burnett, this movie published by MGM Distribution Company.

3. Type of the Data and the Data Source

In this research the writer classifies the data source into two categories namely primary and secondary data sources.

a. Primary data

The primary data source of the study is *Autumn in New York* movie directed by Joan Chen and written by Allison Burnett published by MGM Distribution Company.

b. Secondary data

The writer takes the secondary data source from many sources as references, author's biography, criticisms in relation to the problems and material related to the study whether picking up from books or internet.

4. Technique of the Data Collection

In this case, the writer uses two techniques of collecting data:

a. Observation

This step is used to make the analysis by watching the movie repeatedly to get the understanding about this movie.

b. Library research

There are some procedures in library research, they are:.

- 1) Finding out the important data and identifying the relevant elements.
- 2) Taking notes.
- 3) Arranging data into several parts based on its classification.
- 4) Developing data to get the last result.

5. Technique of the Data Analysis

The data are analyzed by using descriptive qualitative analysis and analyzing the structural elements of the movie.

H. Paper Organization

This research consists of five chapters. Chapter I is the introduction which contains background of the study, problem statement, limitation of the study, objectives of the study, benefits of the study, research method and paper organization. Chapter II deals with review of underlying theory that is psychoanalytic theory. Chapter III is structural analysis, in this chapter the researcher explains the structural element of the study and discussion. Chapter IV is data analysis, which deals with the major characters problems based on

psychoanalytic theory. Finally, Chapter V is conclusion of the analysis and some suggestions.