

Shadow Archetype Dominance in Character Maquia: When the Promised Flower Blooms (Literary Psychology)

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the dominance of the Shadow archetype in the main character in the anime Maquia: When the Promised Flower Blooms. Through a descriptive qualitative method and a literary psychology approach, this study dissects the inner conflict of Maquia as an immortal entity raising a mortal child using Carl Gustav Jung's archetype psychoanalysis theory. The results of the analysis show that Maquia's biological destiny triggers the Shadow archetype, which manifests as an absolute fear of loneliness. In order to perfect the mask of her role as a strong protective mother, she buries this fear to an extreme degree. This chronic repression triggers a series of psychological tragedies that culminate in the collapse of her mental resilience as her adopted child grows up and leaves her. In conclusion, hiding the Shadow archetype is not a manifestation of maturity, but merely a temporary shield that gradually weakens mental stability.

Keywords: *Shadow Archetype, Literary Psychology, Emotional Repression, Maquia, Carl Gustav Jung*

INTRODUCTION

Literature and psychology have a very close relationship in the effort to understand the depths of the human mind. Understanding literature through the lens of literary psychology allows readers to uncover the hidden motives and behavioral patterns of fictional characters, which often reflect the dynamics of life in the real world (Febrianty, 2016). One of the most powerful visual storytelling mediums to study this phenomenon is the anime Maquia: When the Promised Flower Blooms. Therefore, this study holds high significance in examining the Shadow Archetype Dominance in the character Maquia. Dissecting this main variable is very important because the character's journey profoundly represents the universal psychological conflicts regarding separation, the sense of loss, and the dangers of suppressing emotional trauma over time.

Position the urgency and novelty of this study, a review of five relevant previous studies has been conducted. Three previous studies examined the same anime but with different focus limitations, such as the research by Juntilla et al. (2022) which explored parenting styles through a behavioral sociology approach that tended to overlook the character's subconscious turmoil, while Prasadana (2019) applied Freudian theory which reduced the trauma of the lorph race into mere basic anxiety, and Febriani (2022) used Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory which focused entirely on self-actualization without touching the psychological dark side of the character. As an additional pillar in the psychological study of anime characters, Carlo & Marasigan (2023) proved that the Persona and Shadow archetypes often clash, forcing characters to hide their deepest dark sides in order to survive in a social environment.

Furthermore, Mulyadi & Metta (2023) validated that the burden of responsibility of the protective role borne by anime main characters often triggers inner conflicts and repression with fatal consequences. Differing from these five studies, this study expands the literature review by not viewing the character's pain merely as general anxiety or a drive for self-actualization, but purely as a direct manifestation of Shadow Archetype repression.

Based on this literature gap, the main objective of this study is clearly stated, which is to analyze in depth how the Shadow archetype proposed by Carl Gustav Jung reflects and distorts the inner conflict of the character Maquia. To achieve this goal, this study presents a brief overview of its method, which utilizes a descriptive qualitative approach combined with literary psychology theory. The primary data were collected through naturalistic observation of visual elements, such as screenshots, as well as narrative dialogues that show indications of the character's emotional repression. The collected data were then curated and analyzed using the psychoanalytic lens of the Jungian Shadow archetype through the stages of data reduction, analytical presentation, and drawing correlation conclusions.

The results of this study briefly show that Maquia's biological destiny as an immortal entity adopting a mortal child has become the perfect incubator for the dominance of the Shadow archetype, which manifests into an absolute fear of loneliness. To perfect her role mask as a strong protective mother, Maquia buries this fear to an extreme degree. This chronic repression triggers a series of psychological tragedies that lead to an explosion of emotional panic and the collapse of mental resilience when her adopted child slowly grows up and leaves her. This study firmly emphasizes that hiding the Shadow archetype when facing a traumatic situation is not a form of maturity, but merely a temporary shield that actually weakens mental stability gradually. Through this study, it is hoped to provide a positive contribution to literary critics as well as psychology academics by expanding insights regarding the destructive impact of emotional repression for individuals bearing a heavy burden in a caregiving role.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Anime is currently widely recognized in the modern academic world not merely as entertainment, but as a valid and complex literary medium. As stated by Jaimes et al. (2021) anime constantly blends visual arts, filmmaking, and narrative storytelling capable of reflecting the depths of the human mind. This is in line with Eneste (1991) theory regarding film as literature, which asserts that these elements share the same storytelling essence to be analyzed. Understanding anime through a literary psychology approach becomes highly relevant and important, because according to Endraswara (2008), this discipline is crucial to uncover hidden motives and the inner turmoil of characters by separating the physical form of the visual artwork from the specific mental condition of its subject. This study ultimately highlights that fictional characters often exhibit psychological distress or internal battles that resonate strongly with real-life dynamics (Maharani & Oemiati, 2025).

A number of previous literatures have attempted to examine the psychological dynamics of the main character in the anime Maquia: When the Promised Flower Blooms. However, critical analysis reveals clear limitations to each of these approaches. Juntilla et al. (2022) examined this anime through a behavioral sociology approach to analyze parenting styles, however, the study only focused on the character's external actions and fundamentally missed her subconscious turmoil. On the other hand, Prasadana (2019) applied Freudian psychoanalytic theory which reduced the spiritual trauma and loneliness of the Iorph race into merely a normal anxiety disorder due to the clash between the Id, Ego, and Superego. The hierarchical approach carried out by Febriani (2022) using Abraham Maslow's theory was also deemed not comprehensive, because it only focused on the self-actualization stages of the main character's motherhood, thus ignoring how important it is to integrate the dark side (Shadow) into her mental stability. To enrich the psychoanalytic theoretical foundation, this study relies on Carl Jung (1969) archetype theory which states that the Shadow is a receptacle for dark traits, extreme fears, or weaknesses that individuals often hide behind their "social masks". This concept is supported by Carlo & Marasigan (2023) study which highlighted the clash between Persona and Shadow in anime, as well as Mulyadi & Metta (2023) who validated that the role of a protector often triggers chronic inner repression.

After reviewing the existing literature, it is clear there are aspects that still require further attention and clarification. The majority of previous studies tended to oversimplify the character Maquia's trauma as mere general anxiety or limit themselves to viewing it through the lens of positive growth. Not a single piece of literature has specifically examined how destructive the act of covering up the extreme fear of loneliness is when an immortal entity is forced to raise a mortal child. This void proves that the danger of Shadow archetype repression in order to maintain a social role (foster mother) has still not been adequately mapped in previous studies.

In summary, the findings of this literature review affirm that although anime has been recognized as capable of depicting profound human emotional turmoil through a literary psychology approach, specific studies regarding the anime Maquia are still limited to the sociology of parenting styles and basic self-actualization needs. This establishes a significant research gap, namely the neglect of the dominance of the unintegrated Shadow archetype. Therefore, this study is crucially needed to address this gap by proving how the repression of the Shadow archetype, particularly the psychological terror related to loneliness, became the root of the mental collapse of the character Maquia.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a descriptive qualitative method combined with a literary psychology approach. The psychological viewpoint helps to uncover the mental state and inner turmoil of the character through a psychoanalytic lens (Endraswara, 2008). Meanwhile, the qualitative method provides a clear factual overview of the causes and effects of the character's psychological condition by observing the story naturally without changing any variables (Sugiyono, 2019).

The main subject, or material object, of this study is the entirety of the visual and textual storytelling of the 2018 anime titled Maquia: When the Promised Flower Blooms by studio P.A. Works. On the other hand, the formal object of this study directs attention to the mental state of the main character. More specifically, this analysis examines how Carl Gustav Jung's Shadow archetype idea causes Maquia's inner turmoil as an immortal being raising a mortal child. The separation of the research into material and formal objects is intended to create a clear theoretical lens in uncovering what happens in the realm of the character's mind (Wellek & Warren, 1956). The primary data were obtained directly from the anime through image captures and conversations indicating that she is hiding her feelings. As for secondary data, this study uses Jung's psychoanalytic theory, psychology books, and relevant scientific journals. Information gathering was conducted by examining available sources and making complete observation notes. This includes watching the anime repeatedly to record conversations, and saving images that show the sadness or fear (Shadow) hidden by Maquia behind her role as a mother. After this information was collected, the data were grouped based on the emotional signs from Jung's theory.

This analysis follows the interactive model developed by Miles and Huberman, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. First, the author selected only the scenes and dialogues that clearly depict Maquia's Shadow archetype and ignored the relevant parts. Next, the author presented the data in the form of an analytical narrative, showing how this dark side adds emotional pressure while raising Ariel. Finally, the author concluded by linking the visual story from the anime with Jung's theory regarding the mental impact caused by deeply repressed fears (Shadow).

DISCUSSION

The Curse of Immortality and Death as the Source of the Shadow Archetype

The battle within Maquia begins from her biological origins. She is an lorph, a being that possesses a very long lifespan and will not experience the aging process after adolescence. When she makes the decision to care for Ariel, an ordinary human baby who will eventually grow old and die, this creates the ideal conditions for the development of the Shadow archetype in her mind. According to Jung's theory, the Shadow archetype harbors the deepest and most hidden fears. For Maquia, this Shadow emerges as a profound psychological fear of total loneliness, as well as the undeniable reality that Ariel will grow old, die, and leave her alone in the world. The visual narrative in this anime

repeatedly displays the symbolization of the Hibiol cloth (the typical woven cloth of the lorph race) as a reminder of the passing of time, which ironically constantly triggers Maquia's innate anxiety (Shadow) regarding separation.



Figure 1. Shows the lorph elder's warning regarding the curse of immortality or Maquia's Shadow

Maquia's psychological condition was fundamentally already shrouded in emptiness, considering she was an orphan who had no family in the lorph village, unlike her peers. The implantation of this Shadow archetype was then triggered doctrinally through a warning from Racine as the lorph elder, in front of the Hibiol loom. Racine asserted, "誰も愛してはいけない。愛すれば、本当に一人になってしまう、それがわたしたち、わかれのいちぞく にかけられたうんめいなんだよ。" ("Dare mo aishite wa ikenai. Aisureba, hontou ni hitori ni natte shimau, sore ga watashitachi, wakare no ichizoku ni kakerareta unmei nanda yo.") ("You must not love anyone. If you do, you will truly be alone. This is our destiny, the clan of separation"). For Maquia, who from the beginning longed for family ties, this moment turned into an experience of total psychological terror. After she managed to survive the destruction of her village and found Ariel, a human baby who was also completely alone, her decision to care for and love the child turned Racine's prophecy into the dark side (Shadow) within her. The fear of returning to true loneliness made her try desperately to hide her dark side behind her resilient smile while raising Ariel in the mortal human world.

The Psychological Clash between the Adoptive Mother Role and Shadow Repression

In order to blend in with human society and become an effective caregiver, Maquia was forced to hide her true identity. She assumed the role of a strong, loving, and protective young mother to ensure Ariel remained safe. Juntilla et al. (2022) previously identified this parenting style as both authoritative and authoritarian based on observable behavior. However, when viewed from the perspective of Jungian archetypes, playing this role resulted in a massive inner conflict. Every time Maquia tried to put on a happy face for Ariel, she severely repressed her fears of the days to come. The real tragedy emerged when she realized that loving a mortal human brings the consequence of endless loss. Thus, suppressing this Shadow archetype became a heavy burden that followed her for the rest of her life and slowly ruined the mental resilience she possessed.

The Tragedy of Shadow Repression on Maquia's Mental Stability

Jung's theory highly emphasizes the importance for individuals to acknowledge the dark side that exists within them. If this is ignored, pent-up emotions may suddenly emerge or be forced onto others. We can clearly witness this phenomenon occurring at the peak of Maquia's internal conflict, exactly when Ariel entered his teenage years. Because she had buried her Shadow for too long, Maquia suffered very severe inner distortion. She refused to accept the truth that the nature of her bond with Ariel must now begin to change along with the child's maturity.



Figure 2. Shows the explosion of the Shadow archetype when Maquia realizes Ariel is going to leave her

This is visually represented when Ariel decides to leave home to join the military. Maquia's maternal role defense fortress immediately crumbles, which ultimately triggers an emotional eruption where she wails and calls Ariel a liar, "約束だも。。。うそつき、アリエル、まもってくれるって やくそく。。。うそつき、いやだよ。。。" ("Yakusoku da mo... Usotsuki, Arieru, mamotte kureru tte yakusoku... Usotsuki, iya da yo...") ("Even though it was a promise... liar, Ariel, you promised you would protect me... liar, I don't want this to happen"). The phrase "I don't want this to happen" is the core of the character's deeply repressed Shadow; namely the manifestation of absolute terror of loneliness due to her immortal destiny which finally spills over because she failed to defy the flow of mortal time of her adopted child. Seeing this emotional breakdown, previous research by Prasadana (2019) only viewed Maquia's panic as a mere Freudian conflict, which is a mixture of clashes between the maternal Id, Ego, and Superego that then leads to separation anxiety. From another perspective, Febriani (2022) viewed it through the lens of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and merely labeled it as the character's step towards achieving self-actualization. To enhance and broaden existing views, this study claims that the overprotective nature here is not merely basic concern or a desire to achieve personal potential. Conversely, it is a direct impact of the fear to prevent Ariel from leaving. The real tragedy occurs when she realizes that combining an eternal life with a temporary love means she will always face loss. Submerging the dark side turns into a permanent burden that continuously weakens her mental strength.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the analysis conducted, it can be concluded that the biological destiny of the character Maquia as an immortal entity adopting a mortal child has become the perfect incubator for the dominance of the Shadow archetype, which manifests in the form of an absolute fear of loneliness. To perfect her role mask as a strong protective mother, Maquia buries this fear to an extreme degree. However, this chronic repression of the dark side becomes a permanent burden that triggers a series of psychological tragedies. This culminates in an explosion of emotional panic and the collapse of her mental resilience when the adopted child slowly grows up and decides to leave her. The true tragedy happens when Maquia realizes that combining an immortal life with a temporary love means she will always face endless loss.

Therefore, this study firmly emphasizes that hiding the Shadow archetype when facing traumatic situations is not a sign of maturity, but merely a temporary shield that actually gradually weakens mental stability. Through the results of this study, it is hoped that this study can make a positive contribution to literary critics and academics in the field of psychology. This study is suggested to be used as a reference in expanding insights into the destructive impacts of emotional repression, particularly for individuals who bear heavy burdens behind a caregiving role.

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