

Understanding Human behavior through Social Factors: A Psychoanalytic study on K. HariKumar's *That Frequent Visitor*

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Abstract

Human behavior identifies every individual as distinctive. In this research paper, the personality of MC Jagannathan Varma from Hari Kumar K.'s novel *That Frequent Visitor* is examined through the lens of Sigmund Freud's concepts and theories. The researchers investigate the character of Suryasena, whose identity changes to MC Jagannathan Varma, by analyzing his psychological transformation from protagonist to antagonist. According to Freud's personality theory, human behavior is governed by the environment in which individuals live and is formed by an individual's Id, Ego, and Super-Ego. Sigmund Freud mentioned in *Total Quality Leadership*, 'Unexpressed emotions will never die. They are buried alive and will come forth later in uglier ways.' Thus, this research paper introspects the behavior of Suryasena in five aspects of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis theory. The researchers begins by tracing, Suryasena's childhood influence and examining his psychosexual development in five stages: oral, anal, phallic, latency, and genital. Furthermore, examining two critical defense mechanisms such as sublimation and repression. In addition, his attitude towards behavioral adjustment and maladjustment reveals the genuine essence of his behavior. Finally, we observe his embrace of truth and genuine behavior through a Freudian slip. Further, the researchers attempt to comprehend Suryasena's behavioral influence and transition from birth to death by examining personal and emotional societal aspects.

Keywords: psychoanalytic theory, behavior, destructive sibling rivalry, attachment theory and Freudian slip

Introduction

A man should not strive to eliminate his complexes but to get into accord with them: they are legitimately what directs his conduct in the world.

– Sigmund Freud

From womb to tomb, social forces have a role in determining a person's identity. Humans cannot choose their life but can control their reactions in diverse circumstances. Spencer Fraseur quotes in his book *The Irrational Mind*, 'When you face disappointments and trials in life, your response dictates the character created in you as a result.'

Hari Kumar. K claims that a person's decision between good and evil represents their nature and depends on that person's choice.

Every face has a darker side,

*but it is the human who decides if he wishes to adorn that face or not,
not destiny or fate. (Hari Kumar, 2015)*

MC Jagannathan Varma, an unconventional minister, is introduced as the novel's protagonist. Reasons behind his identity shift from Suryasena to MC Jagannathan Varma question his lack of noble characterization and heroic attributes. In the top 9 quotes by Eric Jensen quoted, 'We are social beings, and our brains grow in a social environment.' environment influences a person's behavior and contributes to the formation of their personality. According to Sigmund Freud, a person's personality and behavior stem from their upbringing, where they constantly conflict with themselves. The researchers attempt a parallel study to examine MC Jagannathan's characterization because of his personality, behavioral changes and psychological struggle in the light of Freudian psychoanalysis on the one hand and explicate the adverse influence of sociological factors on the other.

Individual behavior is defined as a combination of internal and external stimuli responses. The stimulus is the social factor that creates the behavioral response in every individual. Psychologist Kurt Lewin in his Field theory formulated the behavior framework of humans. This psychological theory studies the patterns of interaction between an individual and the environment. The theory is expressed using the formula $B = F(P, E)$ where B – Behavior, F - Behavior Function, P – Person, and E - Environment around the person. (*Individual Behavior - Tutorialspoint*, 2019)

Individual characteristics are responsible for how a person behaves in every situation and how they react during crucial times. These characteristics are classified into two divisions such as inherited and learned characteristics. The individuals who inherit these characteristics from their parents or ancestors are called inherited characteristics. While, learned characteristics are acquired through observation, practice, and instruction from people and the environment. It consists of perception, value, personality, and attitude. The culmination of information obtained through the use of one or more of the senses, including the experience of touch and sound. Values influence a person's perception of a situation and their decision-making process. Personality can be defined as recurring patterns of thought, emotion, comprehension, and behavior. A positive or negative mental state, such as expressing one's thoughts, is one definition of attitude.

This article explains how patterns of thinking, feeling, understanding, and acting are part of an individual's personality. The character Jagannathan's behavior plays a significant role in understanding the human psyche in this novel. The main objectives of the present study are consistent with the notion that he strives to overcome the influencing factor or adapt to social surroundings. His characterization could be seen in multiple phases, to begin with, from his childhood to his teenage, and secondly, as a successful politician at age 79. Thirdly, his characterization, whether static or dynamic, is identified by researchers at different stages: the character is influenced by several social elements that shape his behavior and personality. The first phase of Jagannathan's life plays a prominent role in understanding the social influences on his behavior's construction and Freud's theory of personality is applied to observe the aforementioned research problem.

Theory of Personality

Personality is the comprehensive set of patterns that influence human behavior such as thought, motivation, and emotion in a human being. Psychologists have described personality as a practiced action through personal feeling, thinking, and self-conduct. It is the constantly changing system in the minds of individuals and is made up of specific psychological traits that influence their self-conduct and thinking. It is the combination of behavior that distinguishes a person's behavior. Nature and Nurture play a predominant role in shaping a person's personality. That is, the factors such as upbringing and environment are acting as modifiers, which results in bringing diverse personalities into human behaviors. The psychological force that drives every individual is classified into preconscious, conscious and unconscious. Among the three, Unconscious behavior plays a vital role in every individual. The protagonist's Unconscious mind and obtained behavior are more evident in the novel and the researchers parallelly observe this transformation with Sigmund Freud's Theory of Personality. Freud divides it into Id, Ego, and Superego.

The id becomes a psychical province that incorporates instinctual drive energies and everything else that is part of our phylogenetic inheritance. The id operates unconsciously, accords with primary process, and impels the organism to engage in need-satisfying, tension-reducing activities, which are experienced as pleasure. (Lapsley & Ste, 2011)

Being a primitive factor in influencing behavior to develop a human personality, ID is the home of human impulse.

Sigmund Freud believed that the id represents biological instinctual impulses in ourselves, such as aggression (Thanatos or the Death instinct) and sexuality (Eros or the Life instinct) (Ostow, 2006)

Sexual desire is a primary desire that develops during the ID period. Suryasena's life lacked normalcy right from his birth. He grows up seeing only his father, Mrityunjaya and unconsciously started adopting his father's behaviors. Normal parenting is a failure in his early childhood in which a child observes and learns from the familial and social environment. It is identified as there was an absence of father and son bonding. His father spent most of his life bringing sex workers to his house for pleasure. As a child, Mrityunjaya was compelled to observe his father's characteristics and behaviors, which is the replica of his future transformations in his behavioral attributes. During his childhood, out of his father's restrictions, Suryasena could not socialize with other people. Witnessing his father with many women made him contemplate his mother's whereabouts.

Then, one day, I asked him about my mother. He called my mother a whore, a word so doomed; no son could stand to hear that about his mother. Do you know how I responded?' He looked around, expecting someone to make a wild guess, but everyone was blankly listening to him. He smiled wickedly and revealed, I poisoned him and the whore he was with that night. (Hari Kumar, 2015)

His father's abusive representation of his mother as a response to his questions about his mother's whereabouts is the initial cause for deterring his behavior, where he began to take an antagonistic attitude unconsciously by poisoning his father and a woman with him that night. This occurrence led to constructing two different versions of his defined mystique behavioral traits. First, killing people who offend his birth and his mother (Thanatos). Secondly, his sexual drive toward women (Eros).

Mrityunjaya is the biological father of Suryasena and Chandrasena is the birth father of Jagannathan. After, Mrityunjaya's death Suryasena faced a change in his life. He was taken care of by Mrityunjaya's legitimate son Chandrasena. Suryasena was happy seeing his brother's family with a boy equal to his age. He decided to live a new and ordinary life like others. Nevertheless, the dreaded life which he had left followed him. His brother Chandrasena took good care of Suryasena, but his wife and son mistreated him by slut shaming his mother and humiliating him for his illegitimacy. This incident followed him to school, which brought back his unconscious behavior compelling him to avenge by killing Chandrasena's son Jagannathan.

Towards the novel's end, MC Jagannathan revealed the truth in front of the writer Parosh Chandra Dutta and the journalist Pakhi Dutta, who were siblings. The writer was assigned to write a biography of yet-to-be Prime Minister MC Jagannathan. During his investigation, the writer finds the medical report revealed a shocking report against Jagannathan and his identity. From that report, the writer finds that MC Jagannathan's real name is Suryasena and he is who killed his brother's son Jagannathan and has taken his identity. When MC Jagannathan found that his past was known to the writer's family, he plotted a situation to kill everyone. The nature of killing people remains his behavioral habit until his death.

Chandrasena Varma took me to that psychiatrist, and the middle-aged birdie told me that I had hit puberty and witnessing the death of Suryasena played a negative state of mind during this period. The highly qualified bitch did not even suspect that I was the real Suryasena, and all I wanted was flesh. The first time I held my genital in my hand, I realized why my father was addicted to what he did (Hari Kumar, 2015)

Secondly, he got influenced by sexual drives after attaining puberty, that is adolescence. This sexual impact was due to the licentiousness in his father's character, Mrityunjaya. When he hit puberty, his sexual aggression overpowered him, which influenced his father's behavior. *"I was the real Suryasena, and all I wanted was flesh. The first time I held my genital in my hand, I realized why my father was addicted to what he did..." (Hari Kumar, 2015).* The sexual desire in his mind was brought into practice. He first raped and killed the psychiatrist who came for his psychiatric treatment. Later he took many innocent women to the mansion to rape them to death.

EGO

Freud claims that ego is a second part of the personality. The ego is mostly conscious and is far more rational, logical, and cunning than the Id. The ego works on the reality principle, which is the need to satisfy the Id's demands only in ways that will not lead to negative consequences (White 54).

Society affects individuals' egos. Freud explained the ego as the component of the ID that has been transformed by direct external influence.

The ego takes on a number of functions. It commands voluntary movement. It has the task of self-preservation and must therefore master both internal (id) and external stimuli. The ego masters external stimuli by becoming "aware," by storing up memories, by avoidance through flight, and by active adaptation. Regarding internal drive stimuli, it attempts to control the demands of the instincts by judiciously deciding the mode of satisfaction, or if satisfaction is to be had at all. (Lapsley & Ste, 2011)

The idea of changing identity is a conscious decision taken by Suryasena, transforming himself into Jagannathan. He purposefully wanted to change his reality by removing his past identity from Suryasena to Jagannathan. When Suryasena entered a new home, his perspective differed from Jagannathan, son of Chandrasena. 'The young Jagannathan Varma, or Jagan, hated that he had to share his space, royalty, and face with a bastard son of a prostitute.' (Hari Kumar, 2015). Suryasena believed he had a new life with new family members, but to the contemporary Jagannathan, it was an intrusion into his space. Jagan's discomfort resulted in destructive sibling rivalry. Young Jagannathan belittled him by taking his past as a tool.

I dreamt of starting my life afresh. However, that rascal robbed me of my dignity before it could even hatch itself. He made my life a living hell. At school, he revealed my background, and nobody wanted to come near me. Jagan crushed my hopes of starting a new life. One day, I gave him the same poison, which I had used on my father, chased him to the lake with a butcher's knife, and pushed him into the water after tying his leg to a boulder (Hari Kumar, 2015)

In reality, after going under his brother Chandrasena's care, Suryasena attempts to forget his maligned past life. However, his identity was besmirched as a prostitute's son by Jagannathan to his entire school forbidding Suryasena's socialization with others. This made him murder Jagannathan, who brought conflict into his life.

He never came up, and I peeled off a piece of my forehead and underlying muscles, the same area where Jagan had the birthmark. I became Jagannatha Varma, and for the world, the little bastard called Suryasena Varma had drowned and died. (Hari Kumar, 2015)

After this incident, Suryasena changed his identity as Jagannathan. He believed that he would overcome the past conflicts by changing his identity. His conscious mind made him think about the similarities and differences between Suryasena and Jagannathan. Young Jagannathan had one brown mark on the side of his forehead and limped from age seven. Suryasena changed himself completely as Jagannathan by creating a mark on his forehead. He started to live his life as Jagannathan and killed the character of Suryasena.

SUPEREGO

The superego is thus a precipitate of family life. It is an agency that seeks to enforce the striving for perfection, as it holds out to the ego ideal standards and moralistic goals. As a consequence, the superego is the "conscience" of the personality, and it can retaliate against the imperfections of the ego by inducing guilt. (Lapsley & Ste, 2011)

Society will mutually affect the individual superego through the consciousness effect. According to Freud, the developing superego absorbs the traditions of the family and society. The superego works to suppress the id's urges and tries to make the ego behave morally rather than realistically.

Freud called the third and final part of the personality, the moral center of personality, the superego. The superego contains the conscience, the part of the personality that makes people feel guilty, or moral anxiety when they do the wrong thing (White 54).

At the stage of the superego, Suryasena feels more powerful and considers women as the powerless and weaker sex. One day, he learns about Lavanya Baxter's presence in the mansion with her husband. He plans to rape her on the day of pournami (Full moon day). She defended herself when he tried to touch her and escaped by hitting him with the half silver rupee coin. She was the first woman to defend and escape throughout his trials of sexually harassing and killing women.

The coin hit my conscience. Your courage and self-esteem moved my ego and prejudices to such an extent that I found respect for a woman for the first time in my doomed life. (Hari Kumar, 2015)

After this incident, his behavior changed and made him a socializer enabling him to reach the heights of politics as the next Prime Minister. The disapproval of Lavanya awakened the mind of Suryasena, compelling

him to change his opinion regarding women that the weaker sex turns to be subservient when sexual harassment is enforced on them. His understanding of women's strength both at the mental and physical level changed and this reformation made him choose a profession where he could socialize with people with good conduct.

Psychosexual development

Freud's stages of psychosexual development:

The first stage was the oral stage (0-1 year). Babies focus on their mouths for oral gratification. The absence of a biological mother results in a child's antisocial behavior, emotional problems, and juvenile delinquency. Given Bowlby's Attachment theory, it is believed that the relationship between a child and her mother between birth – 5 years of age is crucial to socialization.

John Bowlby states, 'A securely attached child will store an internal working model of a responsive, loving, reliable caregiver, and a self-worthy of love and attention and will bring these assumptions to bear on all other relationships.' **John Bowlby, a psychiatrist, and psychoanalyst stated that mental health and behavior problems could be related to early childhood.** His attachment theory suggests that children are born by being programmed to connect with others. His experiment indicated that infancy's emotional attachment is gained through cuddling. If the mother or caretaker is absent, it affects the infant's later responses to stress and **emotional regulation**. The mother's absence develops in low self-esteem, trust issues, and difficulty forming a healthy adult relationship.

In this novel, Mrityunjaya and Suryasena are identified to be grown without their mother's care from their childhood. Both father and son respectively suffer from the absence of a mother, which leads them to choose sexual violence as their personality. The death of Mrityunjaya's mother becomes one of the reasons behind the selection of a full moon day for executing his act which Suryasena also inherits.

Mrityunjaya, who displaced himself from his father's affection after the king married his second wife (mother of Sreevidya Devi) soon after Mrityunjaya's mother lost her life to illness. The act did not go well with a young Mrityunjaya, who isolated himself from the rest of the world and started living on a diet of drugs, and ... he brought one woman every month on the night of pournami.... His mother succumbed to death on such a night. (Hari Kumar, 2015)

Mirthunjeayan's father's second marriage isolated him from his family. The whole family was poisoned on the night of Mirthunjeayan's stepsister's marriage. Mirthunjeayan turned out to be the only surviving heir to the entire property. He would bring sex workers on the night of a full moon day to brutally rape them to death. Deaths were witnessed by Suryasena while growing up, and in the absence of the nurture of his mother, he became an aggressive sexual predator. 'I waited for the full moon, just to keep the tradition alive, and on the evening of Pournami...' (Hari Kumar, 2015)

Secondly, babies focus on pleasure received through elimination in the anal stage (1-3 years). The individual is preoccupied with the challenges and reward that results from learning to control pleasure and elimination. It focuses on how parents approach child training. Children who receive such reinforcement are likely to feel a sense of self-control. Anal explosiveness is the state of a person who exhibits cruelty and emotional outbursts. The first stage of fixation happens in an individual. Parents failing to provide support or pay inadequate attention resulted in anal expulsiveness. Such anal expulsiveness is identified in SuryaSena, where he does not find anyone to train and appropriately reinforce him. 'I was a toddler, and my earliest memory of a father was a naked man drunk and urinating on a woman covered with blood.' (Hari Kumar, 2015)

Thirdly, the phallic stage (3-6 years) includes children who obtain gratification through their genitals. They masturbate, and they fantasize about their opposite-sex parent. This initiates the feeling of guilt and shame. Individual focuses on the genital area. It becomes the primary erogenous zone. When the genital is stimulated, it makes the individual aware of gender differences pleasurable. The children experience desire toward parents of the opposite sex and jealousy and resentment toward parents of the same sex. Suryasena has a yearning for his mother.

I do not even know my mother's identity, whether she lived or died. They say she jumped into the sea after leaving me at his doorstep.' His eyes were getting dewy,' I hated him for what he did, for I did not understand why he did what he did.' He stopped near Iyer and recalled, 'Then one day, I asked him about my mother. He called my mother a whore, a word so doomed; no son could stand to hear that about his mother. (Hari Kumar, 2015)

Suryasena, during his childhood, did not get proper parental care, which forces him to think a lot of questions about his mother. His search for his mother is identified from his narration during the story's climax. He could not accept other women being with his father and wanted to know what happened to his mother. His father's indifference to his inquisitiveness triggered his homicidal side.

Do you know how I responded? He looked around, expecting someone to make a wild guess, but everyone was blankly listening to him. He smiled wickedly and revealed, I poisoned him and the whore he was with that night. (Hari Kumar, 2015)

Suryasena's unconscious behavior formation of murdering people turned out to be his personality trait. The anger against his father exploded, leading him to poison the only parent he had.

The next stage is the latency stage (7 years-puberty). Physical urges are submerged while children focus on learning about the world. The latency stage is the fourth major physical and sexual development phase around age five to six.

The young Jagannatha Varma, or Jagan, hated that he had to share his space, royalty, and face with a bastard son of a prostitute. Jagan crushed my hopes of starting a new life. I dreamt of starting my life afresh. However, that rascal robbed me of my dignity before it could even hatch itself. He made my life a living hell. At school, he revealed my background, and nobody wanted to come near me. Jagan crushed my hopes of starting a new life. One day, I gave him the same poison, which I had used on my father, chased him to the lake with a butcher's knife, and pushed him into the water after tying his leg to a boulder. He never came up, and I peeled off a piece of my forehead and underlying muscles, the same area where Jagan had the birthmark. I became Jagannatha Varma, and for the world, the little bastard called Suryasena Varma had drowned and died.' (Hari Kumar, 2015)

As mentioned earlier in this paper, Suryasena's change in behavior is identified by poisoning his father first and Jagannathan. Suryasena changed his identity and became Jagannathan, who seemed to be like identical twins to him.

Chandrasena Varma took me to that psychiatrist, and the middle-aged birdie told me that I had hit puberty and witnessing the death of Suryasena played a negative state of mind during this period. The highly qualified bitch did not even suspect that I was the real Suryasena, and all I wanted was flesh. The first time I held my genital in my hand, I realized why my father was addicted to what he did... (Hari Kumar, 2015)

Suryasena came home with his changed identity as Jagannathan. Chandrasena took him to a psychiatrist because he witnessed Suryasena's sudden death and thought it would cause a disturbance in his psyche. At this stage, he hit puberty and felt the sexual drive. At this moment, he related his behavior to his father, who used to bring sex workers to assault them sexually. His father influenced Suryasena's sexual behavior.

Finally, the genital stage (adolescence) occurs when young people exhibit adult sexual desires. This fifth stage sets the onset of puberty when the human sexual urge begins. They receive pleasure when their opposite-sex partner physically stimulates their genitals during sexual activity. This phase in the character's development is not described in the novel.

Defense Mechanism

Defense mechanisms are how people try to protect themselves from painful feelings. It is a psychological operation that protects a person from anxiety-producing thoughts and feelings related to internal conflicts and outer stressors. The character MC Jagannathan is initially portrayed as a youngster's politician. He voices the injustice happening to women with college students in Delhi. A politician could be identified as a noble person. Holding a high position stands as a defense mechanism in his life. To hide his darker side, he channelled himself to the noble position. This mechanism is termed sublimation. The maladjustment could even strongly prove that he does during the novel's end. When his real identity is revealed, he tries to adjust by committing the same mistake he made during childhood. At the end of the novel, other characters come to know about his childhood days that he was the person who brutally raped and killed many women and was in the pretext of false identity as MC Jagannathan.

The unconscious is the storehouse of those painful experiences and emotions, those wounds, fears, guilty desires, and unresolved conflicts we do not want to know about because we feel we will be overwhelmed by them. The unconscious comes into being when we are very young

through the repression, the expunging from consciousness, of these unhappy psychological events. However, repression does not eliminate our painful experiences and emotions. Rather, it gives them force by making them the organizers of our current experience: we unconsciously behave in ways that will allow us to "play out," without admitting it to ourselves, our conflicted feelings about the painful experiences and emotions we repress. Thus, for psychoanalysis, the unconscious is not a passive reservoir of neutral data, though the word is sometimes used this way in other disciplines and common parlance; rather, the unconscious is a dynamic entity that engages us at the deepest level of our being. (Tyson 54)

Another defense mechanism identified is his repressed fear and conflicts. His search for his mother's care and love, to resolve his identity as an illegitimate child, his father's ill-natured behavior in front of him during his childhood influenced his aggressive behavior toward sexual need. At the novel's end, Suryasena is surrounded by other major characters to bring the truth behind the visitor to a mansion, otherwise believed as the Ghost who murders all women brutally on the day of a full moon day. Sigmund Freud opines this method as the Freudian slip where the patients are made to speak freely. Following this method, Hari Kumar makes his protagonist Suryasena reveal all the hidden mysteries by himself. That he is Suryasena son of Mrityunjaya and not Jagannathan. Suryasena murdered Jagannathan and Mrityunjaya for talking ill about his birth and mother as a prostitute. He also murdered many women after having forced intercourse. Ultimately, he even tries to kill other characters who know the dark side of him being a politician. So, to protect his noble identity, he returns to his unconscious behavior of murdering people again and again making it normal.

Conclusion

Suryasena, who could not socialize during childhood, chose a profession that stands active with social responsibility. In identity formation, other characters completely influenced him, and he did not wish to reflect his real identity to society. He took the identity of Jagannathan to hide his identity of illegitimate birth. To satisfy his sexual drive, he used the pattern of his father, Mrityunjaya, who brutally raped and killed women on a full moon day. When his dark side was revealed to the writer's family, he tried to murder them rather than fighting to overcome his fear and conflicts related to his behavior.

From a psychological perspective, the social belief of the people did not allow them to question the serial murder happening in the mansion after the death of Mrityunjaya. The social belief was that the visitor who comes on a full moon day murders the outsiders, especially women. The norms that bound women also paid way to not questioning the social factors. Thus, Suryasena is completely influenced by the male-dominated society, which treats women only for sexual pleasure. His personality turns to be dark and negative.

He could not fight against his social factors because his behavior was unconsciously built during childhood. Even after attaining the noble position, his behavior gets maladjusted based on the fear and conflicts that he faced in his life. Thus, MC Jagannathan's personality shift examines the shift from protagonist to antagonist in the Freudian view. As a result of his past life from childhood through adolescence, the protagonist possesses the antagonist's inner personality traits. In other words, the protagonist's demonic traits are disguised as divine or noble for presenting himself to society as kind and benevolent.

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