Citizen Cane (1941): A Textual Analysis of Psychoanalysis with Structural Linguistics and Hegelian Philosophy
Shaolin Shaon
Dept of Television, Film and Photography, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh
Corresponding Author: Shaolin Shaon, E-mail: shaontfp@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO
ABSTRACT
Received: October 10, 2018
Accepted: November 05, 2018
Published: November 30, 2018
Volume: 1
Issue: 4
DOI: 10.32996/ijllt.2018.1.4.18

This study is about the textual analysis of the film “Citizen Cane (1941)” directed by Orson Welles. Textual analysis is the method communication researchers use to describe and interpret the characteristics of a recorded or visual message (Frey, L., Botan, C., & Kreps, G., 1999). They also claimed the crucial considerations in the textual analysis include selecting the types of texts to be studied, acquiring appropriate documents, and determining which particular approach to employ in analyzing them.

KEYWORDS
Psychoanalysis, Structural Linguistics, Hegelian Philosophy

1. INTRODUCTION
To analyze the film “Citizen Cane (1941)”, we need to follow an approach of textual analysis. There are four major approaches (Frey, L., Botan, C., & Kreps, G., 1999) to textual analysis—Rhetorical Criticism— is one of them. We will follow this approach to interpret the film. For scholars, the word rhetoric refers to Aristotle’s definition: “the available means of persuasion” and Criticism is the “systematic process of illuminating and evaluating products of human activity” (Andrews, 1983, p. 4). Rhetorical Criticism is a systematic method for describing, analyzing, interpreting, and evaluating the persuasive force of messages embedded within texts (Frey, L., Botan, C., & Kreps, G., 1999).

1.1 APPROACHES TO TEXTUAL ANALYSIS
There are four steps to conducting rhetorical criticism (Frey, L., Botan, C., & Kreps, G., 1999)

I. Choosing a text(s) “Citizen Cane (1941)" to Study

Kenneth Burke
II. Choosing a specific type of rhetorical criticism

Dramatistic Criticism - primarily analyzes texts according to philosopher Kenneth Burke's view. The “Dramatistic Pentad” comprises the five rhetorical elements:
- Act
- Scene
- Agent
- Agency and
- Purpose

III. Analyzing the text(s) according to the method chosen

Figure 1 the “Dramatistic Pentad”

Act: A particular message produced by a communicator
Purpose: The reason for the message
Agent: The person who communicated the message

Rosebud
Why did Charles Foster Cane say the word?
Who was Charles Foster Cane?
**IV. Writing the critical essay**

The critical essay on “Citizen Cane (1941)”, analyzed under the **Theories of Psychoanalysis**, as follows- Citizen Cane (1941): A quest for Rosebud

### 1.2 AT A GLANCE CITIZEN CANE (1941)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Directed &amp; Produced by</th>
<th>Orson Welles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Screenplay by</td>
<td>Herman J. Mankiewicz, Orson Welles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starring</td>
<td>Orson Welles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joseph Cotten</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.3 ABOUT PSYCHOANALYSIS

In 1896, Freud first used the term *psychoanalysis* (French) in *Die Traumdeutung* (The Interpretation of Dreams), which Freud saw as his "most significant work", appeared in November 1899. Psychoanalysis is a set of theories and therapeutic techniques related to the study of the unconscious mind (Milton, Polmear.C, Fabricius.J, 2011). Another kind, Lacanian psychoanalysis, which integrates psychoanalysis with structural linguistics and Hegelian philosophy, is especially prevalent in France and parts of Latin America (Jacques, 2006). Here we will study the notion of "Rosebud" under these theories.
2. CITIZEN CANE (1941): A QUEST FOR ROSEBUD

The critical essay on “Citizen Cane (1941)”: A quest for Rosebud, analyzed under the theories of Psychoanalysis, with philosopher Kenneth Burke’s view- The “Dramatistic Pentad”- comprises the five rhetorical elements: Act, Scene, Agent, Agency and Purpose.

2.1 Scene: The background of an act, the situation in which it occurred:

Plot of “Citizen Cane (1941)”

Directed by Orson Welles, this film is considered to be the most excellent film of all time by many critics, filmmakers, and fans. This film portrays the life of a famous American newspaper magnate. The reel life of "Charles Foster Cane" was inspired from the real-life of American newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst, Chicago tycoons Samuel Insull and Harold McCormick, and aspects of Welles's own life too (Carringer & Robert L., 1996). To analyze this film, we need to look after the story briefly.

The famous newspaper magnate Charles Foster Cane, holding a snow-globe, uttered a word "Rose-bud" in his deathbed. Reporter Jerry Thompson, from "The News on the March", sets out to investigate the sensational news of death as well as the meaning of "Rose-bud". After interviewing the second wife, friends, associates Thompson, little bit learns about canes childhood, personal and professional life. In Colorado, Little Cane had no other way but to exile from his own family. Due to getting some economic profit from the bank, his parents sent him to live with banker Mr Thatcher. After gaining full control over his trust fund at the age of 25, Kane enters the newspaper business, takes control of the New York Inquirer, hires best journalists and embarks on a career of yellow journalism. He starts publishing scandalous articles that attack Thatcher's business interests too. Kane rose to power by successfully manipulating public opinion regarding the Spanish–American War and marrying Emily Norton, the niece of a President of the United States. While he was running for Governor of New York, both his wife and his political opponent discovered affair between Cane and amateur singer Susan. The public scandal ends his political career. Later, Kane marries Susan and forces her into a humiliating operatic career for which she has neither the talent nor the ambition. After she attempts suicide, Kane finally allows her to abandon her singing career, and both of them shifted in isolation at Xanadu.
Domination of Cane continues, and Susan eventually leaves him. After Susan leaves him, Kane begins violently destroying the contents of her bedroom. He suddenly calms down when he sees a snow globe and says, "Rosebud". Thompson concludes that he is unable to solve the mystery and that the meaning of Kane's last word will forever remain an enigma.

2.2 Agent: The person who communicated the message:

Who said “Rose-bud”? Who was Charles Foster Cane?

It was Charlie Foster Cane who uttered the mysterious “Rose-bud”. To relate with “Rose-bud", we need to know Cane first. According to Freud’s Final Model of the psyche, Cane was driven through his id. Freud (1973) found that Id strives to bring about the satisfaction of the instinctual need. We are born with an identifier, while the ego develops through contact with the culture, which in turn produces super-ego (Freud, 1973). In the case of Cane, he was forced to leave his parents in his childhood. His ego did not develop due to the lack of family values and domination; he wanted to control the world in turn. In Freudian term, we may call it "return of the repression". After having the ownership of "Inquirer", he attacked the one who separated him from his family, Mr Thatcher and his trust. He also targets people and published scandalous news about them. He controlled the opinion of people through the newspaper. He practised power by marrying the president's niece Emily, also to be the future president. He married Susan and dominated her to carry on opera career forcefully. As like, he was repeating the situation he faced in childhood through Susan. After each flop opera show, he encouraged her to fight against the critics. Maybe he tried less to love her. But he searched for love in his whole life. We all seek to fill up our gap (Lacan, 1989). Canes gap was love which he lost from his childhood by separating from his mother. To know about Cane, we have to consider his palace too. The vastness of his palace will decide the luxury of his life. In a few establishing scenes, the narrator has compared Charlie Foster Cane with "Kubla Khan". Kubla Khan, a Mongol emperor and the grandson of Genghis Khan had a palace in "Xanadu". Almost as legendary as Florida's Xanadu, owned by the great newspaper magnate Charlie Foster Cane. In the narrative, it was the world's most significant private pleasure ground. Contents of Xanadu were paintings, pictures, statues, various stones of other palaces almost a collection of everything, so big it never be catalogued. The resources were enough for ten museums. Its most significant livestock made Cane's private zoo. Like pharaohs, Xanadu considered as the costliest monument for Cane built by himself. "American Kubla khan" the Charlie Foster Cane died in this palace lonely and mysteriously.
Banker Mr Thatcher called him communist, opponent called him fascist but Cane always claimed himself as an “American”. From 1895-1941, he has covered many of these he was, Canes urged his country’s entry into one war, opposed participation in another, swung the election to one American president at least, spoke for millions of Americans, was hated by as many more, controlled peoples mind through the news. His personal life was also public- twice married, twice divorced. In the year of Great Depression, Cane lost his assets, caught by first wife and opponent leader with Susan, lost his first wife and child in a car accident, forced Susan to opera, earn humiliation and criticism, almost lost her second wife Susan, finally dumped by her and lived lonely in his palace Xanadu.

In his life, he was never satisfied. He always wanted more, more and more; more love, more power, more search to fill the gap (Lacan, 1989). He found his true love his childhood, his mother, his completeness- in his deathbed through “Rose-bud” when it’s too late.

2.3 Purpose: The reason for the message: Why did Charles Foster Cane say “Rose-bud”?

To know about Charles Foster Cane, we need to know the “boy version” of "Oedipus Complex”. He explains, at the age of three-four years, for a boy, his mother (the
symbolic role of a mother) becomes an object of desire. The father acts as a rival for the mother's love and affection. As a consequence, the boy wishes for the father's death fears the father's power, in particular, his power to castrate. Then he abandons his desire for the mother and begins to identify with the father, confident in the knowledge that – one day he will have the father's power including a wife (a substitute symbolic mother) of his own.

When Mr Thatcher dealt with his parents, Cane did not want to separate from his mother, though his parents wanted due to economically profitable deal with a bank. He kept saying to join his mother with him. Mr Thacher (condensed into the composite figure of Cane's parents and banker as Rival/Father of Freud's complex) was responsible for endangering his thirst for staying with his mother. All the forces were working against to separate him from his desire (Mother) as well as union with the "mother's body"- the perfect stage (Lacan, 1989). Cane hit Mr Thatcher with a sled, he was playing before the conversation. As the film ends, the camera reveals "Rosebud" as the trade name of the sled. Cane was playing on the sled the day he was taken from his home in Colorado. Through an insert we see, that sled remained, and snow covered it gradually.

In the ending moment of life, through a "snow-ball" he remembered his childhood, his separation from parents, from home. "Snow-ball" was similar to the snowy day he left home, hit Mr., Thatcher with sled
(Trade name "Rose-bud"). We can call it a metonymy – being a small part recalled a whole series of happenings, sufferings, expectations, and desires of Cane’s life. It is explicit that he wanted his lost "moment of plenitude" (Lacan, 1989) back, from where he separated, he wanted to be there back, through this "Rose bud". Though he achieved money, power and fame, he was lonely. He was in a "search" (Lacan, 1989) for happiness. People believe that before death person recalls the summary of his life. In the case of Cane, "Rose-bud" as a metonymy represented his whole life.

2.4 Agency: The medium used to express the message: A Snow Globe and Sled

Here we may discuss Saussure's structuralism and Roland Barthes 'second level of signification'. The snowball itself is not "Rose-bud". It is the reminder of his childhood as a signifier. The house of the snowball was similar to Cane's childhood’s home. It also recalls his day when Mr. Thatcher took him away from his mother. Little Cane hit him with Sled. The sled’s trade name was "Rosebud" which was an indicator to attack Mr. Thatcher in future through the newspaper. So, the signifier and signified made up a sign easily.

Now comes the second of the significance of a sign. The "Rose-bud" portrays the desire of Cane to reunite with his family, his childhood, his mother. According to Slavoj Zizek, hunger is never fully satisfied; it reproduced in fantasies. The desire for union with mother’s body or ultimate love, we began an endless search. Charlie Cane has also included himself in it. To fulfil his wish, he has replaced, substituted, displaced things, but his search never ended. His lack of never filled. When Cane realized it was too late. Also, the reporter Thompson failed to discover the meaning of “Rose bud” while the Xanadu caretakers burnt the sled “Rose bud” assuming junk itself.

2.5 Act: A particular message produced by a communicator: “Rosebud”

According to Lacan, we are born in a condition of "lack" and subsequently spend the rest of life to overcome. This a search that which is desired but forever out-of-reach. "Rose-bud" is not only a simple word uttered by Charles Foster Cane holding a snow ball in his deathbed. "Rose-bud" is the mystery of gap for us. We want to reach the "Real" – which is like nature before symbolization, referred to as "Objective Reality" (Lacan, 1989). In the realm of "Real", we experience our union with mother is as perfect and complete. Our sense of being a unique individual only begins to emerge in "The Mirror Stage". When an infant first sees itself in a mirror, it examines not only an image of its current self but also the promise of a complete person. The ego begins to emerge. Development in Cane’s Life was not appropriate in the stage. That’s why he prefers identity than ego. We may also compare this with "Fort-da-game" originally

![Figure 11 Rose-bud](image-url)
named by Freud. He developed this after watching his grandson throw a cotton reel away ("gone") and then pull it back again utilizing an attached thread (here). Here the "Reel" is "mother". The child compensates for this mother's disappearance by taking control of the situation. He makes her disappear (fort) and then reappear (da). Without upbringing of the mother, Cane compensates and feels "Castration" - the symbolic loss of being. That's why he had a passion for domination.

As an audience, we rely on reporter Jerry Thompson to investigate on behalf of us. He interviews people and increases our curiosity as if we have finished our search. But this is forever out of reach. We can’t live without this process of searching. We want more, more and more. In this “search” to fill up our “gap”, we console ourselves with displacement strategies and substitute objects. According to Lacan, the lesson of the “Oedipus complex” - a child can never have any direct access to the prohibited mother’s body even he spends all his life hunting for it. With substitute objects, we try vainly to plug the purpose. We move among substitutes for substitutes, metaphors and metaphors never able to recover the pure identity.

In Citizen Cane, Cane has replaced his desire (Mothers Love) with newspaper control, replaced with power for being President, extra-marital affairs, dominating the second wife for opera career and the vastness of Xanadu. The search continues, but he did not found "Love". When Cane's wife Susan left, he destroyed valuable collections of Xanadu palace. Then, suddenly he came up with a "snow-ball", addressed it "Rose-bud" and without damaging kept in his pocket. Maybe, this was his another hope for continuing his "search".

He found at least one link to reach his "the moment of plenitude" (Lacan, 1989).

3 CONCLUSION

After the textual analysis of “Citizen Cane (1941)”, we may consider that, like Cane, we all have our own "Rose-bud" and we are searching for it. After achieving a lot, we still search for “Rose-bud”, we want to preserve our “Rose-bud”.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR(S)

Shaolin Shaon is involved as a Manager at “Dhaka University TV” since 2017. She worked on different projects with BBC Action Media, UNDP, and UN Women Bangladesh and so on. She is continuing MTFP (Masters in Television, Film & Photography) Degree at the University of Dhaka and carried out Bachelor degree in TFP from the same University. She played role as a Researcher at “Dhaka University Research Society” since 2012 and has been related with research relevant to Media and Mass communication. She had two articles published in national journal named “Bangladesh Cinema and Television Institute Journal” and “Magic Lanthom”. She also has International Journal in Global Journal of Human-Social Science (Online ISSN: 2249-460X Print ISSN: 0975-587X) Volume 19 Issue 11 and International Journal of Arts and Humanities (ISSN: 2581-3102) Volume 03, Issue

REFERENCES


