Wicked Mother Portrayed in Djenar Maesa Ayu’s *Nayla*

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**ABSTRACT**  
This paper will discuss about the image of a wicked mother described by a child, Nayla, the protagonist. A mother who is a single parent has to function the two roles as mother as well as father for Nayla, exhausts her so much. Left by her husband for another woman makes her a tough and independent woman who does not need a man, and proves that she is able to a good mother for her child. She naturally protects her child from harm and failures she has with her ex-husband. Consequently, she teaches Nayla hard in order to be tough, independent, and smart. The failures she had become her threats in teaching Nayla. Therefore, she who is supposed to represent a goddess, a warm place for a child to have love and attention for her growth and identity, turns out to be a witch, an evil who is ready to eat Nayla with her anger and punishment if Nayla makes a mistake without asking her explanation. Just obey her without questioning or complaining. Subordinating, marginalizing, and dominating are Nayla’s realities. Her mother’s treatment leads her to an uneasy, inferior, and rebellious character toward her maturity causing her careless running life as a woman. If Nayla takes this archetype, the future of a wise mother will be gone and lead to an uneasy and rebellious generation. Using the descriptive qualitative method to find the data, and analyze the data applying Carl Jung’s archetypal criticism, the writer will identify and describe how the patterns of a wicked mother are described and how it is internalized as personality on Nayla in Djenar Maesa Ayu’s *Nayla*. The study finds that the pattern of a wicked mother is like a monster who does not have any mercy and love, selfish, subordinating, marginalizing, and dominating in taking care of her child. The monster haunts Nayla in her maturity process that she becomes an uneasy, frightening, inferior, and unhappy personality.

**KEYWORDS:** archetype, shadow

Becoming a mother is a nature brought by Adama (female adam), but to be a true mother is a choice which should be proved through thought, heart, speech, and action in the mother world existence. However, the challenge needs hardship since the
absurdity of the outer world: the environmental, social, and cultural (gender differences) condition and situation, which do not cooperate well. Therefore, sometime the good will turn out to be evil.

As a woman, Nayla’s mother also wants to be a mother and does motherhood. When she gets married and pregnant, her husband, Mr. Radja, denies the fectus is his because of her job as a model who deals with many men. He leaves her without any discussion for a divorce dealing with the fectus. Feeling rejected and humiliated causes a trauma for her that makes her decide to prove him that she can earn and feed her own and the child without a man by being tough and independence, which also means that she must work hard and laziness is her enemy. Moreover, she does not allow Nayla to know him even inherits his characters. Therefore, becoming a tough and independence woman is an education program for Nayla, so she will not experience the same faith as her mother. But the meaning of a tough and independence woman misleads into a terrible program, since Nayla inherits his father’s characters that makes her mother angry and disappointed. Every time she sees Nayla, as if she sees her father who hurts her so much. Often, Nayla does not understand why her mother is angry to her without reasons. Hatred, punishments, dominations, marginalizations, subordination, and sex abuse (Ruaidah, 2012: 239) are Nayla’s food every day. The image of a good mother who are giving life principle, birth, warmth, nourishment, protection, growth, and abundance turns into a wicked one. She never feels the warmth of a mother, compliments, love, mercy, even everything she does is wrong for her mother. No cheerful childhood but fears. The image of a wicked mother haunts her nature as a female. Even she is afraid of a mother image.

Nayla who exhausts for love is searching from life to life. From her own mother, her own father, Mbak Ratu, Bu Lina, Juli, Ben, and other men. Nayla keeps being
tough and independence differently from her mother’s lesson, and surviving from her suffering and pains.

A mother functions most prominent part of childhood’s growth and development, from pregnancy onwards, the mother represents as well as symbolizes the nurturing container itself, which is tied not only physically but also psychologically as Jung called *participation mystique*. This unconscious identification is mutual that they feel each other pain, hunger and joy. For the infant, this forms the basis of later empathy and eventually will develop into a sense of responsibility for others and inner conscience. It also creates part of the foundation for later ego identity, especially for female children. The mother symbolizes a Goddess who lives in a paradise where everything is loved, fulfilled, cared, safe, and forgiven. A child will adore the mother and willing to be like her for a daughter. So, the child’s psyche as largely contained in the parental psyche and reflective of it, “Children are so deeply involved in the psychological attitude of their parents that it is no wonder that the most of nervous disturbances in childhood can be traced back to a disturbed psyche atmosphere in the home (Jung, CW 17: par. 80)”. The function of parents is very important in understanding that the child only knows its needs fulfilled regardless the hopes of the parents for its cooperative and obedience because it knows that it will always be forgiven and loved. If the home is a paradise, the healthy and balanced growth will be reflected. However, if the home is a hell, it will produce unhealthy and disturbed growth of the child. The images of balance or disorder home will be kept and influenced the maturity process to form a self-identity because the child’s true individual personality does not emerge until it leaves the parents’ psyche becoming a more truly separate entity on the second birth psychologically.
Nayla is a product of her mother’s disturbed psyche and of a broken-home. Living as a single parent, she must do the two roles as a mother and father for Nayla, which exhausts her so much. Rejecting Nayla as his offspring when she is pregnant, Nayla’s father left her without any explanation or discussion of a divorce, which means she has to take care of and feed their child on her own. It makes Nayla’s mother feel rejected, untrusted, and abandoned. Her disappointment toward her husband causes her to be tough and independence as a woman to prove that everything is all right without a husband/man. Her role as a father functions more dominant than as a mother for Nayla. A mother, who loves, cares, forgives, understands, and helps turns into an evil that hates, punishes, dominates, uncompromises, underestimates, and abandons that makes Nayla feel inferior or afraid of mother’s character. When other child makes a pee on the bed, the mother will take care of it and teach it a toilet training and weaning patiently until the child is ready to do it by itself. When it happens to Nayla, her mother will punish her by choosing a pin, which is burnt first and put in the middle of her thighs. She will not allow Nayla to cry or protest against it because her mother will slap and hit her more until she is quiet. Moreover, her mother will torture her verbally by saying how she hates her father and complains why Nayla’s inherits her father’s bad characters. Images of hatred, punishments, dominations, marginalizations, sex abuse frightens Nayla to see her future, she is incapable to love, trust, empathy, sympathy toward others. Her life is a insecure reality and she has to be aware all the time against hurt. So she tries to find her security and happiness by drinking and interacts with others without love or trust. Her rebellious attitudes show her searching for a meaningful form of her absurd life. Nayla is a form of unique resistances resulted from unbalanced psyche of a wicked mother.
The negative forces of the mother are derived from the collective unconsciousness, which belongs to human binary nature, good and evil, white and black, life and death, etc. Jung called them as archetypes or complexes, which can be activated and projected unto consciously when certain realities pull them out relating to the individuation process (Jung, 1989: 392). The archetypes inform the rational approach to everyday reality, providing food for our soul, a nourishing symbolic soul food stew for individuation (Buchholtz, 2007:5). When the dreads of danger and of death happens the negative energy of unconsciousness will send its message through the images/shadow to warn the individu. Therefore, the critic called archetypal criticism was born. Archetypal criticism argues that archetypes determine the form and function of literary works that a text's meaning is shaped by cultural and psychological myths. Archetypes are the unknowable basic forms personified or concretized in recurring images, symbols, or patterns which may include motifs such as the quest or the heavenly ascent, recognizable character types such as the trickster or the hero, symbols such as the apple or snake, or images such as crucifixion (as in King Kong, or Bride of Frankenstein)—all laden with meaning already when employed in a particular work (Abrams, 1999: 12-14).

Therefore, the paper aims to describe how the pattern of a wicked mother is described in Nayla, and how it is internalized as personality on Nayla. By applying archetypal criticism by Carl Jung, it will identify the ideas or images of a wicked mother, which are patterned in recurrent condition and situation. The patterns will be seen on Nayla’s personality when she separates herself from her mother shown on her fears and hopes, good and evil, rise and fall.
The significance will contribute to develop the archetypal criticism, and to see and learn about the evil or demonic threats in our society and future of the generation as portrayed in *Nayla* novel.

*Nayla* (2005) novel is written by Djenar Maesa Ayu, an Indonesian novelist, short story writer, actress, screenwriter, and filmmaker born in Jakarta on 10 January 1970. Her work has variously been described as “provocative and lurid”, and unique and brave. Because of the boldness of the topics, she writes about, she is considered to a member of the informal movement labeled sastra wangi. Her first book was a compilation of eleven short stories under the title *Mereka Bilang, Saya Monyet!* (They say I’m a Monkey), written in 2001 and published the following year. In 2003, one year after it was published, it was nominated for the Khatulisitwa Literary Award. Michael N. Garcia of Cornell University, has since translated the book into English with the English translation being launched, along with *Nayla*, her first novel, during the 2005 Ubud literary festival.

**Archetypal Criticism**

Archetypal criticism is a literary critic, which sees a literary work from the archetypes, which have a common and recurring representation in a particular human culture or entire human race, shape the structure and function in literary work. Archetypes are dominants, imagoes, primordial images, and mythological images resulted from highly complicated but intriguing concepts. It appears as forms or essence, which is unconscious and cannot be conscious. As an essence, it can express in many kinds of forms such as object, situation, and person/character. (Conscious all the images can be sensed by the ego)(Jung, 1989:392).

There are as many archetypes as there are typical situations in life. Endless repetition has engraved these experiences into our psychic constitution, not in the form
of images filled with content, but at first only as forms without content, representing merely the possibility of a certain type of perception and action. When a situation occurs which corresponds to a given archetype, that archetype becomes activated and compulsiveness appears, which, like an instinctual drive, gains its way against all reason and will, or else produces a conflict of pathological dimensions, that is to say, a neurosis.

**Woman archetype**

a. The Good Mother (positive aspects of the Earth Mother): associated with the life principle, birth, warmth, nourishment, protection, fertility, growth, abundance (for example, Demeter, Ceres).

b. The Terrible Mother (including the negative aspects of the Earth Mother): the witch, sorceress, siren, whore, femme fatale--associated with sensuality, sexual orgies, fear, danger, darkness, dismemberment, emasculation, death; the unconscious in its terrifying aspects.

c. The Soul Mate: the Sophia figure, Holy Mother, the princess or "beautiful lady"—incarnation of inspiration and spiritual fulfillment (the Jungian anima) (Cirlot, 1971: 218).

**Shadow**

The shadow concept flows out of discoveries made by Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung. Jung acknowledged Freud’s work on his analysis of the split between the light and dark sides of the human psyche (Zweig & Abrams, 1991). Then, Shadow is the dark side of personality, which is reluctant to acknowledge and repressed within the self and others. Therefore, man is easily to project it onto others because man reject to see inside himself. Refusing the shadow totally causes bad luck and discouragement since man comes under its power and defeated before doing the challenge. It is the
essentially forms of the animal instincts humans inherited from lower forms of life. It is responsible for the human conception of original sin (Jung, 1989:398). Jung contended that, to be a whole, we must continually strive to know our shadow and that this quest is our first test of courage. It is easier to project the dark side of our personality onto others, to see in them the ugliness and evil that we refuse to see in us. To come to grips with the darkness within ourselves is to achieve the “realization of the shadow.” Unfortunately, most of us never realize our shadow but identify only with the bright side of our personality (Jung, 1964: 174).

RESEARCH METHOD

The method of the study is descriptive qualitative by close reading to collect qualitative data in the forms of words, phrases, sentences describing the wicked archetypes of the mother character and the internalization of the archetypes in Nayla’s personality identified through the thought, speech, and action of characters of the mother and Nayla in Nayla novel. Then, the data are analyzed by Jung’s archetypal theory of wicked mother.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Patterns of a Wicked Mother Described in the Novel

Monster

As a mother, Nayla’s mother is expected to love and be merciful to her children mistake. She is supposed to forgive whenever her children do something wrong and love the mistake as the process of their growths. However, what Nayla gets from her is the opposite.

When Nayla’s mother sees Nayla’s being lazy to urinate in the toilet, she feels that it is her shadow that she does not want to see and becomes a threat for Nayla’s maturity. She punishes Nayla by stabbing a burning pin around her genital, “Tak hanya
selakangan Nayla yang ditusukinya. Tapi juga vaginanya (Maesa, 2012: 2)”. Nayla’s pain and scream only makes her anger more and more, she slaps and hits her daughter until she is quiet, “… setiap kali melihat sosok ibu tak ubahnya monster (Maesa, 2012: 2)”. 

A mistake even small one means a punishment for Nayla. The mistake is also the shadow, which her mother wants to avoid concerning her trauma of her marriage. Her husband left her because he denied the fetus she bore was his. She feels abandoned and humiliated for his leaving without any divorce agreement. She has to take care the baby all alone. Every time Nayla makes mistake she hits and makes her standing on a hoot roof,


When Mbak Ratu, her stepmother, takes Nayla to the rehabilitation after her father died, her mother signs the letter applied by Mbak Ratu undoubtly. It is because she feels betrayed by Nayla,”Aku tidak akan menjilat ludahku sendiri…tak ada alasan apapun yang pantas mempersatukan kita berdua (Maesa, 2012:17)”. She does not even see her daughter at the jail, she only sends her clothes. Mbak Ratu and her mother leave Nayla all alone there. She thinks that her father’s death is a punishment for betraying her,”Hidup akhirnya memberimu karma sesuai dengan perbuatanmu kepada” (Maesa, 2012:155)”.

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Making a successful short story does not make her mother proud but she curses her as bad child,”*Anak tidak tahu diuntung. Tega-teganya dia melakukan hal itu* (Maesa, 2012:154).” As we understand that usually, a mother will appreciate what achievement her children reach, and reward them with love and smile.

**Subordination and marginalization**

Motivating and supporting her children are also expected from a mother. It will help the children to cope with the failures to develop the potentials of the children so they can be confident to build their identities. However, Nayla only receives humiliation and domination from her mother.

Her mother always says that she cannot compete her or even be like her,”*apalagi fisikmu pas-pasan, anakku. Kamu tak seperti aku. Aku sebenarnya menyesal dan kasihan. ...Kenapa fisikmu pun menurun darinya...Tak peka, pemasal, tak cantik pula* (Maesa, 2012:8)”. A mother usually adores her daughter and calls her with good words. Because her hatred of her ex-husband, she rejects to see all his bad qualities on Nayla unfortunately Nayla inherits all his characters. Therefore, she teaches Nayla to be like her without comprehending her own feelings and desires as a child. Nayla must obey whatever she orders and says,”*ia ingin sekali keluar dan bergabung dengan orang-orang yang tengah berjalan kaki itu ketimbang hidungnya perih ditusuk dingin. Tapi jangankan melakukannya. Untuk mengutarakan pendapat pun tak berani ia* (Maesa, 2012:166)”. In fact, Nayla wants to tell everything she has to her mother like other children, and her mother will listen and response happily not slaps, mocks, or curses she always has. As a mock of her mother on her first short story published,”*Tulisan sampah....Selera sampah!* (Maesa, 2012:154)” is considered as telling her own sin to public not as telling her inner feelings,”*Kamu tidak sedang membuka aibmu sendiri, Nayla. Tapi aib keluarga! Apa kamu tidak sadar siapa*
dirimu, Nayla (Maesa, 2012:156)”. Moreover, telling her being raped by her boyfriend, Om Indra, perhaps her mother will kill her.

The images or ideas Nayla learns from her mother in her childhood are fears, tremblings, pains, hurts, mocks, threats, and her weakness. Therefore, a mother is portrayed as a wicked person.

The Internalization of Wicked Mother Archetype on Nayla’s Personality

The monster images, subordination, and marginalization Nayla has on her childhood influence her point of view toward the world in her maturity process. The world is seen as a hazard and insecure place for her, so she has to be careful and keep aware of everything she copes with. The fears which her mother does not want to see become real on her personality toward herself and others.

Toward herself

In being female, being a mother is her nature, which enables her to love and care, provide and feed, and comfort. But she never develops the potentials with her mother, ”Padahal ia ingin melihat Ibu seperti ibu-ibu lain...yang terkejut ketika anak kandungnya jatuh hingga terluka dan mengeluarkan darah, bukan sebaliknya membuat berdarah. Nayla ingin punya ibu, tapi bukan ibunya sendiri (Maesa, 2012: 2)” . Her mother never teaches love so she searches it through Mbak Ratu, Her Father, Bu Lina, Juli, Ben, and many men she has relations. But only Juli can give her love which she desires from her mother,”Mencintai ibu. Tapi sayangnya, Ibuku tak pernah belajar mencintai saya....Bersama Juli, saya merasakan kehangatan kasih yang pernah saya ingin saya berikan kepada Ibu (Maesa, 2012:5)” . Her opinion about love is bad that there is no true love, no love without a payment,”Cinta biadab! Umpat Nayla dalam hatinya (Maesa,2012:142)” . Her beloved boyfriend who raped her own daughter has cheated her mother who is very strong and tough, beautiful, and smart.
Therefore, she never trusts someone who says love to her because for her, love,”…adalah politik manusia demi mencapai sesuatu. Bukan untuk mencinta….berterimakasih atas pemberian atas hadiah-hadiah supaya diberi lebih dan lebih lagi. Seperti Ibu memperlakukan laki-laki (Maesa, 2012:111)”, and has relations without love even though she really wants love. Her incapability to give and share love causes her being afraid of mother figure,”Jadi anda takut pada tokoh Ibu? (Maesa, 2012:175)”. Love is a very expensive lesson for Nayla even though she really wants to learn,”Padahal saya mampu mencinta dan bercinta (Maesa, 2012:6).”

Her inferiority leads her insecurity with her gender and potential identity that she cannot choose what and who she is,”Seumur hidup saya takut banyak hal.bahkan saya takut pada diri saya sendiri. Saya sering merasa banyak tokoh hidup di dalam tubuh saya, dan mereka begitu sulit dikenal…”Apa yang Anda lakukan tidak menentukan siapa diri anda.” Saya mau minum bir (Maesa, 2012:177-178)”. She tries to prove that she can survive and support herself by her own to her mother. She wants to tell her achievement as what other children to their parents, she writes a letter to her but she does not dare to send because she knows her mother will never care or even she will humiliate her jobs. She also writes a letter expressing her feeling toward her father, but she also buries it. As human she really wants to learn how to feel,”Saya ingin belajar merasa (Maesa, 2012:6).”

Nayla grows with insecure and unstable personality because the threats and hazards she copes since she was a child. Finding her happiness through drinking and drunk is the only way to cheer her up and forget the bitter life for a while,”Hanya ada lupa yang sejenak membuat bahagia….Kenapa saya harus mencari rasa aman lewat alkohol ketika anak-anak sebaya yang lain sudah merasa nyaman oleh segelas susu dan sekerat roti? (Maesa, 2012: 3).
Toward others

Nayla also has a weakness in coping with the society expectations especially in her gender roles. She is doubt to decide her gender roles that she is capable to do her sexual desires with a female or a male. She has relations with Juli as lesbian as well as Ben and other men she likes and wants. She fails to meet Juli expected as she asked Nayla,”apakah Nayla berjanji tak akan menyerahkan dirinya ke pelukan laki-laki maupun perempuan lain,…jawaban yang keluar dari mulut Nayla sama sekali di luar harapan Juli….saya bukan lesbian (Maesa, 2012:68).” She also realizes that she cannot behave as a woman Ben expected,”…ia tak memperlakukan Ben seperti yang biasa dilakukan perempuan-perempuan lainnya. Tidak berterimakasih ketika Ben membelikan rumah. Tidak terpesona ketika Ben memberinya uang bulanan dan berbagi hadiah. Tidak memasak. Tidak membuatkan kopi. Tidak menyiapkan pakaian kerja dan dasi. Tidak bertutur kata baik. Tidak cemburu. Tidak cinta (Maesa, 2012:110).” Nayla does not know how to feel, how to give and take, how to behave as a female playing roles in society, she only knows how to survive from sufferings of humiliation and domination.

Her adapting and adjusting to society expectations is still on along with the changes and good supports of the new environment she lives in as she hopes,”Ia ingin normal, senormal-normalnya. Maka Nayla menangis (Maesa, 2012:110).” She really hopes that the society can understand her and does not see every one have the same condition. She needs people who can teach her how to feel her good potentials to love and to be loved, to comfort and care, to behave as a normal woman.

Thus, the descriptions show that Nayla only develops her bad potentials like fears, scares, inferiority, weakness, hatred, punishment, pains, hurts. She does not grow her senses of love, virtues, happiness, warmth, laugh, comfort, compliment, and
confidence. She becomes a doubtful, frightening, insecure, rude, and rebellious woman.

CONCLUSION

Living in a patriarchal culture, the position of being female is the second class. Therefore, to be a good woman has to be perfect in serving the male in order to get the fulfillments and happiness. A woman should be diligent and smart in managing the physic and mental such as beauty, slim, sexy, and abilities in kitchen, house chores, and sex. Woman’s intelligence is only seen on the domestic chores and reproduction. When something is wrong with the man, the woman must take the responsibilities and the consequences. Therefore, woman must keep alert and avoid bad things happen to them. Naturally, the woman has to defense themselves from the bad threats, which she does not want to see, unconsciously, the negative energies/shadow will appear to warn her projected onto others. Nevertheless, the shadow should be balanced by the persona/positive energies to keep a healthy psyche.

Nayla’s mother wants to protect her daughter from her failures dealing with man. But her fears become threats for Nayla’s personality since she educates her with a hard discipline and no mercy and turns her into a monster for Nayla. It results on Nayla’s capabilities in interacting with herself and others well. She sees her world as insecure and haunted place. Nayla is a chaos and terrified world, which is searching for the right form with her adapting and adjusting toward her identity.

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