

***Freud Town (mike)**

The title pretty much gives away the allusion in this poem. Unfortunately for me, I didn't know a single thing about Freud, so this poem really didn't make any sense to me on the first read. After researching Freud on some various sites (Wikipedia.com being the most helpful) I learned more about Freud and tried to inject some of my newfound knowledge into the poem.

Carson begins this poem with "Devil say," a phrase that is continually repeated throughout the rest of the poem. Usually, the phrase is separated into two words by the caesura, but not in this opening line. Instead, the phrase is followed by "I am an unlocated." The "Devil" appears to be addressing the "I," forcefully telling it to do or become something. It is possible that the "Devil" is referring to Freud's theory of the unconscious mind. This being the unconscious mind is separated into three sections: id, superego, and ego. Id is the completely unconscious part of our mind that we are unable to control, and is focused around gratifying our most primal desires. In this poem, it seems like the "Devil" could be alluding to the subconscious desires subtly influencing our thinking. This brings us back to why "Devil" is cleverly separated from "Say" in the rest of the poem (leading up to line 10). By suppressing the phrase "Devil say" Carson might be trying to illustrate the concept of Id. However, at the end of line 10 and 11, she decides to keep the phrase intact. In line 11 we have "Devil say the mind" and we get the feeling that "the mind" has discovered the evil desires of Id/Devil. These lines only make sense if we consciously remove the caesura Carson has placed at the end of each line. If we do this, the lines read, "Devil say the mind/ is an alien guest I say/ Devil outlived devil in." Our minds naturally try to make sense of the poem by omitting the punctuation, and, like the "I" in the poem, it seems we have finally gained control over the "Devil." However, like Freud's theory demonstrates, our id controls our actions and thinking even if we think we have superiority over it. The "I" in the poem has finally realized the effects of the Devil/Id and is determined to master it, but the "outlived" in the last line is "Devil" spelled backwards. Even when the "I" tries to submerge and control the innate desires of their self, they cannot—they are too ingrained and powerful.

Amendments

Freud Town (tom)

First things first Sigmund Freud. I think psychoanalysis, dreams and "tell me about your mom" just by reading the title. Carson had to be aware that such a title would evoke such a response so the question remains, why? I think Mike is on the right track when he alludes to the struggle between id, ego and superego. Where the id is the "evil" carnal force within us, often unseen, (therefore light a lamp) always telling us what to do, controlling and pestering us. I also muse that we need "outside" help to see and understand the id working within in us and I think that is what Carson may be alluding to in line seven, "from outside do the trick do."

Freud Town (tiffany)

In interpreting "Freud Town", I was able to distinguish the same allusions as Mike. My analysis basically supported Mike's supposition that the "Devil" referred to in the poem is

the subconscious part of the mind, the part that deals with our innermost desires. Our desires are, according to theory, uncontrollable. We may want to suppress the idea that we desire sexual relations with one of our parents (Oedipus complex, right?). Thus, desire is assigned a negative connotation; it's something we should suppress because it doesn't align with the idea of the societal norm. So, desire is attached to the idea of a devil, the epitome of evil. If we're accepting this notion, it would seem like the speaker of the poem is identifying what their subconscious wants, what it is ordering the rest of the mind to do. Perhaps this is provoked by a little psychoanalytic session on a black leather couch, Freud-style. The poem serves as a list of desires until the end where the speaker states, "I say. / Devil outlived devil in." There seems to be a kind of conquering and control here. For the first time we have "I", which can be linked to personal identity, the side of the mind we feel we have control over. "Devil outlived devil in." seems to be a conclusive statement, like the outward control of the speaker was able to "outlive" (conquer) the inner devil (desire and yearning).

Freud Town (monte)

I think you got it right on. I didn't notice the lived is devil backwards bit, but that only ties right in and reinforces your description.

Freud Town (mike)

The opening lines of the poem are in direct relation to Freud's theories. Each minor event provoking the mind, provoking the devil. I don't remember the exact terms but the devil is probably a reference to the sexually driven Id. The desire and manipulations of our minds on ourselves is like a devil's temptation. The last lines especially reflected this. The devil we live on the outside, driven by the devil within. What were Freud's devils, Carsons?

Freud Town Amendment: (matt)

I think this is a pretty fair analysis of the poem. However, you might also consider whether Freud, rather than Freud's technique, is the subject of the poem. After all, Freud's theories were incredibly controversial in their time. There were plenty of people in the early days who would consider Freud a "devil." Think of all the times "devil say" is in there; we are naturally led to distrust the devil, but in this case the devil could be Freud trying to reveal shocking truths and explain mysterious things to a skeptical audience. And the last line, "Devil outlived devil in." Freud's ideas outlived him and they also outlived his denouncers.

Freud Town (martin)

Freud did make up the concept of the Id, which can be likened to the devil in us all. The way devil begins and ends the first statement of the poem brings attention to the word though. It makes the reader check it out from different angles, and backwards it spells "lived." Perhaps following our Id is really living. There are many different types of devils in the poem. The lamp devil, the trick devil, and the "myself" devil. Lamp refers to light, maybe bringing light to a situation like Freud likes to bring light to a person's thoughts by digging through their personal thoughts, every tiny aspect of them. His diagnosis can be seen as tricky by skeptics, and that's the tone of the speaker I get. The speaker doesn't like Freud, especially since the poem named after him has devil written all over it. A lamp can

also be a common object in a psychologist's office. "An alien guest" makes me think that someone looking in your mind is not appreciated by the speaker. Also, from "outside" doing the trick could mean a psychologist like Freud trying to trick inside a person's mind from the outside.

Freud Town (marina)

I definitely have read parts of Freud's "Interpretations of Dreams" and well, this poem still didn't make too much sense to me, except maybe if taken from the perspective of taking dreams as a window for our conscious mind to be able to look through in order to get ahold of our unconscious mind, practically unaware of doing so yet still retaining some memories. The dreams are usually a vivid and often illogical visual experience, and they, according to the dear and lovely uncle Freud (who, of course did enough crack to kill a small horse) represent people's secret and deep-down usually sexual desires.

Freud Town (craig)

The poem, when read quickly, sounds as if it were written in the dialect frequently and stereotypically used by slave women in the 17th century south, though I cannot say whether or not this was intended. I believe it was, mainly because I began to Mike's explanation of the devil being the id. This is because I was trying to consider the id, or subconscious pleasure seeker, and its role in reading that very poem. It is that subconscious drive that causes us to break up the poem into natural audible word groupings in order to fit it in with everyday experience, though this is one thing that Carson seems to warn against in her introduction. The point of the line breaks is not to be skipped over, but to make us look at situations from a different vantage point. The idea of someone being an "unlocated window of themselves" seems to support this image, as if they know that there is a way to see within themselves, but cannot figure out how to tap into that part of the mind. The window is lost because it is a window into the subconscious which cannot be seen. That's kind of the point of the subconscious. Though early on in the reading we may be able to control our desire to just read the poems audibly, as time progresses, we lose sight of the greater work and begin to focus solely on the poetic enjoyment afforded to us by the poetry, unless of course you are analyzing about 25 of the bloody things for a class on Wednesday or something similar.

Freud Town: (courtney)

Good job researching Freud and referencing the poem to the unconscious mind, the devil to the Id. Combining what I know of Freud and what you have researched/how you linked the poem to him, I can't think of anything to add to this analysis.

Freud Town (casey)

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Freud Town (Allison)

I think the reference to "Devil" as the id is probably pretty on track. And yes, from what I remember of my psychology days, the id does control the mind, and, especially in dreams, the id takes full on control. I think it's really interesting that Carson has "Devil" and "Say" separated, because you say one thing because your ego and superego protect you. But your "Devil" or id would have you say another. You say this, but you think that in order to protect your reputation, feelings etc. At the very end, it really does seem as though "Devil" has won over the egos, because "devil" and "say" come together, and of course because of the last line, which the analysis points out.

Freud Town (abby)

Unfortunately, I know not enough Freud or Christian folklore/history and such to reference this. I do know that Freud never referencing the unconscious mind as a house for the devil because he did not feel that the "evil" or the "unconscious desires" in people were manifestations of the devil, having not been religious. The devil therefore could be more of a mockery of comparison between Freud's and the standard beliefs on the influences of man. The point is, it's mostly a CONTRAST not an explanation of Freud. "The mind is an alien" pokes fun at Freud a little, too, because if we ever found an alien, we would study it like Freud did the mind, and the "devil" in Christianity would like to persuade people to do any number of things, especially reexamine their minds....
Circular. Brilliant!