

Untainted Desires: Analyzing Sexuality in The Phantom of the Opera through Freudian Lens

Keinginan yang Tidak Murni: Analisis Seksualitas dalam “The Phantom of the Opera” melalui Kacamata Freudian

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Abstract

The article's purpose is to examine the prevalence of sexuality in Gaston Leroux's *The Phantom of the Opera* by analyzing the impacts of the characters' background/milieu on their sexuality, how sexuality is illustrated in *The Phantom of the Opera*, and how social and moral constructs influence the characters' expression of sexuality. The researchers utilized Content Analysis and Psychodynamics. The results revealed that Christine's excessive influence of male presence during childhood made her a masculine woman while Raoul's excessive influence of female presence made him an effeminate man. Christine's and Raoul's respective traits balance each other; however, the existing social and moral constructs regulate their behaviors to express their sexualities. On the other hand, Erik's lack of masculine and feminine traits and key figures to follow hindered his development of morals and sexuality. Understanding the significance of the characters' background and milieu in shaping their sexuality as illustrated in Gaston Leroux's literary work urges readers and students to redefine the quality of the relationships they established.

Kata kunci

seksualitas; Freud;
psikodinamika; sastra; Gaston
Leroux.

Abstrak

Tujuan dari artikel ini adalah untuk meneliti prevalensi seksualitas dalam *The Phantom of the Opera* karya Gaston Leroux dengan menganalisis dampak dari latar belakang/lingkungan karakter terhadap seksualitas mereka, bagaimana seksualitas diilustrasikan dalam *The Phantom of the Opera*, dan bagaimana konstruksi sosial dan moral mempengaruhi ekspresi seksualitas karakter. Para peneliti menggunakan Analisis Isi dan Psikodinamika. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pengaruh kehadiran laki-laki yang berlebihan pada masa kecil Christine membuatnya menjadi perempuan yang maskulin, sementara pengaruh kehadiran perempuan yang berlebihan pada Raoul membuatnya menjadi laki-laki yang banci. Sifat-sifat yang dimiliki Christine dan Raoul saling menyeimbangkan satu sama lain, namun konstruksi sosial dan moral yang ada mengatur perilaku mereka dalam mengekspresikan seksualitas mereka. Di sisi lain, kurangnya sifat maskulin dan feminin serta tokoh-tokoh kunci yang dapat diikuti oleh Erik menghambat perkembangan moral dan seksualitasnya. Memahami pentingnya latar belakang dan lingkungan karakter dalam membentuk seksualitas mereka seperti yang diilustrasikan dalam karya sastra Gaston Leroux mendorong pembaca dan siswa untuk mendefinisikan kembali kualitas hubungan yang mereka jalin.

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A. Introduction

Gaston Leroux is a distinguished French journalist and writer who started his literary journey in 1907, leaving a notable mark on genres ranging from detective fiction and mystery to horror and romance (Lennon, 2018). His magnum opus, *The Phantom of the Opera*, written in 1907 and published in 1910, delves into the complexities of human sexuality through the captivating lives of its protagonists. Leroux masterfully crafts a narrative where the enigmatic Phantom's profound obsession with Christine, a gifted soprano, echoes through the corridors of the opera house, affecting both its crew and the corps de ballet and Christine's potential lover, Raoul (Hapsari et al., 2021).

This study examined the prevalence of sexuality in Gaston Leroux's *The Phantom of the Opera*. Specifically, this focuses on answering what are the impacts of the characters' background/milieu on their sexuality, how sexuality is illustrated in *The Phantom of the Opera*, and how social and moral constructs influence the characters' expression of sexuality. This research will be of interest to literature enthusiasts for it will contribute to ongoing formal and informal discourses concerning the nature of sexuality and its implications on human relationships. Likewise, in the context of the academe, the new perspectives explored in this study will help diversify how students think and appreciate Leroux's work as teachers are able contextualize the themes existing in *The Phantom of the Opera* to relate to their students' experiences. Further, the data can aid educational researchers in designing effective pedagogical supports such as interdisciplinary modes in sex education since the study will engage in integrating literature and psychology to understand the construction of the characters' sexual selves. The Freudian theories utilized allows focalization on how the characters' milieus influence their individual lives as sexual beings and their relationships as well as how sexuality is understood within the context of the story. With this study, readers, students, teachers, and researchers can gain a better understanding of the psychological depth of the themes and characters' conflicts and motivations.

Sexuality is one of the fundamental drives behind a person's behavior, feelings and thoughts. As it defines the means of biological reproduction, describes the psychological and sociological representations of oneself, and orients a person's attraction to others since it attunes the human brain and body to pleasure-seeking (Lucas & Fox, 2024). Stevens (1983) explained Freudian theory illustrated a dynamic, purposeful conception of the individual, stressing the significance of conflict and the overwhelming drive to sate primal impulses. In psychodynamics perspective, if satisfaction is inhibited by external or internal agencies, this may be exhibited through fantasy, dreams, or unconsciously influencing behavior. Later works by Freud veered from theories of libido and psychosexual development and toward philosophical and social themes, particularly, inner conflict and integration. Sari & Rokhmansyah (2023), stated that the existence of an unnatural discharge of emotion may have been the cause of an imbalance of the id, ego, and super ego which results in a state of intense anxiety or urgency towards a desire, sexual or non-sexual. According to Bukowski (2018), Freud theorized that the libido is a sexual energy of the instinct associated with the sexual drive. Where in the libido is present from birth and it serves as a driving force behind human behavior. In the book named *The Making of Masculinities*, multiple perspectives are being provided when it comes to sexual and personality traits of people within behavioral differences. Terman & Miles (1936) highlight the common belief that to distinguish personalities, it is involved through the behavioral differences between males and females. In relation to that statement, they also pointed out that the key aspects such as masculinity and femininity are a developing trait within an individual's personality. With the use of the psychodynamic perspective, the development of children is influenced by reinforcement and punishment from adults creating a sense of adaptability reflecting the exhibited traits of significant adults being involved.

Hapsari et al. (2021) in their research, concentrated on Erik's character as Phantom and his underlying neuroticism. They discussed how Erik's strong affection and animosity towards others stemmed from childhood trauma, leading to toxic emotions and loss of faith. This study emphasizes his vulnerability to succumb into his own insecurity and frustration that subsequently precipitated his ruin. In Hidayanti research (2015), pointed out that Erik's oppressive image dominated the novel, imposing rules at the Paris Opera. This persecution led to misery and obedience, emphasizing the unjust outcomes of oppression. Sternfeld's (2015) study explained the nature of the Phantom as a subhuman and superhuman which repulses the audience yet, at the same time, appeals to their emotions due to the mega musical momentum. Drumright (2012) explored the archetypes of characters and plots existing in the narrative in the paper. Erik, being described as an obsessed genius, possesses the contrasting shades of human, the righteous and the wicked. Denied by society's sympathy but embraced by Christine's compassion are what makes Erik's character recede from his demons and feel human. On the other hand, Kavalier-Adler (2009) on the paper, highlighted that women may engage with narcissistic males who seek ownership of their creative talents, posing a threat to their healthy-heroic self-esteem and societal connection. In his paper, Page (2010) examined Freud's theories of Consciousness, Unconsciousness, and the Oedipus Complex. He stressed how Erik's ineffective repression and unresolved psychological conflicts contribute to his violent and emotional behavior. The kiss from Christine at the end of the novel ushered a moment of emotional

release for Erik and served as his initial experience of compassion.

The aforementioned articles provide a variety of in-depth insights on Gaston Leroux's *The Phantom of the Opera*. However, it can be noted that several of these studies gravitate towards Erik's persona. There is also a significant decline in comprehensive studies concerning sexuality. Furthermore, although there are studies that use Freudian theory, the 'divided consciousness' theory as seen in Page's article in 2010, it is important to emphasize that this study will use psychodynamic theory. With this theory, it will investigate character development, specifically on the characters of Erik, Christine, and Raoul. Through this research, it is hoped to bring a new perspective, analyzed the theme of sexuality, the characters' backgrounds/milieus, and the development and construction of their sexual selves. The investigation revealed the excessive or lack of female and/or male influences of the characters' lives have significantly affected their formation of sexuality.

B. Method

1. Content Analysis and Psychodynamics

In this qualitative study the researchers used content analysis to meticulously examine Gaston Leroux's *The Phantom of the Opera* (1995). Content analysis is a research tool that identifies the presence of specific words, topics, or concepts in qualitative data. It allows researchers to quantify and analyze the presence, meanings, and correlations of specific words, themes, or concepts (Columbia Public Health, 2015). Bishop & Orden (1998) uses a content analysis to gather data through two categories which are bibliographic and ordering formation, and the content of the reviews to code sheet each category based on the writings of the authors of children's literature. Ward & Balswick (1978) uses the same design to build on the basis of an overview of the responses themselves (15 mutually exclusive categories) and the stereotypes described in the literature on sex role stereotypes. Hidayatusholikah et al. (2023) also used content analysis to study the relevance of quantum learning method in poetry writing through students and is being analyzed in a series of methods starting by data reduction, data presentation and lastly drawing conclusions. The study by Walia & Kaur (2012) also uses content analysis. The content of each article or paper was scanned, and the pertinent information was transferred to coding sheets, with each sheet including information from a single article or document. Once the coding sheets were completed, the data on them was categorized, tallied, and examined.

This research also uses psychodynamics to analyze and examine the characters within Gaston Leroux's *The Phantom of the Opera*. Psychodynamics is a branch of psychology that focuses on the underlying factors that develop and affect the behavior of individuals within the subconscious mind with a strong emphasis on how the unconscious processes and unresolved past conflicts that may have shaped their behaviors that they developed through their experiences (McLeod, 2024). It allows the researchers to examine and analyze past events in order to understand their impacts through various experiences in the human psyche (BetterHelp, 2024). Downey (2009) in his research uses psychodynamics in order to examine, analyze, and observe sexual differentiation of the brain towards an occurring behavior. The study goes into depth in finding potential variables that serve as a key component of change within a person starting with underlying events from the start of their childhood experiences, the influences of parental figures, and the development of an individual's personality being regulated over time.

2. Framework Matrix

In this research, the use of the Framework Matrix was utilized to label and construct the data. Framework matrix as a type of matrix coding query with case nodes that are crossed with coded nodes (themes) in a summary table. The framework matrix was beneficial for the researchers in terms of organizing the data collected from the novel. In Table 1, the three columns were labeled with character, background/milieu, and sexuality. While the succeeding rows below the first column were labeled with the names of the characters. In Table 2, the researchers utilized two columns which were labeled with social and moral construct and regulation respectively.

The primary source of data for this study is derived from the novel *The Phantom of the Opera* written by Gaston Leroux. This research focuses on text analysis, including words, phrases, sentences, quotations, dialogues, and descriptions. These selected excerpts were meticulously chosen for their representation of themes related to sexuality as portrayed in literary work. Through a thorough examination of these textual components, the researchers interpreted and explored the obscure depictions and manifestations of sexuality within the narrative framework of the novel.

In the collection of data, (1) a comprehensive reading of the novel in its entirety was undertaken, with repeated readings to grasp the main storyline and implications of the text, (2) The data was extracted from the narration, character dialogues, and actions depicted in the novel, (3) lastly, a systematic classification of the

collected data was conducted to identify recurring themes, patterns, and motifs related to sexuality and other thematic elements present in the text. The researchers used the theory of psychodynamics to interpret the underlying themes and factors and examine the sexuality manifested and experienced by the central characters.

3. Data Analysis

The data that has been collected proceeds to the data analysis stage. Bingham (2023) outlined five phases of qualitative data analysis namely: (1) organizing the data and attribute coding for the data collection and potential analysis process, (2) sorting the data topic codes aligned to the study's purpose/research question, (3) understanding the data to identify emerging ideas in the data, (4) interpreting the data in identifying patterns, developed themes, and finding statements, and (5) explaining the data using theories and literature. According to Sari (2023), there exists a process of data analysis that's conducted by only 3 stages, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing with the researchers as the existing data instrument. The 3 stages are not applicable in accordance to the use of its given data instrument, with this matter to deeply analyze each given texts gathered in the data, Bingham method of data analysis should be exercised. Following the five phases process and using the 'bottom-up analytic strategy' (Bingham, 2023), the researchers were able to examine emerging themes. Further, as this compliments the study's research method, which is content analysis, the researchers were able to establish relationships and assimilate new findings into the existing data. To ensure the validity of these findings, the researchers used peer debriefing technique. Then, the researchers discussed these findings in accordance to specific Freudian theories they utilized earlier in order to produce a sound conclusion.

When every component of the research technique is transparent and systematic through thorough, rigorous, and accurate reporting, rigor in both the research process and results is attained (Johnson et al., 2020). To reduce the possibility of bias and increase the precision and legitimacy of research findings, the researchers planned carefully and deliberately. According to Ahmed (2024), peer debriefing is a process in which a researcher consults with colleagues or experts to assess interpretations and findings, therefore reducing researcher bias. Seeking input from peers or professionals validates interpretations and reduces personal biases by introducing various perspectives, improving objectivity and validating the veracity of the findings. This can help to improve the rigor and trustworthiness of the research while also identifying any gaps, contradictions, or biases in the data (Faster Capital, 2024).

C. Results and Discussion

1. Impacts of the Characters' Background/milieu on Their Sexuality

a. Raoul's Sexuality

After his parents' death, Raoul was raised by his two older sisters and a widowed aunt. At Perros-Guirec, he was supervised by his governess. Further, his constant playmate was Christine who also acted as his violin teacher.

"In this way, Raoul learned to love the same airs that had charmed Christine's childhood. They also both had the same calm and dreamy little cast of mind" (Leroux, 1995).

Whilst Comte Philip, who was supposed to substitute their father as Raoul's model and facilitate his acquisition of masculine traits, was preoccupied with the estate and his younger brother's education. As the roles of teacher, disciplinarian, and playmate are principally fulfilled by maternal figures, this set the stage for effeminacy to conceptualize. In Chapter 2, the passage highlights that Raoul mainly imbibed the deep feminine identity he formed and nurtured by the female presence in his younger years:

"As matter of fact, petted as he was by his two sisters and his old aunt, he had retained from this purely feminine education manners that were almost candid and stamped with charm that nothing had yet been able to sully" (Leroux, 1995).

In the succeeding texts, this identity is mirrored in his appearance:

"He was a little over twenty-one years of age and looked eighteen. He had a small, fair mustache, beautiful blue eyes and a complexion like a girl's" (Leroux, 1995).

Raoul tends to be sensitive, expressive, as well as emotionally-driven in terms of decision-making which are considered as feminine traits rather than emotionally-reserved and logically-driven which are often associated with masculinity.

Another manifestation of Raoul's effeminacy can be observed during their rescue mission for Christine. Throughout their descent into the cellar, the Persian frequently admonished Raoul to control himself.

"I seized my companion's arm: the Vicomte de Chagny was all a-quiver, eager to shout to his betrothed that he was bringing her help. I feared that he would not be able to contain himself" (Leroux, 1995).

Trapped in the torture chamber, the Persian and Raoul's only way to escape is by finding the hidden door in Chapter 24. However, despite the increasingly high possibility of dying, Raoul had no sense of urgency and let the daroga do all the work.

"Then he lay flat on the floor, as one does in a wood, and declared that he would wait until I found the door of the forest, as there was nothing better to do!" (Leroux, 1995).

"I had been working like this for half an hour and had finished three panels, when, as ill-luck would have it, I turned round on hearing a muttered exclamation from the viscount. "I am stifling," he said. "All those mirrors are sending out an infernal heat! Do you think you will find that spring soon? If you are much longer about it, we shall be roasted alive!" I was not sorry to hear him talk like this. He had not said a word of the forest and I hoped that my companion's reason would hold out some time longer against the torture" (Leroux, 1995).

Raoul's impulsiveness, complaints, and frailty proved almost detrimental to their survival. It is ironic that Raoul, who is expected to protect his lover, should think and act like a man in crucial times. Nonetheless, he was easily overcome by the torture chamber's illusion:

"But I had first to calm M. de Chagny, who was already walking about like a madman, uttering incoherent cries. The snatches of conversation which he had caught between Christine and the monster had contributed not a little to drive him beside himself: add to that the shock of the magic forest and the scorching heat which was beginning to make the perspiration stream down his temples and you will have no difficulty in understanding his state of mind. He shouted Christine's name, brandished his pistol, knocked his forehead against the glass in his endeavors to run down the glades of the illusive forest. In short, the torture was beginning to work its spell upon a brain unprepared for it" (Leroux, 1995).

"I was still making a moral resistance, but M. de Chagny seemed to me quite "gone" (Leroux, 1995)..

His incapability to endure torment is the effect of his accustomation to pleasure.

"Meanwhile, he was enjoying a long furlough which would not be over for six-months; and already the dowagers of the Faubourg Saint-Germain were pitying the handsome and apparently delicate stripling for the hard work in store for him" (Leroux, 1995).

"He seemed to have but just left the women's apron strings" (Leroux, 1995).

His backstory revealed the fact that the women around him created a tender environment for him to grow and made Raoul a sheltered individual and an effeminate man.

b. Christine's Sexuality

Since her mother died early on, Mamma Valeria can be argued as a mother figure or feminine presence in Christine's life however, it is crucial to take into account that Christine spent most of her formative years in the company of Daddy Daae. Christine cannot fully project the feminine characteristics that should have enabled her to connect with the other girls in the Opera. As a young woman, Christine strongly manifested masculine traits she acquired and developed through the influence of her father, which, in turn, eventually dominated the feminine influence that Mamma Valeria made in Christine's later years.

"She seemed, for that matter, to see nobody. She was all indifference" (Leroux, 1995).

In Chapter 5, Christine is expected to display more emotions. However, upon seeing Raoul, her childhood sweetheart, she showed her calmness amidst the eagerness to speak to him. Meanwhile, these traits are also depicted in Chapter 26, wherein Christine held back from uttering a word when they were trapped in the cellar:

“Christine Daaé did not say a word: she moved about noiselessly, like a sister of charity, who had taken a vow of silence” (Leroux, 1995).

“And he wondered what she wanted. What she was hoping for... She was a virtuous girl, she was said to have no friend, no protector of any sort...” (Leroux, 1995).

In the 10th Chapter, Christine tends to protect herself and those that she valued. She witnessed her father’s instinct to secure their future as men are supposed to protect and defend women; these actions were also highlighted in Chapter 7:

“I am a mistress of my own actions, M. de Chagny: you have no right to control them, and I will beg you to desist henceforth. As to what I have done during the last fortnight, there is only one man in the world who has the right to demand an account of me: my husband! Well, I have no husband and I never mean to marry!” (Leroux, 1995).

This proves how unconventional Christine is from a traditional woman and therefore cannot be subjected to someone’s supremacy. As such, Christine’s previous experiences constituted her dependency to her own self which emphasized the dominance of masculine presence in her sexuality.

c. Erik’s Sexuality

It is important to note that Erik, at an early age, ran away from home to liberate himself from his parents’ judgment.

“When my own father never saw me and when my mother, so as not to see me, made me a present of my first mask” (Leroux, 1995).

Without a father to serve as a rival and identify with, and having a mother who completely rejected his affection (in the novel, this rejection is depicted when his mother was the one who gave him the mask to hide his ugliness), Erik failed to effectively integrate masculine and even feminine characteristics. Consequently, this also led Erik to not fully actualize his sexuality.

His appearance is an allegory to the death or absence of his sexuality. In Chapter 26, when Erik asked Christine to marry him, he kissed her forehead instead of her lips to conclude their wedding ceremony:

“If you knew how beautiful she was...when she let me kiss her...alive...It was the first...time, daroga, the first...time I ever kissed a woman” (Leroux, 1995).

“I tell you I kissed her just like that, on her forehead...and she did not draw back her forehead from my lips!” “Then Christine kissed me, for the first time, herself, here, on the forehead—don’t look, daroga!—here, on the forehead...on my forehead” (Leroux, 1995).

Furthermore, Erik’s visualization of their future as a married couple is akin to how a child would innocently playhouse with his peers.

“One can get used to everything if one wishes. Plenty of young people who did not care for each other before marriage have adored each other since ! Oh, I don’t know what I am talking about ! But you would have lots of fun with me. For instance, I am the greatest ventriloquist that ever lived, I am the first ventriloquist in the world!” (Leroux, 1995).

These revealed how Erik lacks understanding of the real concept of marriage, romance, and coitus.

“Oh, how good it is, daroga, to kiss somebody on the forehead!...You can’t tell!...But I! I!...My mother, daroga, my poor, unhappy mother would never...let me kiss her...She used to run away...and throw me my mask!...Nor any other woman...ever, ever!...Ah, you can understand, my happiness was so great, I cried” (Leroux, 1995).

This reinforced the fact that Erik, being unable to resolve his Oedipal phase, saw Christine as a substitute for his absent mother. In view of this, Erik desperately tried to please Christine whenever he could even agreeing to her plea of deliverance for Raoul and the Persian.

“I have every right to see her in my own house. I am loved for my own sake” (Leroux, 1995).

“She remained alive, weeping over me, with me. We cried together! I have tasted all the happiness the world can offer!” “but that she could marry the young man when she pleased, because she had cried with me and mingled her tears with mine!” (Leroux, 1995).

On account of Erik’s obsession with Christine, it was not a product of his lust rather it was his means of seeking validation which his mother withheld but Christine willingly gave.

Table 1. Milieu and Sexuality

No.	Characters	Background/Milieu	Sexuality
1.	Raoul	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> his mother had died in giving birth to Raoul, who was born twenty years after Count Philippe while his father died while Raoul was twelve years of age petted by his two selfless older sisters and widowed aunt and supervised by his governess influenced by purely feminine education became childhood friends with Christine Daae at Perros 	Effeminate Man
2.	Christine	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> her mother died when Christine was entering upon her sixth year mainly raised by her peasant father who taught her musical alphabet before she knew how to read became childhood friends with Viscount Raoul Chagny at Perros whom she calls as Little Playfellow 	Masculine Woman

2. Impacts of the Characters’ Social and Moral Constructs on Their Sexuality

a. Raoul

A child (Raoul) that was spoiled by his brother and is exposed to an environment of women will eventually mirror its surroundings that results in assimilation of the personality traits and behaviors being displayed throughout his childhood experiences that developed over time. In chapter 2, Raoul’s affections reveal an outward feminine approach, where he presents such emotional depth and sensitivity when it came to Christine:

“Raoul leading the way, feeling that his heart no longer belonged to him, his face set with passion” (Leroux, 1995).

“He felt a terrible pain at his heart and it was of this that he wanted to speak to Daae without delay” (Leroux, 1995).

“At one at the same time, he had learned what love meant, and hatred. He knew that he loved. He wanted to know whom he hated” (Leroux, 1995).

Despite being a man, the fact that Raoul was petted by women made him susceptible to emotion, especially love.

“Lover though he was, he did not even think of stealing a ribbon that would have given him the perfume of the woman he loved” (Leroux, 1995).

However, Raoul is guided in what he does by reflecting the opinions of the society. To be firm and proper towards their principles and values he acquired owing to his upbringing as part of the upper class, an elite. In view of this, despite being openly emotional about his feelings, Raoul cannot freely express his love for Christine due to his social standing as a Viscount and the disapproval of his brother, Count Philippe in account to Christine’s actions and lower social status, depicted in the novel in page 80, Chapter 7.

“That little baggage!” growled the Count (Leroux, 1995).

In chapter 5, Raoul is restrained from expressing his true emotions in an open manner but manages to convey them through formal gestures. His upbringing overcame his nature as an expressive individual, making him develop inhibitions.

“Raoul, pressing a kiss on Christine’s trembling hand, said: “Mademoiselle, I shall never forget you!” And he went away regretting his words, for he knew that Christine could not be the wife of the Vicomte de Chagny” (Leroux, 1995).

“He returned to listen to her. He followed her in the wings. He waited for her behind a Jacob’s ladder. He tried to attract her attention” (Leroux, 1995).

“Raoul suffered, for she was very beautiful and he was shy and dared not confess his love, even to himself” (Leroux, 1995).

“The young man himself was aghast at the sudden quarrel which he had dared to raise at the very moment when he had resolved to speak words of gentleness, love and submission to Christine” (Leroux, 1995).

b. Christine

Christine’s imbibed moral principles and values were heavily influenced by her father when she was a child. Those men, aside from protecting and defending their women, are supposed to honor their words. She is bound by her promise she made of coming back to Erik and keeping her loyalty towards him.

“Poor Erik!”, “Here I am, Erik... I am ready” (Leroux, 1995).

Chapter 9 indicated Christine’s sense of compassion and necessity to gratify Erik’s fancy and that is to suffice his feeling of loneliness. It was not Christine’s nature to be subjugated by anyone, even Raoul. However, being confined in Erik’s control and terrified of his violent actions that might harm the people that surround her, she chose to subside the masculinity within her. Christine even allowed him to marry her.

“I was no longer the mistress of myself: I had become his thing!” (Leroux, 1995).

This circumstance stirred a conflict between her relationship with Raoul.

“I doubted your love for me, during those hours” (Leroux, 1995).

Further, because of social reasons, Christine doubted to overcome the odds of their young love.

“Whatever happened, your position in society forbade me to contemplate of ever marrying you” (Leroux, 1995).

In light of this, Christine was torn in choosing between the two, a moral dilemma that connects her with Erik and societal conventions that set her apart from Raoul.

c. Erik

In Chapter 27, the daroga mentioned that throughout his stay in Persia, Erik remained unsupervised and was given the freedom to act. Erik took advantage of this.

“He was guilty of not a few horrors, for he seemed not to know the difference between good and evil” (Leroux, 1995).

Due to the absence of his parents, there was no one to reinforce Erik’s moral integrity. As a result, Erik was unable to internalize the concept of right and wrong—in other words, he has failed to develop a conscience or moral compass. Since Erik does not have values or principles to abide with, he has no qualms in kidnapping Christine and imprisoning her in his abode. In view of this, he was also incapable of feeling empathy for others as implied in Chapter 22.

“We should only think of ourselves in this life, of our own death matter” (Leroux, 1995).

After he threatened Christine of killing Raoul and blasting the Opera, he still managed to think that he was letting her fully exercise her free will.

“But I told her that, as she had turned the scorpion, she had, through that very fact, and of her own free will, become engaged to me and that she did not need to have two men engaged to her, which was true enough” (Leroux, 1995).

Taking all these into consideration, Erik’s nonexistent morals could not possibly regulate his nonexistent sexuality.

Table 2. Social and Moral Constructs

No.	Characters	Social and Moral Construct	Regulation
1.	Raoul	Man, and sensibilities	Raoul has inhibitions in expressing his love for Christine.
2.	Christine	Man, and sensibilities	Christine pacifies her masculine traits.

3. Discussion

This study examined the prevalence of sexuality, focusing on these 3 questions: “What are the impacts of the characters’ background/milieu on their sexuality?”, “How is sexuality illustrated in *The Phantom of the Opera*?” and “How do social and moral constructs influence the characters’ expression of sexuality?” The results indicate that all of the characters’ respective differences and influences towards sexuality stemmed from their given background/milieu that had occurred during childhood. In line with the hypothesis, the existence of masculine and feminine tendencies of the characters creates a relationship that appears to complement each other as Christine and Raoul’s given traits balances towards each other stabilizing both masculine and feminine traits and filling each other’s gaps. It is important to note that the relationship and experiences with existing mother and father figures led to the development of Raoul’s effeminacy and Christine’s masculinity. The table being used indicates parallel opposites between both characters that exhibit traits, background/milieu, constructs that differ to each other. Christine has an excessive influence of male presence which affected her acquisition of Feminine traits, while Raoul has an excessive influence of female presence which affected his acquisition of Masculine traits. Erik on the other hand failed to develop as there were no masculine and feminine traits present as well as key figures that he could follow during his development resulting in no actualization of his own sexuality. In relation to this statement, Erik’s inability to integrate both features hindered his development retaining his oedipal phase as his relationship with Christine was a result of his unresolved parental issues. He sees Christine more of a maternal figure rather than a romantic partner.

During the research, a problem was found while examining Erik’s background. It is observed that there is existing data about Erik’s upbringing, but to analyze information about his sexual being, it was shown that there were no developments in his self-actualization towards sexuality and his social and moral values are nonexistent making him a hard variable to analyze. It is beyond the scope of this study to address the questions of the specific themes being studied, although there is limited information present from Erik it does not answer nor help the examined themes towards other variables as it already covers what is needed to be analyzed. Therefore, the decision was made to remove Erik from the table.

D. Conclusion

This study provides a new insight into the relationship between the characters in the novel that involves analyzing the concept of sexuality. In-depth reading and analyzing of the texts were conducted by the researchers and evaluated by an expert. The data extracted were organized and filtered through the lens of Psychodynamics. Other existing authors who used the same novel explored social themes and archetypes that focus on how the characters portray themselves throughout the novel which helps support the gathered results of the study, making it an important variable towards existing theories or related themes that may contribute for future researchers to use.

Sexuality and human connection delineate an individual’s perception of oneself and sense of belongingness. In line with this, understanding the significance of the characters’ background and milieu in shaping their sexuality as illustrated in Gaston Leroux’s literary work urges readers and students to redefine the quality of the relationships they established. Further research is required to establish whether there are more existing perspectives towards sexuality as a main variable.

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