

Research Article**The Unconscious as a Formative Aspect of the Sexuality of the Character DSD in the Comic *Houkago Hokenshitsu* by Mizushiro Setona****Aulia Rahman**

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Disorder of Sex Development (DSD) encompasses conditions where individuals face challenges in determining their sexual identity, often deviating from the binary gender norms prevalent in society. This research delves into the portrayal of sexual identity formation among DSD individuals, specifically in the manga 'Houkago Hokenshitsu' by Mizushiro Setona. This research is conducted by applying qualitative research methods, research analysis is described or described through written words. The study aims to elucidate the process through which DSD characters navigate their sexual identity within a dream world, while also exploring the interplay between sexual identity, DSD, and feminist psychoanalytic perspectives presented in the comic. Drawing upon Juliet Mitchell's theoretical framework of Unconsciousness and Neurosis as expounded in 'Psychoanalysis and Feminism: A Radical Reassessment of Freudian Psychoanalysis' (2000), this research underscores the significant role of the unconscious mind in shaping individual identity. Mitchell contends that unconscious processes profoundly influence one's psyche, often manifesting in symptoms of hysteria-induced Neurosis, such as anxiety. The findings of this study reveal two key insights: Firstly, the engagement and exploration of the dream realm facilitate the DSD character in crystallizing their desired sexual identity for real-world expression. Secondly, this journey towards self-identification within the dream world precipitates symptoms of neurotic anxiety, stemming from societal pressures and the internal struggle for self-acceptance and autonomy in reconstructing their sexual identity. In essence, this research underscores the intricate dynamics between sexual identity formation, DSD experiences, and the psychological ramifications portrayed in 'Houkago Hokenshitsu', shedding light on the complexities inherent in the quest for personal identity and acceptance.

Keywords: DSD; Dreams; Sexual Identity; Feminist Psychoanalysis**1. Introduction**

Judith Butler, in her book 'Gender Trouble', elucidates that the discourse surrounding sex and gender identity remains an unresolved issue within feminist studies. According to Butler, an individual may possess a male biological sex but identify with a female gender, or conversely, exhibit a female biological sex while identifying with a male gender, contingent upon the performative aspects they embody (Butler, 1999: 34). Michael G. Shively and John P. De Cecco, in their journal article titled 'Components of Sexual

Identity' (1977: 41-42), delineate four fundamental elements central to the discussion of sexual identity. These components include biological sex, gender identity, the societal roles associated with sex, and sexual orientation.

The framework outlined by Butler and the insights provided by Shively and De Cecco emphasize the multifaceted nature of sexual identity. They underscore that sexual identity extends beyond mere biological categorization, encompassing the complex interplay between biological factors, personal identification, societal norms, and

sexual attraction. In essence, these perspectives highlight the need for a nuanced understanding of sexual identity, acknowledging its fluidity and the diverse experiences individuals may encounter in navigating their own sense of self within social contexts.

In the past, societal constructs predominantly recognized sexual identity within the binary framework of male and female. However, recent years have witnessed the emergence of alternative sexual identities, including the acknowledgment of a third gender, exemplified by individuals with Disorders of Sexual Development (DSD) (Wieringa, 2010: 23). DSD serves as an umbrella term encompassing various conditions wherein individuals are born with sexual and reproductive anatomy diverging from conventional male or female definitions (Callahan, 2009:25-26).

Jeffrey Eugenides, renowned for his novel 'Middlesex' (2000), stands as the first Pulitzer Prize winner to broach issues surrounding DSD, paving the way for a proliferation of literary works addressing these themes. Beyond novels, such issues have found expression in diverse mediums, including comics like 'Houkago Hokenshitsu' by Mizushiro Setona. The central character in this comic, Mashiro, embodies an individual grappling with DSD. Initially identifying as male, Mashiro undergoes a transformative experience during a dream class in high school. Within this dream realm, Mashiro encounters interactions and events pivotal to the formulation of a new sexual identity. These dreamworld dynamics resonate with the real-life experiences of individuals with DSD, both as individuals and within their social milieu.

According to Lawrence Kohlberg (1995: 12), sexual identity can be understood as an individual's concept of themselves as male, female, or neither, perceived and personally believed by the individual. This sexual identity is

manifested through personality and behaviour, guiding the individual on how they should behave, whether as a male or female. The formation of sexual identity itself is influenced by the environment or social constructs surrounding the individual. One's sexual identity is highly personal and develops around the age of 2-3 years when their first sexual awareness emerges regarding whether they are male or female. Sexual identity is the external formation or construction, external values embedded within humans, primarily originating from social communities. How women are treated and act as women, feminine, and how men act and are treated as masculine. If the societal believed sexual identity does not align with one's biological sex, then it becomes an issue. Society perceives this issue as "wrongness". Conversely, DSD seem to address this problem and indicate openness towards sexual identity, implying that gender does not wholly construct sexuality because 'it' is discursive and unstable (Butler, 1999: 23).

From the extensive data outlined above, it can be succinctly formulated that sexual identity is a construction rooted within the subject before the subject becomes a subject, while DSD can be a form of resistance against binary gender. Thus, the problem arises when subjects with DSD attempt to break free from binary gender norms. From this perspective, Mashiro becomes an intriguing character concerning his DSD; he transforms his DSD into a new sexual identity by showcasing the conflicts he faces in the dream world, his connection to the real world, and the process of reconstructing his DSD identity as something progressive, equal to binary gender, and sovereign.

Framed by these considerations, this study seeks to address the following questions: (1) How do the events and interactions within the dream realm contribute to the sexual identity formation of characters with DSD? (2) What implications does the implementation of

sexual identity formation within the dream world hold for the real-life experiences of individuals with DSD?

2. Methods

This research is conducted by applying qualitative research methods, research analysis is described or described through written words (Teeuw, 1984). Explanations and analysis in this study are explained in verbal words, through detailed descriptions and explanations.

In an effort to address the research problem and arrive at relevant and significant findings, this study will employ the feminist psychoanalytic theory of Juliet Mitchell as presented in her book titled 'Psychoanalysis and Feminism: A Radical Reassessment of Freudian Psychoanalysis' (2000). The psychoanalytic theory by Mitchell to be utilized in this research is the Unconsciousness as a Formulator of Individual Identity, which elucidates the formation of human personality through its subconscious realm. Subsequently, the Concept of Neurosis will encompass explanations regarding the implementation of identity formation through the subconscious, particularly concerning how individuals interact with those around them.

The context of the mechanism of unconscious mental life - the laws of the primary process (which govern the workings of the unconscious) - are replaced by these critics with those of the secondary process (conscious decision and perception). As a result, the whole point is missed." (Mitchell, 2000: 8). The failure of an individual's attempt to express their desires is referred to as neurosis. Freud stated that neurosis is an abnormal act performed by an adult to express their sexual desires. These neurotic symptoms indicate a person's failure to fulfilling their desires and instincts (Mitchell, 2000: 10).

The first step in this research is to classify data within the text related to the interactions and events faced by the

characters with DSD in their dreams. This classification aims to focus the research on the formation of the sexual identity of the characters with DSD built from these interactions. Considering that these interactions and events occur on a psychological level (in the dream world) for the characters with DSD, the analysis will be deepened by employing the concept of the subconscious from Juliet Mitchell. This aims to demonstrate how dreams actually reflect internal conflicts within the characters with DSD themselves.

In the future, it is hoped that this analysis will demonstrate how the constructs attached to characters with DSD actually originate from their own perception of their sexual identity and represent a manifestation of sexual identity crisis. The theory of unconsciousness will also be employed to uncover the surface of dreams and reveal the distorted events, both in terms of symbols and interactions between characters with DSD and other characters present in their dreams. Additionally, the concept of sexual identity construction will be utilized to examine the antagonistic and dominant relationships in the interactions occurring within the dream (subconscious) realm.

Furthermore, the concept of Neurosis will be used to examine how the relationship built between the sexual identity formed in the dream world and the real-life of characters with DSD. Here, it will be further developed on the actions of characters with DSD that demonstrate changes resulting from interactions and events experienced in the dream world. What changes occur in the sexual identity of characters with DSD in the real world, whether they remain the same or undergo changes, will be further investigated with this concept.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1. The Innovation of Self and Separation to Yourself

Ichijou Mashiro is the main character in the story. He has a body that differs from that of humans in general: from the waist upward, it is shaped like a man, while from the waist downward, it is shaped like a woman. Born with these conditions, Mashiro decides to live his life as a man, using various attributes that make him recognizable as such, such as having short hair, wearing men's clothes, and speaking and walking like a man. Initially, his journey through life as a man proceeds smoothly without any irregularities noticeable to those around him.



Figure 1. Mashiro asks Kureha to keep his sexual identity a secret (Mizushiro, Volume 1, 2014: 47)

Kureha: *Hanbun onna no ko kaa... zenzen kizukanakatta. Mashiro kun te nanka kou... surat toshiterushi kakkoiishi. Mashiro kun wo ii tte itteru ko mo kekkou oindayo*

Mashiro: *Nankane, umare tsuki konna karada nanda kedo... kimochi warui deshou*

Kureha: *Sonna koto nai kedo, bikkurishita.*

Mashiro: *Demo ano, dare nimo himitsu dakara, kono koto wa zettai....*

Kureha: *Wakatteruyo! Watashi ga anna no datte iu no mo himitsune*

Mashiro: *Un (anna no) mochiron*

Kureha: Half-girl body, yeah... I didn't realize it at all. Mashiro is cool and handsome. Many girls say that Mashiro is a good guy.

Mashiro: I didn't know either, my body has been like this since birth. You must be disgusted.

Kureha: Not really, just surprised

Mashiro: But this should be kept secret from anyone.

Kureha: I understand, I will keep it a secret from everyone.

Mashiro: Yes, (that's) of course.

The conversation above illustrates one form of anxiety hysteria symptoms exhibited by the character with Disorder of Sex Development. The positive aspect is that the character asked to keep the secret is a woman who also dislikes men. Furthermore, the anxiety felt by this character does not only come from other female characters, but also from other male characters who become aware of this character's sexual identity through the shared dream world they experience. Various denials have been made by this character to cover up the secret, but the neurosis effect in the form of anxiety worsens the situation as other male characters become more curious and question the true sexual identity of this character.



Figure 2. Sou begins to suspect Mashiro
(Mizushiro, Volume 1, 2014: 13)

Sou: ...nanka... onna no nio ga suru...
(pashitt) ...teeena nandayo ikinari

Mashiro: Shitsureina koto iu nats

Sou: Betsuni (omae) to wa ittenaidaro

Mashiro: Ii kara mou!! Deteke yo!! Hora!!

Sou: (Yappari omae) (Onna dattanjan)

Mashiro: ...nande shitterundayo, Sou,
Omae masaka

Sou: Ano toki asokoni

Sou: There's a smell of a woman (sound of a slap), that hurts, why did you suddenly slap me?

Mashiro: Don't say rude things so casually.

Sou: I didn't say anything (to you).

Mashiro: Enough!! Get out of here!! Come on!!

Sou: Turns out you're really a woman.

Mashiro: How did you find out, Don't, please don't.

Sou: That time and in that place...."

The anxiety felt by this character sometimes leads him to act out of control. In the speech bubbles above, the main character is depicted suddenly slapping Sou's face. This is due to the anxiety he feels as a result of the remarks made by Sou about the 'smell' of women (Sou is known for changing partners frequently). After experiencing the same dreams together several times, Sou's conviction about the main character's sexual identity becomes clearer, and the main character's anxiety about his sexual identity being revealed increases. This anxiety makes the main character feel cornered and unable to deny the facts stated by Sou.

In contrast, the anxiety derived from his best friend is different. To solidify his stance as a man, this character spends more time socializing with male friends, although many female friends try to communicate and interact with him. Good friendships are not only built in the same classroom but also with friends from different classes. He does this with a male friend from a different class, Shinbashi. Their friendship flourishes because of their connection to a girl named Kureha, who is liked by Shinbashi, even though he knows that Kureha despises men.

The neurosis experienced by the main character with symptoms of hysteria in various forms of anxiety occurs after each character present in the same dream becomes aware of his sexual identity. In the real world, this anxiety continues and affects the pattern of relationships built by the main character with those around him. Eventually, the anxiety from the symptoms of neurosis experienced by the main character also succeeds in influencing the formation of his sexual identity in the real world. Whether it relates to acceptance of his new identity or the consequences he faces because of his sexual identity. The unavoidable process for the main character is the reconstruction of his old sexual identity (before entering the dream) into a new sexual identity.

However, everything changes after he enters high school, especially after joining the dream class. During the dream class sessions, Mashiro always appears dressed in women's clothing. Continuously presenting himself as a woman in each dream session makes Mashiro increasingly hesitant and questioning his true sexual identity. The misunderstandings experienced by Mashiro are further complicated by the presence of a male version of himself in his dreams. This is because Mashiro still cannot determine his true sexual identity.

Appearing as another self (a woman) in his dreams didn't help Mashiro decide on the sexual identity he wanted to live. Quite the contrary, it made him more confused and questioning of his sexual identity because of the attachment to other characters, which still prevents Mashiro from deciding on his sexual identity. The relationships that occur between Mashiro and other characters (male or female) prove that Mashiro's sexual identity is still *in between*.

3.2. Undoing Sexual Identity and Determination of New Sexual Identity

During Mashiro's first experience in the Dream Class, he directly interacts with a woman who hates men and almost kills him. Later, it is revealed that the woman in the dream is Fujishima Kureha. Kureha's perspective begins to change when she learns that Mashiro is not fully male. Mashiro's transformation into a woman in the dream is also discovered by Kureha, so Mashiro's unusual circumstances become commonplace for her. The instinct in Kureha's heart, which desires protection and love, leads her to desire a relationship with Mashiro. Their closeness prompts Mashiro to reconsider his sexual identity as a man. His instinct to protect women in danger takes over, shaping his sexual identity as a male. This leads him to abandon his female sexual identity.

Another dream experienced by the character with Disorder of Sex Development is meeting Mizuhashi Sou. Sou and the main character Mashiro (Disorder of Sex Development) are classmates in high school and both are members of the kendo club. However, their relationship is strained, so they only communicate when necessary. Just as other characters see Mashiro as a man, Sou also perceives Mashiro as a man without any doubt because no part of Mashiro's body resembles that of a woman. Through interactions in dreams, Sou finally discovers Mashiro's true sexual identity as a woman. Sou's belief in Mashiro's sexual identity as a woman is further strengthened by notes left by Ai (an imaginary character who always accompanies Sou) in the real world. In the dream world, Mashiro always appears as the weakest when encountering Sou, fully resembling a girl. Therefore, meeting Sou in the dream world forms a new sexual identity for Mashiro as a woman.

3.3. Sexual Identity Reconstruction in Real Life

The sex of a man is divided into three parts: chromosomal sex, gonadal sex, and phenotypic sex. Chromosomal sex is determined by the chromosomes contained within the individual, whether XX (female) or XY (male). Gonadal sex is determined by the type of gonad possessed by the individual, whether they have female gonads, which include a uterus, ovary, and fallopian tube, or male gonads, which include a prostate gland, vas deferens, and testes (Artaria, 2007: 246)

Meanwhile, phenotypic sex is determined by the outer appearance of the individual, including the external genitalia, which are the penis for males and the vagina and labia majora for females. If someone has male sex chromosomes, then gonadal sex and phenotypic sex should also be male (Artaria, 2007: 247). However, this does not always happen, sometimes leading to quite

a tricky problem when determining the sex of an individual. One of the causes is an "imbalance" in the formation process at the chromosomal, gonadal, or phenotypic levels. The imbalance that occurs at the chromosomal level may be due to mutations or failures in separation, resulting in X, XXX, XXY, or XXXY chromosomes instead of XX or XY (Artaria, 2007: 248).

M. R. Cumming (1994:130-132) in his book titled *Human Heredity: Principal Issues* mentions several conditions that can be considered as consequences of difficult-to-determine phenotype imbalances, including: (1) Klinefelter's Syndrome, (2) Turner's Syndrome, (3) Congenital Adrenal Hypoplasia, (4) Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome, (5) Partial AIS, (6) Mayer-Rokitansky-Kuster-Hauser (MRKH), (7) Cloacal Exstrophy, and (8) Hypospadias.

In the comic '*Houkago Hokenshitsu*', despite being aware of having a body condition that differs from humans in general (being male from the waist up and female from the waist down), the main character (DSD) has a conviction within himself that he is growing up as a male individual. Born with a vagina and experiencing issues in the breast development process, this character's condition is referred to as Congenital Adrenal Hypoplasia with Hypomastia syndrome.

Congenital Adrenal Hypoplasia Hypomastia in medical science is a term given to individuals who are born with female sex (clearly) but experience issues with breast development. Furthermore, Hypomastia is described as a condition where one or both breasts never mature or grow as they should. This condition of Hypomastia can affect the emotional state of the sufferers, so it is not uncommon for medical interventions to be performed to make the breast shape more harmonious with the overall body (Artaria, 2007: 259). Information regarding the main character's body condition in the comic can be seen in the following image:



Figure 3. Potrait body of DSD character (Mizushiro, Volume 1, 2014: 10)

3.4. Gender Identity *In-Between*

Someone's gender identity is highly personal and develops around the age of 3-4 years old when their gender awareness first emerges about whether they are male or female (Butler, 1999: 43). According to Butler, a subject can actively demonstrate performativity, which then determines their gender identity. Butler argues that all genders are a formation of 'becomings' or imitations that do not explain the authenticity or even the natural condition of a subject. There is no such thing as an original form of gender because what remains is its influence; what truly matters is the performativity that shows an individual continuously and obediently engaging in a connection to consistently display their gender identity (Alimi, 2011: 74). This search for gender identity continues to evolve both physically, psychologically, and eventually socially.

The search for gender identity is also experienced by characters with Disorder of Sex Development after experiencing dreams that cause anxiety, hesitation, and questioning of their gender identity to be demonstrated in real life, either as individuals or as part of the community. Although in real life, this person still chooses to use men's clothing to display the gender they want to maintain, their attitude and disposition show

characteristics opposite to those typically associated with men. The process of demonstrating their new gender identity finally reached its peak when the character initially decided to dress like a woman to show to Sou's character.

However, their initial appearance as a woman was revealed to another character, Kurosaki (a senior member of the kendo club). Despite their gender identity as a woman being exposed to other characters, this character does not resist denial, but acknowledges their gender identity as a woman.



Figure 4. Mashiro admitted herself to Kurosaki as a woman (Mizushiro, Volume 7, 2014: 106)

Kurosaki: *Ore wa kawaii to omou yo? Totemo*

Kurosaki: In my opinion, you look cute, you know? Very

Gender identity is not artificial from the beginning, just like human sex. Gender identity naturally forms through the attitudes and behaviors displayed in everyday life. A man may be considered to have a female gender if the attitudes consistently displayed in everyday life are more feminine (Weeks, 2011). Conversely, a woman may be considered to have a male gender if masculine attitudes are more prominent in everyday life. Thus, the gender identity displayed will influence our

gender social role as individuals and as members of the community.

3.5. Gender Social Roles

Being male or female is also influenced by the societal expectations regarding men and women. Certain cultures, families, and societies have specific expectations for the roles of men and women. Gender roles are cultural constructs that delineate the expectations for men and women in societal interactions (Weeks, 2010). Male and female attributes are considered status symbols. Men are recognized for their masculine traits, while women are recognized for their feminine traits. Women are perceived as graceful, slender, and gentle, while men are seen as strong, courageous, and assertive. (Butler, 1999: 102).

According to Japanese folk ideologies of gender, masculinity is constructed in complementary contrast to femininity in a discourse that naturalizes gender roles and attributes. It is believed that men excel in certain domains, such as the public social world (*shakai*) and work, while women excel in others, such as the domestic sphere (*katei*) of the household and family (Suzuki, 2006). The main character in the comic initially believes in fulfilling a masculine role. His masculinity, demonstrated through interactions with other characters, especially female ones, seems pivotal. However, this perception shifts over time. After forming a profound relationship with the male character Sou, the main character's masculine role evolves. Whenever interacting with Sou, his feminine side emerges. Such shifts in gender roles may also influence one's sexual orientation.

3.6. Sexual Orientation: Yuri and Yaoi

The American Psychological Association (2008) defines sexual orientation as a lasting emotional and sexual attraction toward others, regardless of gender—whether male, female, or both.

Generally, discussions about sexual orientation revolve around three main categories: heterosexual, homosexual, and bisexual.

Heterosexuality refers to an inclination for emotional and romantic attraction, as well as sexual activity, with individuals of a different gender. This involves engaging in sexual activities with people of the opposite sex, such as males with females or vice versa. On the other hand, homosexuality involves an emotional and romantic attraction, as well as sexual activity, with individuals of the same sex. This includes relationships between men, known as gay relationships, or between women, known as lesbian relationships. Additionally, bisexuality describes an inclination for emotional and romantic attraction, as well as sexual activity, with both men and women. Thus, bisexuality occupies a position between heterosexual and homosexual tendencies.



Figure 5. The main character engages in sexual relations with both men and women (Mizushiro, Volume 5 and 10, 2014; 95, 150)

The main character in the *Houkago Hokenshitsu* comic is depicted as having a homosexual sexual orientation, as clarified by the author through the images presented in the comic. The depicted sexual relationships involving the main character

vary: one is with Kureha, aimed at affirming his identity as a man, while the other, depicted in the image to the right, involves a male partner. These male relationships serve as a manifestation of the protagonist's exploration of a new sexual identity within the realm of dreams. In Japanese culture, the sexual relations depicted between two women are referred to as *Yuri*, while those between two men are known as *Yaoi*.

Maser (2013: 1) in his dissertation entitled "Beautiful and Innocent Female Same-Sex Intimacy in the Japanese *Yuri* Genre" explains that *Yuri* literally means white lily, symbolizing purity and idealized women. The concept of *Yuri* as a white lily was further developed as an antonym of Rose, which was a symbol of homosexual men in the 1970s (Ishida in Maser, 2013: 4). Later, the understanding of *Yuri* was adopted as female same-sex intimacy, intimate relationships between women.

Yaoi is a genre of publication originating from Japan and often includes manga, doujinshi, anime, and fan art. In the 1980s, *Yaoi* became synonymous with M/M (Male X Male), parodying popular manga and animated characters with gay relationships and sometimes depicting explicit violence and sex (Wilson, 2003: 94). *Yaoi* is an abbreviation of the Japanese phrase 「ヤマなし、オチなし、意味なし」 which, when translated, forms the phrase "yama nashi, ochi nashi, imi nashi" and is often translated as "no climax, no point, no meaning." This term refers to stories about male sexuality (Youssef, 2004: 56).

4. Conclusion

Issues regarding DSD have been widely discussed by the some author in their works. This is inseparable from the broader societal view that DSD is a disease or deviation that can disrupt the binary gender balance. However, for a person with a DSD condition, certainty about their gender might only be discovered after they reach

adulthood, as depicted in the comic "Houkago Hokenshitsu."

Mashiro, as one of the characters suffering from DSD, cannot escape the constraints of societal norms that dictate the display of gender identity. Mashiro's uncertainty about not knowing that she is actually a woman forces her to face a reality she does not want to believe. Mashiro tries to maintain her belief in her gender by having relationships with both men and women. As a result, Mashiro feels that her female gender is stronger than the male gender she has believed in all this time. Additionally, with the help of the school doctor who already knows Mashiro's true identity and through the dream program Mashiro undergoes to confirm her gender identity, it is concluded that the unconscious also has a significant impact on determining a person's gender identity.

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