

# Rose Hall's White Witch: The legend of Annie Palmer (2006) by Mike Henry

<sup>1</sup>Manar Mohammed chyad

<sup>1</sup>AL-Nisour University College, [Manar.m.english@nuc.edu.iq](mailto:Manar.m.english@nuc.edu.iq)

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## Abstract

This paper explores some of the most notable strategies and rhetorical devices, used in writing the novel, Rose hall's white witch: the legend of Annie Palmer. The implications of the concepts and theories used in bringing out the context of the paper and what they truly reflect. For example, the author of this novel, Mike Henry, used superstitions and magic to reflect the overall witchcraft power of the main character. The main character has been portrayed as a powerful witch whose Obeah power can't be leveled up by anyone within the paper context. Therefore, such a concept reflects the true characters of Annie Palmer and the reason for her authoritative position and power in the book. What's more, the author has used the theory of a roaming spirit to showcase a reflection of the main character's potential even after death. She is evident as the most powerful character during her time, and even at death, she is still in control. She is seen at her bedroom balcony and also riding her horse while taking care of the plantation and its inhabitants even after her death. Therefore, the use of such theories and strategies vividly brings out a clear reflection of the ideal nature of a character and, at the same time, makes the piece easy to relate with and exciting.

**Keywords:** Women, Obeah, Love, Annie Palmer

## INTRODUCTION

Behind the beautiful façade of the rose hall great house, lurks a frightening secrete that leaves many people both scared and curious at the same time. Everyone wants to get the bottom of the stories that surround the existence of this building regardless of how breathtaking they are. The building is believed to accommodate the spirit of Annie Palmer, who died not as a result of Mother Nature but engineered by a human; Takoo, her slave, and a lover (Henry, 2006). It is believed that the spirit of a killed human being more so that of someone who could cast a spell during her living days can be very scary; and, Annie's is not contrary. However, before reviewing her spirit, she lived a great life, and during her days of life, she encountered a lot of things that

bring about several themes and theories. Therefore, this article focuses on the concepts, strategies, and theories used by the author to make the novel ideal and interesting, and, most importantly, their reflection in bringing out the context of the book.

Rose hall White Witch: the legend of Annie Palmer novel presents history sugar-coated with fiction to interestingly bring different themes and theories that surround the context of the situation. The story unfolds with the identity of the main character, Annie Palmer, who has roots from England and familiarity with both Jamaica and Haiti. Haiti is widely considered a land of Voodoo, and it's, not a coincidence; there's where Annie Palmer is believed to have learned Voodoo from a nanny who was taking care of her after the death of

her parents. She became a grown woman, and at the age of 18, she considered a move to Jamaica. While there, she learned of the death of the luxurious plantation house, Rose Hall great house's wife, and used her magic powers to confuse the owner John Palmer to marry her. After her marriage, there's when the hell broke loose and different themes, for example, love, jealousy, and feminism started to manifest.

### **The power of love**

What's more, the novel dwells much on the theme of love more so during the living time of the main character Annie Palmer. The author has used magic and superstition to bring out a clear reflection of the supernatural struggles that Annie cast to the people who stood on her way towards the pursuit of what she wants. First and foremost, the Haiti witchcraft stereotype has been used to showcase Annie's wizard potential (Henry, 2006). Since she was taught Voodoo from Haiti, many people fear her might, and she used her ability to scare any individual who intends to stand on her way to pursuing something meaningful to herself. She used obeah to terrify her love rivals and secure her love portion on the people she loved. For example, when her lover Rutherford started falling in love with Millie, she had no other choice but to cast a spell on her and end the relationship (Mike Henry, 2016). She thus summoned a devilish three-legged horse and a blood sacking hag to scare Millie to death. Also, it is believed that Annie had the potential of casting a spell that would make an individual have imagined apparitions to mesmerize him or her to cease from taking what's hers. Therefore, the author of this piece managed to use magic and superstition potential to reflect what Annie was capable of doing to an individual messing with her peace.

Moreover, the author of this piece of work used the theory of roaming spirit to bring out clearly the manifestation of the theme of love. For example, after the death of the main character; Annie Palmer, the slaves thought they were now free to enjoy life beyond the plantation, but they were wrong. Annie had a strong love

for power and authority over the plantation both in life and when dead. Her spirit was still walking in the house and lurked around the plantation circumference while riding on a horse trying to look for runaway slaves. She used her witch power beyond her grave to ensure she still had the authority over the firm and keeps control of some of the things happening within the plantation. Her love for authority over the slave manifests itself even after death, whereby she could still terrify the slaves who were trying to escape or those already out of the firm to go back. It is believed that any slaves who would try running away will encounter frightening voices, hear footsteps and also bloodstains compelling them to refrain and stay back at the plantation (Mutz, 2018). Therefore, the theory of roaming spirit reflects the witchcraft might and the love for control and authority of Annie even at death.

He who finds a lover finds a good thing; however, to Annie that was contrary. Since Annie's had no lasting love for the people that came her way, killing was the only way of terminating the relationship to pave the way for someone else. The author used Annie's unsuitable love to reflect the fate of the people who fell in love with her (Henry, 2006). For example, it means that once Annie has selected you as a lover, you should have in mind that you'll enjoy for sometimes as you prepare for your soon to come death. She had three husbands whose fate ended by death because Annie didn't find them interesting anymore. She was ruthless and heartless when dealing with slaves and their children. Therefore, once she chose a slave as her lover, ostensibly was an avenue of relief to the chosen one. However, the fate of such a relationship ended badly and by death of the latter. Therefore, the Mike Henry used love, romance and death to reflect the fate of any slave that fall on the main character's love radar.

Nevertheless, the insatiable love spirit made Annie find it hard to settle down with the legal husbands, hence was compel to pursue freedom and the power to control. Thus, she would fall in love with several other slaves at the back of her husband. The day John Palmer realized that his wife was cheating, he was compelled to act

by striking Annie with a riding crop. The next day, he did not make it, Annie poisoned him to become the overall in charge of the plantation. She remarried twice and ended up killing the two husbands and continued the act of killing on her slave lovers. On the other hand, the killing of the husbands and slaves who were once her lovers can be as a result of jealousy. In a way, she couldn't handle the idea of letting someone who was once her lover to be taken freely by other women. Therefore, Mike Henry used Annie's difficult to impress love spirit to reflect on the cruelty she orchestrates to her lovers and also showcase the fate that befalls those she falls in love with.

### **Women power**

Conversely, the author has used the power to manipulate and kill as a reflection of Annie Palmer's feminist tool towards the pursuit of freedom and equity. For example, John Palmer realizes that Annie has been cheating behind his back by slaves (Henry, 2006). Infidelity hurts, but the act of cheating with a slave makes it even worse, something that wasn't easy for John Palmer. Hence, forced to crack the whip on Annie. However, on the other hand, Annie was not hurt by the stroke of the riding crop used on her by her husband but by the idea that her freedom to love a slave was about to come to an end. Therefore, the only way to fight for her freedom was to eliminate her husband, and that's when she chose to kill Mr. Palma than to live with regulated freedom of choice.

Moreover, the context of the novel takes place at a time when control of the family property was stereotyped as men's responsibility. Something that Annie wanted so bad, more so when it comes to controlling slaves. In as much as Annie wanted to control the slaves and use them as her property, that wouldn't be an easy task in the presence of her husband. Therefore, by killing him, Annie would end up with full control of the plantation and slaves, and on top of it, the freedom to do whatever she wants at the firm. Besides, Annie had become very tough on slaves and used some as her lovers for

her gain and end up killing all of them. Therefore, the author managed to give a reflection of death and manipulation as a tool the main character used in her quest for change, freedom, and equal responsibility to control a property.

After the death of Annie, the slave felt like it was the ideal time to acquire their independence, but that wasn't even close to happening (Motz, 2018). Her spirit wouldn't let them have anything for their own, and Annie would still be in control of the plantation. Her spirit was let loose by the botched Voodoo that was supposed to keep her closed in her tomb forever. Now her spirit was out and was in control of the property. She could be seen riding her horse going around the plantation, making sure everything was okay just like she used to do when she was alive. Also, sometimes, she could be seen standing on her bedroom balcony by her slaves. The bedroom balcony has a frightening history that none of the slaves would try to relate to or encounter (Nordhus, 2020). Every morning, she used to take to her bedroom balcony to witness the torture slaves who were reluctant to be submissive to her. Therefore, the presence of her spirit on the balcony spreads a quiver of fear to the slaves and in return, remains submissive to her even in death.

Also, the context of the novel takes place during slavery, and the acquisition of thousands of slaves and a plantation was a great sign of wealth. After the death of her husband John Palmer, all the wealth was under her control. She owned over 2000 slaves and the great Rose hall plantation meaning she was wealthy (Motz, 2018). However, to keep control of everything that happens within the plantation border, she depended on Voodoo the black magic as a means of carrying out her desires and effortlessly have the full control of the plantation. Therefore, she used magic to manipulate people that come her way, ranging from husbands to the slaves, which made it easy controlling the large plantation and its inhabitants.

## Conclusion

Therefore, Mike Henry; the author of this piece, has managed to use different theories, strategies and concepts to bring out the actual feeling of the situation in the novel context. For example, the author has used superstitions and magic to showcase the obeah might of the main character, both when living and dead. Her potential with Witchcraft was very scary that almost everybody who knew Annie feared her so much (Black, 2016). However, she was finally killed by her slave lover; Takoo, and the incomplete Voodoo orchestrated to prevent her spirit from haunting the surrounding was invoked. Her spirit could be seen lurking around the plantation standing on the balcony or riding her horse, something that is undeniably terrifying. Besides, the theory of roaming spirit has been used to reflect the desire for power, frighten and remain in control even after death. Thus, the strategies used in this novel reflects the main character; Annie Palmer's characteristic that is surrounded by the themes of love, power and also feminism, among others.

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