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PSYCHIC STRUGGLE IN MISS PRYM IN PAULO COELHO'S *THE DEVIL & MISS PRYM*

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Abstract:-The present paper identifies the woman who holds the titular role in the novel and places her in a new light where the psychic transformations are observed and experienced by the society. This critical analysis also emphasizes the importance of the partaking role of women in the society in making the right choice. The social canon of equating women with tranquility is reworked by the self realization achieved by female protagonist of this present novel. This study with the application of psychoanalysis creates new dimensions by making the psychoanalytical theory more sociable and by bringing the novel into a new perception. In this novel the female character under study strongly cling on to her impulses and claims self realization.

Keywords: Psychic Struggle , Miss Prym , Paulo Coelho's .

INTRODUCTION

The novel *The Devil and Miss Prym* revolves around the conflict between good and evil which actually served as its main theme. It tackles one of the most frequently asked questions in our lives as human beings – are we naturally good or evil? It gives emphasis on the role of the decisions and choices we make and take in order to arrive in the conclusion that we seek. Underlying the broad theme of good and evil, the author uses temptation as the means to bring about spur of events which leads the characters to the main conclusion of the story; good and evil both resides within us and the only thing that matters is how are we going to manage them and maintain balance.

Psychic Struggle in Miss Prym

The psychic struggle of Pilar is delineated with the outlining of psychoanalytic theory based on the tripartite model of mind devised by Sigmund Freud giving special thrust on the interplay of the conscious and the unconscious mind of the leading character. The novel *The Devil and Miss Prym* revolves around the title character Prym who was tempted by the devil to choose between good and evil. She was thinking in terms of pleasure principle which switched continuously between the angles and demons in her mind and she ultimately wins over the demon and helps the community also to win over the temptation restoring the moral code.

According to Freud, transition from the pleasure principle (id) to the reality principle (ego) and morality principle (superego) is the most important progress in the process of the evolution of personality, where the id will inevitable bow to the reality and morality to achieve a balance of personality. As with the generally conceived notion of human mind, moving from the id to superego, the main character Prym chooses to bring forth her superego. Through this novel Coelho offers the reader the self realization of the main character as the vision of life attained through suffering and

struggle.

Psychoanalytic reading is a literary approach where critics see the text as if it were a kind of dream where the text represses its latent content behind manifest content. Here, the critic analyzes the language and symbolism of a text to reverse the process of the work and arrive at the underlying latent thoughts. Psychoanalytic criticism argues that the mysteries in the literary texts, like dream, express the secret unconscious desires and anxieties of the author or sometimes of the characters. we get the glimpses of the same while Pym narrates her dream:

Occasionally it crossed her mind that the Celts, the ancient inhabitants of her region, might have hidden an amazing cache of treasure there, which one day she would find. Of all her dreams, that had been the most absurd, the most unlikely (The Devil and Miss Pym 27).

Such instances shed light to the intricate mental musings of that character, which helps one to psychoanalyse a particular character within a literary work. The most important part of psychoanalysis is the concept of the unconscious mind as a reservoir for repressed memories of traumatic events which continuously give effect on conscious thought and behavior.

In the work Ego and Id, Freud complemented his early psychological structure theory and put forth the theory of personality structure in which he divided human's personality structure into three layers: id, ego and super ego.

Id is the source of human's enthusiasm, inherited instincts, desires and habits. Instead of being restrained by all exterior elements such as logic, reason and social conventions id is dominated by natural law and physiological law. Id performs the first principle of life, i.e. the pleasure principle. When Pym thinks of running away with gold bar, it is the id that leads her. The instinctual drives of the id are regulated by the rational ego. Ego suppresses id in accordance with the demands of the society to achieve a result of taking advantages and eliminating disadvantages. If id includes a destructive element the ego interferes and makes the behavioral patterns non destructive. As Guerin states, ego serves as *intermediary between the world within and world without* (157). Super ego is the moralized ego and its major function is to instruct ego in oppressing impulsion of id and correct behaviours deviating moral criterion. Super ego employs conscience and moral imperative to restrain id and administrate ego for maintaining social stability. Id, ego and superego are always in constant interaction and hence it is difficult to isolate or separate each other. Super-ego instructs ego to try its best to restrict the impulse of id. The dreams of an individual's existence forgo the lawless id and balances on super ego by confirming oneself with the law of the society. As Pym balances:

"it would all end badly: the gold bar would be confiscated until the courts had resolved the matter; she would get another lift back to Viscos, where she would be humiliated, ruined, the target of gossip that would take more than generation to die down. Later on, she would discover that lawsuits never got anywhere, that lawyers cost much more than she could possibly afford, and she would end up abandoning the case. The net result: no gold and no reputation. (The Devil and Miss Pym 28)"

Thus the superego represses all the untamed passions of the psyche and the inherent pleasure principle remains latent.

It should be mentioned that, although Freud's tripartite personality structure theory and all of his psychological analysis theories have not been prove completely, the widely reconginzed marvelous theories could reveal all connotations of human's psychosocial behaviours correctly in some degree. Thus it is helpful for us to grasp all behaviours and psychological activities of characters in detail (Zhu and Bao, 2558). The application of psychoanalytic theory based on the tripartite model of mind devised by Freud is investigated in this study giving special thrust on the interplay of the conscious and the unconscious mind of the main character Miss Pym.

The Devil and Miss Pym recounts the struggle between good and evil, an age old concept, which Coelho offered through Viscos making it the microcosm of the world and the emotions, strong and weak, present among the villagers represents the destiny of humanity. The novel is subtitled as A Novel of Temptation. But unlike other works, this novel presents only the temptation without resolving it. a choice between good and bad is set in front of the readers but no definite answer is given. The readers are left with the freedom to make the choice of heaven or hell for themselves. The author has fininshed the task by making the reader realize that everyone is capable of both. There is saint and demon residing in all of us. Whom one wants to keep under control is what makes the

difference, that is to make the right choice. As Coelho states in the novel:

Savin and Ahab had the same instincts – Good and Evil struggled in both of them, just as they did in every soul on the face of the earth. When Ahab realized that Savin was the same as him, he realized too that he was the same as Savin.

It was all a matter of control. And choice nothing more and nothing less. (The Devil and Miss Prym 135)

The struggle initially takes place between good and bad, light and darkness and finally it turns out to be once between the society and the individual. A stranger comes to Viscos with the aim of finding out whether humanity is left with any goodness. He suffered many setbacks in his previous life in which he even lost his family and dear children. The fight between good and evil takes place within his soul also as he has not lost complete faith from goodness. He calls himself Carlos and at Viscos he meets the barmaid Miss Chantal Prym, who has high ambitions about life. He shows to her one gold bar kept hidden in the forest and offered that he would give similar eleven gold bars to the villagers if they commit a murder within a week. She was selected as a messenger to convey this offer to the people of Viscos. At first she caused delay in this plan, and finally informs the people about the fortune awaiting them. The society was immediately taken away by the offer and after much debate they reach to the conclusion of executing the murder selecting Bertha an old woman whom they think invalid for the village. Temptation offered to the community justifies their action. In a society virtue consists in adjusting the herd and vice is to the contrary but Prym acted bravely against the decision of the society which could have changed the fortune of Viscos. The Superego, as Freud said, is the representative of all moral restrictions and the advocate of impulse towards perfection, which forced Prym to interfere and convince the villagers about the fate that awaits them. She is able to regenerate the goodness in the minds of the people and the social construction was shattered by the interference of an individual soul firmly adhered to the morality principle (superego). The people of Viscos were looking for the betterment of situations at their village that was inverted by Prym's interference. The transformation of a soul from id to superego is forcefully transferred to the society replacing the common interest restoring the moral code.

CONCLUSION

The Devil and Miss Prym throws light on the innate nature of human beings; in fact it deals with the question: Are human beings essentially good or evil? Coelho correctly refers to the story of Adam and Eve which demonstrates man as an instrument of evil. The dilemma Chantal faced in the story revolved around the choice between giving into the temptation or to fight against it. If she chose to give into temptation, she can secure her dream to leave Viscos and explore the world but this will compromise her belief that we human beings are not evil in essence.

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