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MISS PRYM'S PSYCHOLOGICAL JOURNEY TOWARDS CHOOSING THE RIGHT PATH

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ABSTRACT

The present research paper focuses on Miss Pym's journey towards choosing the right path, through psychoanalytical approach. In human beings, both, good and evil exist equally; we have to make our own choice, as Miss Pym has to face many crises to choose the right path, when tempted by an evil. Her psychological journey is carefully investigated in the present research paper. For this purpose Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytical approach is applied and the result is that all the layers of Miss Pym's mind are unveiled.

Key words: Psychoanalytical approach, good and evil, crisis, journey.

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INTRODUCTION

Paulo Coelho (1947), a Brazilian writer, is one of the world's most widely read authors whose works have been translated in more than seventy languages. His novels deal with common problems faced by common men, but the way he handles these problems is mind blowing. His language is simple but it leaves a lifelong enchanting impact on millions of people.

The thrust of the present research paper is to revisit Paulo Coelho's novel "Devil and Miss Pym" psychoanalytically.

Background to the study

Psychoanalysis, primarily, was not in literary practice but it was purely clinical. Later on it was applied to literature. Basically psychoanalysis deals with the PSYCHE. Shakespeare tried to expose the minds of his characters in the form of Soliloquies so we can say that Shakespeare may be the first author to enter the minds of his characters. At that time Shakespeare did not know about the theories of psychoanalysis. It was Sigmund Freud who dared to analyze human psyche. As Felman says, "We normally tend to see psychoanalysis as the active

practice performed upon the passive texts." He also states that "psychoanalysis of literature creates a power struggle and so there are multiple meanings."

Sigmund Freud's Psycho analysis

Sigmund Freud's Psycho analysis is based on three important layers of mind as id- ego-super ego. Id is source of desires for pleasure. There are enumerable desires and these are without control. Id is unorganized part of our mind. It is present from our birth. According to Freud a newborn child is Idridden, he doesn't know about values, morals, difference between good and evil etc.. Id is full of passions striving to satisfy instincts for pleasure. Ego is rational. It controls id. It acts according to reality principle. It is aware of grief. Ego is an organized part, it is our conscious awareness. It balances between real and possible. Above all is super ego. Superego watches ego's moves and wherever necessary punishes it, with the feeling of guilt anxiety and inferiority. It is our conscience. It is internalization of cultural rules. It is representative of all restrictions like social, national, moral, personal etc. super ego governs our minds.

According to Freud, our mind's mechanism

is very critical because all the wishes are ultimately centered upon the libido (sexual desire). Many of our wishes remain unfulfilled. Such suppressed wishes go deep in our unconscious mind, they are suppressed there and our conscious mind, though aware of all the wishes, tries to control it. Above it there is the conscience which molds us according to society and culture. So we cannot behave according to our mind. Our behavior is controlled by powerful social taboos.

Research Method

It is a descriptive, qualitative study based on primary and secondary sources. Its primary source is the novel 'Devil and Miss Pym' by Paulo Coelho translated by Amanda Hopkinson and Nick Caistor. For secondary sources the critical theory books and internet sources are utilized. The data is in the form of words, sentences, quotations etc. The data is classified and then organized carefully to enhance the semantic quality of the proposed researchwork.

Discussion

The society, the remote village of Viscos, in which the novel "Devil and Miss Pym" takes place, is an ideal society, a pure social set up with good human beings, who are living happily without any problems. In such a society the entry of a devil like personality is focused in the very beginning.

"For almost fifteen years old Bertha has spent every day sitting outside the door----- and she saw a stranger" The novel is about a girl, Chantal who is known as Miss Pym and a stranger, the devil. There is no hero. Outwardly Miss Pym seems to be a very innocent, decent, cultured girl doing a job at a hotel (in the same hotel where the devil is about to stay). The devil is not a real devil but a stranger who tempts Miss Pym. The knowledge of evil disturbs her psyche. When Miss Pym was ignorant of the temptation, she was the happiest person, but now there is a challenge for her. The devil puts a proposal as "He will give her gold bars if she commits an evil (a murder)."

It is Paulo Coelho's view that

"I have always believed that in the lives of individuals the profoundest changes take place within a much reduced time frame, when we least expect it, life sets us a challenge to test our courage.

There is no point in pretending that we are not yet ready. The challenge will not wait."-Paulo Coelho.

While investigating Miss Pym's psyche, we have to penetrate deep into her mind i.e. id, ego and superego. She is governed by her super ego that's why she is a cultured girl. She is the only child of her parents. They are no more. She is alone but she is the daughter of the village. She has a typical routine- wake up early-to buy bread from the hawker- go to hotel- return back home and go to bed. There is no change in her life. As she is tired there are no dreams, in fact she is aware of the fact that she has to live there and die there and there won't be any miracle.

Her meeting with the devil creates greed in her mind. We are told in various ways how greed affects human minds, but still our mind is greedy, the more we discard some thought from our mind the more it enters deep in our mind. So she is longing for pleasure She is trying to remove the thought of committing the murder but her inner mind is engaged in deep thinking----- to dare to commit a murder----- may I?--- should I? Can I? Every time the answer comes NO! In this way the inner struggle starts. Her unconscious mind which is full of her unfulfilled wishes becomes positive, her dream may be realized. According to Freud, all the unfulfilled wishes go deep in our unconscious mind and get fulfilled in the form of dreams. When Miss Pym starts thinking about her life, all the thoughts that she has tried to suppress come one by one. She can visualize her unfulfilled wishes. The wish..... to have a handsome husband, to be rich, to be famous, to be beautiful.....

But she tries to suppress these thoughts again and again. The psychoanalytical process relies on understanding repression. The more you suppress, the more it sticks deep into your mind. It does not give access to unconscious but it recognizes symptoms in the form of dreams, illusion, hallucination etc. Miss Pym also comes across many illusions. Sometimes she can see her future, her husband, her glamour. She starts longing for the better life and realizing the foul of present life. She is continuously returning to her unconsciousness where she can visualize her dreams of better life.

The form in which the unconscious makes itself known is radically modified and deliberately disguised. The traumas are very painful. The unconscious acts as protective mechanism to prevent the subject's realization of these agonies. Freud states that in our dream, the process that the repressed desire undergoes is called dream work. A dream works to transform the repressed forbidden thoughts or desires into their manifestations. The manifest elements are what a dreamer remembers in the form of a slip of tongue, hysteric crime etc. Miss Pym is unable to control herself and her desires, her ego fails in balancing her passions and the morals. Her id overcomes her ego and she goes one step ahead. She starts thinking positively about committing a crime- to commit a murder. She is ready to neglect all the morals, values of society and decides to become evil. For that she chooses Bertha, an old lady of eighty. Bertha is very near to death; Miss Pym is almost at the stage of committing the murder of Bertha..... but her superego opposes her, it is still governed by moral and values. Her psyche is still in the control of her superego. Though her ego and id confuses her, the superego balances the situation and at last she decides to be with the good and the evil is lost.- as Paulo Coelho says " In our mind good and evil exist together, they struggle continuously in every soul, it is all about the choice; nothing more and nothing less; one has to make a choice"... and Miss Pym makes her choice. She wins her emotions and frees herself from all the confusions, dilemmas, longings etc. She firmly believes in God and the way he has given her to live.

In this way outwardly it seems that Miss Pym, when tempted by devil for gold, is a very cultured girl who has firm faith in values of morality and so she discards the temptation. But the psychological journey from the point when she is tempted and her last decision has many layers and with the help of psychoanalysis, we have tried to focus upon her mental journey which leads her to take a firm decision. As Paulo Coelho believes "There is struggle between light and darkness, the story of Devil and Miss Pym charged with emotions in which integrity of Being Human meets a terrifying test."

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