

A Freudian Psychoanalytic Study of K. A. Abbas's "Sparrows" and "Three Women"

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Abstract

The Freudian psychoanalytic theory engages several topics of human psychology and behavioral sciences, narrowing down the topic Tennyson's fixations of Freud's theory are studied to conduct the specific study. This paper contains two short stories of K. A. Abbas "Sparrows" and "Three Women's" textual analysis using Freud's theory of personality and supporting it with Tennyson's model to specify. "Rahim Khan" and "The Three Women" from these stories are analyzed with respect to their past traumas and psychological functions of the brain. The main focus of the theory for the text employs the ideas of id, ego, super-ego, suppression, oppression, conscious, sub-conscious, unconscious and catharsis etc. The behaviors of the concerned characters are studied and analyzed on the basis of their speech, actions and events related to them. The analysis is concluded in a sense that gives satisfied justifications to the research objectives. This research is done manually considering the research gap after a thorough literature review.

Key Words: *psychoanalysis, oppression, suppression, violence, trauma, id, ego, super-ego, Sparrows, Three women, Freudian psychoanalysis*

1. Background of the Study

Sigmund Freud the founder of modern psychiatry provides the opportunity to analyze the literary characters through the application of his psychoanalytic theory. In psychology, he puts forward the theory that the outcome of the inconsistency between id, ego and superego results in conflict. In order to form a healthy personality, one should balance his id, ego and superego. Repression happens as a result of this inconsistency. When one of these three parts of human psyche outweighs the other, one resorts to repress desires or past memories rather than articulating them. The aim of this paper is to analyze the main characters of K. A. Abbas's "Sparrow's and Three Women" from a Freudian psychoanalytic position revealing how these characters' lives and personalities have been affected by their id, ego and super-ego. A detailed psychoanalytic analysis of The Scarlet Letter provides knowledge about psychological states of the central characters. These characters and their actions are intended to be analyzed in relation to the Freudian concept of id, ego and superego. The effects of id, ego and superego on their personalities are discussed

during the analysis of the main characters of the novel by making references to their repressed childhood and past memories.

The generalized phenomenon of the psychoanalytical theory by Sigmund Freud which revolves around the belief is that the unconscious is one of the most influencing aspects for the human mind. Freud assumes that human beings possess a number of unconscious thoughts, emotional drawbacks and urges which most often tend to be unpleasant even evil that influence individually their words, actions, attitudes and collectively their behaviors. In accordance with Freud's theory the human mind consists of three parts:

The part which employs human desires, wants organic needs, impulses mostly the sexual and aggressive ones is called id. It concerns no judgments of values of good, bad, moral or evil. The actions governed by id are often spontaneous and without much consideration. Ego is the organized intellect of the human mind. It may-be understood as the system which tends to fulfill what id derives in a realistic manner. Ego employs defensiveness, perception and cognitive functions of the intellect. Super-ego determines perfection. It reflects the social or cultural values that maybe are developed through parental views and actions, and social activity. Super-ego is the mental abstract that builds the organized blocks of human personality. It is also referred as the psychic institution or spiritual determination that negates human fantasies, feelings and actions as it proves to deny what a person precept as immoral by punishing the being through the sense of guilt.

They are the abstract constructs that guide the mental activity in human brain. The latent phenomenon according to the Freudian theory is that the unconscious always matters and plays a part in whatever we do that is how most of the times-initiated actions that are unexpected demand explanation which seems not to be understandable. Whenever a person is judged by his immoral and unacceptable actions there is more to the story of causality of that random or particular deed.

The point to consider is Freud doesn't aim to map unconscious wholly, he doesn't tend to derive out every minute thing happening in the mind instead he intends to bring people to their repressed memories and desires to bring both the client and his psychologist to the understanding of what does cause the specific attitudes and how can the paradoxes be solved and moved into betterment. Freud said that, analysis is strictly speaking 'interminable', the unconscious was and would always be a fact of psychic (related to soul as defined in psychology) life. The best-known thing is that Freud himself projected psychoanalytical majors and minors into literature and culture.

Freud considers that our childhood incidents influence our adulthood patterning our personality. This maybe better understood by seeing traumatic experiences originating anxiety. Consequently describing our behavior to ourselves or others during a conscious mental pursuit it is supposed to be atypical to give a true explanation of our motivation. This is not because we are intentionally lying but it's a fact that even if human beings are fine beguilers of others, they are more accommodating at self-deception.

1.1 Objectives

- Understanding past traumas of the concerned characters.
- Mapping out the causes behind their behaviors.

- Understanding the actions and words on the basis of conscious, sub conscious and unconscious mental states.
- Digging out suppression and oppression on the characters.

1.2 Research Questions

1. How can Rahim Khan's actions and words be explained/justified through Freud's theory of psychoanalysis?
2. How is "Three Women" analyzed through Freud's psychoanalytic theory?

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The literature review concluded that the Freudian psychoanalysis of the short stories "Three Women" and "Sparrows" can be considered a research gap as no work has been done on the specific topic before. Both the stories contain characters sketched in a sense that can allow the researcher to dig out their psychological traumas and causes behind their behaviors.

1.4 Aim

This study aims to analyze the behaviors of "Rahim Khan" from "Sparrows" and "The three women" from the story "Three Women" through Tennyson's model of Freud's psychoanalytic theory.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is of global significance as humans have complex behavioral underlying reasons to act in certain ways and patterns that cause unacceptable behaviors and outcomes need to be discussed, studied, and worked upon to get better results and make human life easier and less painful. These stories not only determine the characters as specified to the region or personalities but can be found in any part of the world if their mental health is dealt in similar ways.

2. Literature Review

"A Freudian Psychoanalytic Analysis of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter*" by İSAOĞLU (2015) is the true example of our study as it is based upon the Freudian perspective of psychoanalytic theory which is applied on one the novels called 'Scarlet Letter'. Deeper study of the research evaluates that the researcher on the account of psychoanalysis takes id, ego and super-ego as basic institutions and apply them to the particular character of a girl Hester and others to map out the reasons her behavior. Freud's theory is the best platform to judge someone's abnormal behavior. The study concludes that the three parts id, ego and super-ego does not employ harmony and the contradiction behind the relationship of these three or their existence or not being shown individually cause the mental instability which led to the complexity in the attitudinal development of the character.

In "Psychoanalytic Study of *Lucky Jim*" the psychoanalytical theory is applied to the novel in which the mindset and character of Jim were closely observed. We can conclude that the problems relating to money were affecting his mind as he was always thinking about the savings. His intentional and unintentional thoughts were also examined, and it was revealed that in his sub-consciousness he wished for money and this wish reflected in his thoughts as he always felt bad about his current financial conditions. Psychology of characters and the factors affecting it are

studied. Jim's character is the mixture of ego, super ego and id. On the other hand, id is observed in other characters. In short, we can say that the Psychological aspects were explored and implied on the characters which assisted us to know how mentality works. Mukhopadhyay and Mukherjee (2014) edited that the harassment, rape and killing of the women was considered as one of the crucial social Problem. The female bodies across the borders were the sight of great number of conflicts and contesting claims. The use of female bodies was to show the more supremacy, power and victory over nations. The use of female bodies also symbolizes the gender discrimination, where men were always considered subordinate and above women. Female bodies were not only raped but also made the symbol of brutality, and sites that endorse multiple layers of politics. Violent destruction of female sexual organs, was made in order to stop the further reproduction of the next generation. In the name of honour killing and to save the respect of family, women were always targeted. Either in India, Pakistan, Iraq or Peru, Women were the basics of the cross-border encounters, to maintain victory. Females were never given importance and respect that they deserve. Women abjection was simply the part of the political standards of those times, to mark the triumph, victory and supremacy over nations across the borders.

Khan (2012) in "Subverting the Mother of South Asia, A Description by Way of Prescription" solves two problems, first is that; what is the thing that constitutes South Asian literature and second explains how is that the third world engages Mother as one of the important ideological constructs. This study exposes how the fiction on Pakistan is and Pakistanis is written through the textual analysis of the novels being selected. It also focuses upon how the attitudinal development takes place. Thus we see that in all these texts the idea of the Mother which is so important to the Third World is destabilized in favor of ideals not really relevant and appropriate to its social values.

In "Psychoanalytic Theory used in English Literature: A Descriptive Study" Hossain (2017) told a clear and understood phenomenon of psychoanalytic theory by Sigmund Freud indulging it with all its aspect by writing how is it understood and applied in different conditions. Exemplifying the theory more accurately the study explores it by talking about 'Oedipus Complex' how it develops and is a natural approach to every child, how it mostly stays a part of the unconscious even after having a great influence on the subject's personality. After completely describing Oedipus Complex its features, effects, development and psychoanalytic perspective the study talks about the relationship between literature and psychoanalytic theory about how Freud himself gave much importance to literature and how many others gave their perspectives on psychoanalytic theory including *D.H Lawrence, Albert Camus, Arthur Miller and Walt Whitman*.

2.1 Theoretical framework:

Tennyson's fixations to the Freudian model of psychoanalytic personality theory will be used as a theoretical model to evaluate the analysis of the given short story in this paper. He talks about the specific topics as suppression, repression, distortion of unconscious processes. In the following research paper the aim is to do an individual's psychoanalysis for getting answers to the questions we raised. Different doctors of psychology have given different models for psycho analysis but we notably used 'Freudian theory' in our study. The theory presented by Freud in the psychological

analysis of a human mind consists of different elements to be discussed and worked on to enlighten the realities. The elements used in this study are id, ego, and super-ego plus conscious and unconscious mind.

The personality adds our natural and primary urges such as anger, hunger and hatred. Freud thought of it as something very natural and original in someone; humans take birth with these primeval and natural impulses.

Ego, the second part of the personality depends upon both conscious and unconscious mind where fact lays the explanation for the conflict between instinctual desires and reality. It is one of the most complex parts of the personality, because ego tells what should be done by the individual, which impulses of pleasures offered by the id can be fulfilled and to what degree they can be satisfied.

Super-ego is the last part of the personality. It is certainly about the moral values, ethics of society in which we dwell or what we have been taught by our ancestors. While talking about these three gates in human mind, we may not forget about the most important aspects the conscious and unconscious mind, where sometimes the individual knows about what is happening and sometimes does not. But in the Freudian theory, the three gates and two aspects work side by side as they are closely related. It is the explanation of the theory applied on the specific characters through their actions described and words spoken.

3. Methodology

3.1 Design

Qualitative research design has been used to conduct this study.

3.2 Source of Data

The data has been collected manually by the researcher from the two short stories of K. A Abbas available on the internet.

3.3 Sample

Purposive sampling technique has been used to determine the texts used for textual analysis

4 Textual Analysis

4.1 Analysis of Sparrows

“He knew that his wife would never come back.” (Abbas, 1947)

This line depicts that Rahim Khan has consciousness of what he does to his wife, he understands that what he does is wrong and violating and even a person like his wife, who is when objectified never says a word is also on the edge and can leave him anytime.

“Rahim Khan felt uncomfortable and unhappy. He had always been angry with his wife when she was there, but her absence angered him still more.” (Abbas, 1947)

These lines analyze the idea that Rahim Khan who has always hated his wife and misbehaved to the unacceptable limits has the conscious understanding that he hates her and would never feel her absence but he in his unconscious, knows that she was a big part of his life. Unconsciously he

knows that he needs her for his own catharsis and she is the only one who didn't leave him after his unbearable actions but he in his consciousness, is not ready to accept this fact and wants to think of her as something he hates. The reason to this hate can be interpreted through the mental suppression of Rahim Khan about his choice of marriage. As he could have created the idea that she is the reason to him not marrying Radha, the one he loved. He has always detested his wife because he was forced to marry her by the oppressed orders of his father.

The concern of ego can also be mentioned here, as to how he sub-consciously or unconsciously regrets his wrong actions.

"A cat mewed in a corner. Finding no one else on whom to vent his anger he flung it out, slamming the door with violence." (Abbas, 1947)

Rahim Khan throughout the story is seen as a violent and hateful character, and the story observes that his rage always has a receptor who is specifically his wife, who in this line has left him. According to the Freudian theory, it is understood that the suppressed desires and behaviors cause unintended actions and have their effects. In accordance with this idea Rahim Khan's violence can be known as the effect of his adulthood suppression and oppression of his father and the society. He always finds his submissive wife a victim to that, and knows that she will leave him too, he pours his anger on the cat and the door; which are the only things left for him.

Another point observed here is that he unconsciously knows he did wrong to his wife and he regret his behavior and misses her and that is why he acts out in rage not knowing what to do and also not accepting the fact that he regrets his actions because of how no one regretted their actions while oppressing him.

Id works here at its finest as Rahim Khan doesn't have a control over what he does and he unconsciously could have hurt a living being or broke the door.

"Six years ago, his eldest son Bundu had run away from home because of a more than usually severe beating. Three years later, the younger one, Nuru joined his brother. Since that day, Rahim Khan had felt sure his wife too would run away to her brother's house" (Abbas, 1947)

These lines explain that he is conscious of his brutal acts, or maybe he could have come to this consciousness of his behavior after he saw how his children left him.

"With her gone, on whom could he shower the outpourings of an embittered heart?" (Abbas, 1947)

This line from the text pretty vividly explains how his heart was broken and how the outpourings were because of the psychological trauma he went through in his youth.

"For thirty years his wife had been both the symbol and the target of all his grievances against his family, against society, against life." (Abbas, 1947)

The writer himself explains the mental state of Rahim Khan here that how he unconsciously makes his wife the object for his catharsis of the mental authoritative oppression by his family towards his life choices and free will, against society for implementing norms and stereotypical objections for his personal desires and wills and his life that now had meaning, happiness, love and ambition. All of his purposes to live ended and he could do nothing. Suppression demands

release and his release conscious or unconscious was towards the people he had control over. The point to mention here is that he could not fight against the oppression he faced so unintentionally he made all of those suffer who has control over.

“As a youth there had been none in the village to beat him in feats of athletic skill--in wrestling, in kabaddi in diving from the canal bridge.” (Abbas, 1947)

Another reason to his oppressing and violent behavior can be the fact that having a conscious of a lot of physical strength that he possesses could do nothing in defending his dreams.

“For some time, Rahim Khan, with youthful resentment, toyed with the idea of open rebellion. But the tradition of centuries of serfdom ran in his blood and, however, indignant he might have felt at his father's severity, he could not summon enough courage to defy paternal authority and social traditions.” (Abbas, 1947)

These lines conclude that the id works where he wants to rebel against the social norms and ancestral orders. But his desires are suppressed through forced laws. And super-ego works as he follows the parental orders negating his desires.

“To the Kazi's formal questions Rahim Khan mechanically nodded his head.” (Abbas, 1947)

Rahim Khan's super-ego works here as he marries a girl he doesn't want to because of his father's order. This marriage is neither logically right nor an inborn desire. “Mechanically nodded” describes his unwillingness for the marriage and he does the act mechanically, he has the consciousness of his act but in his unconscious, he does not accept the marriage completely.

“And hadn't he had his revenge? For thirty years he had ill-treated his wife, his children and his bullocks, quarreled with everyone in the village and made himself the most hated person in the community. The thought of being so universally detested gave him grim satisfaction.” (Abbas, 1947)

The catharsis, irrational behavior, rage, violence and all the negative actions of Rahim Khan somehow seem to be his own conscious conduct. These lines justify that whatever he does satisfies him but a psychoanalytic perspective can employ the idea that Rahim Khan's id gets out of control because of suppression and oppression and let him do all those things which he went through one way or another. Satisfying his desire of showing his control over almost everyone and everything is something id works on.

“Rahim Khan sought consolation in the unquestioned authority over his wife which society allowed him.” (Abbas, 1947)

Rahim Khan himself suffered unquestioned authority while deciding for his personal life, marriage, career and many other things. His traumas lead him to exercise the same oppression on his wife who has no power for herself. Rahim Khan accepts the societal norms consciously as these pave way to his catharsis as well as his id gets satisfaction through these actions unconsciously.

“His first impulse was to wreck the nest with one stroke of his pole, but something within him made him desist.” (Abbas, 1947)

Here the id as always wants him to break or violate anything he sees but the super-ego takes over. He doesn't want to break another home now. This also shows his unconscious desire of having a family as his own is now no more united. His unconscious portrays longing for children as the nest has two baby sparrows.

"The two little ones had now grown into fine young birds, and he called them Nuru and Bundu after his lost sons whom he had not seen for several years." (Abbas, 1947)

Throughout the story researcher can see how he hates everyone mostly his family and his sons who left him because of the severe beatings but these lines describe how he unconsciously wants his children back. His super-ego as before takes over him in this old age when he realizes his wrong doings.

"In vain did Rahim Khan shout, 'Why are you running away? I am not going to beat you.'" (Abbas, 1947)

The dialogue elaborates how the abruptly spoken words show his guilt and regret of his actions. The id after all the oppression made him do irrational and unacceptable deeds both consciously and unconsciously but at the end it is ego and super ego that make him take care of the family of sparrows and desire for one of his own.

"Entering his hut, Rahim Khan lighted the earthenware oil lamp and placed some crumbs of bread for the sparrows before he prepared his own dinner. 'O Nuru! O Bundu!' he shouted, ... Rahim Khan took a ladder and went out in the pouring rain to repair the damage." (Abbas, 1947)

Naming the birds after his kids symbolizes his longing for his sons. Moreover the changed behavior, as he does not kick some stray cat or kick the door anymore, is seen as he is doing normal things. Providing food for the sparrows is the unconscious desire of him for his family that he no longer has. Not thinking of himself he goes into the rain to repair the nest is a super-ego act.

4.2 Analysis of "Three Women"

"Then she quickly jumped and started walking between the two parallel tracks. The young woman and the mother when they saw the dreadful look on her face, became distraught with worry. The moment the beggar jumped between the lines, they both jumped right behind her." (Abbas, 1947)

The context to these lines is that there is an old woman, a mother with a baby and a young woman, and the first one jumps in front of the moving train. There seems to be some psychological problem with the old lady as she wants to take her life, the dreadful look on her face shows she is conscious of the danger she is getting herself into. Id works in this situation as the old woman is not in a state to think of right, wrong or morally correct she rather does what her mind says and does not listen to others.

"'What do you want to do?' The mother asked the beggar. But the tone of her voice revealed the uselessness of this question. 'You know very well,' the beggar answered carelessly." (Abbas, 1947)

The description after the questions here reveals, it is possible that all these women are the different personas of the same woman as the text says they know what each other is talking about without saying, it is still a thought which is not yet proved.

This line depicts that both the women and personas have a conscious of what the old woman is about to do. The carelessness of the answer may depict that there is no certain right or wrong in the decision, it is rather a decision which is based upon something not acceptable.

“Am I mad or are you mad that until today you are hoping for justice in this game called life? Why should we stay alive? For me death is a thousand times preferred.” (Abbas, 1947)

These dialogues elaborate that the person here may have suffered in the past and that’s why life for her is not meaningful at all. The woman is conscious of her decision and the decision takes place on the basis of ego, ego that logically discriminates between what’s easier to spend life of death.

“The young woman was not going to give up this easily, ‘But think of my youth? In a woman’s life, there is only this one time! And if one doesn’t enjoy life then...’” (Abbas, 1947)

This is a talk from the younger woman, now we may observe that the old woman before has seen life’s true face so she does not want live anymore, this seems to be an ego act while the young woman works upon id, who wants to fulfill her desires.

“Youth! This very youth which is worth four annas. This very youth, which a brute stole from you with sweet-talk and left you to flounder through life! This very youth, which you are forced to sell every day in the market! Sell to every policeman, every railway man, every drunk and anyone who pressed four annas in your hand! I spit on such youth.” (Abbas, 1947)

These lines from the text show how women are objectified and used, and on the contrary the old woman’s words here are logically justified on the mental functioning basis through id.

“Now it was the turn of the mother. She looked at her child as if gaining strength from him in order to reason with the beggar... No matter how much I may have to suffer.’ Then she desperately held the child to her bosom saying, ‘My little baby! My child.’” (Abbas, 1947)

The mother works with the super-ego phenomenon as she keeps finding things to support her argument, which is not so strong but she still wants to defend her thoughts.

“This little piece of flesh that you clutch to your bosom wherever you go is the living example of the injustice and the violence of society; the root cause of your destruction. What will he do when he grows up?” (Abbas, 1947)

These lines observe the mental consciousness of the old lady, she goes on with the ego concept judging what’s right and wrong on the basis of her experience. She unconsciously portrays the suppression of her past life through this part of the text. As she reveals the truth for having a kid, she actually unconsciously tells how having a kid made her life difficult.

“In the word ‘him,’ there was a lingering tone of affection. While she spoke the word, her eyes were the eyes of a new bride. ‘Don’t say anything about him. He was helpless before his father and mother.’” (Abbas, 1947)

The young woman here talks about a guy who left her to the old woman, and the first point to notice is that here too no one tells the story what happens but the characters know it already. The

other point is that id can be seen working as she is defending her desire to be with the man and to protect him from being accused.

“Was he helpless due to his parents or due to the property? And where did your parents’ love vanish? ... ’ Saying this, the beggar ran towards the oncoming train; the young woman and the mother ran behind to stop her mad race.” (Abbas, 1947)

The old woman talks about the bitter truths again, not considering id or super-ego but talking straightforwardly about the clear realities of life. And now the decision to jump in front of a train is seen to be either from id or ego. But the deeper thought says it’s id because no matter how difficult the life becomes taking one’s life is always wrong

5 Findings

The textual analysis of the short stories finds out the psychological aspects of the actions done and words spoken by the characters.

- The psychoanalysis of the first story evaluates that there is unconscious guilt somewhere in Rahim Khan that he never acknowledges nor does he ever accept but his actions of taking care of the birds, saying the words “I’m not going to hurt you” reveal how he regrets his behavior unconsciously.
- Another fact disclosed through the analysis is Rahim Khan always thinks the violation he creates and beatings and the ill words he speaks is actually what satisfy him but the truth is all these things are a form of catharsis for him in result to the oppression from societal norms and parental pressure.
- The analysis reveals that another reason behind Rahim Khan’s irrational behavior was not having the freedom to express his anger while he had a lot of physical strength, everyone forced him to do things he never wanted and he received orders from people weaker than him physically and had to obey those orders so in return he physically and verbally hurt everyone he had control over till the last stages of his life.
- The second story concludes through the analysis that the three women are actually one woman whose three life stages as different personas have been described.
- The analysis observes that the oldest persona has experienced life more than the other two and understands the bitterness of life.
- Her impulse to die than to live is an id reforming action but her arguments are quite related to the ideas of ego.
- The rest two personas engage into id more than the other two elements and they want to keep their loved ones and live better but the most experienced one knows all of this is in vain.

5.1 Conclusion

The study concludes that the objectives set before are achieved to the finer degrees as the psychological traumas of the characters have been mapped out through the textual analysis. The reasons behind certain behaviors of the characters have been observed and the evaluation has been done relating the events to Freud’s psychoanalytic theory. A few unexpected ideas have also been driven out through the analysis.

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