

Psychoanalytic Study of Abigail's Mind In Arthur Miller's Play "The Crucible"

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Abstract: The present research explores the psychoanalytic study of Abigail's mind in Arthur Miller's play "The Crucible". This drama is about the Salem witch trial of 1692, in North America. As it is clear like daylight that 'Crucible' is a container in which we melt the things to purify the purity of the people. This research suggests Abigail's mind under the umbrella of Psychoanalytic study. Sigmund Freud is the pioneer of psychoanalysis theory. He divides mind into three parts; Id, Ego, Super Ego. As Sigmund Freud discloses that "the mind is like an iceberg, it floats with one-seventh of its bulk above water". Abigail prefers id. It prevails 98 percent in our mind. Id is the only part that is present spontaneously in our mind. It subsists with carving, yearning, longing, ambition and fascination, impulses particular our sexual and aggressive drives. The findings of the present research is about Abigail's personality has a confrontation between id and super-ego. Although, she follows id because her parents does not give love and affection to her and she wants to get love and affection from hideous way.

Keywords: Id, Ego, Super- Ego, Naive, love and Affection, Neurotic.

1. INTRODUCTION

Theoretical framework:

Arthur Miller is an American playwright. His novel is not copious in number. He writes only nine plays but his plays leaves a great impact on the mind of the readers. As Francis Nelson expresses that "As time goes by, his play continue to endure, many of them in fact gaining in strength and impact." (The Crucible, NKM, pg.12) He gets Pulitzer Prize on the eve when he writes the crucible. As 'Shaw is concerned about the intellectual, the social, the moral, Eliot with the psychological, but Miller embraces all these with his sweep-the intellectual, the social, the moral, the religion and the psychological' (pg.13). As Miller himself asserts "I cannot live apart from the world" (pg.13).

The crucible by Arthur Miller has two levels; literal and symbolic level. On the literal level 'crucible is a vessel in which metals are melted down so as to make them purified by separating baser elements'. (pg.433) Symbolically, we notice that it means a severe test which is used to accuse the people of puritans. They go through different tests. For example; the sink test, the scale test, the drunk test, satan mark test, the prayer test. These tests are used to check the purity of the people. In this play "The Crucible" prosecute witchcraft test is used in order to check the purity of the peoples. The nucleus point in Miller's play is "the struggle of the individual attempting to gain his rightful position in his society and his family" (pg.14). Miller also asserts that "I believe that the reader will discover here the essential nature of one of the strangest and most awful chapter in human history" (Arthur Miller, Christopher Bigsby, introduction).

The pioneer of psychoanalytic theory, Sigmund Freud, proclaims that "Psychoanalysis is in essence a cure through love" (Sigmund Freud, Letter to Carl Jung, 1906). Same case with Abigail. Her problem can be resolved through love. Psycho means 'mind' and analytic means 'to examine something'.

Freud divided mind into three parts. Id, Ego, Super- Ego. Id is our unconscious part on the other hand Super ego is our conscious mind. By the same token, Ego maintains our relation between id and super ego. We can say that Id is prevailing in our mind by birth. Because when a baby born, she born with wishes and desires and she wants to fulfill them.

Id is dark side of our personality. Because our mind is consist on lots of desires and wishes. And our all desires are not

fulfilled .when our desire and wishes are not fulfilled then our dark side begins to develop. Same is the case with Abigail's personality because her wishes does not fulfilled .Her desire to achieve love and affection from Proctor, her desire to dance in the forest with her friends, does not fulfilled and her journey took the opposite turn towards the dark side of her personality.

The word Ego is taken directly from Latin where, it is the nominative of the first person as "I Myself". The Latin term Ego is used in English to translate Freud's German term 'Das Lech' which literally means 'the I'. Freud says that "The ego represents what we call reason and sanity, in contrast to the id which contains the passion. (Sigmund Freud, the Ego and the Id).

In the book "Critical Theory Today", Loss Tyson describes psychoanalytical criticism as "The notion that human beings are motivated even driven by desires, fears, needs, and conflict of which they are unaware –that is unconscious." (Tyson, 12). Super Ego follows the morality, societal norms, religion etc. Freud explains that "Conscience is the internal perception of the rejection of a particular wish operating within us" (Sigmund Freud, Totem and Taboo; Resemblances between the mental lives of savages and Neurotics, 1913). In addition, another part of this theory which Freud developed comes from the theory of Id-Ego-Super ego. Tyson elaborates;

"The three ,the id is irrational and tends to want instant gratification ,the super ego work in direct opposition to the id because it internalizes cultural taboos and works to keep the id at bay, the lastly the ego is the conscious self that experiences the external world"(pg.25).

Abigail follows id and she learns black magic according to her desire. She thinks by learning the black magic she can get power over John Proctor. After getting John she can she can also achieve her unfulfilled desire of love. On the other hand, Parris follows super ego .So, her ego does not maintain her personality.

In the crucible, Abigail chase /search for id. Arthur Miller himself said of The Crucible that "The central impulse for writing it at all was not the social but the interior psychological question?"(pg.420). Abigail means "A beautiful girl, has lot of friends, crazy fun, and is always single." It is quite obvious throughout the text that she is innocent and beautiful and she has a lot of friends". As in the start of the text Arthur Miller describes 'strikingly beautiful girl' (pg.156

ABIGAIL: Uncle, we did dance; let you tell them I confessed it- be.

ABIGAIL: We did dance, uncle

ABIGAIL: She always sings her Barbados songs, and we dance (...)

ABIGAIL: (*innocently*): A dress? (pg.158-160)

This conversation reveals that she is innocent and she does not do such activities consciously. As she admits that '*uncle, we did dance; let you tell them I confessed it*'-(pg.158).This shows that she is innocent because she confesses it in front of her uncle. And Parris calls her 'Child'. This also suggest that she is pure. When Parris asserts that you conjured spirits. She "*lowers her eyes*" (pg.160). This also highlights her chastity but she loses her conscious.

Abigail's parents are dead and she lives with her uncle .It also signals out the pity condition of Abigail. Being a child she deprived from parents love. As "I cannot think of any need in childhood as strong as the need a father's protection" (Freud). This recommend that Freud also give significant of love for child because parents teaches morality and differentiate between good and evil. So, in other words we can say that our super ego develops when our parents teaches what is right and what is wrong .It is clear like daylight that Abigail's super ego does not developed and in a way her id or unconscious part developed a lot and ego does not maintain her personality because her uncle was busy in their political activities all the time.

Abigail wants love and affection as it is obvious through her name 'My father is joy'. This proffer that she wants love from her father. She is 17 years old. She is in genital stage but her personality is suppressed due to the tenderness and warmth. Due to the lack of affection she becomes neurotic. As Sigmund Freud, the father of psychoanalytic theory professes that "The psychoanalysis of neurotics has taught us to recognize the ultimate connection between wetting the bed and the character trait of ambition".

She becomes neurotic and her conscious is alleviate. She becomes unfastened .As she utters; "Give me a word John, a soft

word” (pg., 180). And she again expresses her desire unconsciously as she describes, “I am waiting for you every night” (p.180). This suggests that she has a lust for John Proctor because she cannot maintain balance between Id and super ego. As Freud demonstrates that, “Where Id is, there shall ego be” (The Anatomy of the Mental Personality, Lecture: 31). Here Freud upholds that ID and ego are necessary to maintain her personality.

Abigail works at Elizabeth’s home. As she unmitigated “She hates me, uncle, she must, for I would not be her slave. It’s a bitter woman, a lying, cold, sniveling woman, and I will not work for such a woman” (pg.162). Proctor is the only person whom she loves intensely. She has libido and longing for John Proctor. She has carving needs intensely and strives ruthlessly to satisfy herself. As “Children are completely egoistic, they feel their needs intensely and strive ruthlessly to satisfy them” (Freud) She feels from ambience that John is only person who loves her as she depicts, (*In tears*): I look for John Proctor that took me from my sleep and put knowledge in my heart! (pg. 184).

Her gesture and reaction also reveals that she is innocent. *Her tear* also proposes that she is in pity condition and she is weeping to express her true emotions. (*He turns abruptly and goes out .She rushes to him.*) John, pity me, pity me! (pg.184). Here we noticed that over and over again, she requests John Proctor because she wants sympathy from Proctor. Time and again, we notice that she confesses what she has done. It is a symptom of purity. Over and over again she commemorates her parents because she needs love as she explicitly describes;

Now look you .All of you .We danced. And that is all. And mark this .Let either of you breathe a word, or the edge of a word, about the other things, and I will come to you in the black of some terrible night and I will bring a pointy reckoning that will shudder you. And you know I can do it; I saw Indians Smash my dear parent’s heads on the pillow next to mine ...” (pg. 176).

Her emotions as well as feelings will never die at any cost .Because she wants to share with her parents but unfortunately her parents died and her emotions are being expressed by grotesque manner. As Freud epitomizes; “Unexpressed emotions will never die, they are buried alive and will come forth later in uglier ways” (The Interpretation of Dream). Here, Sigmund Freud wants to explore that unexpressed emotions has very dangerous result. As Abigail utters; “Let either, if you breathe a word, or the edge of a word... and I will come to you in the black of some terrible night and I will bring a pointing reckoning that will shudder you”(...) She also asserts that “I know how you sweated like a stallion whenever I’d come near you” (pg., 182).

Abigail’s dress also represents that she is acquitted like a new born baby .It is quite obvious through the white bonnet, shawl and apron which she is wearing .Her ‘Demure posture’ hair tied neatly back also suggests that she is a naïve girl .White color is the symptom of purity. We notice that her actions, deed, emotions, gesture, dress are the sign of her purity. As she utters, “I never sold myself! I ‘m a good girl! I’m a proper girl!”(pg.218). As she again expresses that “She made me do it! She made Betty do it!”(pg.218). This reveals that she has not done bad deed herself but Tituba duress her to do such bad deeds. She again proclaims that “She makes me drink blood” (pg.218). Periodically, we notice that she is being constrained to do bad deed. This also advocates that she is virtuous but she is forced by Tituba. She faces lot of miseries but she respects Hale as she construes that “No, Sir!” This alludes that she respects every man and she calls ‘Sir’ to Hale. While conference with Danforth she again utters ‘No, Sir’. This indicates that she is unsophisticated and she cannot speak long sentences in front of Hale and Danforth. Abigail says “(*now softening*): And you must .You are no wintry man. I know you, John. I know you. (*She is weeping.*)...” (pg., 182). Intermittently, we notice that her gesture suggests that she is wide eyed and pure.

According to Freud, dreams are symbolic. In our mind, there is a dream sensor. When dreams come our sleep cannot sleep .Dream are part of our unconscious mind. The data which is present in our unconscious mind comes through dream. As Freud asserts “The interpretation of dream is the Royal road to a knowledge of the activities of the unconscious mind” (S.F The Interpretation of Dream, 1900). Abigail says “Something I wake and find myself standing in the open doorway and not a stitch on my body! I always hear her laughing in my sleep. I hear her singing her Barbados songs and tempting me with –”(pg.220). This suggests that time and again her mind reflects the unconscious part .According to Freud, there are two types of instincts Eros and Thanatos .In Eros, we notice life instinct on the other hand in Thanatos we notice death instinct. In the crucible we notice that Although, Abigail suffers a lot but she follows Eros and it is also a positive point in her personality.

We can say that if Abigail gets love from her parents she does not become neurotic and don't go behind the rules of church .It is quite right that her personality has a clash between id and super ego .Although, she follows id but she deprived and affection from her parents and she gets love and affection from hideous way but yet she is innocent. She betrays from her track because no one present to guide her. Id dominates in her mind because her super ego does not develop and ego cannot maintain her personality so, she becomes neurotic due to the imbalance of id and super ego. In other words, we can say that id and super ego confrontation to each other and due to this clash ego cannot maintain her personality. Yet, she is transparent because she expresses her emotion in an obnoxious way. It is not her culpability because no one segregates her between good and bad.

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