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“PSYCHOANALYSIS OF THE CHARACTERS OF ‘THE TEMPEST’- IN REFERENCE TO THE
FREUD’S PERSONALITY STRUCTURE”

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ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to study the famous play of Williams Shakespeare, The Tempest with the different angle of Psychoanalysis .The three Personality elements of ‘Psychoanalytic Theory’ given by famous psychologist Sigmund Freud can be seen clearly in the characters of the play through this small study . Williams Shakespeare is known for the unique character formation which makes him different from other dramatist or play writers. He takes the characters from different walks of life, they could be ‘ the most foolish king. Or the wisest fool in the king’s court’. His art work generally depicts the keen understanding of human nature. He has the deep knowledge of human psyche, their characters and behaviour. The present study will through light on the personality of different characters from his one of the famous play "The Tempest" . To analyse the characters deeply ,the freud’s ‘Personality structure’, from his very own psychoanalytic theory is used. This study will help us to understand the different characters of William Shakespeare in quite new way. Not just for readability but this study will also help the readers and researchers to understand the characters of different plays, Fiction or Novel with the help of Psychoanalytic theory of Sigmund Freud. The purpose of the study is to bring out dee understanding of different personalities through psychoanalysis of various characters from the play , ‘The Tempest’ of William Shakespeare, my best Play writer.

Key words: Tempest, William Shakespeare, Sigmund Freud, Psychoanalysis, Personality Structure

INTRODUCTION

The portrayal of human beings and their relationships, fascinates me the most about literature I have been studying for few years about the psychological approach in literature and psychoanalysis, through which I try to understand the behavior of the characters who are realistically drawn, in the way we analyze and understand the behavior of the real people in our life.

To study the characters minutely, the **Psycho-analytic theory** of Sigmund – Freud has been used in present study. From his theory, His ‘Personality Structure’ is taken to analyze the characters. It comprises the

three elements i.e. I.d., Ego and Super – Ego. Which will help us understand the personality and to study the characters deeply.

Psychoanalytic theory: Austrian physician Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) was the founder of the Psychoanalytic School. The Psychoanalytic theory of Sigmund Freud is based on the idea that strong inner forces, which are present in unconscious mind, influence Human behavior. The theory includes the three elements of Personality Structure. They are -

ID is a group of instinct present within the unconscious level. It is based on Pleasure Principle. This aspect of personality is driven by internal and basic drives and needs.

EGO which is based on the Reality Principle, it works to achieve the id's drive in a real way and helps to balance both, 'id' and 'Superego'.

SUPEREGO is the third element of Personality Structure, It is driven by Morality Principle. It acts in connection with the morality of higher thought and action. The super ego works to act in socially acceptable ways. It employs morality, judging our sense of wrong and right and uses guilt to encourage socially accepted behaviour.

William Shakespeare-The famous playwright William Shakespeare was born in 1564 in England. He wrote approximately 35 plays and 154 sonnets. He wrote most of his known works between 1589 and 1613. His early plays consist comedies but later he started writing tragedies, where Othello is the best example of his tragedies. He was a poet and an actor. He wrote several plays, novels and sonnets. In the last phase of his writing career, he wrote tragi-comedies and The Tempest comes under that category of his tragi-comedy plays. He was died in April 23,1616.

About the play The Tempest- The tempest is the well-known tragi-comedy play of William Shakespeare, considered as his last play which was written in 1610-11. It was first published in 1623. It consist five acts in all. It is the Story of Prospero, An older brother, the duke of Milan, who was betrayed by his own younger brother, Antonio and left in the mid of sea on a rickety boat where duo faced the terrible storm. Antonio wanted them to drawn and to die, to get the Dukedom. But destiny washed them ashore onto the lonely island where he became the king and captured the good and bad spirits under him through his magic power. With the help of good spirit Aerial, he allowed the tempest to shake the ship of King of Naples, Alonso, who was coming back with his son Ferdinand, who later fell in love at first sight with Prospero's daughter Miranda. They all were coming from the King of Naple's daughter's marriage, accompanying Prospero's younger brother Antonio and other important characters. The play starts with the tempest and then the flash back story said by a father Prospero to his young Daughter Miranda. And finally ends with the repentance and restoration of relationship. After being caught and then saved in the Tempest, the king of Naples Alonso and specially Prospero's younger brother Antonio realized their mistakes and felt sorry for their wicked deeds, and asks forgiveness from Prospero. A play ends with the comic or the happy ending. The play is known as the tragi-comedy.

Psychoanalysis of the Characters of The Tempest: It is found that the characters and the protagonist in the play 'The Tempest' have the effect of one or the other elements of Freud's Personality structure.

The 'ID' element of Freud's Personality structure, in the characters of William Shakespeare's, the Tempest:

'ID' is the aspect of personality driven by basic drives or needs, it is the group of instinct present within the unconscious mind. It is based on the 'pleasure principle'

According to Freud the id is unconscious by definition:

It is the dark, inaccessible part of our personality, what little we know of it we have learned from our study of the dream and of course the construction of neurotic symptoms, and most of that is of a negative character and can be described only as a contrast to the ego. We approach the id with analogies: we call it a chaos, a cauldron full of seething excitations. ...It is filled with energy reaching it from the instincts, but it has no organization, produces no collective will, but only a striving to bring about the satisfaction of the instinctual needs subject to the observance of the pleasure principle.⁽¹⁾

Same traits of id behavior can be find in the **Ferdinand's** character, When he was the first one to jump into the water when they faced the sudden Tempest and tribulance in the sea. His speech clearly describes his personality in Act I , Scene 2 and line 10 – of the play , *The Tempest*. When he says –

“ Hell is empty and all the devils are here.” (Shakespeare,2008, 1.2.10).

Secondly, he falls in love so soon with the Prospero's daughter in the strange Island. His character shows that he was dominated by the 'ID' elements which is known for pleasure Principle – Despite being warned by her father Prospero. He never stopped loving his daughter Miranda. On the other hand the daughter of Prospero, **Miranda's** personality is also dominated by the ' ID, known to be as the pleasure principle of Freud's Personality structure, Who too was fell in love with Prince – Ferdinand.

Prospero: Fair encounter of two most rare affections!

Heavens rain grace On that which between 'em! (Shakespeare,2008, I.ii.1365-68)

We can analyse that the character **Antonio** was also dominated by the I D. element of Freud's personality structure in his personality and character. Who, just for the sake of his own pleasure, betrayed his brother. He did not even try to understand his love for him when he was playing trick on his elder brother.

The 'Ego' element of Freud's 'Personality structure' In the characters of William Shakespeare's , the Tempest:

We all have three drives of Id ,Ego and Super Ego, but it comes out in our personality at different stages of our life. At present we, can study how prospero's character was dominated by Ego Element of Freud's Personality Structure, where he could see the reality and balances the Id in his nature. Prospero's love for his magic art made him aloof from outside word for a time being but later, In the island, when he started using those magic power in practical, Shows the Ego element of freud's personality structure in his character. His act of telling his daughter about their reality

Prospero:'Tis time I should inform thee farther (Shakespeare,2008, I.ii.111-12)

and then giving and distributing the work to the different monsters and spirits in the strange Island.

Prospero: “Hast thou spirit, Perform'd topoint the tempest that I bade thee?” (Shakespeare,2008, I.ii.312-13)

This Shows his balanced nature and the tint of **Ego**, the 'Reality Principle' in his character. In another example from Act IV Scene I of *The Tempest*, we see that Prospero did not even take the love of ferdinand for her daughter, easily. For that, he put the Ferdinand's love in test to know the depth and seriousness of his love for her daughter Miranda.

“PROSPERO

Soft, sir! one word more.

Aside

They are both in either's powers; but this swift business

I must uneasy make, lest too light winning

Make the prize light.”(Shakespeare,2008,I.ii.21)

The above lines explains the experience of a mature and protective father Prospero who wanted to confirm ferdinand's love for his daughter , by not giving his daughter hands to ferdinand so easily. For which he says that the quick and easy winning makes a price of that winning really low and light. This again shows the 'Reality Principle' and gives the tint of ' Ego ' element of Freud's personality structure in his personality.

The 'Super-Ego' element of Freud's 'Personality structure' In the characters William Shakespeare's , the Tempest :

Gonzalos character was dominated by 'Morality Principle', when we see his faithfulness towards the Kingdom.Ganzalo was a good old man – who has the tint of 'Super Ego' in his character which is lead by the 'Morality principle'. This may be seen in his character, When he provide all the required Books of Magic to the Prospero when he was betrayed by his own brother Antonio.

Prospero: By Providence divine.

Some food we had, and some fresh water, that

A noble Neapolitan, Gonzalo,
Out of his charity, being then appointed
Master of this design, did give us, with
Rich garments, linens, stuffs, and necessaries,
Which since have steaded much. So, of his gentleness,
Knowing I loved my books, he furnished me
From mine own library with volumes that
I prize above my dukedom. (1.2.190-200)

Out of his dutiful nature and being a faithful servant, he gave 'Magic books' to Prospero because he might have thought, his master might survive the hard test, the life had given him.

And finally Again in the character of 'Prospero' , we see the dominance of Super-Ego, which is lead by the 'Morality principle', being betrayed by his brother, still he cares for his life, When at first, he gave the orders to spirit to create 'Tempest' in the Sea and assured that no life should get harmed in that disturbance in the sea-waves. Which was later cleared in her talk with her daughter Miranda in **Act I Scene 2** of *The Tempest*.

"PROSPERO: Be collected :

No more amazement : tell your petious heart

There's no harm done " (Shakespeare 2009, 1.2.231)

Conclusion

The Psychological understanding of these above characters we discussed, make them all the more fascinating when we read the plays by keeping in mind, the personality type of the characters. This small study will help to understand the characters of the play more deeply and not only this play, but all the other characters from any fiction or Novels to all the students, scholars, teachers and lovers of literature who are being drawn and attracted towards Short Stories, Novels and plays because of their human interest. after reading this study , the readers will read, not just for readability but for the enhancement of their knowledge to understand the characters deeply other than the story or the plot.

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