

TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD FROM THE PERCEPTION OF PSYCHOANALYTICAL APPROACH

S.Anisha Shebin

Assistant Professor

St.Alphonsa College of Arts & Science

Soosaipuram, Karinkal, Kanyakumari District

ABSTRACT

This research paper discloses how the augmentations take place amongst the predominant character all through the work of fiction. The study scrutinizes the novel To Kill a Mockingbird based on the psychoanalytic theory. The development of the protagonist's id, ego, superego are analysed applying Freud's psychoanalytic theory. This theory is an evidence for the authentication of the development and transformation in the character. This alteration is appropriate to every effort put together by the character to encounter a balance between aspiration and authenticity. The protagonist's father has strong control over his id, ego and superego and he had a foremost influence in the protagonist's development. The denouement draws attention to the development of the personality in altered phases due to the requirements of the unconscious mentality.

Key words: Psychoanalytic theory, id, ego, superego.

The modern classic of American Literature, Pulitzer prize winning novel, designated as the most thought-provoking book of all times, *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960) was written by Nellie Harper Lee. In 2006 British librarians categorised the book a head of the Bible and said 'every adult should read before they die'. In 1962 the aforementioned novel was adapted into an Academy Award winning film. It had been translated into forty languages and sold out more than forty million copies across the world.

Nellie Harper Lee was born in Monroeville, Alabama on April 28, 1926. She was bestowed Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2007 for her contribution to literature. She lay down her work of fiction in Maycomb right through depression era. Racial prejudice, apartheid and discrimination are the predominant theme that was widespread in the south of Alabama. Many autobiographical rudiments glanced at her work. The principal character Scout is positioned on Lee and this work is contemplated through the eyes of her.

To Kill a Mockingbird is about the commentator four year old Scout, her ten year old brother Jem and her widower father Atticus. Being a lawyer Atticus defends Tom Robinson who is fallaciously incriminated of violating a white girl. During the course of trial the jury repudiates to acknowledge Tom on the grounds that he is Black man whose confrontation in opposition to White was not acknowledged.

Atticus inculcates his children to comprehend the residents of Maycomb, he said “you never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view-until you climb in to his skin and walk around in it” (33).

The story that Lee tells revolves around the children. She supposed every child will lost their innocents when they stumble upon the realities of adult life. Throughout the novel Scout intensifies due to the ethics and facts that she gathered from the people around her. She fathomed the differentiation among righteousness and discrimination by scrutinizing the trial of Tom Robinson. She witnesses racial segregation in her own hometown and endured a lot due to prejudice. She faced a confrontation between her internal aspiration and external reality. The differentiation in the behaviour is analysed through psychoanalytic theory.

Sigmund Freud, an Austrian neurologist, healer of troubled human mind, the founder of psychoanalysis not only just examines the psyche of common people but furthermore great writers, poets and philosophers. Freud evaluated the work of writers through psychoanalysis to comprehend their unconscious motives. Literature is mirror of life. So Freud believes that a person unconsciously express his motives, desires through his actions. Freud started to view literary works through the lens of psychoanalysis. The main purpose of psychoanalysis in literature is to study the underlying unconscious motives of the artist and what he intends to tell through his characters.

The psychoanalytic theory formulated by Freud is a branch of psychological studies. It is often referred as ‘depth psychology’ because it deals with unconscious motives and conflicts. It ascertains underlying mystery and reality of human life and behaviour. Psychoanalysis is divided into two levels, conscious and unconscious level. Conscious mind comprises of whatever that comes about within the confines of our awareness. “Conscious is a small part of the mind includes everything we are aware of in the given moment” (Burger 87). Unconscious mind is a reservoir of feelings, thoughts, urges, and memories away from our conscious awareness. “unconscious is the deepest and major part of the human mind, it is the storehouse for primitive instinctual drives plus emotions and memories that are so threatening to the conscious mind that they have been repressed” (Hjelle and Ziegar 87). According to Freud, slip of the tongue or any accident such as losing or breaking anything is due to certain unconscious drives.

The personality is inclusive of three major systems: the *id*, the *ego* and the *superego*. The *id* is the original system of personality, everything that is inherited and present during the time of birth. “*id* represent the biological substratum of humans, the source of all drive energy” (Pervin76). “The *ego* is governed by the reality principle, which is tries to substitute for the pleasure principle of the *id*.” (Feist, 25). “The *ego* comes in to existence because the needs of the organism require appropriate transactions with the objective world of reality.” (Hall and Lindzey 37). “The *superego* is the internal representative of the traditional values and ideals of society as interpreted to the child by its parents, and enforced by means of a system of rewards and punishments imposed upon the child. The *superego* is the moral arm of

personality; it represents the ideal rather than the real and it strives for perfection rather than pleasure” (Hall and Lindzey 38).

This paper examines the development of the characters in the novel; Freud’s psychoanalysis highlights the different phases of the characters using the *id*, *ego* and *superego*. The relationship between Atticus and Scout is very important, the *id*, *ego* and *superego* of Scout changes from the beginning of the novel till the end because of the influence of Atticus. He teaches her social values and how to handle the situation.

Scout’s brother Jem takes her to school the first day and show her the class. Her teacher Miss Caroline encounters that Scout can read, “she discovered that I was literate and looked at me with more than faint distaste” (19) and asked her to tell her father not to teach her anymore because it will interfere with her reading. Scout disagrees and replied “He hasn’t taught me anything, Miss Caroline. Atticus ain’t got time to teach me anything” (19). She said “If he didn’t teach you, who did?...you weren’t born reading.”(19). Scout argues “Jem says I was... I got swapped when I was born” (19). The teacher got irritated and punished her and to avoid any more trouble she apologised, “patted the palm of my hand with the ruler, then made me stand in the corner until noon...I mumbled that I was sorry” (19).

Scout explains Atticus what happens at school and said “I didn’t think I’d go to school any more...she said you taught me all wrong, so we can’t ever read any more, ever” (33). Atticus explains that they can keep reading at home but she needs to keep quiet at school. He tells her a simple trick to get along with people. “You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view...until you climb into his skin and walk around in it”(33).

Scout being a young girl, unable to balance her desire and reality, her *id* is very stronger than her *superego*. Scout should understand that sometimes desires cannot be fulfilled due to social principles. Her *id* insist that she wants to read from home, by telling her teacher that she is born literate, she lied to her. Though lying is unacceptable to *superego*, in order to fulfil the wish of her *id*, she made a story. Atticus helps her to develop her *superego* by teaching her valuable lessons.

In the school Cecil Jacobs calls Atticus a nigger lover in front of Scout because Atticus defends a Blackman. “My folks said your daddy was a disgrace an’ that nigger oughta hang from the water-tank” (85). Scout wants to punch him on his face but realised that if she fights she would let her father down because he rarely ask her to do something for him.”I drew a bead on him, remembered what Atticus had said then dropped my fists and walked away. Scout’s a coward! Ringing in my ears. It was the first time I ever walked away from a fight” (85). Scout’s *id* said that she wishes to punch him because he insulted her father by calling him a nigger lover. Meanwhile her *superego* said she should never fight because her father asked her not to fight for him. Even though he calls her a coward, Scout agrees with her *superego* and moved away from that place due to the respect she has towards him.

Francis calls Atticus a nigger lover so Scout got irritated and fights with him. “I split my knuckle to the bone on his front teeth” (93). This time her *superego* cannot compromise with her *id* and she beats him. Her *id* cannot tolerate the uncomfortable state of tension. When her tension level got raised, her *id* functions in such a manner as to discharge the tension immediately.

The relationship between Scout and Boo Radley shows the development of her mind and also reflects the influence Atticus has within this development. Boo is a mentally unstable person so he was kept inside the house by his family. He was considered as a mysterious being by the children and so they created new versions of stories about him. Scout develops a negative to positive feeling towards Boo Radley because of her development within her id, ego and superego.

“Boo was about six – and- a- half feet tall, judging from his track; he dined on raw squirrels and any cats he could catch, that’s why his hands were bloodstained – if you ate an animal raw, you could never wash the blood off. There was a long jagged scar that ran across his face; what teeth he had were yellow and rotten; his eyes popped, and he drooled most of the time”(14).

The children have never seen Boo Radley in their life, but they have given the meticulous description of him. Scout couldn’t acknowledge how a person can stay inside his life throughout his entire life. Her desire is to know who Boo Radley is and why he never leaves the house. In reality he is a mentally disabled person. Her *superego* was not fully developed to distinguish the reality. Her *ego* is unable to relate reality; here the *ego* fails to satisfy the instincts so the *id* reasserts its power. Scouts *superego* knows that she should respect every one and it is wrong to create stories about people. Her *ego* is unable to comprehend the situation and incapable of finding the balance between her *superego* and *id*.

Scout finally realised that Boo Radley is above suspicion and he is by no means going to hurt her. Scout’s trials and tribulations occurs due the conflict amid *id*, *ego* and *superego*, she strives to find solution for her conflicts finally her *ego* starts to connect reality and stabilise with her *superego* and *id*. Her *superego* and *id* are able to find balance because her *ego* is able to communicate with reality and figures out how to deal with the situation herself.

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