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EFFECTS OF SURROUNDINGS: A PSYCHOANALYSIS CRITIQUE OF THE FORTY RULES OF LOVE

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ABSTRACT

The research deals with the psychological analysis of one of characters of Elif Shafak's novel "The forty rules of Love". The character that has been chosen for psychoanalysis is named as Ella. She is a forty years old woman who is suffering from a mental conflict and the reason being is the changing conditions around her. The research has been conducted by analyzing her character and her dialogues. The research is qualitative, keeping in view Freud's theory of psychoanalysis, the character has been analyzed. The major focus has been on Freud's theory of id, ego and superego. The novel deals with impending enigma in minds of people, the impact of the modern world on society and thoughts of people. This research deals with one aspect of it and that is existentialism. It is of great importance with respect to the 19th and 20th centuries because it highlights the inner psychology of person. The character of Ella is also a victim of sudden changing conditions around her. Majority of the modern writers have brought this topic into focus. After World War I and II, people went into chaos not only physically but mentally as well. The reason was a mere shift in their views about development, science and technology. As the century progressed, man invented many new ways for his protection. The one being invention of atomic bombs and guns. People thought of these inventions as their protection gods. After World War and especially the attacks on Hiroshima and Naga Saki, their gods turned into evil beings causing destruction to themselves rather than their enemies. This brought an immense change in the brains of people. When they lost their loved ones, their companions, their business and everything they had, they started questioning themselves. Who are they? Who is their creator? What is their nature? What do they live for? Why are they living? Where they would go after death? Is there any life after death? The character of Ella also became a victim to unexpected changing situations around her but within her family, and passing through traumatic condition. The research further opens the way for similar approaches to be used in other literary works.

Keywords: Effects; Surroundings; The forty rules of love; Psychoanalysis.

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INTRODUCTION

Elif Shafak's the forty rules of love (2010) is the blend of two stories going side by side. It can be called the blend of past and present. On one side, the story of Maulana Jalalud Din Rumi and on the other, the story of a housewife which brings us to the 21st century. The research revolves around the character of "Ella Rubinstein" who is a forty year's old married woman. She has 3 daughters Jeannette, and twins, Orly and Avi. She has what every women wish to have in her life but still there are some loopholes in her married life that cannot be filled. She feels incomplete and disunited from the world but cannot do anything about it, because she is a married woman and doesn't want to break the norms and conventions of society. But then what happens that she becomes courageous and she leaves everything behind and goes to live her life

according to her own conditions. The place where she is comfortable, the man who loves her spirit and soul and is not with her just for physical needs but who actually cares about her. Her story starts with a normal daily routine when she goes to her kitchen and opens the window to get some fresh air. While getting the fresh air, she actually prepares herself for a new day and a new "her". In the real sense, she was basically living a robotic life every day just waking up, preparing breakfast, sending children to school, then her husband. After the breakfast, then starts the preparation for lunch. In the end, dinner is served and going back to bed with the regrets of the previous day and thinking of the coming day. Every day she had the thought, "what is purpose of her life" but later could not think of anything. The only thing that makes her happy was her job. She was a review writer and was given a new book named as "Sweet Blasphemy". When the book came in contact with her she got the feeling that there was something similar in the book and her life. But later, it was actually the writer of "Sweet Blasphemy" that was similar to her thoughts. She got distress when she came to know that her daughter was in love with someone and wanted to marry the same person. She got worried as she didn't want her daughter to be in the same condition as she was in. Ella wanted to save her daughter's life. For the same reason she called Scott, the boyfriend of Jeannette and asked to back off and leave her daughter. But when Jeannette came to know about the whole incident she squabbled with her mother and asked why she did that? But Ella had no answers but only regret for what she had done.

David and Ella had a lifeless relationship, as one day, when they both were sitting together, there remained awkwardness between them. She could not do anything regarding the situation but was indignant to come in these circumstances. The reason for the awkwardness that was prevailing was the question roused by Jeannette. She was of the view that if she could not remain happy after love marriage, then how were her parents surviving? Ella had no answer to that but to remain quiet (Shafak, 2010). After everybody left, David asked her the same question but she was in utter despair and couldn't say anything but just the words "I was in love with you... but many years ago" (Shafak, 2010). David again asked her the awkward question, when did she stop loving? Again after a long pause, she started thinking the same question. Was that a reality that she stopped loving him, or it was just a phase of life? But it was true she gave the place of David to someone else in her own mind (Shafak, 2010).

The first time Ella came to know about real love when she read the first lines of "sweet blasphemy" and she found it analogous to her own situation. The lines stated that regardless to what some people say "love is not a sweet feeling that comes and swiftly go away" but it remains with you the rest of your life (Shafak, 2010). And in times of despair, depression, melancholy, glum and distress the need for love is bigger than anything else. She felt regret but when she looked at her children, all the regrets faded away. A turning point came in Ella's life when she sent a mail to A. Z. Zahara and told her miseries to a stranger. But that stranger gave her more love and respect which she all the time demanded but could not get. She had a list of 10 things which she wanted to accomplish before turning to forty (Shafak, 2010). The last point that she wanted to accomplish was "open her heart to love". And while talking and meeting with A. Z. Zahara, she really opened her heart to love. She got all the courage and went to meet A. Z. Zahara for the first time and this opened her way to love and later she was determined to live her life with the man with whom she could feel the real happiness. But the scheme of God was certainly different then what everybody thought. And this was what happened to Ella. She knew that the writer had a disease which would not allow him to live. But following the instinct she went to love her life. And saw the horrible face of death. She saw A. Z. Zahara die before death. After his death, she came back to her home without any regrets and that was the time when she felt the happiness that she missed all the time. This paper deals with the character of Ella and her psychological condition during the time of her marriage. All the circumstances in which she felt helpless and the moment she achieved the inner satisfaction was her real trophy that she won (Shafak, 2010).

Research Statement

Literature deals with life to represent those who also have no voice in real life situations but in a metaphorical way. The psychological condition of characters in the novel represent the same who are impacted by the surrounding but still unable to express their ontological existence. Keeping in view the same, the forty rules of love represent the impact of the surrounding on the mind which is analyzed in the current research from a psychoanalytical perspective.

Research Objectives

1. To show different characters of the novel inclined with surrounding.
2. To explore the impacts of surrounding on the mind in *The Forty rules of Love*.
3. To approach psychologically to existence position of the characters, affected and victimized from within.

Research Questions

1. How different characters of the novel are inclined with surrounding?
2. What are the impacts of surrounding on the mind in the forty rules of love?
3. How psychologically the existence position of the characters in the novel is shown which is based on victimization and marginalization?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Psychiatry which means the doctoring of mind was first invented and coined by Johann Reil (Volker, 2003). Later people started working on the same philosophy and made their way to the big world of psychoanalysis. Franz Anton Mesmer (Mesmer, 1980) was the first to create hypnotism through mesmerism. His theory focused on the idea that living things are influenced by the planets around them, so the dissemination of animal spirit can be changed through gravitational energy. Later he transformed his idea to focus more on magnetism (Marneros, 2008). He was capable of putting people into stupor states by swaying the magnetized bars in front of them. In his view anyone could achieve the same results by swaying the bars and similarly, some of the people got relief after the treatment. Later it became the fashion in Europe and people started coming to him for help, some of the psychiatrists believed its nothing but a suggestion. He created the whole surrounding and atmosphere and also an organization to train the people who wanted to join the same field. Philippe Pinel (Pinel, 1809) at the beginning of his career, focused on literature and theology, but later he started studying medicine. A turn-off fact that came into his life was the death of his friend. His friend had a mental illness which caused his death; it brought chaos in his life and he started working on the mental illness and became an important figure in an asylum in Paris. Later he worked on providing moral therapy to the patients so they could live in a clean and good environment to be healthy again. Jean-Martin Charcot (Charcot, 1872) was the inventor of neurology and was the one who made a great contribution to the field of psychoanalysis. Simultaneously he worked on brain functions, aneurysms, motor syndrome, and resultant diseases. He worked to overcome the psychological sufferings and disorders that women had and that are normally acknowledged as hysteria. It not only involves the suffering but also the loss of certain functions in the human brain. He was in favour of hypnosis as in some cases, it cured the patients.

Psychoanalysis is the study that helps the people and other individuals to have the understanding of them and their relationship with the people around. There are three parts regarding the human behaviour, conscious, subconscious and unconscious. These directly affect the behaviour of individual (Squire, 2008; Sio et al., 2013; Sio & Ormerod, 2009; Westen, 1998; Rees & Frith, 2007; Koch, 2004; Jung, 1960; Adler & Hull, 2014; Cramer, 2000). Schopenhauer is basically known as the instigator of the unconscious. He worked on the field for many years and was of the view that a person's unconscious is a dormant force that can make him repressed, depressed or transcendent. But man has no force on his unconscious, it works

on its own and stores everything that man carries within himself for years in his mind. Sigmund Freud (Freud, 1917, 1937) worked on the theory of psychoanalysis and was the one who investigated the human mind and different things that go through the mind of humans. He worked on the conscious mind as the things presently available in the present moment, which he referred as preconscious. He was of the view that the conscious part has little part in indifference to the unconscious, which covers the biggest area of the human mind. His id, ego and superego are the distinctive features of psychoanalysis and play a significant role. It begins from birth with the nervous system, and it grows slowly and gradually. It later becomes part with the instincts as Freud (1917, 1937) relates them with desires. The id works with the pleasure principle to accomplish the demands of the individual itself. And when the wish or desire isn't accomplished, it becomes stronger with time and later, one gets into the clutches of the consciousness. The ego more appropriately works with the reality principle. It works to complete the needs of id. The ego has to face problems as it faces obstacles to accomplish the needs of the id. When it grows it becomes part of the superego. In this, two things play an important role (conscience, ego ideal); the conscience works and keep records of the obstacles and ego ideal keeps the positive tracks. In superego the desires and wishes sometimes remain unaccomplished even for many years. The superego encourages the person to breathe and live in society and it morally shows the person the right and wrong path to walk on. Carl Jung worked on individualization in the theory of psychoanalysis, where conscious and unconscious are brought together to become the whole (Jung, 1915). His theory see the psyche in three parts the ego, the personal unconscious and collective unconscious. Alfred Adler (1924, 1927) first worked on the aggression instinct which was rejected in the first place. According to him, there is drive in every individual that works behind individual's behaviour and all circumstances and it always endeavours for faultlessness. In every individual there is a phenomenon that looks for perfection or ideals. Hence when these things strive to be unachievable, it often goes into the unconscious and becomes the cause of sadness. Jacques Lacan (Lacan, 2006) worked on focusing on the structure and work of Freud. According to his theory, any individual's behaviour, desires, passion, and wishes are structured on the behaviour of other. Thus one person's feelings and behaviour rely on others. The mirror stage is one the most important contribution in the field of psychoanalysis. It works in the early years of infant. When the infant is six months older he begins to recognize the people from the image that is created in his mind through the mirror stage. Other/other is, again in the field of psychoanalysis theory, an important contribution the capital "Other" symbolizes the imaginary other. The "other" is not referred to other but the replication and prognosis of ego.

METHODOLOGY AND ANALYSIS

This research has been based upon analysis of a character from Elif Shafak (2010) "The forty rules of love". Shafak (2010) has very well described the mental trauma she was going through in her life. The character has been chosen because she was the one who after having every basic requirement and facility felt incomplete. The story revolves around her journey towards herself realization and what made that empty space in her life. She dealt with this question throughout the novel that what made her empty and vacancy in her heart and mind. After going through the book "Sweet blasphemy" by A. Z. Zahara, she went into deep thinking. While reading the book, she felt that it was a reflection of her own life. The text analysis has been chosen as tool for this research. We find several instances in the text that highlight the mental trauma of character of Ella.

Ella is a forty years old woman who did her masters in literature and then after marriage, served as a housewife. Now after several years, when she found out that now her children are independent and does not need her much time, she decided to consume her time in any job. She joined an agency where she worked as a review writer of several books. Her husband supported her in her this decision and job. The novel starts with lines highlighting her psychology.

"Afterward Ella replayed the scene in her mind so many times that, rather than a fragment from the past, it felt like an ongoing moment still happening somewhere out there in the universe" (Shafak, 2010).

The very first lines of the text highlight her state of mind. She was somewhere lurking in her past. A person only goes in the past when he does not like his present. If one is unhappy with his present condition, he would definitely go for his past or some other place so that they may find an escape from the present world. So these very first lines of the text indicate that she was unhappy with her present. As the story progresses, we get confronted with the fact that she is a housewife and carries off her responsibilities well. But in these responsibilities bundle, she has somewhere lost herself. She compromised her talents and knowledge for her husband and children. But now she was fed up with her this life and she needed a change.

There are also other references from text that show her mental condition. She was so overwhelmed by changing conditions that led to her realization. Sudden changing conditions around her gave rise to the trauma in her mind. Society has great influence on you and especially your closed ones have great influence on you. According to psychoanalytic theory, it is the surrounding that affects your mind and we see such situations around her that affected her mind. First of all, we observe that her daughter gives her shocking news of getting married with her boyfriend at a very young age. She had an argument with her daughter that made her very upset and in that agony, she talked to her boyfriend that they may not take this decision. This makes her more offended and there is a cross attack of bitter remarks for each other between daughter and mother. This makes her so upset and she feels that things are no more under her control and now her children do not need her. This makes her think about her own married life too, because in an argument with her daughter she says that: "love is a sweet feeling bound to come and quickly go away" (Shafak, 2010). On being said that, she is questioned by her husband that does not she love him and she says that she loved him but now things are different. This argument makes her question herself that really there is nothing like love in her life now and her life is just a pack of responsibilities and nothing else. She started feeling that is she happy or he only pretends to be. This is the first incident in the text that becomes the cause of Ella's disturbance and the reason being was the change behavior of her daughter and her unexpected attitude towards her mother. This was not only limited to that. The other thing that played an important role towards her changing thoughts and actions was the book that she was assigned to write a review about. The book named "Sweet Blasphemy" by A. Z. Zahara. The very initial pages of the book let her know that her thinking was somewhat wayward. The lines in the book stated "love is not only a sweet feeling bound to come and quickly go away" (Shafak, 2010). These lines were in total contradiction with what she said to her daughter during that argument. This made her think that her thoughts were so out of love now and she was losing interest in love and romanticism by the passage of time.

According to Sigmund Freud (1917), the psychoanalytic theorist, every desire of human being and action of him comes out of his desire for sex. He was reprimanded for his this approach but some way or the other he was sure through his observations. In this novel, we also find such instances where Ella's actions seem driven by her lost interest in physical pleasures. This has been highlighted by her relationship with her husband. Her husband remains out of house for weeks and she does not question him for anything. She likes to remain alone and even after being in the know that her husband has relations with other women she does not respond. But psychologically she is affected. She keeps herself busy in cooking in order to get away from such thoughts. She keeps herself busy in making dishes and she thinks sex requires two but cooking requires only one person and a cook book to go on with. She feels relief in cooking rather than any other thing. So according to Freud theory her actions and thoughts have been the result of her lack of interest in sex.

One other aspect of psychoanalytic theory is its explanation through concept of Id, Ego and Superego. These three forces are responsible for driving our actions. Id means our desires, wishes that we wish to fulfill. Ego stands for our social behavior. It guides our behavior according to context. It gives importance to the fact that whether such kind of behavior is acceptable by the society. Superego means controls our actions based on moral values and norms. It helps us to decide that whether such behavior is morally correct or not. By applying this theory onto character of Ella from *The forty rules of love* by Elif Shafak, we find out that her

actions were also driven by such forces. First of all, if we talk about Id i.e., her wishes, it was to become independent and she had a desire for love. It was out of this desire that she started writing letters to Zahara. As stated in the text: "Soon exchanging emails with Aziz made Ella feel that she was somehow breaking away from her staid and tranquil life" (Shafak, 2010). He satisfied her desires and made her comfortable. But this was not that easy. It was hard for her to take decision that whether she should go for this step or not. As we find another quote from text: "So maybe it was blasphemy for a married woman with children to write intimate emails to a stranger". She thought harder before discussing her life with A. Z. Zahara. This was because of second force and that is ego. She thought harder to take any step because she thought that will it be ok in society and for my family members. Will my step be approved by the society or not. After thinking a lot over it, she decided that she is only discussing her thoughts with him and there was nothing wrong in that and continued with her decision. The third force then is Superego which shakes you morally to take your decision. She thought it right to go on with decision of sending Emails to A. Z. Zahara. After that, with the progression of story, we see that she gets too much involved in A. Z. Zahara and her desire for love overcomes her all thoughts. When A. Z. Zahara invites him to his place, she feels a bit awkward in the start but she is so carried away with him that she agrees. Here again we see role of these forces. We see that While leaving her home and lying to her husband she remains I conflict that whether to do this or not. Will it be socially and morally correct? But her Id overcomes all other forces and she moves to A. Z. Zahara place.

According to American Psychological Association, there are certain approaches to psychoanalysis. The first being is attachment theory which states that a person feels the need to be close to caregiver as a child feels with the parent. In this novel, we find out that Ella gets close to A. Z. Zahara just after exchange of few e-mails and that was because she was in need of love and she felt attached and close to him because he gave her care. The other factor is Separation Distress. She was in an anxiety of separation between her husband and her. She felt lonely and this reason made her close to the writer. Next factor is the sense of feeling secure. She felt secure with him. She felt that he would not cheat her like her husband and this gave her sense of security. According to APSA, another approach to this is Transference. Transference is described by APSA as the tendency of a person to react in a situation is predetermined by the context and experiences. As we see in this case when Ella's daughter tell her of her decision to marry her boyfriend, her reaction is shocking because the relationship of Ella with her mother was of a daughter and a mother is always conscious about her kids' decision and life. So Ella behavior was a result of her close relationship with her daughter. The other factor discovered by APSA is resistance. When a person feels irritated by the condition around him and certain emotions in him, he reacts in a certain way in order to resist those emotions. As we find in this novel, in order to get rid of irritating and troubling emotions, Ella keeps herself busy in cooking and other stuff. Trauma is again another factor that a person goes through a trauma. Trauma is severe shock to system. When Ella comes to know about her daughter's decision to get married, she suffers a shock and then her actions are a result of that shock. When she calls her daughter's boyfriend and had an argument with her daughter that she acted out of the trauma that she went through.

In this way, we did the psychoanalysis of the character of Ella by applying certain approaches to it and by using Freud's theory of psychoanalysis.

CONCLUSIONS

The research resulted in finding out the reasons for Ella mental conflicts. It has been found that whatever thoughts disturbed her mind were a result of the scenario appearing different from her daily routine life. The major reason was that she started feeling that now her children do not need her care and her husband is no more interested in her. These things created chaos in her mind and she started feeling alienated. She started a search for love. When she found that, she left her home and went away with it, but after staying away from her family, she realized that it was not easy and she only needed a break on returning home, she was moved to find that her husband and children missed her and need her love and in return she also received love. Sometimes we feel that we have no importance in the lives of people around us but by

missing them, we find their worth in our lives. By psychoanalytic theory, we found that this all happened due to unexpected situations confronting her, and after several experiences, she found her way to life.

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