

Psychological Concatenation of Desires

Dr. Lanke Subha

Assistant Professor, Department of English, Andhra Loyola College, Vijayawada

Abstract

Man suffers from universal neurosis clustered in cultural background or tradition that forces him either to subjugate the instincts or to domineer over the other. When a person's instinct is not satisfied he/she forces themselves to accept it, or there arises an urge to do the unacceptable things to fulfil their desire. Ultimately he is signified as the ruthless person through his actions, behaviour and attitude. All the desires or instincts of a person are controlled by the internal organs of the body, which is reflected in exterior. Hence, the implicit thoughts, feelings, emotions when reflected become explicit under uncontrollable situations. He or she is either forced to unify his/her self or unify with the others. Where there is rejection, suppression, and subjugation take place there arise the conflict of identity. The writer's tries to project the relationship between the emotions, desires, feelings, social concerns through the representation of the characters that reflects the then prevailing societal rules and its influence on the human being's mindset. I have made an attempt in analysing the psychological element used by Robert Browning in his select poems and the influence of the poet's background in it.

Key words: Individual difference, psychology, cultural background, identity crisis

Literature mirrors the past, present and the expected future too. The writers create the ambience, inserts his ideas, emotions and feelings in words to his readers. Language plays a crucial role in exhibiting the writer's notion with that of the reader's expectations. Few writers synchronize the life story of people with the fictional characters, relate the ideological principles and draw the imagery, symbolises the events with the real life situations, opens the doors of the unknown world and make them realise the importance of life and existence. Some writers write about their life experiences, challenges and conflicts, give a vivid image to the readers that familiarize their personality. The unique elements like gender, race, discrimination, culture of the author has an impact on his/her writings. The author's main purpose of writing is to amuse, educate, persuade, or to satire on the prevailing situations. Literature mainly influences the readers of generations; hence the writings of genres of literature should possess knowledge of the subject which he writes either through proper research work or experience.

After reading a literary text the readers develop their own interpretation of the text and it is not needed that the readers have to agree with the author's words. Every individual has a unique ability to understand the things around them, either through textual knowledge or through the life experience they judge the happenings in life. In the same manner, the writers also have their own identity in the world of literature. Some try to influence the readers for a cause, some try to provide knowledge; whereas some try to entertain through words, but whatever may be the core of the writer, finally they want to change the mindset of the readers. Words are the powerful weapons that can create or ruin a kingdom. Writers have the powerful weapon that influences the human mind set i.e. Psychology and the writings are

literature, the happenings are life. Hence life projected in literature is psychology. In a nutshell human create literature, and literature recreate human.

Robert Browning (1812-1889) was an English poet and dramatist, well known for his dramatic monologue and psychological portraiture. During his stay at home, he started to write poems with the influence of PB Shelley. Browning's first published work *Pauline: A Fragment of a Confession* (1833), in dramatic monologue. Browning personified his adolescent age passions, anxieties and identity crisis. But his exposure of emotions and feelings in writings was condemned by John Stuart Mill that made him to focus on objectivity of the subject. In 1842, *My Last Duchess* was published, first appeared in *Dramatic Lyrics* and in 1855 a poem *Andrea del Sarto* (also called *The Faultless Painter*) published in *Men and Women* a collection of poetry. These two poems have been taken for analysing the use of psychological element by Robert Browning.

Robert Browning gave importance for morality in art, highlighted the difference between aesthetic and didacticism in his works. The upheaval in the society, increase in crime, domination, suppression, turmoil, fantasy totally changed the life style of the people. The observation made by the writer in his society, his power of imagination becomes a creation. Here the implicit and explicit behavioural attitude of the poet is directed towards the reader. The poem *Andrea del Sarto* (1842) is written in dramatic monologue, written with the backdrop of the Italian Renaissance painter Andrea del Sarto. Andrea del Sarto was an Italian painter well known for his faultless paintings. He married Lucrezia and their marriage life was unsuccessful. But Andrea drew her in many of his paintings often as Madonna. She is described as faithless woman, stubborn and jealous, had an illegal affair with the apprentice. This is characterised in Robert Browning's poem *Andrea del Sarto*. Andrea though well known as a faultless painter, he couldn't get the fame of his contemporaries Michelangelo and Rafael. He started to search the reason for his failure as a painter. He feels sorry for his inability to bring the soul in his artistic work, and he observes the same in others work too. His pessimistic looks finds faults in everything around him, whether it art or artless. His works are simple, clear and admirable but none with grandeur attraction. Andrea seeks comfort in Lucrezia, but fails to get it. Andrea is aggressive in nature, he wants to emphasize power over Lucrezia and entrap her. He forces her to sit for a while and listen to him, as he feels he could convince her for a painting. He makes promises to give her the money, a kind of bride to stay with him. Lucrezia carelessly wipes off the paint that shows her disregard on his painting. Lucrezia is ambitious, stubborn, careless which is absent in Andrea. He wishes to project her qualities in his painting and make it lively but it escapes. He wants to take the love of Lucrezia which he longed for. Andrea is not ready to listen to any type of criticism on his paintings, and he decides to live inside. His psychologically unstable mind forces him towards Lucrezia. He wishes to entrap his wife within the frame like him. Andrea fails in both the attempts; finally Lucrezia leaves the place that symbolically represented through the broken frame, heart of Andrea.

In the poem *My Last Duchess* (1842) Robert Browning used dramatic monologue. The poet's inspiration is from the life of Duke Alfonso II and the Duchess of Ferrara lived during the 15th century. Lucrezia his wife dies in a mysterious manner after three years. It projects the revival of renaissance Italy. His stay in Italy made him imbibe the Italian culture. The male chauvinism and woman suppression are felt in the poem where the Duke exercises his power over the Duchess, and the Duchess remains submissive. As Duke is from an aristocratic family who gives more importance for power, status and mannerism, he forces the Duchess to follow the same to keep up the nine hundred years old name. Duke is a psychopathic who finds faults in every action of the Duchess. He wishes his Duchess to

smile only at him, but she smiles at everyone and for every small thing she feels happy. He belief that woman are object to be controlled, commanded and abandoned. He is a narcissistic who denies the sensuous pleasure of the Duchess on small things. The aggressive Duke orders to stop the smile of the Duchess. Duke proudly talks about Fra Pandolf the artist who drew the painting of the Duchess. He orders the Count to sit and see the image of the Duchess, explains the artistic work of Fra Pandolf who brought the Duchess alive in the painting. Throughout the conversation with the Count we find the Duke suspicious mind, psychological aberration when he talks about the Duchess. Duchess is a simple, pleasant, kind hearted, polite lady who seeks delight in everything. The Duke wished to possess everything and control everyone but he couldn't control the Duchess. He disliked her attitude and called her unfaithful, stubborn because of which he arrested her in the frame, so that he can exercise his power on her by drawing a curtain on it and also control the view of everyone. The Duke favours money and focuses on maintaining the status of elite society is implied through the demand of dowry for second marriage.

The meaning of psychology in literature is explained by Wellek and Warren (1963: 81) as follows: "By 'psychology of literature', we may mean the psychological study of the writer, as type and as individual, or the study of the creative process, or the study of the psychological types and laws present within works of literature, or, finally, the effects of literature upon its readers (audience psychology)". In both the poem Robert Browning brings out the Italian culture during the 15th century-renaissance period where the people exercised power to question the other, male domination, suppression and subjugation took place. Andrea and Duke though belong to the different societal group they preferred to control their wives, searched to maintain pride rather than relationship. Being obsessed with the fear of failure in life they tried to live without their better half. Lucrezia and the Duchess searched for the happiness in life, they sensed the essence of life and decided to live the fullest, whereas Andrea a failure painter, Duke a failure husband felt that objects only can give them happiness. The poet relates his work to life and its problems, formed specific characters with specific problems in a specific circumstance. The poet in both the poems use art that symbolises life, a restricted one with curtain or frame is rules or boundaries. The poet wants the readers to elevate from the limits and see the world with inner eye to lead a happy life with the near and dear. Robert Browning related the past happenings to his present with the changes happening in the society and makes the readers to know about the psychologically imbalanced human mind through two different characters, how the dream or desire if not reached may ruin the life of a king or kinsman.

References:

1. <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/43745/andrea-del-sarto>
2. <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/43768/my-last-duchess>
3. <file:///C:/Users/Win10/Desktop/psychology%20in%20literature/82271267.pdf>