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## **The Characters Controlled By ‘Id’: A Study Based on Chitra’s Short Stories Collection *Arranged Marriage***

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### **Abstract:**

This paper attempts to study psychoanalytical aspects in the short stories collection *Arranged Marriage* of one of the famous Diasporic Indian writer Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. The element of ‘Id’ of well known ‘Psychoanalytic Theory’ given by famous scientist and psychologist Sigmund Freud can be seen vividly in Chitra’s *Arranged Marriage*. Chitra is known for her unique style of writing, which differs her from other diasporic writers. She takes the characters from different areas. Most of her writings has woman as the protagonist. The present study will throw light on psychological aspect of personality and domination of Id in the characters of her famous Short stories collections *Arranged Marriage*. This study will help the readers and researchers to understand and analyse the characters of fiction, play or Novel in much better way. The importance of psychoanalysis in literature has also been depicted in the present research paper.

**Keywords:** Sigmund Freud, Psychoanalytic Theory, Personality structure , Id , Arranged Marriage, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni.

### **I - Introduction:**

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. (Freud 1933)

The Id is the primal, innate and instinctive component of personality. It consists of all the inherited (i.e. biological) components of personality present at birth, including the sex (life) impulse—Eros (which has the libido), and the aggressive (death) impulse. The Id is the impulsive or unconscious part of our psyche which give response directly and instantly to the instincts. The personality of the newborn child is all Id and only later part of his life, develops into an Ego and Super-Ego. The Id is infantile throughout a person's life, and it does not change with time or experience, as it is doesn't have anything with the external world. The Id operates within the unconscious part of the mind, So it is not affected by logics or reality the everyday world. Id is based on the "Pleasure principle" (Freud 1920) which is the idea that every wishful instinct should be satisfied at once, without thinking about or seeing the threats. When the Id achieves its demands, It gives pleasure, when it is denied the person feels dissatisfaction and experiences unpleasure. The Id normally deals with the primary process of thinking, which is illogical and fantasy oriented. It is far from reality. It is primitive and irrational. This form of thinking process is no real and has no comprehension. It is normally related to the wish fulfillment. It is regarded as the great reservoir of libido, which needed the instant and immediate satisfaction.

The psycho sexual development of child in early age defines the work of Id in his early stage. ID's instinct is same as a child, who want something at a time and it should be satisfied there on. And on the contrary, if the child doesn't get anything his mood gets off and he starts

crying, same in case of id, when a person is dominated by id element, he seeks immediate pleasure, if he doesn't get satisfied, he faces tensions or displeasure. If this drives leads to the swing of mood to the worst level, it may create problem in work place or at home. The person remains unsatisfied and it keeps his/ her mood off all the time and this lead to the serious problem in his/her performance. The unrest mind cannot give the better output. Id drive is usually a suppressed impulses of the person, and generally it rest in unconscious mind .Unconscious mind is like a huge ocean with a never ending depth. Under this the person may have such desires which he / or she cannot reveal to anyone. But the person , who is dominated by Id , this part of Unconscious mind gets out and he does the things that he cannot even imagine of doing. When Unconsciousness comes out of the mind itsreally unexpected by people you know or for urself. It can come out in the form of Freudian slip, According to Freud, Inthis we can observe Unconscious thoughts and feelings are transferred to the conscious mind in the form of parapraxes, which is popularly known as Freudian slips or slips of the tongue. Under this, a person reveal what is lying really deep in his or her mind by simply saying, something he/she didn't mean to.For example, someone says , we can make sandwich with bread, but instead he/she says bed. Another example is where a person may call his friend's spouse by the name of a previous one, whom we liked better than his present partner. For Freud, The slips of tongue gives insight to the unconscious mind and thus he wanted to convey that every behaviour is significant and no behaviour manifested out of accident, weather, it'sa slip of tongue. Thus, all behaviour are determined. According to Freud, "Dreams are the royal road to the unconscious". For him, conscious mind has censor, but, when we are sleeping it is less vigilant and during that time ,our repressed ideas come to the surface as dreams. According to Freud, He believed that many a times the real meaning of a dream had a sexual significance and in his theory of sexual

symbolism he throws light on the underlying meaning of the themes of common dream that the person usually have during sleep .

## **II - Explanation:**

The immigrants sway between the homeland and hostland in their habits, customs, gender, identity, culture and politics which are sociological, psychological, cultural and also political. Divakaruni who herself is an immigrant and whose works portray the complexities faced by the immigrants with their different experiences. Her philanthropical attitude of real life, as she is connected with the 'Pratham' a non – profit organization, is projected through her work in a story *The Perfect life*, in *Arranged Marriage* where Protagonist, Meera Bose helped an abandoned Child. It is found that the protagonist and other characters in the same collection of stories, have the effect of one or the other elements of Freud's Personality structure. Here under present study, the influence of Id in different characters is analysed and studied. As we know that in different phase of our life our personality is controlled by different element of Freud's Personality Structure. Here the psychological study of the immigrant's experiences is done by observing the behaviour of the immigrants in the short stories. The different element of Diaspora can be seen in the immigrant's behaviour, the pain, rootlessness , displacement and insecurity in the foreign land faced by all immigrant's which brings certain psychological issues in their character like, anxiety, quick-tempered, and insecured which makes them to take the action in that way. To avoid the pain the immigrants seeks pleasure. As they too suffered a lot as immigrant, they don't even think of the problem they may Face as in the character of Chitra's *ArrangedMarriage*, one of the character Meera Bose in the story 'The Perfect life' acted, while helping an abandoned child. It clearly describes that she too felt homeless some day, as the child might be feeling that day, by getting so much emotional she didn't even think that she should

first put a complain to the police about the missing child, she was so much carried away that time, that she did what her heartfelt, meaning she followed the voice of her heart, ignoring the reality and threats of doing so. This type of behaviour comes under the ID element of Freud's Personality structure, which clearly says, ID is a group of instinct present within the unconscious level, which is considered as the selfish part of the personality. It is based on 'Pleasure Principle', which means, it avoids pain and seek pleasure. This aspect of personality is driven by internal and basic drives and needs. Due to the instinctual quality of the id, it is impulsive and often unaware of the implication of actions.

### **III - The 'Id' Element of Freud's Personality Structure in the Characters of Chitra's Short Stories Collection 'Arranged Marriage':**

*Arranged Marriage* is the beautiful collection of Short stories written by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. It mostly deals with woman as an emigrant protagonist. It has eleven short stories deals with the diasporic elements like Nostalgia, identity crisis , insecurity and rootlessness and depicts that the element of Diaspora also develops ones personality and Freud's elements of 'Personality Structure' are dominated on the characters at different phase of their life. Id operates on the **pleasure principle** (Freud 1920) which is the idea that every wish or instinct should be satisfied instantly. Chitra's collection of short stories *Arranged Marriage* reflects the agonizing situation of the diasporic South Asian women. The Main theme of her short story collection *Arranged Marriage* is 'marital relationships' in the view point of some South Asian communities where the parents arranges the marriages of their children. The practice is still prevalent in some part of South Asia. However, Immigration has widened the mental horizons of the people from the east, and Divakaruni also put questions on this practice through the present collection of short stories. After their exposure to the west in various ways e.g working outside the home, their

increased independence in decision-making, and adopting a new culture etc., makes them to deal differently to the marital situation as well. A post colonial writer, Divakaruni has brought the complexities faced by the immigrants in an detailed way through her works. The identity crises and cross cultural problems occupy the themes in the works of Divakaruni. The problem of gender in the post colonism adds to the distressing situation of the immigrant women. Divakaruni is a typical postcolonial writer. Divakaruni openly throws light on the term and the concept of 'diaspora' to the intellectual public who not only understand but keen to know more about the concept and its reality. She also has a huge interest as a social activist. She serves on the board of 'Maitri' which is the organization to help woman and a similar organization called as 'Daya.' Divakaruni serves as the emeritus Board of Pratham Houston, a Non-Profit Organisation, working to bring Literacy to disadvantaged Indian Children. Her life's glimpse is depicted through the Protagonist, Meera Bose (Perfect Life) who wants to provide Krishna, the all such life's luxury that the simple abandoned child could hardly get .

I thought about it. Krishna and I had established a good routine. We ate breakfast together in the mornings and watched the news. While I was at work, he amused himself by looking through the pictures in the books I brought for him from the library. When I got back from work, we usually went to the park (we'd bought ourselves a kite) or the library, or sometimes rented a video—he liked movies about animals. After dinner we'd sit together on the couch and watch it and talk about the more exciting scenes. (Divakaruni 87)

#### **IV- The Features of 'Id' Governed By the Personality of Different Characters from the Short Stories of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni:**

In Clothes ,Sumita's characters have free thoughts and action, though she did arranged marriage still she did what she wanted, even after getting widow, she never try to follow the Indian culture by wearing white sari. She could not accept that easily, being in love with her husband and missing him and his words, "For when you begin working,"he says. But first he wants me to start college" (Divakaruni 26). She made her mind to continue his husband's business, because she knew the reality of India and its traditions, which were still harsh for the widow woman in India. As in India, widows were not given so much of freedom and equality as compared to the woman with a husband or the spinster could get. She called it a dangerous land. So, rather going back to India, she wanted to go according to her own desires, "*Idon't know yet how I'll manage, here in this new, dangerous land. I only know I must*" (Divakaruni 33). Moreover, for her, widows in India were "Doves with cut off wings" (Divakaruni 33).The metaphor used in the line depicts the condition of the young widow at India, who has to suffer the whole life in white saree by following the old tradition, where the "widows in white sarees are bowing their veiled heads,serving tea to the in- laws" (Divakaruni 33). So going against the trend and following his husband business was the drive and instinct which Freud explains in his *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* where he compares the id with the horse and its Ego as the rider,

"One might compare the relation of the ego to the id with that between a rider and his horse. The horse provides the locomotor energy, and the rider has the prerogative of determining the goal and of guiding the movements of his powerful mount towards it. But all too often in the relations between the ego and the id we find a picture of the less ideal situation in which the rider is obliged to guide his horse in the direction in which it itself wants to go."(Freud 1932)



Sumita follows the free will of her heart and decided to live in America to start a new life, the life she discussed with her husband. "I tilt my chin, readying myself for the arguments of the coming weeks, remonstrating" (Divakaruni33). Likewise, In the short story 'The Word Love', not only at the later part her life, the protagonist did things that was against the tradition of her home at Kolkata India but in the early stage of her life also, she went to watch movie secretly, against her mother's will, and later she got punishment from her deed. "Once when you were in college you had gone to see a popular Hindi movie with your girlfriend Secretly" (Divakaruni 61). The lines show the exact example of how the character was dominated by the Pleasure seeking Id. In the later years she moves to Berkeley for pursuing Ph.D, where, she met Rex, a foreigner man and despite of, knowing the consequences of crossing the Indian cultural boundaries, she moved to his apartment and started living with him without marriage, following her sexual instinct which is the major trait of Id, and which was quite against the will of her mother, and also against the values that she always wanted to teach her daughter. The life glimpse of Chitra can be seen through the character of Meera Bose in 'The Perfect Life', like Divakaruni supports the Pratham Houston Programme for the underprivileged children, Meera Bose helped the abandoned child Krishna but Meera's character is dominated by the id element, because being an immigrants, she didn't even think of the legal formalities, which were quite different from India. She gave the name, place and all the facilities to the abandoned child. As, the pleasure principle is devoid of the sense of morality and reality, therefore the characters controlled by Id have an aggressive and passionate behavior to the point of being lawless and amoral.

I thought about it. Krishna and I had established a good routine. We ate breakfast together in the mornings and watched the news. While I was at work, he amused

himself by looking through the pictures in the books I brought for him from the library. When I got back from work, we usually went to the park (we'd bought ourselves a kite) or the library, or sometimes rented a video—he liked movies about animals. (Divakaruni 87)

The Instinct and impulsiveness are the forces that drive Meera Bose and therefore she never regrets or judges her act in the light of social order. She wanted to live the life of her own, the free life that she desired. She is in relationship with Richard, a foreign man. For him, she says, "Richard was exactly the man I'd dreamed about during my teenage years in Calcutta" (Devakaruni 73). Further, her act of living with a man without a marriage, like that of a protagonist in 'The Word Love' depicts the trait of Id in her character. She is Intelligent and self-reliant woman, she is not ready to play the role imposed by family, parents or society.

Because in Indian Marriages becoming a wife was only the prelude to that all-important, all-consuming event -becomingmother. ThatWas'nt why I'dfaught so hard – with my mother to leave India; with my professors to make it through graduate school; with my bosses to establish my career. Not that I was against marriage – or even against having a child. I just wanted to make sure that when it happened, it would be on my own terms, because I wanted it. (Divakaruni 76)

Meera Bose boldly defies social and moral order and acquires what bestows her satisfaction. "Eventually Richard and I planned to get married and have children, but neither of us was in hurry"(Devakaruni 74). She was never against the marriage but she wanted to do it in her own terms and conditions, and whenever she'll feel to make it happen. She never wanted to marry under the pressure of her parents or would be.

What I liked most about Richard was that he gave me space. I'd been afraid that after we slept together he'd either lose interest in me or start pressuring me to marry him. Or else I'd get pregnant. That was what always happened in India. (My knowledge of such things, of course, was limited to the romantic Hindi movies I'd seen. At home, we never discussed such things, and though my girlfriends in college gossiped avidly about them, they were just as protected as I from what our parents considered sordid reality.) But Richard continued to be passionate without getting possessive. (Divakaruni 74)

Id drive can also be seen in the character of Mahesh in 'Meeting Mrinal', who left his wife and son, seeking his own pleasure, in her red-haired secretary who was younger to Asha. Mahesh fell in love with her and left his wife and a child for her. Id usually dwells in unconscious. Whatever we do in our daily life in sake of responsibility and for the sake of society is not Id, Id is the hidden desire the exact context is the lines from the 'Meeting Mrinal', "All his life, he told me then, he'd been doing what other people wanted, being dutiful son, then a responsible husband and father. Now he'd finally found someone who made him feel alive, happy. He wanted the chance to really live his life before it was too late" (Divakaruni 286). There were so many things Mahesh wanted to pursue in his life but he never tried to follow his desires. Asha knows and understands all, she knows that this was the time when Mahesh was doing what he really wants, so she too never stopped Mahesh, her husband, this was the greatness in her character, but on the other hand, Mahesh couldn't balance his instincts being dominated by pleasure seeking element. Id. This was common in the character of Meena and Ashok also, in the short story 'Affair'. In 'Affair', Meena fell in love with the husband of her best friend, 'Abha'. It is observed in the story that the pleasure principle overshadows the reality

and morality principle by Meena and Ashok, who broke the convention and started having extra marital affair after the Arranged Marriage. Meena and Ashok were like free souls and enjoyed being together, but the fire in the relationship was disclosed during the couple dance they both did in the party, where their own spouses were present and they danced cozy , being carefree about the world.

I wondered what they thought as they watched Ashok and Meena glide by , their faces illuminated by the silver light from the revolving spheres overhead. When he spun her around , Travolta – like , until she ended up in his arms , her hair tangling around his throat like a living thing , were their eyes dazzled , like mine , by the flash and glitter of the gold strings of that backless choli? (Devakaruni 248)

## **V - What Leads the Behaviour to be Dominated by Id Element of Freud's Personality Structure-?**

Freud (1923) describes the psyche structured into three parts , the id, ego and superego. He says they all develop at different stages of ones lives. As discussed previously, Id is a group of instinct present within the unconscious level. According to Freud's book, 'Beyond pleasure principle', Id is based on '**Pleasure Principle**' (Freud 1920) which is the idea that every desire or instinct should be satisfied at once , regardless of its result. This aspect of personality is driven by internal and basic drives and needs. But what leads these characters of different short stories to behave in such manners. Usually they all followed their heart and where their heart took them they moved towards that direction. Id usually seeks the immediate pleasure as it is based on the 'Pleasure Principle'. So the characters avoided being in a real world , they infact avoided the reality and Morality Principle and thus this instinct lead them to follow their deep unconscious thought which comes out in the form of domination of Id element in their

personality. The person have different thoughts in his mind, some are so unusual that ,if they may revealed , can do the great effect to the character of the individual. So to bring the thought in socially acceptable way is the Id, and to reveal the thoughts instantly is the work of Id.

## **VI - Conclusion –**

Away from home, people struggle to live in a strange land, which is not their own, they feel loneliness, displacement ,Nostalgia , Identity Crisis and alienation which lead to Insecurity and sometimes dissatisfaction in relationship. The above psyche feelings, the one have during diaspora are the diasporic elements which are common while a person leaves to his homeland and immigrated to the foreign land. This particular feeling of leaving home and adjusting in new place, is not just connected with the huge term Diaspora, which was first used as the dispersion of Jews from Israel in 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C., but with the every minor immigration can bring such feeling to the mind of the person which has huge effect on the individual's personality and its traits, and behaviour. For example ,A small Child may face such above feelings of Insecurity and loneliness when he/she joins schoolin early age. After having so much love , care and attention from parents and family, the child feels a sense of loneliness in his/her mind and heart thus he/she reflects his/her feeling in the form of cry. That's why it is said that children are the best example of Id, because they never hide their feelings and what is in their unconscious mind comes out easily so they do and follow their feeling immediately, they need immediate satisfaction from their hunger and all their needs when they don't get immidiately they started crying so children are the best example for the Id , as the domination of Id is found in the behaviour of the child. So, to control Id's desire in later part of our life , Ego enters and gives us

the sense of wrong and right and satisfies id with the most real way . Ego neither goes with morality or pleasure principle but with reality principle.

The above discussion bring out domination of Id in the characters of the Chitra's famous short stories collection *Arranged Marriage*. It just didn't give the brief understanding of the concept of Psychological analysis but also throw light on the different personality type with main focus on Id , the pleasure principle of Freud's concept of Personality. It just doesn't help us to analyse the characters but by this above observation, the characters can be deeply studied and understood. Same technique of observation in the exploratory research can bring out the major breakthrough in the combination of literature and Psychoanalysis. Which are no different and can jolt the studies and understanding in more productive innovative way , Thus this concludes with the few words of Bernard. J. Paris , "As Mentioned in the book *Imagined human beings: A psychological approach to character and conflict in literature*, "Rejection of psychoanalysis in literature has been a major critical error" (Paris 97). So, when Psychological analysis and literature goes hand in hand , it just not improve the readability but makes us understand the story line, character and their personality in much better way.

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