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EXCAVATION OF REPRESSED DESIRE IN ADELA QUESTED: A PASSAGE TO INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The world abroad is of lesser importance than the world within. This is the impetus for what the seed of psychoanalysis begins to germinate and by degrees it takes the form of a full-fledged tree of criticism in the realm of literature. With the help of this tool the critics can delve into the heart of the strange and apparently inexplicable behaviour of man. Things that exist invisibly pose a challenge to man's intellect, his rational mode of exploration. This is how the endeavour is placed on the psycho-sphere of human activities, and this is what makes a critic of literature interested in the process of excavation of the internal world- the abyss of human mind. The ensuing paper seeks to analyze the character of Miss Adela Quested, one of the most important figures in E. M. Forster's A Passage to India in terms of psychoanalysis, with special attention to that particular incident of Adela Quested's hallucination in the Marabar cave.

KEYWORDS: Marabar cave, Adela, revenge, race

DISCUSSION

The only aspect of Adela's experience which remains solid and attractive is her doubt about what happened in the cave. But finally she confesses that she may have been suffering from a delusion of being attacked. Critical opinion tends to favour Adela's hallucination by offering her sexual repression as evidence. Adela's cry of rape is projected as the sign of her repressed desire. But *A Passage to India* does not provide sufficient evidence for presupposing that Adela's musings on Aziz's handsome appearance should translate into sexual fantasy of rape. In spite of all these, one can notice a significant point. One can notice some textual references in favour of the fact that Aziz dislikes Adela's looks, whereas Adela likes Aziz's looks:

"Adela's angular body and the freckles on her face were terrible defects in his eyes,

and he wondered how God could have been so unkind to any female form (PI 61)".

Adela's attraction to Aziz is exhibited through this particular line "what a handsome oriental he was". Through a few lines later it is also expressed that "she did not admire him with any personal warmth, for there was nothing of the vagrant in her blood, but she guessed, he might that she has, may be unconsciously same kind of attraction towards Aziz. Here mark the use of the two words 'race' and 'rank'. It indicates that she is consciously aware of her own position and social rank. It's a common notion that the darker races are physically attracted by the fairer, but not vice versa. Though an inferior sex, but she belongs to a superior race. So it is not right on Adela's part to feel any kind of attraction towards a man who belongs to an inferior race. And most probably she tries to attribute her guilt to another in order to

disown such guilt. She tries to project her guilt into some other person.

There is common interpretation that Adela accuses Aziz because she was sexually repressed. Frigid woman suffers from sexual hysteria and that unattractive woman desire to be raped. Wendy Moffat says:

“first Adela is forced against a wall and roughly molested, then when the breath was upon her, she uses the field glasses as a weapon to push into her assailant’s mouth. She could not push hard but it was enough to hurt him ... she was strong (p. 76)”

“It has been found that Adela’s rage here uncharacteristic of her personality in the final version (June Levine. 92)”. Wendy Moffat again says:

“Certainly Adela’s motives are ambiguous. She seems to get joy from having a chance to victimize her attacker, but it is not uncomplicated revenge of having the tables turned. Most curious of all is her retort ‘not this time’. The attack incites a kind of passion in her, her diction implies that she desires sexual fulfilment in the form of a power struggle, ‘not this way’ but ‘not this time’. The enigmatic reply ‘not this time’ muddies our sense of what Adela fears and wants in this scene. She does not seem to be an entirely innocent victim. We might even interpret these words to mean that she is asking to be raped at another time (P. 76-77)”

Another important view is that Adela suffered about of sexual hysteria. “Her coldness disorients her as she enters the cave in Marabar, Pondering love and realizing, she does not love her fiancé. ‘Did she love him?’ – this question was somehow dragged up with the Marabar. Was she capable of loving someone? (Pi. 212)”. Upon entering the cave, a symbol of the unconscious, the instinctual, and of motherhood and fertility, Adela becomes unhinged, suggesting a rejection of sexual union. She breaks her engagement. She falls apart when her ascent to the caves with Aziz marks her anticipate the sexual act. The frankly sexual desire for union is absent from Adela’s engagement with Heaslop. Adela regretted that neither she nor Ronny had physical charm. She collapses when attempting to fathom her feelings and her fear of sex as she enters the cave, she is terrified by her inchoate feelings, which blend in her mind with the echo.

To describe the fact that Adela suffers from a kind of sexual hysteria, one may perfectly refer to a film directed by David Lean. In his screen adaptation of the novel, David Lean throws light on this particular matter. A scene shows her leaving the safety of the European compound to venture out on a bicycle alone. She chances upon an ancient Hindu Temple whose sexually explicit carvings arouse her curiosity and interest. The threatening

aspect of her sexual arousal is figuratively represented in the aggressive monkeys that swarm over the statues and scare her away. The actually descends to chase her. They are portrayed as violent by the sudden shift to kettle drums and dramatic brass on the sound track. She returns to Chandrapore breathless, pale and sweating. Immediately on her returns from the temple, she overturns her decision not to marry. At night she is shown alone in bed, thinking back on the erotic images she has seen at the temple. The film explains Adela’s experience in the caves in terms of her relationship with Ronny. In a flashback of Adela staring fixedly at Aziz’s silhouetted shape looming in the cave’s entrance, Lean repeats the image of her pale and frightened face after encounter with the monkeys.

There is still another sort of interpretation regarding this. It’s not that she was sexually repressed or suffers from sexual hysteria. Rather her hallucination is described in terms of Adela’s apprehensions about committing herself to a loveless marriage that is nothing short of a legalized rape. Since she enters the cave disturbed about her forthcoming marriage to Ronny Heaslop, she is forced to acknowledge her social status as a subject and thus to confront the material and psychological reality of what it means to be rape able. Actually the accusation arises from the unconscious level of her mind, borne of her panic and brooding over her coming marriage with Ronny. Her marriage to Ronny will give her the label of Anglo- Indian which she in her conscience detests. Her psychological condition on the eve of her entry into the cave is also related to facts of her experience. The truth dawns upon her that she does not love Ronny and that her marriage would amount to a forced union. The sexual element in this forced relationship will be a kind of rape. Brenda R. Silver says:

Adela’s entrance into the cave affirms a crisis of identify that is both ontological and Political coinciding with her doubts about her marriage and her perception that she lacks physical charm, it plunges her into consciousness of her place as woman, the place of sexual objectification, the place where being sexual object defines woman’s existence. Within this realm, her intelligence, her desire to know count for nothing within this realm, the refusal to accept her place, the refusal, for example to marry, constitutes a refusal to be within the norms culture imposes upon her. Like the flame in the Marabar caves, she would experience union (marriage) as a form of extinction, while the rapture generated by her subversive refusal opens the space for social and political strife. That Adela ultimately represents this consciousness in the terms of physical assault signifies both the materiality and the sense of

power lessness that accompany woman's objectification.

One can find that there are many thoughts which are repressed into her unconscious mind. These thoughts along with its incidental fear exhibits itself in a mystic manner.

CONCLUSION

Psychoanalysis is a science and when it is employed to literary criticism, the whole affair assumes the proportion of scientific exploration. Unless one is conversant with the essential of psycho-therapy, he cannot do justice to his work. This genre of criticism belongs to specialist sphere and the reader of this criticism requires to have some knowledge of psychoanalysis. This criticism is concerned less with the appreciation of literature than with investigating its motive.

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