

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Repressed Psychology in Doris Lessing's *The Fifth Child*

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By

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Letter of Recommendation

Mr. Mangal Bahadur Khatri has completed his thesis entitled “Repressed Psychology in Doris Lessing's *The Fifth Child*” under my supervision. He carried out his research from 2065/03/01 B.S. to 2065/08/27 B.S. I hereby recommend his thesis be submitted for viva voice.

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This thesis entitled "Repressed Psychology in Doris Lessing's *The Fifth Child*" submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Mr. Mangal Bahadur Khatri has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Chapter I

Lessing and Her Works

This research work is a study of Doris Lessing's thirty-fifth book *The Fifth Child* published in 1988. It explores the repressed human fear through the means of a horror story. The horrible description becomes a suitable medium to study the human fear of the unknown because it is human nature to fear about unpleasant future. So, she wrote this book to explore the human fear through the story of a couple – Harriet and David who, in the hope of securing a happy and safe future by having many children, unexpectedly give birth to a monstrous child who brings about destruction in their happy life. Lessing admitted pain in her attractive family life she created: "It's sense of disaster; I know where it comes from – my upbringings. That damned First World War, which rode my entire childhood . . . (14). Thus, this work of Lessing is the product of her tormented and frightened mind as she constantly feared for the unpleasant future.

Doris Lessing was born in Persia on October 22, 1919. Both of her parents were British. Her father, who had been crippled in World War I, was a clerk in the Imperial Bank of Persia; her mother had been a nurse. In 1925, lured by the promise of getting rich through maize farming, the family moved to the British colony in Southern Rhodesia. Doris's mother adapted to the rough life in the settlement, energetically trying to reproduce what was, in her view, a civilized, Edwardian life among savages; but her father did not, and the thousand-odd acres of bush he had bought failed to yield the promised wealth.

Lessing has described her childhood as an uneven mix of some pleasure and much pain. The natural world, which she explored with her brother, Harry, was one retreat from an otherwise miserable existence.

Lessing, unlike other female writers of her time, made herself into a self-educated intellectual. She recently commented that unhappy childhood memories seem to produce fiction writers: "Yes, I think that is true. Though it wasn't apparent to me then. Of course, I wasn't thinking in terms of being a writer then – I was just thinking about how to escape, all the time" (qtd in 12). The parcels of books ordered from London fed her imagination, laying out other worlds to escape into. Lessing's early reading included Dickens, Scott, Stevenson, Kipling. Later she discovered D.H. Lawrence, Stendhal, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky. Children's stories also nurtured her youth; her mother told stories to the children and Doris herself kept her younger brother awake, spinning out tales. Lessing's early years were also spent absorbing her father's bitter memories of World War I, taking them in as a kind of "poison" (Kaplan 350). Lessing has written: "We are all of us made by war," "twisted and warped by war, but we seem to forget it" (Kaplan 352).

Lessing left home when she was fifteen and took a job of nursemaid. Her employer gave her books on politics and sociology to read, while his brother-in-law crept into her bed at night and gave her inept kisses. During that time Lessing was, "in a fever of erotic longing" (Kaplan 353). Frustrated by her backward suitor, she indulged in elaborate romantic fantasies. She also wrote stories, and sold two of them to magazines in South Africa.

Lessing's life has been a challenge to her belief that people cannot resist the current trends of their time, as she fought against the biological and cultural

imperatives that fated her to sink without a murmur into marriage and motherhood. Lessing believes that she was freer than most people because she became a writer. She says:

There is a whole generation of women and it was as if their lives came to a stop when they had children. Most of them got pretty neurotic – because, I think, of the contrast between what they were taught at school they were capable of being and what actually happened to them. For me, writing is a process of ‘setting at a distance,’ taking the ‘raw, the individual, the uncriticized, the unexamined, into the realm of the genera.’ (123)

During the postwar years, Lessing became increasingly disillusioned with the Communist movement, which she left altogether in 1954. By 1949, Lessing had moved to London with her young son. That year, she also published her first novel, *The Grass Is Singing* (1950) and began her career as a professional writer. Set in Rhodesia, it charts with the theme of economy which is rare in Lessing’s works. Because of her campaigning against nuclear arms and South African apartheid, Lessing was banned from that country and Rhodesia for many years.

Lessing's fiction is commonly divided into three distinct phases: the novels with Marxist theme, which were written from 1944 to 1956, when she was writing radically on social issues. She returned to the psychological theme with the publication of *The Good Terrorist* (1985). Finally, she wrote on the Sufi theme – Islamic theme, which was explored in a science fiction setting in *The Canopus* series. She later converted to Sufi Islam, saying her life and Marxist worldview lacked a spiritual dimension.

Lessing's switch to science fiction was not popular with many critics. In this regard, for example, in *The New York Times* in 1982 John Leonard wrote in reference to *The Making of the Representative for Planet* that "One of the many sins for which the 20th century will be held accountable is that it has discouraged Mrs. Lessing . . . She now propagandizes on behalf of our insignificance in the cosmic razzmatazz" (3). Her breakthrough work, written in 1962, was *The Golden Notebook*. It is considered a feminist text by some scholars. Its theme of mental breakdowns as a means of healing and freeing one's self from illusions had been overlooked by critics. She also regretted that critics failed to appreciate the exceptional structure of the novel. In *Walking in the Shade* Lessing modelled Molly, to an extent, on her good friend Joan Rodker, the daughter of the author and publisher John Rodker. Lessing does not like the idea of being labeled as a feminist author. When asked why, she replies:

What the feminists want of me is something they haven't examined because it comes from religion. They want me to bear witness.

What they would really like me to say is, 'Ha, sisters, I stand with you side by side in your struggle toward the golden dawn where all those beastly men are no more.' Do they really want people to make oversimplified statements about men and women? In fact, they do. I've come with great regret to this conclusion. (10)

Lessing's fictions are deeply autobiographical, much of them emerging out of her experiences in Africa. Drawing upon her childhood memories and her serious engagement with politics and social concerns, Lessing has written about the clash of cultures, the gross injustices of racial inequality, the struggle among opposing elements within an individual's own personality, and the conflict

between the individual conscience and the collective good. Her stories and novellas set in Africa, published during the fifties and early sixties, decry the dispossession of African Americans by white colonizers, and expose the sterility of the white culture in southern Africa. In 1956, in response to Lessing's courageous outspokenness, she was declared a prohibited alien in both Southern Rhodesia and South Africa.

Over the years, Lessing has attempted to accommodate what she admires in the novels of the nineteenth century – their "climate of ethical judgment" – to the demands of twentieth-century ideas about consciousness and time (Green 426). After writing the *Children of Violence series* (1951-1959), formally conventional novels about education and the growth in consciousness of her heroine, Martha Quest in *Martha Quest* (1952), Lessing broke new ground with *The Golden Notebook* (1962), a daring narrative experiment, in which the multiple selves of a contemporary woman are rendered in astonishing depth and detail. This is about the relationship with each other and men. The major character Anna Wulf, like Lessing herself, strives for ruthless honesty as she aims to free herself from the chaos, emotional numbness, and hypocrisy afflicting her generation.

Attacked for being 'unfeminine' in her depiction of female anger and aggression, Lessing responded, "[a]pparently what many women were thinking, feeling, experiencing came as a great surprise" (Taylor 427). As at least one early critic noticed, Anna Wulf "tries to live with the freedom of a man" – a point Lessing seems to confirm: "These attitudes in male writers were taken for granted, accepted as sound philosophical bases, as quite normal, certainly not as

woman-hating, aggressive, or neurotic" (Taylor 427). So, in her writings, she explores feminist and cultural issues

In the 1970s and 1980s, Lessing began to explore more fully the quasi-mystical insight that Anna Wulf seems to reach by the end of *The Golden Notebook*. Her "inner-space fiction" deals with cosmic fantasies. *Briefing for a Descent into Hell* (1971) is a dreamscape, and other dimensions like in *Memoirs of a Survivor* (1974) and science fiction probe of higher planes of existence. She does the same in *Canopus in Argos: Archives* (1979-1983). These reflect Lessing's interest, since the 1960s, in Idries Shah, whose writings on Sufi mysticism stress the evolution of consciousness and the belief that individual liberation can come about only if people understand the link between their own fates and the fate of society.

Lessing's other novels include *The Good Terrorist* (1985) and *The Fifth Child* (1988); she also published two novels under the pseudonym Jane Somers *The Diary of a Good Neighbour* (1983) and *If the Old Could* (1984). In addition, she has written several nonfictions, including books about cats, a love since childhood. *Under My Skin: Volume One of My Autobiography, to* (1949) appeared in 1995 and received the James Tait Black Prize for best biography.

In this way, Doris Lessing, a Nobel Prize winning writer, has drawn sufficient critical attention from different critics. On 11 October 2007, Lessing was announced as the winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature on 1987, she is the oldest person to have received the literature prize and the third oldest Nobel Laureate in any category. She also stands as only the eleventh woman to be awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature by the Swedish Academy in its 106-year history.

The Fifth Child, on which the present research work is based, is a bizarre novel. In this book, she gives a fresh twist to an old idea and belief because Lessing shocks the reader by making her mouthpiece, Harriet's own child a monstrous. It recounts the havoc the birth of this monstrous child caused in what had been a happy, old-fashioned family, has caused a stir in the field of literature because of its element of horror. Margaret Moan Rowe clearly outlines a psychological division in Lessing's work between the world of the father and the world of the mother; between the visionary and the ordinary; between dreams and practicality; between imagination and common sense. She writes:

In the course of offering incisive readings of all her novels, Lessing resolves -- or refuses to resolve -- tensions between the paternal and maternal perspectives. Gayle Greene, in a more detailed set of readings, also notes the continual struggle in Lessing's narratives between the force of visionary imagination and the drag of quotidian reality. Throughout her career, Greene argues, Lessing has constructed texts that tutor the imagination -- turning it away from vain strivings for abstract knowledge or . . .

(19)

Carey Kaplan and Ellen Cronan Rose take *The Fifth Child* as "a masterfully realised psychological thriller, where a woman's repressed or denied aggression against family life is incarnated in a monstrous boy child" (46).

While comparing Lessing's *The Fifth Child* with Margaret Drabble's *A Natural Curiosity* and Ariel Dorfman's *Death and Maidens*, Trudy Bush says that these writers are writing from within a profoundly influential development in social thought of the sixties in the English-speaking world. Bush writes:

The works are written with an endorsement of a psychological determinism, which explains criminal or antisocial behaviour as determined by experience, either at the familial or societal level. The policy implications of this belief are that criminal is not the fault of the perpetrator, and that expenditure on social welfare, rather than on law enforcement, will result in a crime-free and domestically utopian society. (1)

Doris Lessing explores the domains beyond realism in *The Fifth Child*. By doing so, she invites us to look beyond what is normal and usual. She subverts the conventions of realism that leads her to focus on psychological aspects. In this regard, Catharine R. Stimpson comments: "In order to persuade us to cross over into domains beyond realism; to notice the 'not us' that we blindly wish were like us; to engage with the possibility of the presence of 'creatures different from us'" (28).

Although these above-mentioned critics have analyzed the novel *The Fifth Child* from various perspectives, they have not yet focused on the study of universal human fear of the unknown in it. Hence, this researcher seeks to examine this aspect of the novel.

The study has been divided into four chapters. The first chapter presents an introductory outline of the work, a short introduction to Doris Lessing and a short critical response. Moreover, it gives a bird's eye view of the entire work. The second chapter briefly explains the theoretical modality that is applied in this research work. It discusses an overview of psychoanalysis, horror in literature and fear factors.

On the basis of the theoretical framework established in the second chapter, the third chapter analyzes the text at a considerable length. It analyzes how Lessing explores human fear through a horror story. It sorts out some extracts from the text as evidence to prove the hypothesis of the study – *The Fifth Child* explores the universal human fear for the unknown consequences through the means of a horror story. And, the fourth chapter is the conclusion of this research work.

Chapter II

Theory of Psychoanalysis

A study of psychoanalysis and its practice originated in the late nineteenth century in the works of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939). This theory offers a distinctive way of thinking about the human mind and of responding to psychological distress. Psychoanalysis has travelled widely from its central European origins, and has evolved into a complex, multi-faceted and internally fractured body of knowledge situated at the interface between the human and natural sciences, and between clinical practice and academic theory. Notwithstanding critiques of its Eurocentric origins, psychoanalysis has been taken up in many different cultural contexts as well.

Along with the more general rise of psychological thinking, psychoanalytic ideas have had a pervasive influence on such areas of life as child-rearing, education and popular culture. Within the academy, psychoanalytic theory has been taken up most extensively in the humanities and more sporadically in the social sciences including human geography, where a distinct sub-discipline of psychoanalytic theory has shown tentative signs of formation since around turn of the twenty-first century.

As psychoanalysis has its base on psychology, psychology deserves some discussion here. The term "psychology" is defined as "the science that systematically studies and attempts to explain observable behavior and its relationship to the unseen mental processes that go on inside the organism and to external events in the environment" (Kagan et al. 13). If we go back to the past to see what psychology meant at the time, we find the famous poet and thinker Alexander Pope who defined psychology as the science that studies psychology

of man. The personal traits of man and woman are, no doubt, naturally different from one another but there are some common characteristics too. Most of the people can manage their emotions, frustrations, wild desires, conflicts and hardships of life. Such people represent the normal groups in the society. But there are few people who tend to deviate from normal traits and are marked by limited intelligence, emotional instability, disorganized personality and flawed characters. They often live wretched life. The abnormal groups of the society can be described as mentally retarded people.

So, Psychoanalysis is a technique of psychological studies of the psycho-sexual development of human personality, the unconscious mental activities and a means of treatment for neurotic patients. Freud comments:

The term "psychoanalysis" has three different meanings. It is, first, a school of Psychology that emphasizes the dynamic, psychic determinants of human behavior and the importance of personality. Secondly psychoanalysis refers to a specialized technique for investigating unconscious mental activities. Finally psychoanalysis is a method of interpreting mental disorders especially the psychoneuroses. (179)

The unconscious is perhaps the most fundamental and defining idea of psychoanalysis, though it has a much longer history. For Freud, only a small proportion of the human mind is knowable through rational thought. The greater part is outside conscious awareness and full of hidden dangers. It makes its presence felt in a variety of ways including dreams, slips of the tongue, the clinical method of "free association", and other actions the motivations for which are not discernible by, and are often contrary to, conscious intent. The

psychoanalytic unconscious acts as the repository for experiences, thoughts and feelings that are unacceptable to, and are repressed by, the conscious mind. The unconscious therefore exemplifies a means by which rational “human agency” is “de-centred” in the sense of not being the driving force of human action, an idea that has been highly influential in human geography.

Freud studied to develop a more reliable method to analyze and investigate the patients' psychic problems. He tried to let them go back into their past events which he called “free association.” In this technique, he let his patients relax mentally and physically to bring out spontaneous flow of reminiscence of patient. In his "free association" technique sometimes his neurotic patients gave account of dreams that belong to their retrospective agitations and Freud became able to cope with the psychoanalysis of his patients. Through “free association,” Freud accomplished an elaborate theory of dream analysis entitled "The Interpretation of Dream" in 1900. It became really a great landmark in the history of psychoanalytical method. In this regard, Robert S. Woodworth writes:

The forgotten experiences and unadmitted desires and attitudes that came to light in free association were so often of a sexual nature that Freud early came to emphasize the predominant if not exclusive importance of sexual difficulties and conflicts in the causation of any neurosis. Hostility motives and ambivalence (love and hate for the same person) also come to light but were regarded as arising from frustration of sex desires. From dream analysis he came to believe certain types of objects and processes. So there

were regular symbols and mother symbols and symbols for secret love or hate. (165)

Thus, Freud perceived psychoanalysis as a method of psychological investigation, a means of treatment and a theoretical psychological system. He made a systematic study of mind dividing it into different levels.

Division of Mind

Freud, the most systematic exponent of a mental theory, divides mind into three levels: the conscious, the preconscious and the unconscious or subconsciousness. The conscious is that part of the mind which provides immediate awareness, perceptions, thought or feelings of the mental events and memories. Consciousness is also a process or sequence of events. William James mentions it as "a stream of consciousness that means continuity of the process" (67). Consciousness constitutes the relationship to the environment. It refers to the experience of an object or event at the present moment. The preconscious mind is the storehouse of memories and wishes which can be recalled into consciousness. Those memories and desires which are dimly conscious are constituents of preconscious mind. It is a recalling process to consciousness.

He lays emphasis on unconscious mind too. The unconscious mind, according to him is the reservoir of buried thoughts, emotions, feelings, wishes and impulses that can be brought into consciousness. The unconscious is timeless and chaotic in nature, infantile and primitive. It is the dark side of the personality which has no concern with morality, reality, good, evil and norms of the society. The contents of unconscious come from two sources: animalistic feelings and strivings which have never been conscious and repressed wishes and thought.

George Bridges notes:

The nature of the unconscious, according to Freud, is dynamic. It consists of repressed childhood wishes which are never striving to express themselves. It is also as intimated above, sexual energy.

Freud calls it libido. The sexuality of the unconscious is, however, a perverse sexuality. (75)

These repressed desires – sexual and others – always try to come into the surface of the conscious. The unconscious wishes are extremely powerful and dynamic. They are not easily allowed to come into conscious awareness because the unfulfilled desires can damage one's self esteem and they express themselves symbolically in dreams, slip of tongue, mental conflicts and neurotic symptoms. Freud believes that the inhibited feelings and wishes of childhood remain influential as a part of active unconscious. This causes a person mental disturbance and they become schizophrenic and paranoiac.

Finally the subconscious is the bottom of the 'berg,' the part beneath the surface, which makes up about two thirds of the 'bergs mass. In the modern field of personal development the terms 'unconscious mind' and 'subconscious mind' are often interchangeable.

The main focus in the Psychodynamic school of thought was the subconscious mind and its effects. There are, according to Freud, natural stages of development with any maturing human, these include fascinations and conflicts of interests with the parents (yes this includes the mother and the sexuality of the individual) each of which leads to the maturation of the individual.

Freud predicted that if any of these stages aren't resolved satisfactorily, then there will be problems in later on in the individual's life. These problems

would have their roots firmly in the subconscious mind, and although they can be resolved through psychoanalysis, could have profound effects on the way the individual behaved with the subconscious mind directly imposing itself upon the conscious mind.

The notion of a subconscious in some branches of psychotherapy is considered to be the deepest level of consciousness, that individuals are not directly aware of, but still affects conscious behavior. They 'sink down' to subconscious. Handling 'all processes' means also that feelings (fear, drifts, passions, weaknesses etc.) where also 'processed within' conscious mind may block many feelings, but the subconscious mind does not. The subconscious mind seems to be comprised of and communicate through feelings and images. Because consciousness operates in short-term memory, and usually has no direct access to information deeply submerged, it becomes necessary to be able to access the subconscious to directly address and understand the nature and origin of some issues. By using a feeling or emotion as a guide, or affect bridge, the subconscious can lead the client and therapist to the origin of the issue in question as it stores and records in the subconscious. The more feelings, or the greater the emotional charge associated with an event, the easier and more clearly it will be recalled.

Division of Personality

In 1927, Freud introduced another important aspect, the structure of human personality into psychoanalytical theory. He makes three major divisions of personality: the Id, the Ego, the Superego. Each portion of personality has its own developmental history. But, here, we only concern with their functions and

interactions. The Id is the source of all psychic energies and the Ego and Superego develop out of Id.

The Id is a container of unconscious wishes and desires. In Freud's words the Id stands for "untamed passions" and is "cauldron of seething excitement" (5). The Id is the representative of primary-process or mode of thinking. It manifests itself in dreams, jumbled thoughts and intoxication, it has no concern with logic, time sequence, morality and social norm; it has only desire for immediate wish fulfillment. It is entirely guided by the pleasure principle and avoidance of pain. It is a reservoir for libido, unconscious, sexual and aggressive ideas which are originated in Id. Like the unconscious, it is disorganized, timeless and far from reality. In the Id, the contradictory or conflicting impulse may coexist juxtaposed. It lacks ethical judgment and social values. It is the depository of the innate instinctual drives. If unbridled, the Id would always seek immediate gratification of primitive irrational and pleasure-seeking impulses. It is seen at an early stage of development but it becomes dominant in adult personality structure of normal people. Thus, the Id is the underground storeroom of buried thoughts, feelings, desires and experiences that are repressed and prohibited to come into surface of adult normal personality.

The Ego is our ordinary social self that thinks, decides, feels and wills. It maintains all the worldly functions and makes them as realistic and rational as possible. It creates a balance between inner demands and outer reality. Some classic psychoanalytical theorists say that the Ego developed later out of the Id. But modern theorists note that Ego is as primitive as Id. It is director of personality whose functions are perceptions conscious thought, memory, learning, choice, judgment and action. It is conscious, partly unconscious in

contact with Id and the Superego. Page points out four functions of Ego; they are:

1. To satisfy the nutritional needs of the body and protect it against injury.
2. To adjust the wishes of the Id to the demands of reality.
3. To enforce repression
4. To co- ordinate the antagonistic strivings of the Id and the Superego. (185)

The Ego deals with sexual and aggressive impulses originating in the Id at the unconscious level. The secondary process is the mode of thinking that takes place consciously or preconsciously in reality principle and it has great importance in the Ego. The desire for immediate pleasure must be checked and it has to pass a long route to obtain pleasure in a proper manner. In infantile, Id is dominant and in maturity Ego rules the Id but there arises a constant conflict between them and in some occasion the Id always has a control over the Ego that creates some abnormality in individual's behavior. If the Id embraces the pleasure principle for immediate gratification, and the Ego comes to the reality principle to postpone the irrational and anti-social gratification. When a child becomes able to learn something he comes in contact with rules, regulations, morality, standards, values and codes of the society; this develops another aspect of personality called Superego. It is also known as conscience or the moral principle. Initially a child acquires his notions of right and wrong, dos and don'ts, good and evil from his parents. The punishment given to them on their acts develops negative values and the rewards as the positive. Gradually the peripheral culture and other social authorities enforce to mould the Superego. It

is mostly unconscious and partly conscious. It is also known as internalized parental codes. Thus, Superego is a censor which classifies all the functions of the mind. Blum expresses his view:

When the Superego prohibits expression of sexual or aggressive drives, the ego typically joins the Superego in opposition to the Id. Submission to Superego forces enhances a person's self- esteem. Resistance to them usually results in feelings of remorse and unworthiness. It is possible, though rare, for the Superego and the Id to be allied against the ego. In such a case the ego struggles against a feeling of pervasive guilt generated by the super ego. And the personality may be overwhelmed by severe depressive reactions. (6)

It is Superego which prohibits Id and ego to operate wish fulfillment and sometimes it was with both Id and Ego. Thus, Superego is the norms and values oriented judge of the human psychic personality.

As an emotional being, man possesses fear of many dreaded things. He develops different types of phobias as he has to undergo different unpleasant experiences in life. Psychoanalysis tries to address these phobias as well. The psychoanalytic theory of phobia is based largely on the theories of repression and displacement. It is believed that phobias are the product of unresolved conflicts between the id and the superego. Psychoanalysts generally believe that the conflict is originated in childhood, and is either repressed or displaced onto the feared object. The object of the phobia is not the original source of the anxiety.

Another psychoanalyst Carl Gustav Jung began as a disciple of Freud, his mature version of depth-psychology is very different from that of his predecessor. He considered Freudian theories too negative because of Freud's emphasis is not on the individual unconscious but on what he calls the "collective unconscious," stated by all individuals in all cultures. The instincts as the archetypes together form the collective unconscious which is positive as a creative faculty. Abram derives Jungian criticism in these words, "Jung regards great literature like the myths where patterns recur in diverse culture and expression of the archetypes of the collective unconscious" (267).

Here, Jung means primordial images are archetypal. For him, literature is not the libidinal wish-fulfillment but it is the collective unconscious of archetypes that is shaped by the diverse culture determines our unconscious and the literature in only expressed form archetype Hazard Adams prefacing Jungian essay, "On the Relation of Analytical Psychologies to Poetry" writes: "Jung thinks at archetype as symbols with meanings that can't be expressed except in their own terms, rather than as allegorical images that can be fully explained by analytical procedures" (783). Jung studies psychoanalysis in the archetypes revelations at the individual in their dreams.

Theory of Anxiety and Affects and Neuroses

Anxiety is at the core of the psychoanalytic theory of effects (feelings), and from the beginning of psychoanalytic thought has been recognized as central to an understanding of mental conflict (for it is through bad feelings that conflicts are felt and known). In his early work, Freud, in keeping with his early discharge model of mental function, considered anxiety to be a "toxic transformation" of undischarged libido. This failure of discharge could either be

physiological or it can arise from repression, as a symptom of the continued pressure of unacceptable desires, which lead to the "psychoneuroses" –hysterias and obsessions.

In 1926, Freud radically revised his ideas about anxiety, abandoning the distinction between neurotic and realistic anxiety, and the claim that repression causes anxiety. In this new theory, Freud distinguished two types of anxiety, a traumatic, reality-oriented "automatic" anxiety in which the system is overwhelmed, and a secondary, "neurotic" anxiety in which reprisals of these situations are anticipated, thus setting in motion defensive processes. "Automatic anxiety" is an affective reaction to the helplessness experience during a traumatic experience. The prototype for this experience lay in the helplessness of the infant during and after the birth, in which the danger proceed from outside, and flood a psychic system essentially unmediated by the ego.

The second form of anxiety originates within the psychical system which is mediated by the ego. This "signal anxiety" presage the emergence of a new "danger situation" that would be a repetition of one of several earlier, "traumatic states." These states, whose prototype lay in birth, correspond to the central preoccupations of different developmental levels, as the infant's needs become progressively abstracted from the original situation of immediate sensory overload to more sophisticated forms of need regulation capable of synthesizing the many elements facing it. These moments – loss of the object, loss of the object's love, the threat of castration, and the fear of punishment by the internalized objects of the superego—which are experienced serially during the developmental process, can reemerge at any time in a person's subsequent adult

life, typically brought on by some conflation of reality and intrapsychic conflict, as a new edition of anxiety.

This new way of conceptualizing anxiety is an outgrowth of Freud's late revisions of his theory with the structural theory and his formulation of the mediating agency of the ego, and it has the effect of shifting clinical work on anxiety into the realm of the ego. The correlation of the dangerous situations with developmental stages also suggests a diagnostic aspect to anxiety, with the earlier types of anxiety indicating earlier fixations. In the work of later theorists, the presence of the earliest anxieties in clinical work is thought to be indicative of pre-Oedipal disturbances in development, and of corresponding structural deficits in the ego.

A neurotic is a person who displays a mental state resulting in high level of anxiety, unreasonable fear and behavior and often, a need to repeat actions. If an individual's adjustments inadequate that they cause him/her chronic discomfort and interfere markedly with his efficiency in ordinary living; they may be characterized as psycho neurotic or neurotic. Dollard and Miller contend:

In neurotic, strong fear motivates a conflict that prevents the occurrence at the goal responses that normally would reduce another drive such as sex and aggression. This is called overt inhibition. The cues produce by the goal responses. This motivates conflicting responses such as stopping and avoiding. The reduction in fear, when the neurotic stops and retreats reinforces those conflicting responses. (47)

Neurosis is serious mental disturbance, which creates the disturbance of adjustment. Neurosis is marked by the degree of anxiety and it also hampers the social adjustment.

Likewise, Livitte Strauss also supports the problem of neuroses to create the problem of social adjustment. He presents that sex and hunger are also like the fear and anger which increase the anxiety level:

In the course of growth and development an individual has to learn a lot of fear, life is certainly not a placed stream for any one. The process of living is one of continual copying of circumstances and events that lest the defenses against anxiety. (199)

The neurosis also creates the fear and anger in a person's mind. Fear is an exclusive defense against anxiety but fear is obscured by repression. Result of repression of any drive produces the frustration which leads the person to alienation. Neurosis and anxiety disorder also create different types of adjustment disorders such as depression, frustration, aggression and deepest anxiety. On the other hand, free floating anxiety is like a symptom of depression and schizophrenia like disorder of genetic causes. A person has frustration that developed free floating anxiety due to parental loss and marital separation. The free floating anxiety often results in anxiety and depressive disorder. As Livitte states:

A person may unconsciously seek to return earlier development period as a way of escaping current anxiety. He/she may then begin to behave in way which characterizes an earlier period and which usually reflect less responsibility and greater dependency.

(56)

Neurosis and free floating anxiety creates the adjustment problem Sigmund Freud also contributed in psychoanalysis upon the human behavior. Sexual instincts also lead the person in different psychological problems be:

Sexual instinct develops from the fetal stage onward in oral and genital stage till adolescence when the past habits at childhood and even other normally accepted behavior in the early childhood encounter the social and cultural factors and lead to their virtual forgetting without getting a chance to be expressed. (232)

This forgetting is like a fantasy and repression and that creates the neurosis and free floating anxiety. This automation of forgetting is only conducive to the collection of these painful memories in the unconscious level at the mind and appears in the different symptoms and signs, particularly, regression, fixation and projection.

On the other hand Dollard and Miller hold that the repression is another form of protection and regression. Ultimately creates the problem of adjustment in society:

Repression is appeared in from at fixation, projection and regression. So repress in is a learned process to forget any bitter memories at unpleasant events. But such memories are put in storage in the unconscious at the mind and appear in the forms of different behaviors. (147)

Depression, frustration, aggression and anxiety disorder are responsible factors for creating the psychological problem of adjustment. When the person suffers from anxiety disorder such person suffers from schizophrenia and he can't create the social existence. So, he comes to think life is without purpose and meaning.

Anger and neurosis are one of the important causes to create the problem of social existence. Mostly, anger and frustration are created when he/she is unable to fulfill basic needs. Such strong motives transform into psychological problem that occur in emotional states. Psychologist Shaffer L. F. describes that:

When a person is unable to reach in original goal in such cases since the need persists, individuals do not usually give up their motives entirely but instead tend to make inferior or substitute adjustment. The person may remain in a tense and an adjusted state, showing anxiety and other varieties of behavior that commonly known as psycho neurotic or nervous. (177)

These entire psychological problems change the person's life and create the problem of adjustment in the society. So, frustration, aggression and fear are the key factors to create alienation from society, marital life and moral philosophy.

Representation of Horror in Literature

“The oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear, and the oldest and strongest kind of fear is the fear of the unknown.”

-- H. P. Lovecraft

Lovecraft readily admits that weird fiction is not for everyone, “because it demands from the reader a certain degree of imagination and a capacity for detachment from everyday life” (9). These facts few psychologists will dispute, and their admitted truth must establish for all time the genuineness and dignity of the weirdly horrible tale as a literary form. Against it are discharged all the shafts of a materialistic sophistication which clings to frequently felt emotions and external events, and of a naïvely insipid idealism which deprecates the æsthetic motive and calls for a didactic literature to “uplift” the reader toward a

suitable degree of smirking optimism. But in spite of all this opposition the weird tale has survived, developed, and attained remarkable heights of perfection; founded as it is on a profound and elementary principle whose appeal, if not always universal, must necessarily be poignant and permanent to minds of the requisite sensitiveness.

The appeal of the spectrally macabre is generally narrow because it demands from the reader a certain degree of imagination and a capacity for detachment from everyday life. Relatively few are free enough from the spell of the daily routine to respond to tappings from outside, and tales of ordinary feelings and events, or of common sentimental distortions of such feelings and events, will always take first place in the taste of the majority; rightly, perhaps, since of course these ordinary matters make up the greater part of human experience. But the sensitive are always with us, and sometimes a curious streak of fancy invades an obscure corner of the very hardest head; so that no amount of rationalisation, reform, or Freudian analysis can quite annul the thrill of the chimney-corner whisper or the lonely wood. Here is involved a psychological pattern or tradition as real and as deeply grounded in mental experience as any other pattern or tradition of mankind; coeval with the religious feeling and closely related to many aspects of it, and too much a part of our innermost biological heritage to lose keen potency over a very important, though not numerically great, minority of our species.

Man's first instincts and emotions form his response to the environment in which he finds himself. Definite feelings based on pleasure and pain grow up around the phenomena whose causes and effects he understands, whilst around those which he does not understand. The universe filled with them in the early

days -- are naturally woven such personifications, marvelous interpretations, and sensations of awe and fear as would be hit upon by a race having few and simple ideas and limited experience. The unknown, being likewise the unpredictable, becomes our primitive forefathers a terrible and omnipotent source of boons and calamities visited upon mankind for cryptic and wholly extra-terrestrial reasons, and thus clearly belonging to spheres of existence whereof we know nothing and wherein we have no part.

This phenomenon of dreaming likewise helped to build up the notion of an unreal or spiritual world; and in general, all the conditions of savage dawn -- life so strongly conduced toward a feeling of the supernatural, that we need not wonder at the thoroughness with which man's very hereditary essence has become saturated with religion and superstition. That saturation must, as a matter of plain scientific fact, be regarded as virtually permanent so far as the subconscious mind and inner instincts are concerned; for though the area of the unknown has been steadily contracting for thousands of years, an infinite reservoir of mystery still engulfs most of the outer cosmos, whilst a vast residuum of powerful inherited associations clings round all the objects and processes that were once mysterious; however well they may now be explained. And more than this, there is an actual physiological fixation of the old instincts in our nervous tissue, which would make them obscurely operative even were the conscious mind to be purged of all sources of wonder.

Because we remember pain and the menace of death more vividly than pleasure, and because our feelings toward the beneficent aspects of the unknown have from the first been captured and formalized by conventional religious rituals, it has fallen to the lot of the darker and more maleficent side of cosmic

mystery to figure chiefly in our popular supernatural folklore. This tendency, too, is naturally enhanced by the fact that uncertainty and danger are always closely allied; thus making any kind of an unknown world a world of peril and evil possibilities. When this sense of fear and evil, the inevitable fascination of wonder and curiosity is superadded, there is born a composite body of keen emotion and imaginative provocations whose vitality must be of necessity endure as long as the human race itself. Children will always be afraid of the dark, and men with minds sensitive to hereditary impulse will always tremble at the thought of the hidden and fathomless worlds of strange life which may pulsate in the gulfs beyond the stars, or press hideously upon our own globe in unholy dimensions which only the dead and the moonstruck can glimpse.

With this foundation, no one needs to wonder at the existence of a literature of cosmic fear. It has always existed, and always will exist; and no better evidence of its tenacious vigour can be cited than the impulse which now and then drives writers of totally opposite leanings to try their hands at it in isolated tales, as if to discharge from their minds certain phantasmal shapes which would otherwise haunt them. Thus Dickens wrote several eerie narratives; Browning, the hideous poem "Childe Roland"; Henry James', *The Turn of the Screw*; Dr. Holmes, the subtle novel *Elsie Venner*; F. Marion Crawford, *The Upper Berth* and a number of other examples; Mrs. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and *The Yellow Wall Paper*.

This type of fear-literature must not be confounded with a type externally similar but psychologically widely different; the literature of mere physical fear and the mundanely gruesome. Lovecraft views such writing has its place

as the conventional or even whimsical or humorous ghost story where formalism or the author's knowing wink removes the true sense of the morbidly unnatural; but these things are not the literature of cosmic fear in its purest sense. The true weird tale has something more than secret murder, bloody bones, or a sheeted form clanking chains according to rule. A certain atmosphere of breathless and unexplainable dread of outer, unknown forces must be present. (18)

In this way, he holds that weird fiction will always be with us because of the deep programming in the back of our primitive minds.

Primitive storytellers infused tradition with supernatural phenomena in ballads and tales. These tales told of alchemy, Jewish mystical beliefs, cosmic battles, esoteric druid sacrifices, Teutonic boreal forests, witches, and other nocturnal worshippers. Lovecraft notes that the gentlest Christian doctrines to the darkest, “most monstrous morbidities of witchcraft and black magic” exhibited an air of the supernatural during the Middle Ages (23). Lovecraft also considers *Beowulf*, the corpse-bride in *Phlegon*, the ghost of Sir Gawain in *Morte d'Arthur*, *Dr. Faustus* of Elizabethan drama, the witches in *Macbeth*, and the ghost in *Hamlet* to complete his survey of early horror literature. The appearance of gargoyles, mounted on the cathedrals of Europe, set the stage for the early gothic novel writers.

Lovecraft introduces us to Horace Walpole who ushered in the requisite damp, haunted castle of most gothic novels with his 1764 *Castle of Otranto*:

This novel dramatic paraphernalia consisted first of all of the Gothic castle, with it's awesome antiquity, vast distances and

ramblings, deserted or ruined wings, damp corridors, unwholesome hidden catacombs, and a galaxy of ghosts and appalling legends as a nucleus of suspense and demoniac fright. (26)

Add to this the assorted evil nobleman, persecuted heroine, and immaculate hero and the basis for an early gothic novel. Ann Radcliffe (1764-1823) deftly inspired dread with her choice of settings and small hints of the horrors to come.

The early gothic novel led the way for a spate of gothic romance writers such as Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* and Charles Robert's *Maturin Melmoth*. Haunted castles led the way to haunted monasteries and cunning clerics. Mary Shelley emerged with her classic *The Modern Prometheus (Frankenstein)* never to repeat her initial success. Shelly inspired thought-provoking discussion. She opened the doors for the quasi-moral, semi-gothic tradition of Robert Lewis Stevenson with his Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde to traversing the windswept Yorkshire moors of Emily Bronte in *Wuthering Heights*. Edgar Allen Poe is another horror writer.

While other writers of the day were imitating each other, Edgar Allen Poe developed a profound understanding for the human psyche and what terrorized it. Lovecraft divides Poe's tales into different classes including supernatural horror tales. Poe employed his knowledge of psychology in this latter group. While perfecting the horror genre, Poe also made popular the short story according to Lovecraft. *Ligeia* and *The Fall of the House of Usher* are among his best. American authors, Nathaniel Hawthorne, D.H. Lawrence, Ambrose Bierce, and Henry James can also be taken in the same light.

Chapter III

Exploration of Repressed Human Fear through Horror Story

In *The Fifth Child*, Doris Lessing invites us to delve into the unknown and unexplored area of human concern. In so doing, she gives a fresh twist to an old idea: what would our world seem like to an alien who finds himself among us, and how would we react to such a being. These questions offer a realistic, even if chilling, reflection of the bizarre world we live in. It is a dramatic and memorable, playing as it does upon the most ancient fear. It explores the psyche of human through the medium of a horror story as it sends shivers down our spine.

The story has been told from a terrified mother's point of view. Apparently, the mother Harriet stands for Lessing herself. Lessing has created unusual characters so as to substantiate the theme of human fear in this novel. The major characters Harriet and David, who are a couple, do not mix up with other people. Something always seems to possess this couple from the very beginning of their love and marriage life. Some unspecified and unknown fear haunts them. Lessing, on the first page of the novel, describes them as "someone conservative, old-fashioned and not to say obsolescent; timid, hard to please" (7). Because they behaved strangely, there was no end to the "unaffectionate adjectives" they earned (7). Other people could easily read their mind and see that there was something wrong with them. Something has taken possession of them. But in order to appear normal, they defend a "stubbornly held view of themselves, which was that they were ordinary and in the right of it, should not be criticized for emotional fastidiousness, a abstemiousness, just because these

were unfashionable qualities” (7). This shows that the couple has fear of the mass, something unpleasant and hidden in their psychology.

When the story begins, Harriet and David meet each other at an office party neither had particularly wanted to go to. At the party they keep themselves isolated around the walls where there are a few non-dancers. This couple hold, sort of, cynical attitude towards others. Lessing writes:

Harriet and David, standing by themselves, holding glasses – observers. Both had reflected that the faces of the dancers, women more than men, but men, too, could just as well have been distorted in screams and grimaces of pain as in enjoyment. There was a forced hecticcy to the scene . . . but these thoughts, like so many others, they had expected to share with others or anyone else. (8)

Instead of indulging themselves in merry-making at the party meant for entertainment, Harriet and David abstain from such activities due to their trepidation.

Harriet, from whose point of view the story is narrated, is an unusual character. Lessing describes her appearance and mood at the party:

From across the room – if one saw her at all among so many eye-demanding people – Harriet was a pastel blur. As in an impressionist picture, or a trick photograph, she seemed a girl merged with her surroundings. She stood near a great vase of dried grasses and leaves and her dress was something flowery:

“The focusing eye then saw curly dark hair, which was unfashionable . . . blue eyes, soft but thoughtful . . . lips rather too firmly closed. In fact, all her features

were strong and good, and she was solidly built. A healthy young woman, but perhaps more at home in garden?" (8)

Harriet's posture, mood, appearance and facial expression set her apart from the mass. She seems to be in obsession with something else. Something in her mind and heart distracts her; she seems to be haunted by some hidden mystery. Her 'unfashionable dark hair,' 'soft but thoughtful eyes', and 'firmly closed lips' are testimony to her nervousness.

Her partner, David is no different from her. Harriet knows his look of "watchful apartness mirrored her own" (8). In fact both of them share common interests. Both have found out who the other was Lessing deliberately questions, "So what was it about these two that made them freaks and oddballs?"(9). Lessing implicitly attributes to their attitude to sex. Their attitude to sex can be described as being awesome. David is not the kind of person who goes around sleeping with different girls. His former girl friend's promiscuity disgusted him and they broke off. As for Harriet, she remains virgin until her marriage with David. Her friends take her as "man-mad or nympho," (10) and they further comment that it must be 'something' in her childhood that's made her like this. Poor thing" (10). This 'something' suggests that great fear is implanted in her mind concerning sex, so she has phobia for sex. Harriet has sometimes felt herself 'unfortunate or deficient' in some way, because the man whom she went out for a meal or the cinema took her refusal as much as evidence of a 'pathological outlook' as an ungenerous one" (10). One of her friends who frequently visited Harriet's family commented, "Well, you're old-fashioned, that's all. And a lot of girls would like to be, if they got the chance" (10). But a sense of fear and insecurity disturbs her mind. "These two eccentrics", Harriet

and David talk as if they were “what had been denied to them both, as if they were starving for talk” (11). As they share similar temperament, they decide to marry. Harriet has had moderate childhood and she did well enough at school. She does not like to “appear more eccentric than she had to be” (11). As for David, he has had divorced parents, so what he works for “is a home” (13). David needs security, love and safety.

During their first wedding night they make love like hungry tigers without using contraceptives though they first planned not have children for two years. But Harriet is overwhelmed by his purpose – that was it, he was making love with a “deliberate, concentrated intensity, looking into her eyes, that made her accept him, his taking possession of the future in her” (15). During this act of sexual intercourse, David was able to some extent drive her fear from her mind. On the very first night, Harriet conceives. They plan to have a lot of children, “six children at least”, as they usually reply on being asked by Harriet’s and David’s mothers. One reason for having more children is their search for security for future, as they seem to be constant fear about something. Their in-laws who visit them take both Harriet and David as “rather mad” and “wrong-headed” (18). When they criticize, Harriet goes through a tough time. She becomes disappointed with herself, becomes sick and sleeps badly. The criticism triggers her fear factor. In the midst of fear, disappointed and sickness, Harriet’s first baby is born, which becomes a great source of happiness. It is with a “fierce possessiveness that Harriet liked and understood, for it was not herself being possessed, or the baby, but happiness” (24). This happiness, seemingly, means a lot to Harriet as it abates her fear for her insecurity for the time being.

In accordance with their plans to bear a lot of children, Harriet and David go on producing children on almost yearly basis until the fourth child Paul is born. Everything goes somehow all right so far. After this, their great fear begins with the conception of the fifth child, which they had not expected so soon. Harriet's instinct tells her that something which she had dreaded most is going to happen. Lessing writes:

She [Harriet] was frantic, exhausted . . . she was peevish; she lost her temper; she burst into temper; she burst into tears . . . David saw her sitting at the kitchen table, head in her hands, muttering that this new foetus was poisoning her. Paul lay whimpering in his pram, ignored. . . . Harriet lay weeping on her bed. 'But they must come, don't put them off- oh, David, please . . . at least it'll keep my mind off it. (41)

Harriet has never suffered so much a pain as this during four pregnancies before. At five months, feels severe pain in her stomach; most of the time she lies down with her hands pressed into her stomach, tears running her face, moaning from some "pain she would not specify" (48). This shows that Harriet suffers from more than physical pain which she can not identify herself. Apparently, she suffers from her own fear of something unknown and hidden. In order to lessen her pain, Dr. Brett gives a sedative which she thinks of as something to "quiet the baby" which she regards as the source of her unbearable pain (49). She finds something bizarre about this fifth baby. She had never before experienced such pain during the time of the delivery of four children. Her all fear is now in this about-to-be-born baby, which she finds enemy of her and the family. Lessing writes:

If a dose of some sedative kept the enemy – so she now thought of this savage thing inside her – quiet for an hour, then she made the most of the time, and slept, grabbing sleep to her, holding it, drinking it, before she leaped out of bed as it woke with a heave and a stretch that made her feel sick. She would clean the kitchen, the living room, the stairs, wash windows, scrub cupboards, her whole body energetically denying the pain. (51)

Though she physically denies the pain, she suffers from emotional or psychological fear or pain. This fear or pain makes her think of different possibilities of the cloned creatures experimented by scientists. She projects the baby inside her womb as the similar horrible creature. She fantasizes:

Her time was endurance, containing pain. Phantoms and chimeras inhibited her brain. She would think, when the scientists make experiments, welding two kinds of animals together, of different sizes, then I suppose this what the poor mother feels. She imagined pathetic botched creatures, horribly real to her, the products of a Great Dane or borzoi with a little spaniel; a lion and a dog; a great cart horse and a little donkey; a tiger and a goat. Sometimes she believed hooves were cutting her tender inside flesh, sometimes claws. (52)

This shows how dangerously she is obsessed with fear of this impending baby. She feels that she is “locked with the foetus- the creature” (53). This is nothing but the product of her tormented and frightened mind as she always dreaded to give birth to criminal and monstrous thing that would devastate her life. This is analogous to the author’s life and her fear.

Harriet is horrified to feel that the baby inside her womb is real monster, because whatever and however much she eats, she feels more and more hungry. The baby inside her devours anything Harriet eats. Out of hunger, Harriet is always

spooning in soup, and breaks hunks of bread into it. Her appetite was enormous, instable – so bad she was ashamed and raided the fridge when no one could see her. She would interrupt her nocturnal peregrinations to stuff into herself anything she could find to eat. She even had secret caches like an alcoholic's hoards, only it was food: chocolate, bread, pies. (54)

Her repressed fear of the unknown and hidden danger possesses her mind in such a way that she “lumbers over to turn off the TV set” in an abrupt manner when there is reporting of murder in a London suburb. (55)

Just before the time of birth, Harriet and her Dr. Brett exchange hot arguments as the doctor blames her for over complaints. But Harriet justifies her complaints as she says, “It's not you who is carrying this –’ She cut off *monster*, afraid of antagonizing him” (59). She then calmly but angrily and accusingly retorts, “Would you say I was an unreasonable woman? Hysterical? Difficult? Just a pathetic hysterical woman?” (59). When the doctor generalizes all her pregnancies, she frantically says that “it's not the same thing,” it is *absolutely* different”(59). She further says, “I don't understand why you can't see it. Can't you see it? She thrust out her stomach, which was heaving and – as she felt it – seething as she sat there”(59). In the meantime, the pain in her womb makes her think of horrible thoughts about the baby as she walks, strides and runs along the country. She fantasizes that she “took the big kitchen knife, cut open her own

stomach, lifted out the child – and when they actually set eyes on each other, after this long blind struggle, what would she see?”(59). Lessing suggests an answer to the question asked here that Harriet discovers or sees a real monster in the form of her baby. Then Harriet returns to reality as the pain begins nearly a month early and she experiences “strong wrenching pains, worse, she knew, than ever in the past” (59). She feels that the baby is fighting its way out. She feels badly “bruised” inside her and she imagines “one enormous black bruise” (59). The baby, then, is born, throwing everyone in real surprise, whom they give the name, Ben. The baby is described as:

He was not a pretty baby. He did not look like a baby at all. He had a baby a heavy-shouldered hunched look, as if he were crouching there as he lay. His forehead sloped from his eyes to his crown. His hair grew in an unusual pattern . . . His hands were thick and heavy, with pads of muscle in the palms. ‘He’s like a troll, or a goblin or something’. He was stiff and heavy. (61)

This passage shows what the fifth baby is like. The mother herself describes it as an “alien”, because it has neither cried nor shown any protest in its cot (62).

David regards the baby as “extraordinary or not ordinary” (63). When Harriet lifts the baby in the air, it “wrestles, fights, struggles and cries in his characteristic way, which was a roar or a bellow, while he went yellowish white with anger – not red, like a normal cross baby” (63). This happens when Harriet deprives it of the breast after it “sucks so hard” almost killing her. It leaves bruises all around the nipples. When she holds him to get up the wind, he seems to be standing in her arms, and she feels “weak with fear at the thought that this strength had so recently been inside her, and she at its mercy” (63). Harriet

becomes hypnotized to see the baby as there is repugnance. Lessing substantiates the theme by adding the phrase, “and fear?” frequently when Harriet feels repugnant (64).

Ben grows, to everyone’s dismay, to a real monster. Everyone, who try to hold him, shrink back by his “clumsy weight” (66). He takes in twice the amount of food recommended for his age, or stage: ten or more bottles a day. And he cries in an unusual way, that irritates other siblings. This forces Harriet and David to separate Ben from other children. In four months’ time, he is like an “angry hostile troll” (69). Harriet’s sister Sarah comments as she once holds Ben: “That Ben gives me the creeps. He’s like a goblin or a dwarf or something” (68). Everyone who hold the baby quickly hand him back feeling disgusted.

Harriet and David’s fear of the unknown culminates in the birth of their fifth child, Ben. After this, they dread to have intercourse fearing another Ben that would cause greater destruction in their life. Lessing writes:

But now they were both thinking; that creature arrived when we were being as careful as we know how – suppose another like him comes? For they both felt – secretly, they were ashamed of the thoughts they had about Ben – that he had willed himself to be born, had invaded their ordinariness, which had no defences against him or anything like him. But not making love was not only a strain for them both; it was a barrier, because they had to be reminded continually of what threatened them. (71)

Their fear now becomes confined within the activities of Ben who sends a chill down the spine whoever faces him or goes near him. Once Ben’s bending the arm of Paul backwards outside the cot proves that Ben is not an ordinary child.

This explains a sadistic attitude towards people, because when Paul's arm was badly sprained, Ben was "crowing with pleasure and achievement" (71). This makes the couple gather that Ben was going to "destroy the family life" (72). In fact, he was already destroying the family atmosphere. He always remains in his room, like a prisoner. He outgrows his barred cot at nine months. He never crawls; he pulls himself straight up on to his feet. He does not play with the toys. To everyone's horror, he bangs them on the floor or the wall until they break. He stands on the sill, gripping the bars, and the shaking them, and surveying the outside world, letting out his thick, raucous cries. Because of such strange activities of Ben, Harriet herself feels alienated and isolated from others and expresses her frustration and helplessness as she says: "I suppose in the old times, in primitive societies, this was how they treated a woman who'd given birth to a freak" (74). Ben creates such a terror in the house that he could silence a room full of people just by being there, or disperse them. People become forced to go off making excuses as "whomever he was looking at became conscious of that insistent gaze and stopped talking ; or turned a back, or a shoulder, so as not to have to him" (75).

Harriet and David's fear triples when Ben strangles a lively dog to death. To everyone's dismay, it is quite impossible a task for a small child to kill the dog. This incident creates a mystery and terror in the family. In the killing of the dog, Ben's "soundless laughter" reveals his evil and beastly nature" (75). Harriet fears that if Ben could "kill a big dog by himself, then why not a child?" (76). Surprisingly again, three months later, the old grey cat, Mr. McGregor is killed in the same way, though it has been kept out of reach.

As a mother, Harriet suffers more than anyone else at the hands of Ben. Everyday becomes a long nightmare for her. It seems that she wakes in the morning unable to believe that she would ever get through to the next evening, because Ben is always seen on his feet, and had to be watched every second. He sleeps very little as he spends most of the night standing on his window – sill, staring outside into the garden. If Harriet looked in on him, he would “turn and give her a long stare, alien, chilling: in the half dark of the room he really did look like a little troll or a hobgoblin crouching there” (76). Otherwise he would resound the whole house with his screams. Ben proves such a monster that Harriet prays to the motorists to run him over when he goes out wildly into the street. She was praying, “Oh, do run him over, do, yes, please” (77). When she holds him in her arms, he jerks like “a monster fish” (77). Ben not only gives his mother pain and fear, but also he inflicts bad bruises on Harriet’s mother’s forearm and cheek. He beats and fights with other siblings in the home. He comes to be known as a destroyer of beautiful and happy home or world. His act of ransack into the garden is symbolic of this:

he went out into the garden and stalked a thrush on the lawn, crouching down and moving on a low fast run – and he nearly did catch the thrush. He tore some primroses off their stems and stood with them in his hands, intently staring at them. Then he crushed them in his strong little fists and let them drop. (82)

He seldom talks. He neither says “Mummy nor Daddy, nor does he pronounce his own name” (82-83). He just says, “I want cake” (83). I want that. Give me that.” He wears brown dungarees and a brown shirt, both in strong material. Everything he wears has to be thick, because he tears his clothes, destroys them”

(89). Lessing makes him comparable to ‘a gnome’ with his clenched held-forward fists” (89).

David has already disowned Ben as his son. Harriet only has sympathy for Ben as she herself bore him in her womb. When their in-laws suggest that Ben be sent to some rehab or institution, Harriet feels little bit uneasy. But it Harriet who suffers whether Ben remains in home or in an institution. When Ben is sent to an institution in the North of England. But Ben hunts Harriet even in her dream. Her fear of the child either for the good or bad affects her life. Her fear leads or forces her to visit the child in the institution. When the people in charge do not allow her to the child, she becomes furious as she snaps, “ I am sick of being told I don’t understand this and that. I’m the child’s mother. I’m Ben Lovatt’s mother. Do you understand that?” (97). Finally when Harriet is allowed to enter the cells inside the institution, there is horror scene or atmosphere:

In the cots were – monsters – a baby like a comma, great lolling head on a stalk of a baby, then something like a stick insect, enormous bulging eyes among stiff fragilities that were limbs, a small girl all blurred, her flesh guttering and melting – a doll with chalky swollen limbs. A lanky boy was skewed, one half of his body sliding from the other. A child with no back to its head; it was all face, which seemed to scream at her – rows of freaks literally drugged out of their minds. (98)

This passage is the testimony to the horror story employed by Lessing to explore human fear that devastates human life. Harriet becomes more horrified as she enters the room where Ben is kept. Ben lay:

On the floor, on a green foam – rubber mattress. He was unconscious. He was naked, inside a strait-jacket. His pale yellow tongue protruded from his mouth. His flesh was dead white, greenish. Everything – walls, the floor, and Ben – was smeared with excrement. A pool of dark yellow urine oozed from the pallet which was soaked. (99).

This situation of Ben forces Harriet to take him back home. He starts screaming and shouting all at once when at home. The home is again filled with terror and fear. In order to deal with the repressed fear, Harriet decides to control Ben through “fear” (107). David takes the responsibility of other children – “The real children”, whereas Harriet takes Ben’s responsibility (109). Here, ‘the real children used to refer to other children besides Ben suggests that Ben is not a real child, by implication, he is alien or monster in the form of child. Harriet employs a youth named John for the care of Ben. However, in a zero – sum game that offers no consolation prizes, saving Ben destroys the family. Unable to tolerate him, friends and in-laws drift away. Ben’s siblings arrange to go to a boarding school, to live in other houses. All cast Harriet as a criminal – first for having borne the bruising, fearsome creature, and next for having decided to bear with him. Eventually, gangs of unemployed young men, themselves outcasts, accept Ben: “Ben had become the part of the group of young employed, who hung about on pavements, sat around in cafe’s, sometimes did odd jobs, went to the cinema, rushed about on motorbikes or in borrowed cars” (111). He becomes so attached with the gang that she knew he had become a pet or a mascot for this group of young men. They treated him roughly; it seemed to Harriet, even unkindly, calling him Dopey, Dwarfey, Alien Two,

Hobbit, and Gremlin. 'Hey, Dopey, you're in my way'. 'Go and fetch me a cigarette , from Jack, Hobbit'. But he was happy. In the mornings, he was at the window waiting for one of them to come and fetch him; if they failed him, rang up to say they couldn't make that day, he was full of rage and deprivation, and stamped bellowing about house. (114)

All this makes Harriet feel "sharp fear" (117). At home Ben behaves as if he is real beast. He raids the refrigerator, spills everything all over the floor and devours the uncooked chicken. Once Harriet saw him "tear the raw chicken apart with teeth and hands, pulsing with barbaric strength" (117). The whole house is filled and resounded with "tantrums, rages, despair, roars of No!, No!, No!" (118)

At school where Ben is put, he drags a bigger girl in the play ground beating her and "bruising and grazing her legs" (121). He breaks her arm. After this incident, Harriet threatens Ben to send back to the institution, because Ben hurts other people as well.

When it becomes very difficult to handle the child, Harriet consults Dr. Brett to arrange an appointment with a specialist, she says, "Please don't make me out as some kind of hysterical idiot" (123). This reveals Harriet's inherent fear that would make her foolish for her excessive or unreasonable fear, because at the level of psychoanalysis, the mother is suffering from some kind of emotional upheavals, she is obsessed with fear of something terrible, something unknown. In fact, it is the mother who has forced the child to be abnormal. It is the mother's projection that the child looks like a monster. This is proved when Dr. Gilly discloses, "I'm going to come straight to the point, Mrs. Lovatt. The problem is not with Ben, but with you. You don't like him very much" (124). At

this, Harriet becomes devastated as the doctor rightly sees the problem with her. She retorts, “Oh my God,” exploded Harriet, “not again!” She sounded peevis, whiny. She watched Dr. Gilly noting her reaction” (124). This shows that Lessing has tried to explore the human fear through the horror story. As she suffered from this fear, she projects it through character, Harriet. This is further proved by the doctor’s expression which Harriet notices as the doctor leaves. Harriet saw “on the doctor’s face what she expected: a dark fixed stare that reflected what the women was feeling, which was horror at the alien, rejection by the normal for what was outside the human limit. Horror of Harriet, who had given birth to Ben” (128).

But the tormented mind of Harriet sees Ben as monster, because she has already made up her mind to look at this fifth child with horror. She is, sort of, predestined to do so as she had mammoth fear of giving birth to someone devil. At the end, Harriet imagines Ben to be with other children. She fantasizes:

And the babies . . . the children . . . she heard laughter of small children, their voices; and then the wide shine of the table seemed to darken, and there was Ben, the alien, the destroyer. She turned her head cautiously, afraid to alert in him senses she was sure he possessed, and saw him there, in his chair. He sat apart from others’ faces, observing. Cold eyes? She had always thought them cold (156).

This is how Harriet imposes horror in her own child, as she always feared to give birth to a monstrous child. Whatever is related about the child, Ben is the projection of the tormented and troubled mother.

Chapter IV

Conclusion

No matter how gallant a person may be, there dwells the worm of fear inside the bravest of hearts and the noblest of souls. It is not fear as such but overcoming fear that matters a lot. If we fail in taming fear, it brings havoc in our life however happy it may have been. So, the presence of fear is a major hindrance in the path to happiness. The direct experience of wars, disasters and adventures are not only to be feared but the obsession and fear that haunts in the later life is a challenging task to be conquered. This is what the present study on Doris Lessing's *The Fifth Child* explores.

Lessing's *The Fifth Child* explores the repressed human fear through the means of a horror story. The scary description becomes a suitable medium to study the human fear of the unknown. She had a very disturbing childhood because she always feared something horrible things in her life. So, she wrote this book to explore the human fear through the story of a married couple – Harriet and David Lovatt who, in the hope of securing a happy and safe future by having many children, unexpectedly give birth to a monstrous child who brings about destruction in their happy life.

The book describes the changes in the happy life of Harriet and David which occur as consequences of the birth of Ben, their fifth child. The couple's obsession with some great fear leads them towards destruction of their happy life. Everything goes well until the birth of Ben though the couple lives in extreme sense of emotional upheavals due to fear of the unknown.

Ironically, they are desperately waiting for the final destruction which is to ravage their life. The child turns monstrous as he grows older as it easily kills

animals like dogs and cats. He even manages to inflict great injuries to bigger school children. He rarely smiles and speaks to others. He devours food like a devil as he swallows large raw chickens kept in the fridge. He becomes a being born to take away the life of its parents. Even in the rehabilitation center, Ben proves to be a real monster. His final comeback at home makes everyone's life miserable because the couple can neither abandon the child, nor can they give proper love and affection. They go through the constant dilemma as to what to do with the child. But they cannot take the child's life away as it is their own offspring. Nevertheless, the desire to kill the child is repressed in Harriet and David results into the terrible terror and fear. It is the awareness of the society and its gaze which forces them to live with split psyche because of which they are neither able to kill nor love the child. This is the psychic state that the research focuses on.

Thus, Lessing analyzes the psyche which is preoccupied with the fear of the unknown through the means of a horror story of Harriet and David. This shows how fear which reigns the human psyche devastates human happiness.

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