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HUMANISM IN R. L. STEVENSON'S THE STRANGE CASE OF DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE

M.Geetha, M. A., M. Phil., SET,
Asst.Prof. of English
A.V. C. College (Autonomous)
Mannampandal, Mayiladuthurai

Abstract

Literature reflects life. Life is a mixed combo of emotions and feelings. Works of the literature of varied nation project and forecast the need of the hour 'Humanity'. American Humanist Association defines "Humanism is a branch of life that, gives the ability and responsibility to lead ethical lives to personal fulfillment." Every part of the world has started to fear the threats like corona, cancer, and various unknown disease. These fast-spreading diseases stand as a hurdle to life on one hand and poverty, frustration, longing for liberty stand on the other. Basically man is a social animal. But the animal nature is controlled by the humane sense that every individual possesses. Humanity is found not only in human beings but also in animals. Dogs are evaluated for gratefulness. Crows are noted for the tendency of sharing. Feeling pity for others and stepping forward to lend helping hands to the sufferer are our inherent qualities. Generally in British literature humanity is found at a large. In Julius Caesar, Shakespeare makes the readers feel pity for the character of Caesar as well as Brutus and other conspirators. In Doctor Faustus, Marlowe organizes and impresses

the mind of the readers to the fall of Faustus. Likewise R. L. Stevenson in his novel A Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, makes us realize how gradually Jekyll comes under the spell of Hyde. Later, he repents for his action and finally seeks mercy through confession. Jekyll stands for humanism whereas Hyde stands for beastly qualities in man. This paper would explore how great masters of English have dealt with humanity in their works.

Keywords: Literature, humanism, pity, helping without expectation, mercy.

Introduction:

Literature is a form of artistic work in a written form. Literature reflects life. Life is a mixture of emotions and feelings. Different emotional outbursts are identified in and on the society and are expressed through literature. Man is a social animal. Emotions and feelings are common for human beings. Our society is designed in such a way that man and nature are

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inseparable. Man cannot make his survival without anyone's dependence. So man has acquired certain emotions and feelings from animals.

Emotions are what we feel. Simply they are reactions. Pity, fear, anger, joy, sadness, anxiety, shame, suffering, etc. are the basic emotions of man. Emotions have influence on how we live and interact with others. Feelings differ from emotions. They are purely connected with mental ability. Benevolence, compassion, tolerance, mercy generosity, magnanimity is related to humanism. Human values are ornaments which shine like stars in the personality of an individual who adorns those values. Spreading humanity is the need of the hour. Humanity means helping and caring others and forgetting the selfish attitude, which is, sharing unconditional love with each other. When these humane sense start to lack, the inhumane animal nature evolves in man.

R. L. Stevenson was a Scottish writer. He is best known for children's classic Treasure Island and the adult horror fiction, The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. The nightmare of Stevenson provided him an opportunity to bring out the fiction in a fantastic manner. This novel, The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde is the result of a close examination of the dual nature of man. It is an output of an inner struggle between good and evil with variations such as human versus animal, civilized versus animal violence. Here Stevenson through the character of Jekyll

has portrayed humanity wins though it faces hardships. Admitting the faults and confessing it, man needs a brave soul. That soul is found with Jekyll.

Discussion:

Freud's theory of personality deals with id, ego, and super-ego. Id is the primordial and inborn part of the mind that consist of sexual and destructive drives and obscure memories, the super-ego functions as a moral conscience, and the ego is the realistic part that negotiates between the desires of the id and the super-ego. Stevenson has focused his creation on the character of Dr. Jekyll and Hyde relating to Freud's concept of theory of personality.

Dr. Henry (Harry) Jekyll is a man of fifties. He is born into a rich family. He has a good education. Frequently he arranges for dinner parties. He is a well known, scientist, and a familiar personality in London. He is a lovable friend to Dr. Lanyon, the fellow physician and Mr. Utterson, the Lawyer. Their friendship is a long-lasting one which is evident in the course of the novel. Dr. Henry Jekyll is a kind-hearted man who helps everyone. These are the characters which each and every individual possesses. His readily helping tendency and knowledge of scientific research has accumulated many friends. Simply he is a man of decency. The servants of Jekyll love him much. They adhere to the orders of Jekyll. Utterson learns from Butler Poole that the servants have orders to obey Hyde. "We have orders

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to obey him". Also Utterson had a dreadful nightmare where he visualizes the figure of man trampled on a girl and approaches a sleeping Jekyll are found to be the same. He is a trusted friend of Jekyll. He wants to protect Jekyll. "If he be Mr. Hyde, he had thought, I shall be Mr. Seek." (Stevenson, 21)

Utterson makes enquiry with Jekyll about Mr. Hyde. He is not in a position to disclose to Utterson. He begs him to do a favor that he must fight to get the legal rights for Hyde. Further Jekyll says, "I have really a very great interest in poor Hyde" (Stevenson, 28). This is a proof to understand the caring nature of Jekyll. Later when Utterson discusses about the trial Jekyll shares a letter he has received from Hyde. Jekyll feels unworthy for his generosity toward Hyde. On hearing it Utterson feels that Jekyll is relieved from the hands of Hyde. Utterson, Dr. Lanyon, and Dr. Jekyll are once again united. This displays their friendliness.

Butler Poole is a loyal servant to Jekyll. He feels he has the sole responsibility to bring out Jekyll from the foul play what is Dr. Henry Jekyll is undergoing. When Utterson arrives Jekyll house after a call from poole we witness the love of servants for Jekyll. The servants begin to cry loudly at the very sight of Utterson. By that time Poole consoles them. Poole also wanders over London to get the original drug for Jekyll. All these confirm

the love, affection and the humane senses the servants have for Jekyll.

Edward Hyde is a man of deformity, pre-historic, and a cave man. He is an ugly, cruel, fleshy and aggressive in behavior. His look gives us an opinion that he does not belong to this world. He is a mystery to everyone. He wants establish his evil power over all. He is a black spirit. He enjoys violence actions. Mostly Hyde loiters in darkness. He is an output or outsource of suppressed evilness of Jekyll. Mr. Utterson wants to safeguard and protect the reputation which Jekyll holds in London. When Richard Enfield says the incident that Hyde trampling over a girl at early in the morning and Hyde offers a cheque which is signed by Dr. Jekyll. He is astonished and ponders to find out the relationship between Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. The physical appearance of Hyde is quite different from Jekyll.

Enfield describes, "He is not easy to describe. There is something wrong with his appearance; something displeasing, something downright detestable. I never saw a man I so disliked, and yet I scarce know why. He must be deformed somewhere; he gives a strong feeling of deformity, although I couldn't specify the point. He's an extraordinary-looking man, and yet I really can name nothing out of the way. No, sir; I can make no hand of it; I can't describe him. And it's not want of memory; for I declare I can see him this moment." (Stevenson, 12)

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Hyde murders Sir Danvers Carew for no reasons. We could say he has done to demonstrate his power and to release his evil. With a cane (walking stick) Hyde violently beats Carew and is dead. When Hyde comes to know that he would get caught by the police, he escapes. Dr. Lanyon has sent envelopes to Utterson stating the real condition of Dr. Jekyll. After the death of Lanyon and the narration of Poole, we could get the complete picture of the evil, Hyde.

Finally Dr. Jekyll admitted his faults. "If I am the chief of sinners, I am the chief of sufferers also" (Stevenson, 58). He wants to give space and activate the dark portion of his self. He manages to control. But gradually the drug which helps his to transform into Jekyll and Hyde has lost its control. Jekyll couldn't control his evil power. Evil has succeeded. Both Jekyll and Hyde are dead. We may feel pity for the pathetic condition of Jekyll.

Conclusion:

The great master, Shakespeare has created characters like Brutus, Cinna (the poet), Cassius, etc to show that people enjoy violence. Killing or murdering stand as an act to let go the evil off. Milton in his Paradise Lost has shown the nature of God, man and Satan. Man has to undergo many transformation or the different facets of life. The final end of a being should be a peaceful one.

"We think too much and feel too much little. More than machinery, we need

humanity; more than cleverness, we need kindness and gentleness. Without these qualities, life will be violent and all will be lost."- Charlie Chaplin.

Right from an early age, he has secretly occupied in unspecified dissolute and amoral behavior. Jekyll holds this darker side a spirit and undertakes experiments willful to separate his good and evil selves from one another. Through these examinations, he gives Mr. Edward Hyde into an existence, finding a way to metamorphose himself in such a way that he fully becomes his darker half. Hyde is the alter ego of Henry Jekyll.

Henry Jekyll's full statement of the case or the confession letter from Dr. Jekyll is an ample document to understand the humane quality that R. L. Stevenson needs to demonstrate. The novel forecasts the pure Victorian society. According to Freudian theory the thoughts and desires banished to the unconscious mind motivate the behavior of the conscious mind. Through Hyde, Jekyll has made an attempt to pass away his animal nature. And banishing evil to the unconscious mind in an attempt to achieve perfect goodness can result in the development of Mr. Hyde to one's character. Freud discovered that the general behavior of an individual was much driven by motivations arising from the emotional forces built on the unconscious part of the mind, and free will is only an illusion. According to Freud's theory of personality, human actions are as a result of

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mental and neurotic conflicts. It is in human nature, according to Freud, to be more inclined towards aggression, which demands the satisfaction of more antisocial instincts that drive towards the attainment of an individual's pleasure.

This leads to more conflict between individuals and society and, ultimately, the destruction of humanity. Freud argues that humanity cannot be inclined towards granting mercy since there was no much emphasis on the constructive human nature forces. There was no clear indication of human creativity and productivity in Freud's psychoanalytic theory of human development. The urge to the immediate satisfaction of human instincts results in conflict. According to Freud, the aggression is produced by the id, which is considered as the little devil from within that urges individuals to indulge in pleasurable activities irrespective of the consequent

results provided that some satisfaction is guaranteed (Freud, 1930).

Admitting the faults and confessing it, man needs a brave soul. That soul is found with Jekyll. He repents for activating his alter ego. Dr. Henry Jekyll succeeds to overcome his own beastly quality through confession. He punishes himself by locking inside the closed doors and his death and end of the character of Hyde affirms that humanity wins and which is the need of the hour.

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