

## The Origins Of Psychological Conflict In Classical And Early Modern Literature

**Kawaljeet Kaur<sup>1\*</sup>, Dr. Seema Verma<sup>2</sup>**

1 Research Scholar, Shri Venkateshwara University, Gajraula, Uttar Pradesh, India

kawaljeet246@gmail.com

2 Associate Professor, Shri Venkateshwara University, Gajraula, Uttar Pradesh, India

**Abstract:** This paper analyzes the portrayal of mental health, emotional turmoil, and the inner conflicts of characters in notable literary works across different periods. It focuses on the impact of various psychological theories, such as Freudian psychoanalysis and existentialist psychology, on character development and plot construction. Repression does not eradicate our anxieties, agonies, and urges; rather, it empowers them by enabling them to shape our present experience. Under a related process known as Sublimation, the suppressed content is elevated to a higher level or camouflaged as something honorable. Oedipus disdained the gods' oracles and prophesies. The more skilled the artist is, the more realistic and engaging the characters, plot points, and conflicts may be, and the more the reader will be captivated by them because of the illusion of authenticity.

**Keywords:** Psychological, Conflict, Literature, repression and classical.

### INTRODUCTION

A distinguishing characteristic of Freud's investigations is his ascription of a crucial function to the unconscious in the lives of human beings. The unconscious serves as the storage body for traumatic events, emotions, unacknowledged wants, phobias, sexual impulses, unsolved conflicts, and so on. The formation of this unconscious occurs throughout early childhood, when painful psychological experiences are eliminated from the conscious mind, a phenomenon referred to as "repression" by Freud. Repression plays a vital role in the functioning of the unconscious mind. A persistent fascination in modern literary studies has been in the unconscious mind and the concept and consequences of repression, frequently intertwined with discussions on sexuality.

Repression does not eradicate our anxieties, agonies, and urges; rather, it empowers them by enabling them to shape our present experience. Under a related process known as Sublimation, the suppressed content is elevated to a higher level or camouflaged as something honorable. For example, sexual desires may be transformed into profound religious yearnings. A similar neologism is a defensive mechanism, which is a psychological process or strategy used to prevent uncomfortable acknowledgment or recognition. An example commonly recognized in

this context is the Freudian slip, referred to as the "parapraxi" by Freud.

There are numerous influential literary works that touch on psychological themes. Some psychological aspect can be found in nearly all literary works. Both the interior workings of the mind and its outward manifestations are included under the broader field of psychology. The writer focuses on the inner life of the character, including his thoughts, emotions, and feelings, rather than the person's behavior on the outside, while discussing psychology in literature. A character's inner life—their wants, thoughts, emotions, and feelings—are the primary topics of a psychological book.

In its widest meaning, a "psychological novel" may be any narrative piece of fiction that places a heavy focus on complicated characters. Fictional tendencies that include psychological elements are associated with literary currents such as literary modernism, nineteenth-century psychological realism, and stream-of-consciousness. And some narrative devices, including free indirect speech and inward monologue, are often used in psychological novels. The psychological and emotional dimensions of the characters are the main points of focus.

## **FATE, FREE WILL, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CONFLICT IN ANCIENT TRAGEDY**

Oedipus Tyrannus, Oedipus the King, and many other titles have been given to Sophocles' Oedipus Rex. The genius behind it created an epochal tragedy that reflects the boundless creativity of ancient Athens. It explores the ultimate connection between humans and the cosmos and delivers a shocking blow to conventional moral reasoning. Tragedies, more so than epics or any other genre, must deal with ultimate, according to T. R. Henn, "It poses moral questions since it cannot resolve legal disagreements".

Any discussion of tragedy by critics must take Oedipus Rex's structure into account. By showing his characters' reactions to stress, Sophocles brings his characters to a human level. Through the age-old story of Oedipus, he both constructs and addresses the inexorable enigmas of human existence. Says Chong-Gossard with precision:

As an institution, the theatre allowed males to publicly accept the 'other' via witnessing or portraying it. As we hold on to the idea that a legendary Oedipus really did descend from his throne to his sword, we are really participating in a dramatic play get a deeper understanding of the power of theatre to inspire positive transformation in our collective human experience.

Tragedians have long piqued the interest of critics who want to classify them as "most religious" or "least religious" (etc.). The moral or immoral actions of the character, as seen through the playwright's interpretation of modern norms, form the foundation of this categorization. If the audience's religious views are compatible with the playwright's, then the play's characters' portrayal of the link between crime and punishment must be correct. Among the most significant ideas to the Athenians of the fifth century were perjury (pollution) and asylum (purification), both of which were emphasized and interpreted by Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides within the context of preexisting theatrical conventions. Tragedians also drew on these religious ideas to flesh out their tragic protagonists and heighten the audience's sad perception.

Playwrights in ancient Greece took use of public misconceptions about mythology and folklore to great literary and dramatic effect in their tragedies. The playwright made an effort to incorporate social, political, and religious ideas and ideals into tales from the mythological past. For today's readers, this is an important piece of information. It is said by Bernard Knox that, "The character of Oedipus is the character of the Athenian people.

Oedipus, whose plot Sophocles chose, attempted to evade the fulfilment of Apollo's prophesy. Oedipus disdained the gods' oracles and prophesies because he falsely believed he had triumphed. But in the end, he discovered—much to his dismay—that he had fulfilled the prophesy long before. In ancient Greek religion, the oracles played a key role. They are also quite important to the plot of this drama. Despite the oracle's continued popularity throughout Sophocles' time, it was far from revered due to its reputation for providing Athens with unfavorable outcomes. Unless one assumes that the chorus's perspective automatically represents Sophocles' own, it is difficult to deduce Sophocles' personal attitude towards the oracles from Oedipus Rex.

## **PSYCHOLOGICAL TURMOIL AND EXISTENTIAL INQUIRY IN SHAKESPEARE**

William Shakespeare's famous tragedy "Hamlet" explores the mysterious inner workings of the human mind. As he grapples with several moral quandaries and internal struggles, Prince Hamlet embodies this intricacy. We may make sense of Shakespeare's deft handling of "Hamlet" by analyzing its existential themes, the character of Hamlet, and the play's themes of insanity and lunacy. The internal conflict between Hamlet's duties and his morals reveals his complicated nature. Even though he feels compelled to get revenge for his father's death,

Hamlet's moral compass warns him against it. An internal conflict arises as a result of this dispute for Hamlet.

Because of its massive scale, intricate narrative, and deep examination of the human mind via poetry and prose, *\*Hamlet\** is held in the greatest regard in the Western canon. We are led on a trip into the depths of doubt, grief, rage, and, finally, the issue of sanity in this psychological drama by the protagonist's inner struggle. Ultimately, Hamlet's depressing spiral into lunacy propels *\*Hamlet\** as a tragic drama.

Even after two months have passed after his father's death, Hamlet is still hurting from his mother Gertrude's treachery in the play's prologue, when she married Claudius, the heir apparent. After receiving word of Claudius's terrible deed via his father's spirit, Hamlet sets off on a mission for vengeance, which only serves to deepen his sentiments of loss and betrayal.

On the other hand, Hamlet's predicament is about more than simply getting even. His inner anguish is indicative of a contemplative mind preoccupied with big issues and moral conundrums. Paralysis by analysis and a strong desire for justice weigh him down, as do his thoughts about death and life's meaning, and he remains undecided as a result. Also, as Hamlet tries to make sense of the enormous job at him, his mental health deteriorates. Because of his mental illness, it becomes hard to tell the difference between the truth and lies. Some people intentionally mislead themselves, which makes us wonder what it is to be sane and what types of mental struggles can lead people to madness.

Shakespeare expertly portrays Hamlet's inner anguish via soliloquies. His famous line, "To be or not to be," perfectly captures the existential struggle that drives his character. This sad contemplation on life and death, which avoids the question of whether one should seek the forgetting of death or face the sorrow of life, highlights the precariousness of human existence and the immense significance of awareness as an ultimate goal.

## **THE INTERNALIZATION OF MORALITY AND DUTY IN THE RISE OF THE NOVEL**

Certain parts and incidents in Richardson's *Pamela* are repeated, which create an eerie impact. These include the protagonist's terrifying surroundings and her master's secret background. In the famous masquerade ball scene, Richardson's characters' costume choices and Pamela's

master's cryptic language suggest a connection to the characters' inner thoughts and feelings, which aligns with Freud's idea of focus. "Anxiety and Ego Defence Mechanisms" and the "Tripartite Psyche" are two Freudian notions that are explored in this study. One of Richardson's many accomplishments as an 18th-century literary giant were popularizing what would become known as the epistolary novel. There was a French translation of Pamela because of how enchanting it was when first published; the book went on to become a best-seller. Two books that are loosely related might be seen as making up Pamela. Anxieties of a young maidservant girl navigating the tiered society of 18th-century England are shown in the first two books, Pamela. In the two volumes that follow, beginning with *Pamela in Her Exalted Condition* (1741), the protagonist struggles to adapt to her new social position as a result of her marriage to a member of the nobility.

Even though Samuel Richardson only spent fourteen years of his life penning seminal books, he remained heavily involved in the printing business all through his entire life. Richardson was first successful in the printing industry and did not begin writing novels until much later in life. He learnt about current events via publishing the House of Commons' parliamentary discussions. Readers are able to directly access the ebb and flow of characters' awareness without the intrusion of hindsight via Richardson's use of the epistolary style.

## **SIGMUND FREUD'S THEORY**

Human nature, interpersonal dynamics, and societal and economic conditions were all profoundly affected by the tumultuous events that occurred in the twentieth century. Anxiety, self-splitting, and persecution fears were major factors in the emergence of psychoanalysis, there are two parts to the unconscious: its descriptive character and its dynamic nature. Psychoanalysis mainly focusses on the latter. Clinical phenomena like resistance and transference, which show up in dreams and fragmented memories, provide credence to the idea that the dynamic unconscious is a driving force behind mental conflicts.

Lapsley and Stey state that there is a topographical model of the mind that is comprised of the conscious and unconscious aspects. Internal conflicts arise when the conscious ego's regulating forces collide with the repressed and prohibited ideas and impulses stored in the unconscious mind. Irrational and existing outside of time, the contents of the unconscious continue to seek ways to be expressed and released. One of Freud's famous models of the

human mind, the tripartite model, was revealed in 1923. This paradigm proposes that there are three separate aspects of the mind, each with its own set of principles and goals.

## **A FREUDIAN ANALYSIS IN RICHARDSON'S PAMELA**

Anxiety of the Characters and Their Defense Mechanisms in Pamela: Throughout the book, it is clear that Squire B's reluctance to get into close relationships stems from his crippling dread of being abandoned. His persistent attempts to have Pamela as his mistress stem from painful experiences in his past, such as his mother's death, a failed affair with Sally Godfrey, and his former way of life. Unbeknownst to him, Mr. B. believes that maintaining emotional distance is essential to his well-being. Lady B's death sets the stage for Squire B's blossoming romance with his mother's favorite maid. Despite this, he has no plans to tie the knot, and his fear of rejection from both his family and his fellow upper-classmen is a major factor in his reluctance to do so. To satisfy his inclinations and go on to other relationships, he would rather maintain Pamela as his mistress.

In contrast to Richardson's simple depiction in the book, points out that Pamela's complicated socioeconomic background confuses the idea of marriage between an impoverished maid-servant and her noble-born master. The gentry were admired and despised in eighteenth-century England due to the high value of social position. Because of his keen awareness of this social dynamic, Mr. B. has no desire to risk losing his status or becoming a pariah among the aristocracy or even his own family by being involved with a lowborn girl like Pamela. For this reason, he turns to projecting his thoughts onto Parson Williams when he develops an obsession with Pamela. To save his country estate and himself any possible shame, he writes a letter to Pamela's father in which he fabricates a tale about Pamela having an affair with a young priest. Shariat Kashani states that projection is a defense mechanism that people use when they attempt to place their worries, disputes, and anxieties on another person or group.

The goal of this technique is to find someone else to blame for one's bad feelings, actions, and unclear impulses. In his letter to Mr. Andrews, Mr. B. expresses his misgivings about Parson Williams, writing, "I believe her very honest and very virtuous; but I have also found out that she is carrying on a sort of correspondence, or love affair, with a young clergyman, whom I hope to provide for in time; but who, at present, is destitute of any Subsistence but my favor..." as an example. This is why I temporarily diverted her attention away from him.

## THE INTERNAL STRUGGLES OF PAMELA AND HER DEFENSIVE MECHANISMS

Pamela's low self-esteem and dread of closeness cause her to forgive too easily. According to Tyson, a woman's infatuation with a guy who is frightened of intimacy is usually a reflection of her own fright of closeness; she may even appreciate him for this same reason—that he doesn't challenge her boundaries. Even though she knows B. doesn't want any real emotional connection or loyalty, the heroine struggles with a dread of intimacy throughout the book. The idea that she can shield herself from danger by accepting his marriage proposal is appealing to her base instincts. The religious background and parental ideals that shape Pamela's superego also contribute to her poor self-esteem, which manifests as her tendency to forgive B.'s previous crimes and continuing misbehavior to an exaggerated amount. She thinks, subconsciously, that she is unworthy of preferential attention.

"Reality Anxiety" happens when a person feels threatened by something that exists in the actual world, as explained by Nye. Dangerous scenarios and realities are faced by humans in these situations. Anxiety is a protective mechanism that alerts us to potential threats; nevertheless, it might backfire if we aren't prepared to deal with them. Where are Pamela's honor and moral principles? She is in a similar jam.

Hysteria sets in for protagonist Pamela as a result of her experiences, which include B's frequent sexual assaults, her solitary imprisonment in Lincolnshire under Mrs. Jewkes's careful eye, and her developing feelings for her master. The heroine's bravery wavers at times, as Doody narrates, such as when she is scared of two cows while trying to flee Lincolnshire. this scene shows that "the obstacle to Pamela's escape resides within herself," since the heroine thinks about Mr. B and Mrs. Jewkes whenever she sees cows. Put another way, Richardson reveals the complexities of her mental health and the struggles she faces within. Hallucinations and visual distortions impair her discernment and escape attempts as a result of her severe fear about reality.

One of the protagonist's inner struggles that she often attempts to hide is her growing sexual desire for her master. Her superego is influenced by her religious background and moral principles, which are at odds with her emotions and ideas.

## **PAMELA'S DEFENSE BY WRITING HER LETTERS**

Pamela finds that writing helps her deal with and control her overwhelming emotions and ideas. When she's going through a tough time, she goes to her closet and starts writing. As a means of self-rescue, Pamela finds solace in penmanship.

According to J.W. Fisher Pamela's letters and diary entries reveal her inner life. In her work, she captures the essence of the event by truthfully expressing her instant thoughts, conflicted emotions, and acute stress. The places she writes about in her letters have deeper psychological meaning. For instance, she starts to dread going to the Bedfordshire home wardrobe room since that's where her master tried to sexually abuse her. But when she is taken prisoner at Lincolnshire House, her closed wardrobe becomes her haven.

Pamela finds solace in processing her experiences via writing, which also helps her temporarily overcome her concerns. She finds solace in her letters, which provide a safe haven for her to express herself and work through her struggles.

When the heroine's mind starts to wander, she finds refuge in her closet and takes up writing as a means of expressing herself. In the time leading up to her expected consummation, Pamela finds solace in her closet, where she entertains herself and calms her worried thoughts with a pen and ink. Additionally, she writes to Miss Darnford about how she finds writing to be a calming and distracting activity, which she uses to avoid thinking about her spouse.

## **AT FIRST, SHE IS AFRAID TO ACCEPT THIS WRITING PROJECT**

The reason Pamela is hesitant to embrace the Lockean endeavor at first, according to Diane Monique Harris, is because she is afraid of coming out as arrogant if she does "literary coupling with Locke." She frets about writing beyond her perceived social status for the same reason she fretted over marrying B., who was further in her social class. Writing about such weighty topics to B., who she regards as a valued person, she admits her fear of venturing outside her comfort zone.

Pamela commits herself fully to the writing enterprise when she gets past her worries and anxiety. As the story progresses, she realizes that her letters will be read by many people. So, she is careful to create a "textual body" that may be shared among readers without making her feel embarrassed. She returns to her earlier, more natural, and uninhibited writing style as a

result of this realization. While she acknowledges that B.'s family is her main audience, she tells him that she will also be presenting her literary progeny to the world, following in the public work of Mr. Locke.

### **THE TRIPARTITE PSYCHE IN PAMELA**

The portrayal of the tripartite mind in Pamela is crucial to comprehending the character's inner emotions. The three components of the psyche, as proposed by Freud and reflecting various facets of human conduct and character, are the id, the ego, and the superego. All three of these factors are present in Pamela's situation. She seeks instant pleasure and satisfaction due to her unconscious needs and instincts, which are represented by the id. As an example, her id is on display when she finds herself more attracted to Mr. B, despite his dubious behavior. However, Pamela's ego is her conscious self and acts as a go-between for her id and the limitations of reality. She fights the moral and social pressures to conform to society's standards while still pursuing her own interests throughout the book. Her ego is on display in the conflict between her moral compass and her feelings for Mr. B.

As the story's heroine neared puberty, she served Lady B. beginning when she was twelve years old, and she slowly came to terms with her inclinations. But when Lady B. passed away, she had to deal with several tough events that made her conflicted between her society standards and her id, her instincts. According to research, Pamela's hyperactive superego causes her to feel guilty and ashamed on a regular basis, and this problem manifests itself throughout the book.

Parents, according to Nye, are representatives of society who have their own standards for what constitutes good and bad mental states, feelings, and behavior's. Moral principles are not developed in a vacuum; other adults in a household often have a role as well. Most families pass on their traditions and social mores to their offspring. The superego, in Freud's view, is responsible for internalizing the moral principles instilled in us by our parents.

The protagonist's parents have a major impact on how her superego develops. According to Dussinger, the parents play a mostly supporting role in the story and don't become too involved. In order to provide an example for Pamela to follow, Andrews stresses the importance of honesty and ethics right from the start. She should be careful of her master's plans, they warn her. Because she is too young to understand the difference between her new employer and her former mistress, our little heroine sees no need to question her master's

actions. Because of this, she has a hard time understanding her parents' worries and feels conflicted by different types of authority.

The puritanical views of Pamela Andrews' parents are strongly inculcated in her, shaping her superego. Regarding this matter, Watt elucidates that Puritanism disapproved of ideals of romantic love but gave spiritual importance to the bond between spouses in marriage. While Roman Catholicism valued celibacy highly, Protestantism idealized marriage. Due to the intrinsic corruption of man's physical nature resulting from the inherited demons from the Fall, Puritanism firmly forbade any sexual acts that did not include marriage. Therefore, virtue was seen to be the same as controlling one's impulses.

The brutal reality that servant girls in eighteenth-century England endured is brought to light by Watt . Due to their usual enslavement to their employment until marriage, these young ladies often had difficult lives. Many bosses went so far as to outright ban their subordinates from getting married. There was a dramatic spike in the number of single maids in London due to these economic circumstances. Marriage was a major focus for girls from lower- and middle-class families since it was such a difficult and frustrating task. The only way out of slavery, as Pamela ultimately decided, was to marry into the family of the owners.

## **CONCLUSION**

The more skilled the artist is, the more realistic and engaging the characters, plot points, and conflicts may be, and the more the reader will be captivated by them because of the illusion of authenticity (Novikov). Truth was something that Tolstoy was deeply preoccupied with; in his book *A Confession*, he defines truth in a variety of ways. "Truth" means "everyday life" to him at first, then "death" to him, and eventually "faith" to him Repression does not eradicate our anxieties, agonies, and urges; rather, it empowers them by enabling them to shape our present experience. Under a related process known as Sublimation, the suppressed content is elevated to a higher level or camouflaged as something honorable. Any discussion of tragedy by critics must take *Oedipus Rex*'s structure into account. By showing his characters' reactions to stress, Sophocles brings his characters to a human level.

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