The Evil for Evil Cycle: Sound − Echo − Bang

With reference to Selected Novels of Shobhaa D'e

A Research Paper by

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Key Words-

1) Nymphomania – It is a term used for hyper sexuality. The term was used for women. The lady with nymphomania may either harass the partner with high sexual cravings or may turn to adultery if not satisfied by the partner. Nymphomania leads to disturbance in relationships. The new term for the same is compulsive sexual behavior disorder.

2) Resentment – Complex multilayered emotion that is result of suppressed anger, disgust, disappointment etc. If suppressed for a longer time, the person may either turn depressed or violent.

3) Primary and Secondary Emotions – Primary emotions are real and immediate emotions. They are aroused with reference to situation. Secondary emotions are cognitive emotions which come later after primary emotions.

4) Narcissus and Echo – The two are famous characters of Roman mythology. Narcissus stands for self-centered arrogant and rude nature. Mythological character Echo used to just repeat spoken words. Here in the article, Echo has two meanings. One Echo is the literal echo – repeating sounds. Another implied meaning is high influence of Narcissist personality. When one of the parent is Narcissist, often their children play echo and turn out to be like the Narcissist parent.

5) Gas Lighting – Strategy used by a shrewd person to manipulate someone or to prove someone guilty. It's often used for man-woman relationship. The victim is made to believe that s/he is at fault for the tension in the relationship. It's a conscious effort by a dominating partner that may sometimes seriously affect the victim and the victim starts blaming himself/herself. The term has its origin in a play 'Gas Light' written by Patrick Hamilton

ABSTRACT – The aim of the research is to find out the factors for dominance of a Narcissist partner in a man-woman relationship. Narcissism affects marriage adversely. Characters in the selected novels of Mrs. D'e are nymphomaniac. It is seen in the novels of Shobhaa De that central characters are Narcissist. A Narcissist is not loyal. S/he is too self-centered. Their partners are victims who suffer. A Narcissist does not improve as s/he never realizes his/her drawback. The article refers to two novels of Shobhaa D'e: Sethji and Srilaaji. Sethji published in 2012 and Srilaaji published in 2020 present stories of aristocrats who mutually accept adultery. Gas lighting is often used to manipulate the partner. A narcissist plays the victim card and makes the partner believe that s/he is guilty. Amrita, the protagonist of Sethji had to accept the marriage proposal against her wish. She loved MK who was already engaged to Tabassum. MK kept promising her that he would break the engagement but he did not. Amrita did not like Srichand but her mother convinced her to accept the proposal so that Sethji would help them financially. Amrita had to accept the proposal. She was hurt by both MK and her

own mother. MK disappeared for many years. Sethji seduced her physically. Amrita used her charm and beauty to dominate the household affairs and even the political matters of Sethji. Sethji trusted her. She smartly handled all the problems. Srichand loved her but she kept avoiding him. Amrita was a victim of paranoia. She did have a troublesome youth but she herself also turned very rude. When trapped by men of Bhau and Jaiprakash Jethia, she managed to save herself and Sethji with the help of MK. She managed her life even after the death of her husband. She became emotionless making her way. Srilaa never got genuine love or care from her parents. Her parents lived in separate rooms. Her mother had a mental problem due to which she did not pay attention on her. Father was always busy with his business affairs. Srilaa did not get enough love or care. She was married to Abu Daya who loved and cared for her. He respected her too. He was a gay. Both partners accepted extra marital relations of each other mutually. Srilaa as a mother was too self- centered. Her children did not get enough love, care or attention. Khushboo in her adulthood realized her mother's selfishness. She fought with Srilaa. Abu Daya passed away. After his death, Srilaa, instead of paying more attention towards children, turned to fulfill her sexual needs. Many men came in her life. Srilaa did not remain loyal to any partner with whom she had developed relationship. Both Amrita and Srilaa are echoes of what situations came in their lives but they banged the same. They were not aware about their own psyche but they played the same role they hated. Suppressed paranoia turned the ladies too calculative to think and care for others. Mothers of Amrita and Srilaa both were victims of male dominated society that never thought of feelings of women. Srilaa and Amrita both understood and pitied the condition of their respective mothers but they turned rude and calculative. Srilaa herself never cared or gave enough time to her children. The novels show how a Narcissist influences echoes and later those echoes turn into the same Narcissistic voice. It is a vicious cycle where echo becomes the sound that turned into similar bang.

Objective of the research –

The research is with special reference to selected novels of Shobhaa De – Srilaaji and Sethji. . The novels by Shobhaa De present complex relations where adultery is very common and devotion is rare. The novels revolve around aristocratic society where marriage as an institution has undergone drastic changes.

1) The aim of the research is to find out the factors for dominance of a Narcissist partner in a man-woman relationship.
2) To understand the reason why the victim keeps tolerating wrong practices of a partner.
3) To understand the reason why one is not able to change a partner who is not loyal or who is indulged in an extra marital relationship.
4) To find out the factors that makes one too self-centered to think for the family.
5) To understand 'Gas lighting' and its effect on man-woman relationship.

INTRODUCTION –

It is observed during the research of novels of Shobhaa De that the central characters are Narcissists. A Narcissist who is not loyal to his/her partner dominates the other partner. The guilty person lives and enjoys nicely without any kind of fear. They (Narcissists) use Gas Lighting and make the partner feel guilty. Often the partner develops low self-esteem. The Gas Light is a manipulative technique used by a dominating partner in a man-woman relationship. The term has its origin in a play by Patrick Hamilton. A movie was made in 1944 based on the play so the term became popular. With special reference to Sethji and Srilaaji, the protagonists turn what they actually hated. The victims gradually turn exactly what they hated earlier.

To understand the term nymphomania, here is information from a newspaper article. An article in Divya Bhaskar on 14th December 2024 discussed about extra marital relations as the cause of marital dissolution. In discussed various cases most of them from urban background. The article is compiled by Dhruv Sanchaniya from family court where the cases for divorce were registered. The real reasons for appealing in the court for divorce were really shocking.

One old lady was caught chatting with seven men. She was seventy. She just got pleasure chatting with other men. She had told all of them that she was single whereas her husband was suffering from cancer. When he tried to oppose her chatting with other men, she turned him out of the house.

One lady of same age (70) demanded divorce because she was tired of her husband who demanded physical pleasure – love making every day and she was not willing for the same.

Both the above cases are contradictory but what is in center – determinant factor is sex – physical pleasure. Both the above given examples

Here is the data of registered divorce petitions by Rajya Sabha.

Year -	2022	2023	2024
Registered Petitions	24910	27194	44037
Solved	26557	30084	30659
Pending	34761	31954	50128

(Dhruv Sanchariya, Divya Bhaskar, December 14, 2024)

- Narcissism and its effects -

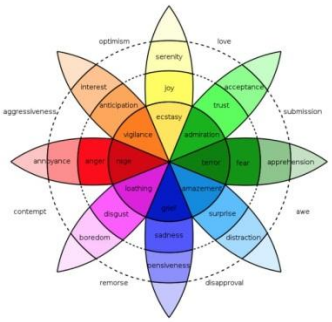
Ernest Jones published a paper in 1913 with the title 'God Complex'. In this paper he described narcissism and its darker side. Ernest Jones explained that more or less superiority complex is present and acceptable in every individual but when the superiority as well as self-centeredness is more, it reaches to a level that is clinically called NPD. Ernest Jones later met Sigmund Freud. He was very much impressed by Freud. They worked together for psychoanalysis for a very long time. Initially Freud took narcissism as a positive quality related to self-confidence but his views were challenged by Ernest Jones. Later they developed a theory related to a darker side of NPD. Ernest Jones observed that individual with NPD is often aloof and self-centred. As they considered others inferior, they don't remain loyal in relationship.

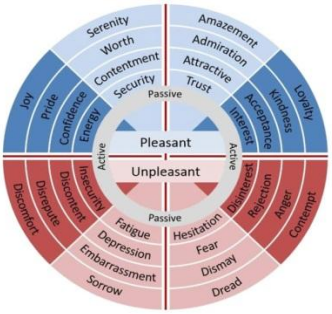
- Evil for Evil theory –

"To whom evil is done do evil in return." – This is a very popular line by W.H. Auden. He wrote it in his famous poem September 01, 1939. The poem is based on the beginning of World War II. Germany attacked on Poland and provoked the war. Germany faced injustice in the treaty of World War I. Germans suffered a lot. They had to pay heavy taxes to the Allied group. It damaged their economy. Germany rose with Adolf Hitler's leadership and tried to recover their loss. Nazi army attacked on Poland and invaded their certain areas. It provoked other nations and they jumped in the matter that lead to the war. For taking revenge, they started a war

that led to even heavier destruction than the first war. It happens in daily life too. What one faces unwillingly or suffers from, comes out unconsciously and others have to face the same agony. It breeds more hatred.

Primary emotions are real and immediate emotions. They are aroused with reference to situation. Secondary emotions are cognitive emotions which come later after primary emotions. Olivia Guy a clinical psychologist has explained about a secondary emotion in detail. Resentment – suppressed sadness, anger, loneliness etc. may gradually turn a person either depressed or cruel and emotionless.





Studying the characters of the selected novels, we may conclude that resentment turned the victims too rude and cruel that they make others suffer.

Srilaaji is the protagonist of the novel Srilaaji written by Shobhaa D'e and published in 2020. Srilaa had a paranoid childhood. Her mother had a mental problem. She was often out for the treatment. Father was busy in his business.

'Their life as husband and wife ended within the first year of their marriage and unfortunately, they never became friends.' (Page no 37)

Neither father nor mother took enough care of Srilaa. Srilaa suffered from selective muteness during her childhood. Generally children hesitate to communicate with others freely in case of Selective muteness but Srilaa hesitated in her own house in front of her own parents. Srilaa had a deprived childhood. Srilaa shared physical intimacy with many throughout her life but every male had a calculation for her. Srilaa never got true love. Her husband was quite humble but he turned out to be a gay. He was more concerned about his male partner than his wife Srilaa. Other premarital and extramarital affairs proved toxic. Srilaaji herself also proved very selfish. She was a sex hungry woman who often left children alone to enjoy physical pleasure with others. In the later phase of her life she lost her husband but continued to enjoy life with a man. She used to stay in Goa. This relationship was disclosed to her daughter who fought very badly with her mother regarding this relationship.

When she slapped Khushboo, she had touched her after many years.

'Suddenly I realised I had not touched my daughter in years.' (Page no 204)

Srilaa suffered from paranoia yet she lived a life to make her own daughter feel paranoid. Khushboo, daughter of Srilaa felt Srilaa was a selfish woman of loose morals. What Srilaa had missed, her children also missed.

Amrita is the protagonist of the novel Sethji written by Shobhaa D'e. Amrita was cheated by her lover MK who did not break his engagement with Tabassum and continued physical relation with Amrita. MK married

Tabassum – a girl from his community and settled abroad. Amrita was convinced to marry Srichand by her mother. Mother of Amrita convinced her to marry Srichand so that Sethji would secure their future financially. Amrita had to accept the proposal but she felt being used by her own mother for financial security.

Later MK contacted Amrita. They helped each other to come out of their problems. Amrita always waited for MK and hoped he would leave his family for Amrita.

'Like countless foolish women the world over who fell for married men, she continued to hang on to some insane hope.' (Page no.264) The description shows that Amrita loved MK so immensely that she kept her reason aside dealing with him.

Before her marriage with Srichand, mother told Amrita, "A woman who understands the value of her body and trades it wisely is the one who succeeds." (Page no 285)

Amrita could not forget MK but she did not care for Srichand and his feelings. Srichand really loved her but he never got enough love or care from Amrita. Amrita was seduced by her own father in law – Sethji. She used her charm to control household and political matters of Sethji.

In the end, Sethji tells Amrita –

"You used your body to gain control over me. I know not only every inch of your body but every fold of your cunning brain as well."

(Page 284)

The two above quoted sentences show transformation of Amrita from an innocent girl to a shrewd woman. She hated the advice of her mother but gradually did what she was told. Sethji understood her worth and offered to join his political party. Amrita became emotionless and lived quietly at her home in Delhi after the deaths of both the sons of Sethji.

It is concluded that resentment – suppressed paranoia turns the person rude. Primary emotions of sadness and fear gradually turn to self-centeredness and rudeness.

CONCLUSION –

Troubled children create more trouble in later phase of their lives. Often children devoid of love and care grow into rude adults. Srilaa and Amrita both are the examples of paranoia. Their childhood was disturbed. They did not get genuine love or care. They also turn rude and self-centered. To conclude, paranoia leads to borderline personality disorder. A victim becomes too self-centered that s/he does not even think about the family. Dr.Satyakant Trivedi is a psychiatrist practising in Bansal Hospital,Bhopal. In his book 'Over Thinking Se Azadi:Win the Battle of Your Mind' explains that there is a difference between worries and rational thinking. In any situation, rational thinking is advisable but too much over thinking leads to depression. Nowadays people are getting more depressed because of over socialization. It's not wrong to socialize but comparison with others brings to many problems. In rich society, problems of frustration and depression are more because they compare themselves with life style of others that brings complications. Marital problems are increasing due to too much socialization. In the selected novels of Shobha De many problems are due to more socialization and comparison with others.

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