

Mental Illness, Madness, Mental Instability and Psychological Issues: A Study of *Jane Ayre* and *The Bell Jar*

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Abstract

The study investigates the two novels of Jane Ayre and The Bell Jar, the aspects focus on the psychological matters. These matters are like mental instability and behavioural instability, also the madness. The forms of mental illnesses are many, the ones those are known commonly are linked to women as long as these women are not obedient. The mental instability occurs to several reasons and these reasons are mostly through the life of the women who face such conditions. The reasons are like the imprisonment of women and being locked. The other aspect is the role of the psychological pressure women suffer of and these psychological pressures are made of forms those are different.

Keywords: Instability, mental illness, psychological problems

Introduction

The repression takes forms of isolation and alienation as form, most of the women like the two novels represent are alienated. The study discusses the reasons of the mental issues and the matters of mental health, it argues the consequences of these issues on women and also the consequences of the reasons of existence. Besides, the psychological domination forms are many that this paper investigates, these are like imprisonments and the reasons of it. The central impact of these psychological matters is also discussed through this study, the women who goes through such issues as a lesson to the others do not to follow same attitude.

The research also represents the other part of the results in which other women are meant to be contained and mentally constantly under psychological repression “It was used as a reason to keep women out of the professions, to deny them political rights, and to keep them under male control in the family and the state” (Showalter, 1987, P.73). Thus, by both results either to revolt or to be obedient the result is one it is to be psychologically influenced and mentally unhealthy. The result of the end in both situations whether to follow, and to revolt are the same, by this aspect the study aims to prove the psychological repression influence.

Argument

The study investigates different sorts of tyrannies, and the most effective ones are the domestic and social. The domestic type is more into the domestic activities and the duties of household, women under such repression are the ones who reflect domestically psychological pressure “According to the anti - psychiatrists, mental illness had to be examined in terms of its social context: the emotional dynamics of the family and the institution of psychiatry itself” (Laing, 1961, p.221). The males in such repression take the idles of the society as instrument to over press

the female partners. The pressure is built upon the idles of the era, the period that women in it are meant to be the angle of the house and not to be disobedient.

The society in this term show link of features as women who are unable to fulfil husband demands and domestic ones are not considered to be idle. The features of women differs and physically also psychologically restricted. Women are expected to be in a sort of physical shape that is the idle shape, this form represents weakness and low weight also the skin preferably light and the body generally thin. These idles come along with its own results, nutrition illness, the one those keep women in this shape and affect them psychologically. The mental instability happens also with this sort of illness and the mental health instability.

The society domestically confirms these idles and put them on the list “Rise in nervous disease were at their height in the mid-century of the Victorian Era and the question of how to draw the subtle dividing line between sanity and insanity received frequent press attention” (Shuttleworth, 1996, p.222). On the other side, women and their families are spouse to follow these rules in order to provide the females the life they want and the social acceptance they desire. In this term the male benefit increases as he gains also the social acceptance and the legal acceptance. Due to such mental announcement females lose their position as reliable part of society.

Thus, the two novels represent the result of the repression in different types of it and the impact of it, also the role of males and the abilities of them compared to women after the existence of madness and mental illness out spread socially. The mental illness happens through the repression and takes the form of it “Annual report, accounted for the single largest category of women in lunatic asylums” (Poovey, 1989, p.130). The domestic one takes the constant apply and frequent way as it applies in matter of one environment and specific duties. The social one is more extended, and it is based on the social perspective of the surroundings. The result differs the social one comes along with domestic to form high influence.

The part of such repression in two forms goes extended as the ones who reject and be imprisoned as it happens in *Jayne Eyre* are mentally able to balance and to recognize the reason. The reason of the domination and the reason of the mental condition they have, the ones who accept lose the ability to recognize as they express several forms of repression. Thus, the diversity makes it complicated and a bigger form of repression. Also, the influence takes a more extended and increased shape to be socially present to the public and the ones who reject to show as the punishment, the ones publicly prefer to do the acceptance. As this choice go clearer with the social standards and the rules of the society in which it brings social stability to the standards.

The social standards are built upon the reason to make the insanity and mental illness active and under the order to organize. Also, to keep the society in its shape of the standards and rules, the reasons of such claims are many and the results are divers. The rules also differ by the social circle and the subjugation differs in certain levels; in some social circles it goes higher. The other ones go lighter, and the benefits also differs as for the certain social circles it provides education to apply more amusement to the surrounding society.

The other ones may reflect another sort of domestic tasks in which it excludes education and go for the serve of the household. The acceptance of such suppression is the way to get the options in this extent, the rejection offers imprisonment and the repression of it that leads to madness “could deliberately invoke the masculine powers of Victorian medicine and law to

disarm, discredit, and confine women who refused to suffer and be still” (Logan, 1998, p.149). Thus, the repression in many forms take a collective shape to apply and by apply it express the results of instability and mental health instability. The madness in its social form is a case of subjugation that apply by the surroundings of character and the reflection of it to impose and apply.

The Bell Jar main character is a woman named Esther, through the events of the novel the character expresses different sorts of social repression and one of the issues the novel reveals is the madness. Also, the result of being disobedient, the character in the beginning of the novel expresses her worries about rejection as a punishment of another woman. The other element shows the out spread of mental illness claims between the women characters in the novel that reflects the social concept of one part of the society. The friend of her in the nursery hangs herself and the result and the reason are the same.

The reason is that this character life conditions is like Esther and her name is Joan and by such type of social repression she goes to hospital of mental health to recover. The mental electric shocks are one of the cures of such mental illnesses that leads to another result more complicated. Moreover, to lead the patient to escape attempts, Joan also has the same suicidal ideas and attempts like Esther. The similarity of the conditions and ideas show the influence of the social repression and its impact on the women. The other issue derives that is punishment of mental instability in which the character grows a concept that she is mentally ill. This part comes with a result of more complicated ways the belief grows to a lifelong issue and illusion.

The author shows the possibility of the character to expresses her mental illness in case she expresses a sort of disobedience and stand against society and revolt. Hence, the social standards by not following the result are a mental instability acquiescent “She was utterly unselfish... She sacrificed herself daily...in short she was so constituted that she never had a mind or a wish of her own, but preferred to sympathize always with the minds and wishes of others. Above all--I need not say it she was pure” (Woolf, 1931, P. 1218). The events of the novel show that the character in front of the different types of social repression, the beginning of the novel represent the character social circle that is not poor and rich social circle. The character has a possibility of well life and well education and by such possibilities the character can continue her education and have the life she desires. Esther in the beginning also expresses her worries, the worries of her are social and the part of its impact comes through the execution of one character. The influence of such event reflects on the character mentally to give the signs of insecure and psychological repression.

Besides, the shock she receives by her boyfriend who is the reason of her loss of faith of him and the picture she has of him. The characters have a high standard of beliefs about her boyfriend that ends to be a reason of her mental shock. The social repression collective built increases to be more effective and by this it shows through her part to be rejected to be part of educational class. This result is to make a high type of domination on the character a social one that leads her to be unactive and her mother goes for the psychiatrist to manage her recovery. This behaviour leads to another result that bring the suicidal ideas, Esther aims to survive of such psychological condition.

The character aim is to be married earlier and to have a domestic life, unconsciously reflects that the domestic repression is what comes as a choice. The type of repression the character demand is what she feels as the environment of her. Also, to escape the revolt punishment that she

may face as she grows a revolt and stand against, by that revolt she faces the result. The result demands her being obedient otherwise she will be called mentally unstable directly. Hence, *The Bell Jar* contains the forms of the mental health conditions in the extents of the over pressure, the insanity as a case through this novel is a matter of social manners. It happens due to the social sides of pressure; the society forms many kinds of it on the terms of standards. The chance to cross such kinds of pressure as the text gives is little as the character's one way to survive is to be one of the people who accept. To be specific one of the women who believes in domestic pressure and domestic life.

The protagonist aims to find herself into a domestic life like most of women of that period in order to have the life she desires as a sort of survival, mental survival. "Governesses formed one of the largest single occupational groups to be found in insane asylums" (Peterson, 1972, p.13). The society by this confirms the one main standard this standard is the domestic life hold. By this standard the idea of women insanity shows up as threat and line not to cross. On the other side, the novel shows that the survival is uncertain although the protagonist seeks it. It is uncertain due to the reasons of the standards as the social pressure crosses the domestic pressure.

Then gradually the chances that are to give the insanity its influence and right of existence increase. Then, the increase of this type of mental condition goes against the domestic chance and it represents another woman as an example of the women who did not make it socially. *The Bell Jar* through this proves the idea of the connection between the domestic and social pressure. Also proves that the insanity is a punishment rather than a mental condition it goes for the reason to be socially obedient. The novel also shows the elements to give this punishment a frame of acceptance and as a way to be accepted in society.

Therefore, the idea to represent is that the society is in correct shape and the ones who believe the opposite are insane and mentally unstable. By the suicide of one character the author gives that the uncertainty belief into the parts of the text. Otherwise, this character would go in the right condition of her recovery, due to her being unable to match the social standards she kills herself unjustly. On the contrast the protagonist's survival is that she starts to agree with the social manners around her. The author puts the point of the possibility that if she backs to revolt or be against the insanity will back to her. The meaning is that these types of mental conditions and through the novel are matter of inability to agree with social standards. Although it is the manners of the people in certain time, that makes generations to agree and live by.

In *Jane Eyre* the novel gives another picture through the protagonist. Jane is an orphan girl who lives in her uncle's house and with his widow, the women who treat Jane cruelly. In the novel the protagonist is locked into a red room, where her uncle died earlier. And in this room, she starts to face psychological allusions of her dead uncle. The girl later faces more complicated situations in that house that it shows the psychological pressure on her and the mental health. In this novel the characters around her are by the influence of them make the repression psychologically. "Jane Eyre raises awareness of the wrongs done to women when men of faith forget or fail" (Griesinger, 2008, p. 38). The school she attends is another issue, the head of the school is corrupted, and he abuses her and other students. The protagonist of the novel makes friendship there in the school and this friendship with a boy who later dies.

Then she starts to work as a teacher and then she falls in love with a man but she cannot have love relationship with him. This man is a married and she works in his house. Also he locks his wife in a room because he claims that she is mad. Later, the mad wife put the house on fire after Jane leave the house and the man who Jane loves get injured and loses most of his wealth. Then the love between both makes them meet each other and be together also Jane starts to take care of him in his sickness. The man losses two eyes then he manages to recover, and his sight becomes by one eye recovered. The novel also shows the part in which jane suffers of the imprisonment. This part that has a general influence on her mental health as she shows different allusions. Then the part of her being locked by her uncle widow is the part to show the type of the pressure psychologically.

The other character is the mad wife of Rochester is another figure of women psychological instability as she suffers it on the hand of her husband. This character background suffers of this treatment to be locked in the house because of her family background as they belief she comes from mad family “Bertha Mason is mad; and she came of a mad family; idiots and maniacs through three generations” (Bronte, 1847, p.211). Women in that family are mad and that is the reason of the man to lock her. The part gives the possibility of her being not mad until she is locked into the room of the house that she sets on fire. And then she jumps and dies, the suicide is another element that is related to madness, and it shows that the character owns mad features. In *Jane Eyre* madness takes the traditional frame of it as a punishment also an action toward one character. Women in this novel are objects of the husbands and it is his decision to make the life of his wife in a locked room, similar to the widow wife of Jane’s uncle.

The novel gives the topic of madness and mental illness in the frame of society, matter of society and women are the members that they suffer of this punishment. The society takes this type of issues as a part of its standards toward the ones who may have the possibility of mental illness. The psychological pressure is the main reason of this type of mental situation also it is the reason of the punishment. The mental illness comes along with imprisonment as it shows in this novel and the reason is to keep the character in one place to face the pressure. The house becomes the jail and the asylum that the women who are instable mentally locked in.

The other part is the way of the treatment in case this person is mad the sickness grows more and become complicated. As it is the treatment of the house holders pushes them to be madder and more instable. Also, the house is the domestic pressure figure already and by this part it takes a clear definition of the pressure it shapes toward the person. The novel gives the school as another figure of repression as the ones who rule this school are cruel. And this cruelty reflects mentally toward the women, and it happens to Jane who suffers of abuse and the psychological abuse is the type that it effects more than any other form of abuse.

The novel also reflects themes, and these themes are like madness and mental illness also abuse and mistreatment. Besides, theme of sickness and death also the love theme that is part of the main concepts of the novel. The social standards pressure is another theme that happens and gives the novel impressions. These parodies start with a cause of social fears, the protagonist fears the society and avoid revolting against by relationship with Rochester. The reason of her that is not able to be in a relationship with him is that he is married.

Hence, she is unable to break the social boundaries and the idle norms of society that says she must be pure and avoid any type of relationship with any man until she is married “His lunatic wife: and you have nothing to do with him: you dare not speak to him or seek his presence” (Bronte, 1847, p.512). The idle woman is the one who accepts the social standards and never revolt, or she will be sentenced as mad or corrupted. By this type of accuse she losses her chance of a stable life and the mental instability is the slow death. Even if the person is not ill mentally, she will be gradually by the pressure of the society and the wife of Rochester is an example of this situation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the two novels offer the madness and mental instability as the main matters of the events also the psychological instability. Also, the society opinion that to accept this as a fact and to keep it in the society frame. The other elements are the elements of imprisonment as it happens with the madness and mental illness, and it proves the psychological pressure. The novels both show this pressure in the actions, and it shows the impact of it on people. Psychological instability happens because of the pressure, it shows that it is more than a mental illness and the protagonists of the novels show it.

The mental instability also shows because of the abuse, it is one of the reasons and ways to make the person mentally in suffer. Also, the psychological main element is the mistreatment as women usually face through the part in, they are locked down and treated inhumanly. This treatment brings the reason of mental instability and madness, the pressure takes the forms to be more in its influence. And it brings another element, it is the social norms and the reason of the belief in these norms is fear for woman. The women who revolt face madness accusant then be locked in like many other women in house or asylum.

The houses in this term of domesticity are the first step of pressure is that the beginning of the suffering these women who have this issue of domestic abuse go for being locked down. This issue is through the event of the novels happens. In *The Bell Jar* the protagonist shows the suffering more as she is the main one to be accused of madness and her life changes and her situation changes. The reason is that she revolts even by her behaviours and to experience it she suffers of the pressure. The domestic pressure is seen in *Jane Eyre* as element to repress women and put them in the situation of psychological instability. The main issue is that the psychological issues according to the two novels are because of pressure.

The pressure psychologically is the main element that happen and rule the events that it effects the characters. The imprisonment also is one of the elements that happens in the condition of women and makes them in mental illness and madness in the other situations like in *The Bell Jar* and it then led the character to know the result of revolt that also show in *Jane Eyre*. And how it affects them and take the shape of madness through the suffer of the protagonists and their dreams of marriage and domestic life. It also gives the idea that women are not reliable and not equal to men, the psychological pressure and the psychological pressure become more in that situation to make these women in instable mental condition.

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