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THE UNDOMESTIC GODDESS – A STUDY OF PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

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ABSTRACT

The fiction beautifully portrays the work and life imbalance. Strewn with psychological elements it revolves around samantha sweeting the protagonist. She chooses the flight response when she is in an unmanageable situation beyond her handling capacity, inferring us her twitchy condition. As well the important cue that secondary motives such as the basic needs and personal freedom, which may lead to mechanization of life and subsequent suppression of emotions, destroying the vitality. When she feels fulfilled, refusing even the opportunity once she desired the most, emphasizing the importance of primary motives. The author wonderfully depicted the corporate firms and the modern slavery in disguise. Although the novel is not flawless, those trivial details can be ignored for their inconsistencies, considering the beauty of construction of plot.

KEYWORDS:

Psychological Perspectives

INTRODUCTION

The protagonist samantha sweeting is a highly paid london lawyer working in a law firm carter spink. Being the best law firm many of carter spink's lawyers are over burdened with their work load. Samantha too work over time in her firm. Her only goal in life is to become a partner in that company. She has never made a mistake in her job until then. When she was about to be elevated as a partner in the company she makes a grave mistake, unable to find any solution to that, she decides to go out of the company. Reaching somewhere in the middle of the countryside. There she finds a house, where she was mistaken for an interviewee and was offered the job of housekeeping. As the days roll up she finds inner peace and love which she missed in her previous job as a lawyer. She found the purpose of her life and she finds her self identity over there. At one point she was able to find that she was trickily planned to be struck with a critical situation in her previous job. She takes a resolution to prove her innocence

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and bring back her lost good name. She goes back to London, proves her innocence, thus getting back her job. But having found the satisfaction and inner peace in the current life, she refuses to accept the highly valued, prestigious full equity partnership of the company.

PSYCHOLOGICAL ELEMENTS IN THE NOVEL:

We come across many psychological elements and real life like situations in the novel.

a. Fight or flight response:

According to physiological and psychological theories, if any organism is threatened by a situation, it takes any one of the natural responses that is to fight and sustain or to take flight and go away from the situation, thereby avoiding the stimulus [1]. We see this natural instinct in Samantha when she was in an unavoidable critical situation; she was not able to think. It is described in the lines of the author,

"There is a kind of iciness about my spine"

"What am I going to do? A wall of panic hits me as I take in the consequence. I bury my head in my hands. I'm trying to keep calm but inside is a great well of terror. I have to face it."

She tries all the ways to rectify the mistake but once she finds it out of her control, she feels light-headed, without a second thought she goes out of her company like an automaton. We find this described in the lines,

"I walk through reception on autopilot"

"Without thinking twice, I join the throng".

b. Suppression of emotion and its effects:

In our modern life, we learnt to live without expressing our feelings, slowly making our life a colorless picture. These unexpressed feelings sometimes cause all the problems in life, these even manifest physically, making the person twitchy. This is clearly depicted in the novel; we can see at many places Samantha tries to show her joy or sorrow but to maintain the decorum of the company she suppresses it. Even in places where to express immense happiness, she was not given a chance. When she hears that she was about to be promoted as partner in the company, the only goal she has ever dreamt of came to her, she was unable to express it as she wanted to be more 'partner like'. These suppressed emotions leave her more sensitive to the environment described in the novel as twitchy.

c. Work-life imbalance :

In our life, if our working hours take precedence over all our other things and if we are unable to spend reasonable time with our family or for ourselves, that is work-life imbalance. This novel features the work-life imbalance and its effects clearly. By certain signs, we can deduce that we have this imbalance. In this work of fiction, many of the employees suffer from work-life imbalance. For example, the protagonist Samantha sleeps less than 6 hours a day. There is a mention about a character named Clive Sutherland who was in the office by lunch time when his wife gave birth to twins that morning. Not only this, we see many instances clearly painting the picture about the protagonist's work-life imbalance like the employees at Carter Spink were to go to office even at weekends. Samantha was consciously anxious about her performances and how it is perceived by authorities. The coldness which we see in her authority figures. The working hours she has per month, which exceeds 200 hours, are clear signs of work-life imbalance which may reduce the efficiency of an employee and

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lead to reduced productivity.

Even in the last chapter (9th chapter) all the Carter Spink employees including the partners were very busy with their laptops and mobiles. They were indifferent to the situation and that minute. They live in their own world. They show no interest in the hot air balloon in sky. The announcement that the train would be half an hour late has brought a tremendous change in their behavior. This unsocial behavior which is against the very nature of humans also one of the triggering factors why Samantha decided to quit the job when offered again.

d. Power of primary motives:

Being a fresh graduate ambitious, completely career focused without personal responsibilities, working overtime and at weekends may not be an issue. But if it becomes a life time issue for sure one cannot cope up with the pressure. According to Abraham Maslow, a psychologist, "The most basic level of needs must be met before the secondary or higher level of needs". When Samantha was working at Carter Spink her basic needs like physiological needs and safety needs are met but she was not able to fulfill the next level of need that is social belongings and love. All her life was so mechanized she had no weekend off. According to Maslow's theory of parallel processing our brain can act and desire various needs at the same point of time. We can see her secondary motives like professional achievements takes action in all her life until she was able to first feel the intensity of primary motives. Once she finds love and all her primary motives triggered she starts feeling fulfilled, refusing even to go back to her past life.

e. Social belongingness:

The need for belongingness and love is the third rung in the hierarchy of needs living organisms try to fulfill the need. This particular psychological element is highlighted in many of the areas in this novel. When Samantha was celebrating her birthday she was the only person at the restaurant. We can even see the mention about her friend Guy, if Samantha had time it could be possible that they could have developed any romance between them. She does not find any belongingness. But in contrast to that when Samantha wants to leave her employers, Mr. and Mrs. Geigers they want her to be with them going to the extent even increasing her salary. Although she is astonished initially, she starts feeling the warmth in their love. This sense of belongingness is one of the factors which prompt her even to renounce the job offered to her.

CONCLUSION:

"One best book is equal to hundred good friends. One good friend is equal to a library"

- A.P.J. Abdul Kalam.

This book gives us many valuable advices and experiences through the study of the life of the protagonist. We learn the importance of primary motives and the driving forces in our life.

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