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### INVESTIGATING THE ROLE OF FREE WILL IN DAVID DIOP'S AT NIGHT ALL BLOOD IS BLACK

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#### ABSTRACT

The present research investigates the importance of free will and the struggle of the characters throughout the novel. It also explores the colonial suppression on black nation of Senegal and their role in World War 1 in the novel *At Night All Blood is Black* by David Diop. The present research follows the theoretical background of humanistic psychology. It takes *At Night All Blood is Black* by David Diop as a primary source of data. A complete analysis of the text has permitted the researchers to understand some of the findings in the light of Carl Rogers's theory of personality in the perspective of free will. This novel also shows the racial prejudice and racial discrimination among different nations. The methodology used for this research paper is qualitative in nature. The text is analyzed in the light of humanistic psychology in the perspective of free will.

#### INTRODUCTION

The current study accords with aspects of humanistic psychology in the perspective of free will. This research explores the viewpoint of David Diop about colonialism and its psychological aspects on colonial nations how they suffer and how it changes their personalities from the loss and grief of their loved ones due to several different reasons including the period of colonialism, and most importantly the distress and agony of the war period. Humanistic psychology is a reaction to Behaviorism and Psychoanalysis. It focuses on the nature of humans that they are inherently good. Major theorists Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers, and Rollo May are the prominent figures of this theory.

Abraham Maslow formed the Hierarchy of needs in which he presents five basic elements by using a pyramid.

- Physiological needs
- Safety
- Love
- Self-esteem
- Self-actualization

Abraham Maslow in his book *A Theory of Human Motivation*(1943) talks about the concept of Free Will and its importance in attaining the highest rank of Self-actualization.

Carl Roger also gives *The Theory of Persona*(1959) in which the main focus is on the Free Will of humans how they choose to react in any situation he says that humans are inherently good but they change or learn every day and they don't need to always react positively. Carl Rogers in his book *On Becoming a person*(1961) gives importance to the idea of Free Will and how it is necessary for one's personality if a person uses his free will then he/she should also take responsibility for his/her actions.

Psychological Dualism is also termed as Mind-Body dualism in which a person worked on the mindset of any other person to overcome his/her regrets and feeling of guilt. It is all about the psyche of humans how their mind and body conflicts all the time that they take some serious actions. A person thinks according to the feelings of any other person.

This research work identifies the correspondence between literature and psychology. The main agenda of this work is to analyze the psychological effect of war on people from the perspective of Abraham Maslow and Carl Roger's theory of Humanistic Psychology. One who is participating in the war, the loss of their beloved ones, and the consequences of the fear, hopelessness, and death that prevails everywhere during World War 1 that make them shatter and broken. As far as in the novel *At Night All Blood is Black* the exclusive objective of this research is to observe the ruthless and inhuman slaughter of the Africans for the country to which they did not belong. This text consists of the main theme such as the duality of characters, the psyche of the main character Alpha who suffers a great change after the death of his brother like a friend, the gruesome impact of colonialism on the mind of characters, and also on how the nature of character changes with the change of situation. These points are the main focus of the study of this novel.

#### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS:**

- What is the role of humanistic psychology in determining the development of the characters in *At night All Blood is Black*?
- How does Free will determine the course of action in the selected text?

#### **Significance of Study:**

This research has practical importance. This research paper helps us in understanding the importance of Free Will through the character of Alpha and

also through his dialogues which he has delivered throughout the novel. On secondary level it also helps us in better understanding of colonial exploitation of Africans during World War 1. It also portrays how Alpha Ndiaye separates himself from others and it unfurls a story of a pure and dark tale of brotherhood and friendship, distress and revenge.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:**

Rogers (1961) elaborates that free will for a person is all about his conscious state of mind a person is responsible for his behavior in any situation and a person should adopt free will instead of determinism. Under free will, a person is guilty of his or her actions and an individual can choose whatever he wants it's on the individual whether it is good or bad despite the inherently good nature of humans. Most psychologists employ the notion of free will that the humanistic behavior is not inactive but a person vigorously reacts to inward and outward power. It makes us answerable for our actions and it plays a significant role in human development.

Rogers (1959) proposed that both psychology and determinism goes sided by side which means he has two ways approach he do believe on the concept of free will that lies under humanistic psychology and determinism that came under the supreme power or fate system, both have their own advantages and disadvantages. He says that behaviors of humans are solely depends on both of them, some attitudes and behaviors of humans are the result of external forces a like fate and some are the result of their own choices their free will.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:**

The research is base on qualitative method with the deep study of text keenly and thoroughly in which we come to know about different aspects of humanistic psychology through different characters, in this extensive study we can understand the war scenario how people suffer psychologically and physically. The first step here is to collect the data from different sources especially from the text of the novel and relate different events with the theory we are going to apply in this research. After applying relevant data on the theory then we will derive our conclusion.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW:**

Psychoanalysis deals with the unconscious mind of a person (Courtney, et al., 2018). It focuses on the things which the person does without any intention. It deals with the concepts of id, ego and superego. Id refers to the unconscious level and to focus on desires of a person. Ego deals with the working on the id, how to make it possible. Superego focuses on the moral and social values to fulfill the requirements of id. Sigmund Freud is the founder of this concept.

Saggu (2019) has researched on the psyche of a person who kills others for his satisfaction. "In literature, we do not find explicit statements but images, symbols and metaphors and those can be in the writer's unconscious. Our wishes, desires and fears that we try to repress are buried in our unconscious and they always succeed to come out through any mean. "Joker, Arthur Flakes, is a mentally retarded person who was bullied by everyone in his childhood for his appearance and conditions. This thing developed a sense of

revenge in him. For this sake, he had cut down every relation with the outer world. He doesn't shares any bonds with anyone. He lives in his dreams. The research has shown that the things which he cannot do in real, he has done these things in his dreams. This is a way of him to fulfill his dreams. He, under the pressure of his subconscious, killed his own mother. He has loved her so much as she is the only one with which he shares a good bond. Yet he has killed her under the pressure of subconscious. She is not his blood mother and is also responsible for not to stop the people who bully him. He has done all these things under aggression. He has shown his frustration in a worst manner. Kallas (2021) examine that the present work has discovered with great interests that during the war time, in the heart of trenches there have mixed battalions. At the Ministry of Armed Forces, he has discovered that in spite of these representations which could have built racism, fraternization between black and white troops have occurred. In the heart of sufferings, in the worst misery, all these representations have fell down. He says that he has met a man during his visit to France for studies, that man's father has been saved by Senegalese rifleman, and brought back towards the backline. There is a kind of fraternity you called it humanism, and strangely enough war can produce a form of fraternity and humanism between the simple soldiers, the one who have sent to death. On the other hand military hierarchy has used and abused of an image conform the representation of black people that has made during the colonial period to justify it.

#### **DATA ANALYSIS:**

At Night All Blood is Black (2018) as humanistic psychological novel deals with the one of the most important aspect of psychology that is Free Will. (Lafiscal, 2008) elaborates in his research about this theme of study which is mostly common in the time period after World War 1 and World War 2, most of the writers examines the use of free will by people after this traumatic situation of war. People has totally showed disregard for each other so the writers of that time explain the concepts of free will that people are using in a tumultuous way for their freedom without the distinction of good and evil. The terrifying outcomes of World Wars have made people abnormal and this situation creates abomination and outrage in human minds and this abnormality results in the madness and destruction of human mind and actions. The people during that time period who undergo through this drastic change surely have affects on their personalities but the one who do not face such momentous and rigorous change also have a lot of impacts on their personalities due to this situation. The concept of free will under the humanistic psychology is initiated in the text form at the time of Homer but in reality we do know that the existence of Free will is as old as the creation of this universe and the fall of Adam from the heavens.

This tale truly depicts the sufferings and agonies of black community of Senegal and their role in First and Second World War which has never been appreciated. The novel is so hypnotic and mind boggling, full of darkness and light at the same time. It shows us the beauty and the ugly darkness of a person's mind. The protagonist Alpha and his more than brother Mademba is in the battlefield alongside the French armies, Mademba is gravely injured that he has begged to his best friend Alpha to kill him but he does not kill him, as

soon as Mademba dies it's like a switch got flicked in Alpha's mind and he has realized what a cruel coward he is that he has abandoned his best friend his more than brother, abandon not in the sense that he runaway but he has defied him the only thing that could have given him a peaceful end and he has driven to madness with guilt. Through his guilt we come to know about the unbelievable power guilt can have over a man. For the seeking redemption and to ease away his guilt he uses his free will to kill the Germanic soldiers just to satisfy his guilt. The novel is not all about the darkness, savagery, need for revenge, and ugliness of war. It shows the psychological effects of war can have on a person. It is absolutely devastating how war can take away your innocence, how war can cast a dark shadow on friendships, relationships, and families.

There is a huge thing in this novel about race because he is treated like a beast not as a human, a beast who has released on the German camps and he has used his free will to kill the Germanic soldiers ruthlessly. The more we read it the more layers we find in Alpha's mind; there is such layers and complexity to his story. The book represents the graphical representation of the violence and it lets us see why Alpha uses his free will to do such violence.

The starting lines of the novel depict the psychological effect of the whole scenario on the protagonist. "God's truth, now I know. My thoughts belong to me alone; I can think what I want. But I won't tell" (Diop, 2018, P.1). In these lines from the very start of the novel where we see the protagonist Alpha in the state of continuous turmoil and guilt he continuously talks about his psyche that his thoughts solely belongs to him, no one can force him to do anything. After the death of his more than brother Mademba in the battlefield he lost his senses and is in the state of trauma and guilt, he uses his free will in order to fulfill his thought process, the things that are running in his head due to guilt and trauma of war that makes him enable to do the things that are so drastic and fierce. The words that he has used "but I won't tell" this phrase shows his incapability to reflect his thoughts into words as there is no one who can understand his mental state they do not know the things going on in his mind and the important thing is he also does not know what he is going through, the impact of war and the tragic death of his more than brother has made him shattered mentally. As it is normal for the French soldiers to get killed in the battlefield and especially the death of black soldiers are quite normal for them. So after facing all the backlash or cruel attitude of French armies towards black, Alpha uses his free will and do whatever he wants to release his frustration and anxiety.

The use of free will and the portrayal of humanistic psychology is describes in 1984, (1949) written by George Orwell. (Paudel, 2021) elaborates the thing that a person should not compromise on his or her independence and freedom, if he uses free will to achieve his freedom than it does not matter which path a person will choose that is positive or negative, good or evil. Basically in this novel Orwell elaborates the over control and totalitarian system of government, if such type of system runs in a society or country than it is hard to for the masses of that society to practice their freedom and even to use their free will. The work of Diop At Night All Blood is Black also practiced the

same thing that is the use of free will which is demonstrated in every single chapter of the book. In the next lines of the novel we come to know about the condition of Alpha about the recent death of his friend the starting part of the novel all deals with the huge sufferings of Alpha's mind. "I allow myself the unthinkable. No voice rises in my head to forbid me: my ancestors voices and my parents voices all extinguished themselves the minute I conceived of doing what, finally I did" (Diop, 2018, P.2). In these lines the misery and the sufferings of the Alpha continues, his more than brother has pleaded helplessly for the placid death but he could not give him a serene ending that has made him realized the weakness of his soul and mind and the way he blindly follows the culture and traditions of his ancestors. He has thought about the things which he could not think in his whole life. The inner voices in his head are now useless and he does not pay any attention to his customs and values, he prohibited those internal articulations. These lines openly shows the willingness of character acts that he could not fulfill the wish of his friend in the name of cultures and the restrictions from his ancestors that unable him to do what he want. But now all the barriers and obstacles have ended all the thoughts that once confined him now have no value in his eyes.

Alpha has given us a story of warfare, love, and madness has a terrifying power. It is incantatory and dark prose and brilliant vision jangled over emotions and blown our minds. The novel is the true depiction of the psychologically tattered person who has only following his instincts without bothering the outcomes of such actions.

Smyslova (2016) examines the practice of free will in *A Clockwork Orange* (1962) presents the theme of free will, the human existence is solely based on free will, human has made choices according to their situation. The writer of *A Clockwork Orange* elaborates that humans are innocent by birth it is their society and surrounding that can corrupt them. They force them to adopt such choices by using their free will that will damage a person as well as the one who associate with that person. The main protagonist here Alex also practices his free will to spread violence. And he should know the fact that he is also accountable for his actions, but he has wanted to get rid of his authoritative personality so he has used a lot of psychological and medical methods to get rid of his this habit of free will which he practiced to spread terror.

The use of free will was a hot topic after the World War 1 and 2; mostly the writers give their all abilities on defining this topic and its relation with fate. So all the lines of chosen text we examine the same inner battle going on in protagonist's mind that draw him to the verge of madness; the novel is full of darkness and obscurity. "I would have slaughtered him like a sacrificial sheep, out of friendship. But I thought of my old father, of my mother, of the inner voice that commands us all and I could not cut the barbed wire of his sufferings" (Diop, 2018, p. 2). The lines observe the helplessness of Alpha and it also depicts the incapability of Alpha to use his free will, and it also demonstrates the impact of psychological trauma on his mind after the death. He has wished to end the distress of his more than brother but he could not do so. As the researcher has already mentioned that this novel does not have only darkness but it also have blend of darkness and light. The remembrance of his

mother and father shows the light. He does not killed his friend is not wholly act as free will, this is his own decision to take but it is just because of his customs and values that prevent him to kill his friend to save him from agony. The inner voices traumatize him consistently this is the point from which the madness of Alpha starts.

Like all the war time works Pincher Martin (1956) by William Golding has also referred to the war time period that has made every human brutal and blood thirsty. The character in the novel is also of the same type which the writer has presented as much fallen. The main character Martin is a corrupt man and somehow his environment has also made him so much selfish, we come to know all about this through the flashbacks when he has saved himself in a shipwreck during the World War 2. He has recalled his past life, different events where he has bluntly used his free will in order to achieve his goals. Through flashbacks the character of Martin reveals that he has wanted to use women as a sex object he has killed his best friend just because he has wanted to have sex with his friend's Nat wife and which is also his friend named Mary, she has rejected him and chose Nat over him so he has raped her this shows the freedom of Martin the choices he has made in his life and then has to bear the outcomes of his free will.

The way Golding examines the free will and psychological aspect of Pincher Martin, he elucidates his another novel Lord of the Flies (1954) by William Golding also examines the use of free will in his novel and how the use of free will has made a person psychologically disturbed. Human beings are inherently good but they have the tendency to do good or bad. A person can do well by using his free will and he or she can spread evil on the earth. The character of Ralph in the novel has the tendency to do evil but he overcome his instincts and follows the path of goodness by using his free will, same is the case with the antagonist of the novel Jack he has used his free will to promote the evilness, he has killed his fellow boys just for the sake of temporary power he let down his values and moral principles.

This identical concept of having free will is elaborated in this novel by David Diop, he also examines the same thing in the novel that how the main character uses his free will and how he has to face a psychological issue. Same is elaborated in the next chapter Diop talks about how he has gathered the guts of his brother and walked in the moonlight to bury him while walking with heavy heart he only feels the guilt of not killing his friend to make ways easy for him. "Like no one would ever that Mademba had begged me three times to finish him that I had remained deaf to his three supplications that I had been inhuman by obeying duty's voice" (Diop, 2018, P.5). These lines again elucidate the guilt of Alpha that he has unheard the request of Mademba his more than brother he shows the indistinct attitude towards him his inner voice stops him to overrule his sense of conscience. According to Diop he is being very cruel towards his friend he should have killed him but his duty has made him restrain to do so. He has considered himself cruel and brutal that he could not listen to his friend's misery. He is not at all being inhuman towards his friend he just could not do this thing, he is not savage at that time but after the death of his friend he become savage and he wants to give a peaceful death to

his enemies he does not want them to suffer like his friend. At that time French Armies have hunted a large number of African from different areas of Africa especially from the West and have made them to do what their own soldiers could not do means they only hunted them because they have made them savage and shows the world that these Africans are blood thirsty and they only want bloodshed in most cruel way possible.

We found in most of the lines about the Stanley's theory of obedience that solely applies on the black African soldiers, they always say yes to their Captain. "But I Alpha Ndiaye, I understand the true meaning of captain's words. No one knows what I think. I am free to think whatever I want. And what I think is that people do not want me to think" (Diop, 2018, P.6). All the black soldiers are highly obedient but protagonist of the novel Alpha knows the reason behind the thing why Captain has always praised the black chocolate soldiers just to use their bravery and show the world how brutal and inhuman they are, all other soldiers do not question the captain but Alpha thinks about everything in his mind, he knows what is the purpose behind this applause but still he willingly follow his choice of being barbaric. Here also the free choice of Alpha shows that he took the decision of fighting alongside French despite of the fact that they are just manipulating them.

David Diop has beautifully described the imagery of the two lovers under the moon. The way he portrays the intimacy between Fary and Alpha in the midst of horror and fear of war as well as the fear of Alpha's own thoughts has made this book more interesting and appealing. These descriptions also refers to the unconscious and nostalgic mind of Alpha, how he has used his free will while loving the Fary in the darkness of night and under the shades of trees while on the same time Mademba also has loved Fary and wanted to have her but she chooses Alpha over Mademba and Alpha has made love with her to its fullest. The next segment deals with the light and dark thoughts of Alpha which Dr. François has helped his patient to draw on the papers in the form of drawing through these drawings we have insight of Alpha's mind the very first deals with the head of Alpha's mother he draws it very well that shows his love for his mother, the reason behind these drawings is that most of the patients of Francois are unable to understand the French language so this is the best way to peep into their minds. "Doctor Francois gives us time to think, to come back to ourselves.... He tells us to draw whatever we want...Doctor Francois is looking insides our heads" (Diop, 2018, P.46). These textual lines represents the goodness of doctor that he wants to make his all patients free from the dirt of war he wants to clean their minds and help them in spending a good life with bright future. He has also blue eyes but his blue eyes are totally different from the blue eyes of the enemies, he has the goodness in his eyes, he does not speak anything but he has guts to speak with his piercing blue eyes and a loving smile on his face. Alpha do know the reason behind the drawing he do know that doctor has wanted to took glance of the minds of his patients to help them in reducing their mental stress. Alpha knows that the doctor is disinfector of the filth and grim that has created by war and that has made their mental state so pathetic they don't even think any goodness left in the world.

The piety and distressful situation created by war create a void in the mind of soldiers who take part willingly or forcefully by French army. The first drawing of Alpha totally shows the image of his mother which he has saved in his mind from his childhood. This chapter or his first drawing solely shows the joyful days of Alpha that he has spent with his mother and father and at the same time it also depicts the sorrows and mourning of Alpha and his father on the kidnapping of Alpha's mother. This shows that Alpha undergoes through a lot of circumstances in his life, firstly his family and then his more than brother Mademba. Later loss has made him brutal and inhuman and this is the reason behind his free will that he has already mentally not stable and this loss of Mademba he could not bear

### **CONCLUSION:**

The researchers has observed the text in the lens of humanistic psychology and specifically in the perspective of free will, how a person can use his free will and how it can be helpful to shape up the personality of that person. Free will can be positive and negative. The people who use his free choices are responsible for his actions. David Diop has shown the outcomes of the free choices which Alpha has made throughout the novel and which results in the madness of Alpha. His trench mates call him soldier sorcerer and starting avoiding him. The death of his friend enables him to use his free will under the heavy guilt of considering himself the reason of his more than brother's death. The current research can contribute in the field of literature, psychology, colonialism and in understanding the personality of human beings. Specifically it can be helpful in understanding the major role of Senegalese soldiers during World War 1 which the world has never known. This particular research throws light on endless sacrifices of black community in wars and also their traumatic condition after the war. This current research is beneficial in the field of literature as well as it will also helpful in understanding the historical fiction knowing the role of Senegalese soldiers during World War 1.

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