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REPRESENTING 'SELF' IN *THE DIARY OF A YOUNG GIRL* BY ANNE FRANK: A CRITICAL STUDY

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Abstract:

The present research paper talks about representing 'self' in "The Diary of a Young Girl", also known as the Diary of Anne Frank, A Jewish teenager, who was one of the victims of World War II. As Anne Frank's diary focuses her quest for 'self'. Her world famous diary narrates two years of her life from 1942 to 1944, when her family retreated into their 'Secret Annex' and records her hopes, desires, frustrations, and clashes with her parents, and observations of her companions. She penned down some of her innermost feelings in relation to love, adolescence feelings and meaning of life. In her diary early entries she explains that though she has many friends and acquaintances, she feels she does not have one person to whom she can really open up. She regrets that she does not share her true self. Anne asks herself question about the type of person she is? What does It mean that Germans despise me because I am a Jew?

Keywords: *Jewish, Hiding, Self, Diary, True Friend, the World War II, Self-Identity, Adolescence, Frustration, Hope, etc.*

The Diary of A Young Girl, is about a Jewish teenager called Anne. She was born on June 12, 1929 in Frankfurt, Germany and she died on March 15, 1945 in concentration camp when she was fifteen. who lived with her family .Which consist of father, Otto; her mother, Edith; her older sister, Margot ; two years (1942-44)in who were shock in fear and went into hiding during the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands during World War II .As the story takes you through their everyday lives, of hiding in the Annex which also includes arguing and times of happiness. Anne Frank's perpetual feeling of being lonely and misunderstood provides impetus for her dedicated diary writing colors many of experiences she recounts throughout her diary. Anne defines her identity simply as being different from every other person in her family. Anne writes a great deal about how she sees herself verses how others perceive her. She acts as though she delights in other people's criticisms of her but secretly wishes she could somehow be different. In her diary which she calls 'Kitty' got in a gift on her thirteenth birthday represents the only place where Anne feels comfortable sharing and revealing her true self. The diary became a way for Anne Frank to express her feelings and sorrows and thereby to reduce her internal



pain of being away from school and society. It was also a true friend to explore how she fell about becoming a woman and her evolving identity. Through writing she gave voice to her inner self which became the best way to reduce her mental and psychological suffering from which she was having day today experiences. Writing a diary is a really strange experience for someone like me ‘Paper has more patience than people. She says,

‘Paper has more patience than people’ I thought, No one will believe that a 13 year old girl is completely alone in the world ‘And I am not. I have darling parents, 16 years old – sister, and 30 people, I can call them friends. To enhance the image of this long- awaited friends in my imagination. I want the Diary to be my friend and I’m to call this friend ‘Kitty’ (Frank, 04)

She often writes about her own flaws and how she can go about improving on them. Her outlook and attitude set Anne apart from of her peers in the Annex .She appears more ambitious and optimistic than the others in the same situation. Towards the end of the diary, she comes to the crucial conclusion that though She may life not be the others would like her to be. She is her own person and she respects herself.

Readers can experience that Anne Frank would have probably led a life of obscurity had her diary not been published by her father in 1947.Though she had started writing in her diary in the summer 1942 , it had never been with the intention of creating a record of her experiences as a Jew in hiding . Anne’s diary was, for her an express herself in the most honest terms. In 1933 Anne’s family – her father Otto; her mother Edith; and her older sister Margot; moved to Amsterdam from Germany following the rise of Adolf Hitler. In 1940 the Netherland was invaded by Germany, which began to enact various anti-Jewish measures .Margot received an order to report to a labour camp, facing arrest if she did not comply, the family went into hiding on July 6 1942. At 13 years old, Anne Frank had to go into hiding in the Secret Annex which will serve as her home for the next two years during World War II. She is accompanied by her family, Mr. & Mrs. Van Daan their son Peter, and Mrs. Dussel. Anne often writes about her feelings and what it is like to grow up in such difficult circumstances. She often feels lonely and deprived of a normal life. The close quarters she is living in often make her feel confined and claustrophobic. She said that I’d like to stamp my feet Anne’s tense relationship with her mother doesn’t help her feel better, nor does the constant criticism she receives from Mr.& Mrs. VanDaan , Mrs. Dussel often scolds her , and she is not particularly close with her sister Margot. Anne matures considerably and develops a close friendship with Peter Van Daan, the teenage boy in the Annex and explains her first experience of falling in love with Peter, She needs a friend and a partner with whom she could pour out her heart. She needed a friend who would help to put her on the right road.She writes,

We talked about the most private things, and yet up till now we have never touched all those things that filled, and still fill, my heart and soul.I committed one error in my desire to make a real friendship: I switched over and tried to get at him by developing it into a more intimate relation, whereas I should have explored all other possibilities (Frank, 212).

She writes about her emotional growth and discoveries about herself. What she feel about Peter and what Peter thinks, when she realized that he could not be a friend for her understanding, she leave him As she says, “For its innermost depths youth is lonelier than old age” (Frank, 213).



She found it to be true. While in hiding, Anne writes about key details of the War. Amsterdam is devastated by the war during the two years they are in hiding, she expresses normal thoughts and feelings a girl of her age would have., for example the closed quarters and the number of people living in the secret Annex, often causes Anne to feel confined and desire fresh air. Her tone is often emotional and insecure, as she is very critical of herself and the others living in the secret Annex. Anne struggles about her identity in relation to her family and the brutal world lying outside the secret Annex. As Anne matures she becomes more emotionally independent and tries to figure out what her place in the outside world,

The whole globe is waging war. We really out to save every penny to help other people and save what is left from the wreckage after the war. I could go for hours about all the sufferings the war has brought but then I would only make myself more dejected (Frank, 52).

As Anne reveals her feelings of being depressed writes, I am boiling with rage , and yet I mustn't show it , I'd like to stamp my feet scream , give Mummy a good shaking , cry and I don't know what else because of horrible words ,mocking looks, and accusations which are leveled at me repeatedly every day and find their mark , I would to shout to Margot , Van Daan, Dussel, and Daddy too “ Live me in peace , Let me sleep one night at least without my pillow being wet with tears , my eyes burning and my head throbbing , let me get away from it all preferably away from the world” But I can't do that , they mustn't know my despair, I can't let them see the wounds which they have caused (Frank, 52). In this way the readers explore the tension between the war and the personal identity Anne is trying to develop, drives her portrayal on herself.

Anne explains that she is never comfortable discussing her inner emotions even with her close friends. Despite her excitement overdeveloping into a woman. Anne nonetheless finds that she and her friends talk only about trivial topics, she appears to be just like many other insecure, vulnerable teenager who are struggling to find their identity. She wrote about typical adolescent issues such as jealousy towards her sister, annoyance with others, especially her mother; and an increasing sexual awareness Moreover she developed dislike towards her Mummy. She finds her Mummy very different to her commenting on her She writes Anne wants her mother to be a real mother , a friend , a guide , so that she could reduce her pain of being isolated from the rest of the world and can't understand Anne's inner sufferings and psychological worries caused her . In Anne's imagination mother could teach her daughter about the feminine qualities and understand her physical as well as psychological changes coming with change of age. Anne wants to break all the stereotypes created by the society for women and wants to create her identity. As men are unable to narrate the gender specific experiences of women .As feminist writer Virginia Woolf emphasized on the women's marginality in the male dominated society she wants to be a person having freedom in every sector of life. Writing own experiences of women tried to be conscious about their position these women had to be face different difficulties, women wants freedom. Anne sometimes became absurd that there was nobody understands her psychology and difficulty sometimes she wants to scream so that her tension would decrease. She writes, “A person can be lonely even if he is loved by many people, because he is still not the one and only to anyone” (Frank, 103).

In the story Anne says “My fear makes me want to scream out loud sometimes because she is still in spite of everything; I have not enough faith in God. He has given me so much which certainly



do not deserve and I still do so much that is wrong every day. She quotes, “I hid myself within myself” (Frank, 161).

I only considered myself and quietly wrote down all my joys, sorrows and contempt in my diary. This diary is of great value to me, because it has become a book of memories in many places. The Diary of Anne Frank is a beautiful and thought provoking story that explores the themes such as persecution, Jewish identity, adolescent, Maturity, inner conflict, love and sexuality but representing ‘Self’ is one of the most important themes in Anne’s diary. Anne Frank wrote daily entries of her life in the secret Annex for two years, over time; however, her entries evolve into more reflective pieces about humanity, such as the nature of the war and her role as a young Jewish girl in a devastating world. She also discussed her hopes for the future, which included becoming a journalist or a writer. She died in the early days of March 1945, her short young life snuffed out tragically by the working of a twisted manic ideology. She writes, “I still believe that ‘People are really good at heart’ As her last entry reads “I want to go on .living even after my Death” (Frank, 161).

The Diary of Anne Frank is a personal account of one family’s experience of hiding from the Nazis during the war. Through the perspective of a teen age girl helped others realize the true horror of war and an eloquent testament to the human spirit.

Thus, Anne’s diary one of the most meticulous –maintained and revealing documents to come from the victim’s side has become a symbolic text of the Holocaust. Her use of language is both simple and powerful. She uses simple sentences to convey her message and her choice of words is precise and evocative. Children read the diary as a part of their academic curriculum to acquaint themselves of what a girl of their age faced time in the 1940’s. It is considered that the writings of Anne Frank are one of the most truthful and enlightening recordings of time within the Nazi period of the Netherland. Throughout the present paper the experiences and thoughts of a young girl recorded .Anne in simple words depicts her internal pain and her cry for freedom and liberty. The Diary of a Young Girl’ is an autobiography of a 13 years old girl as she described herself. It is a reminder that we are the part of something greater than ourselves. “Where there’s a hope, there’s life”

It fills us with fresh courage and makes us strong. One should be always hopeful can face any challenge in life, as Anne Frank in The Diary of a Young Girl. I am recommend this diary to all ages of people to read for gaining more understanding about that time and teach me that we should be optimistic in the time of difficult circumstances.

Some critics and writers also take interest in Anne’s writing style. According to critic, Delinda C. Hanely, the diary, as the mirror of all people, not only for the young and the adolescents. He praises her for being able to expose the current situation at such a young age. He remarks, the story of Anne Frank’s life death resonates with people of all ages and backgrounds. Anne’s diary provides vehicle for people to learn from Europe’s holocaust and examine prejudice, persecution, discrimination, hatred and violence. Anne’s worlds survive death and inspire young people to express their idealism. Her faith that good will triumph evil still gives hope to millions around the world.

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Literary Cognizance

ISSN- 2395-7522 (Online) Imp. Fact.6.21 (IIJF)

An International Refereed / Peer Reviewed
e - Journal of English Language, Literature & Criticism

Vol.- IV, Issue- 4, March 2024



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To Cite the Article: Khan, Pathan, Shaikh, Kalimoddin. "Representing 'Self' in The Diary of a Young Girl by Anne Frank: A Critical Study". Literary Cognizance, IV - 4 (March, 2024): 14-18. Web.

