

## Alluri Edu Kondalu: A Psychoanalytic Audit in *A Prison Diary of an Ordinary Man*

Mrs. S. Aswathi,

Reg. No.: 22222104012019,

Ph.D. Research Scholar (Part time – Internal),

PG & Research Department of English,

Kamaraj College, Thoothukudi -03.

(Affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu, India.)

**Guide & Supervisor**

Dr. A. Subashini,

Assistant Professor in English,

PG & Research Department of English,

Kamaraj College, Thoothukudi -03.

(Affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu, India.)

The research paper is a psychoanalytic study of a character named Alluri Edu Kondalu, a fellow prisoner of M. Chandrakumar in Guntur Jail, Andhra Pradesh, India, as depicted by Chandrakumar in his non-fictional book called *The Prison Diary of an Ordinary Man*. The book in itself narrates the traumatic life history of many prison mates the author has come across during his incarceration. Among those personalities Alluri Edu Kondalu is one prominent figure that no reader can erase him from one's memory. Alluri seemed to be a tough person both from inside as well as outside. He was once a reputed head constable in his native, Tenali; but then he landed up in jail for committing a cruel murder. The researcher finds many clashing conflicts in Alluri's psyche. Alluri seems to face a lot of unconscious struggles in fixing his temperament. He was not able to bring balance between his 'id' and 'ego' thus takes aid from his mind's defense mechanisms to rely, reflect and sometimes to justify his act.

**Keywords:** Psychoanalysis, Prison Literature, Murder, Psyche and Defense mechanisms.

The book *The Prison Diary of an Ordinary Man* is a sequel to Chandrakumar's bestseller *Lock-Up* (2017) which has won the Best Document of Human Rights Award in English. In *Lock-Up* Chandrakumar narrates the trauma encountered by his friends and himself during his lock-up days. This book *The Prison Diary of an Ordinary Man* records his experience in Guntur jail waiting for his judgement day. The entire book is a realistic depiction of the happenings in the jail of Guntur. Like *Lock-Up* this book was originally written in Tamil on the title *Kattudhalayinooday Kaatru* in the year 2011, later got translated by Raya Chellappa into English and published in the year 2019.

M. Chandrakumar along with his friends and fellow travellers Nelson, Ravi and Moideen were arrested by the police on suspicion over a local petty theft case. They were tortured and forced to accept the crime in which they had little connection. But Chandrakumar and his friends were not ready to accept any crime which they had never committed. Even after receiving intolerable torture inside the lock-up, they stayed strong and firm in their decision. In this regard, they were shifted from lock-up to a jail for their next hearing. In spite of their innocence, they had nearly spent a five months' time in Guntur Jail waiting for their judgement

day. During that period, they had to live and adjust with many different personalities and also happened to explore the new jail life.

One among those complex personalities was Alluri Edu Kondalu. He was in the police department for nine years till he ended up in Guntur Jail. Alluri's native was Tenali, in Andhra Pradesh, in his nine years of service he had worked as a constable for six years and later got promoted as head constable. He started his career as a Policeman first in Hyderabad, later got transferred to Rajamundry, Guntur and finally moved to his native Tenali itself. Alluri Edu Kondalu has a very good physic. He was also good at weight lifting and shooting. Both his mind and body looked youthful and blooming.

Being youthful, sharp and crafty in his duty, he got the opportunity to assist many higher officials in completing their task. His deed brought him many medals and laurels but at the same time it also became the reason for his frequent transfers. The nature of higher officials getting help from him and supporting him has gained him more confidence, through which he became more powerful and dominating. He got transferred to his own native town which made his profession more like a cake walk for him. Because most of the people in the town were his relatives and friends, with which he could complete his task and would also be able to take control over the town in an effortless way. His popularity in his area sprouted up a discomfort and enmity between his station Inspector and himself.

His dominant power in his profession turned him too arrogant like a wild animal. He committed three murders out of which the first two were done for the sake of the government and the last one was his personal revenge. However, Alluri as well as the government never admitted his two murders as a crime because it was carried out with proper approval to shoot from his higher officials. The first time Alluri shot a real time living subject with his bullets was on a religious riot in Hyderabad where he had happened to shoot a front-line protester but the bullet got misfired and pierced the right shoulder of another man. Thus, he accidentally killed a person for the first time for which he was rewarded a medal from the government. The act of government recognising a murderer gave him ample confidence to carry out his next shoot on a different occasion in a Communist protest where he again shot a protester to death with more enthusiasm and for which the government again appreciated him with a medal and promoted him as a head constable. The first two encounters had no similarities with the last one but still the escape of punishment for the previously done crime paved way to Alluri to kill his girlfriend, a poor flower vendor's daughter in a ruthless way.

Alluri was fully conscious and completely aware of the deed that he had committed, but at no point he was ready to sacrifice or to pacify his urge or instinctual drive. He was not ready or else was not able to suppress his killing instincts into his unconscious mind. This made him appear and act more like an animal than a matured human. His inhuman nature got reflected when he uttered the line: "We were trained to shoot and now was the opportunity to practice it on a live target ... When the crowd scatters, the rage propels you to shoot, and you shoot!" (Chandrakumar 197).

According to Sigmund Freud, the structural model of the psyche is constructed and processed by three interacting agents called 'id', 'ego', and 'super ego' which is present in the psychic apparatus that runs to and fro in the conscious and the unconscious state of the mind to function as well as to feed the brain with commands to proceed with. The 'id' is the most commanding agent which tempts the individual to attain one's instinctual desires. It seeks

immediate gratifications and it is guided by the pleasure principles. These pleasure principles drive the id to get immediate gratification for all its needs and urges. The 'super ego' is the extreme opposite of 'id' which always insists the human brain to act morally and advises it to suppress its instinct urges. This 'super ego' is guided by the morality principles which helps humans to attain the loyal or spiritual state in difficult situations. The 'ego' is the mediator between the 'id' and the 'super ego'. It seeks long term gratifications and it is guided by the reality principles. These reality principles allow 'ego' to judge what demands of 'id' is socially acceptable and allows the brain to act accordingly. 'Ego' always tries to bring a balance between both the 'id' and the 'super ego'. The same is better explained by Saul Mcleod in his web article titled "Freud's Theory Of Personality: Id, Ego, And Superego" as: "The id is the primitive and the instinctual part of the mind that contains sexual and aggressive drives and hidden memories, the super-ego operates as a moral conscience, and the ego is the realistic part that mediates between the desires of the id and the super-ego".

On taking into account the character of Alluri Edu Kondalu, the researcher could see only the internal conflicts that raise between id and ego. In no place one can sense the stimulation or warning from the super ego. He did not take any moral stand in any of his life situations; he only chose to satisfy his instinctual urges. With the absence of stimulation from the super ego, the id part of Alluri takes the patronizing role thus makes the ego part incapacitated to maintain the balance between the 'id' and the 'super ego'. All these action simultaneously resulted in his fixation of having a more dominant, inhuman and animal like quality and behaviour.

This behavioural change is well exposed when Alluri opens up his state of mind after accidentally killing a protester in the religious riot. He says: "Even after I was engulfed by smoke from my first bullet, I didn't stop until I had exhausted all the bullets" (Chandrakumar 196 & 197). His behaviour has got even more worse when he shot the front-line protester in the communist protest. He confessed this to the author, thus: "In those situations, my attitude was to shoot as many of the front line protesters as possible to get the appreciation of the higher authorities" (Chandrakumar 198).

When analysing the personal life of Alluri, he had never showed his love to his mother or to his girlfriend. All the emotion he showed off towards his mother was the fear of his mother's arrangement for Alluri's wedding. This fear did not take place because he loves the daughter of the flower vendor but that his mother's decision would affect his ambition of becoming an Inspector. In fact, he had never expressed any sort of love or respect towards the poor girl, all he had for her was mere infatuation, which later developed in him an insane possession towards her body. It is only because of his possessiveness he gave no time to his brain to test, whether what he had seen in the theatre, that the girl was on the bicycle with some other man was real or illusion. This state of losing his possession gave him anxiety that resulted in the murder of the poor soul. His ferociousness and his fury to kill her even after giving a deep stroke in her stomach was revealed, when he uttered:

She caught my head with both her hands and repeatedly hit it against the door. My fury surged, and I struck her again. Pulled her up and made her stand against the other wall and struck again. Like I had fired till the last bullet in the agitation, I just kept striking her till either she went down or I was exhausted ... *I had brought her down.* (Chandrakumar 223)

Even after committing such a cruel act, he had acquired no guilt. Without getting any thoughts to surrender himself in the police station, he takes four days leave from the inspector saying that he was sick. It took two days for him to clean all the blood stains from the house. He completely cleaned and painted the house new. In the next two days he had indulged himself in the brutal act of cutting down the body of his girlfriend into pieces and threw it into the river that flows at the outskirts of the town. Regardless of committing an indigestible crime he remained happy, calm and composed. He pretended to be sad in front of the people in the station about the missing of his girlfriend, “Bending his head when in public, pretending to be disgraced, Alluri Edu Kondalu the head constable, was all smiles, sitting in the station, drinking happily” (Chandrakumar 233).

Alluri’s intention was not to kill her. It was entirely an unconscious act that pushed him to pierce the knife into her stomach. But, Alluri was not that kind of ordinary person to suppress his urge to kill some person which is a social crime, instead he continued to strike her with the knife till she left her last breath. This happened because Alluri has fixed up himself that his previous two murders were not a crime at all. Moreover, no officers or even his conscience reminded or reproved him that what he had done is an inhuman act. Likewise, the medals and promotion he received for murdering a person propelled his confidence to go for the third one.

He was clear and had reasons and points to justify his crime. In the first case he fixed up his mind with the fact that “If there are protest against the firing, the concerned persons would be transferred or suspended, but no one would be removed from service. In fact, there had been no cases against firing by police in a riot” (Chandrakumar 197). Even in the case of killing his own beloved, his realisation is thus: “Wretched sinner! Could you not have obeyed me? You are dead now!” “Is it true that you are dead? Am I mad now? You know I was a grown-up animal, could you not have adjusted to me?” (Chandrakumar 224 & 225).

Every time when an internal conflict raises between Alluri’s id and ego, his ego part tries its best to sooth down his instinctual urges, but has never fully succeeded in the act. His mind falls into a dilemma whether to ignore his drives to make himself socially acceptable or to satisfy his deep personal desires. As a result of this conflict, he develops anxiety and fear inside him. To hide his anxiety or fear he immediately reacts for it with anger and arrogance, with which he tries to dominate and control others.

Similarly, in order to safeguard and to escape from his conscience he uses a set of defence mechanisms, which helps him to cope up with his memory, cognition, as well as his behaviour. “Defense mechanisms are unconscious psychological responses that protect people from feelings of anxiety, threats of self-esteem, and things that they don’t want to think about or deal with” (Cherry). Defense mechanism was introduced by Sigmund Freud and was later developed by his daughter Anna Freud and other psychologists. There are nearly twenty defense mechanisms among them the researcher found three defense mechanisms that were predominant in Alluri’s psyche.

The first one is ‘rationalization’ introduced by Anna Freud, which helps one’s conscious to support their unconscious deed that are socially unacceptable by justifying it as a logical or reasonable act. This quality was found in Alluri because he had never realised his faults or crime at any point of time, instead he kept on giving reasons for it. Thus, he had reasoned out for not having acquired any guilt for shooting a person to death, as: “I realised

that it was sufficient if I satisfied a few people at the top; the rest below were of no significance to me” (Chandrakumar 208).

The second one is ‘denial’, this mechanism works by believing that something has not happened or it does not exist. By refusing or blocking some selected memory the individual may try to defend or will try to escape particular situations. Alluri uses this mechanism unconsciously in order to quench the needs of his id which always seeks immediate satiation. Even after stabbing his girlfriend deep in her stomach, his fury did not get pacified, so to convince his id part he obliges to its pleasure principle thus without giving himself a second thought he continuously stabs her till she falls.

Correspondingly, the last one is ‘displacement’, which functions by redirecting or transferring any aggressive impulse to some powerless or less harmful object or person. But it is different from Freud’s concept of ‘transference’ where the feeling for one person is transferred to other person for specific reason, the feeling here transferred can both be good or bad. This is not the case with ‘displacement’ where the object or the person is specifically targeted and attacked. Here, Alluri displaces his anger and aggression to the public as well as over his girlfriend just because he cannot react or even speak against his authoritative Inspector, who kept on torturing Alluri by regularly giving him many workloads and continuous night shifts. Thus, to suppress his anger and hatred for the Inspector, he started to torture the helpless common people of the town. Alluri says, “In the office, the authoritarian behaviour of my inspector was unbearable. So, I had to harass my constables and the common man to find some solace” (Chandrakumar 211).

To conclude, one can reason out that, the abnormal as well as intolerable behaviour of Alluri Edu Kondalu and also his act of committing three brutal murders is because of his mind’s failure to cope up or find balance between his ‘id’ and ‘ego’. He is obsessed with his pleasure principles and had never listened to any of his reality principles that he was consciously aware of. Thus, had never acquired any moral in his personal and professional life, which then let him turn out into an inhumane, animal like personality.

#### **Works Cited:**

- Chandrakumar, M. *The Prison Diary of an Ordinary Man*. Translated by Raya Chellappa, Eka Westland Publications Pt. Ltd., 2019.
- Cherry, Kendra. “20 Common Defense Mechanisms and How They Work: How Defense Mechanisms Help You Cope With Anxiety”. *Verywell mind*, Nov. 01, 2022, [www.verywellmind.com/defense-mechanisms-2795960#:~:text=Defense%20mechanisms%20are%20unconscious%20psychological,Freud%20in%20his%20psychoanalytic%20theory](http://www.verywellmind.com/defense-mechanisms-2795960#:~:text=Defense%20mechanisms%20are%20unconscious%20psychological,Freud%20in%20his%20psychoanalytic%20theory).
- Mcleod, Saul. “Freud’s Theory of Personality: Id, Ego, And Superego”. *Simply Psychology*, Nov. 09, 2023, [www.simplypsychology.org/psyche.html](http://www.simplypsychology.org/psyche.html).
-