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# Clash of Id and Ideology in Paulo Coelho's Eleven Minutes



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Abstract: Paulo Coelho's Eleven Minutes has viewed the Id as subservient to ideology. The study focuses on Karl Marx's concept of Ideology and the Freudian Id. In the novel, a character namely Maria has a strong Id which dominates her ideology. Her act of masturbation and feeling of erotic pleasure shows a lack of repression. She is ruled by carnality as the proletariat is ruled by the bourgeois. The present analysis aims to throw light on all erotic experiences of Maria which reveal that her ideology is subservient to the id. The researcher aims to find out that healthy repression of sexual desires distinguishes humans from animals and that an individual can become productive in society. Healthy repression converts psychic energy into artistic creation. Out of curbing eroticism, the ideology becomes operational. Consequently, culture, religion, morality and creativity are introduced and practised and society becomes balanced.

Key Words: Ideology, Id, Super-ego, Narcissism, Social Institutions

### Introduction

Instinct has been critically analyzed, debated, and interpreted by different philosophers, writers, mystics, scientists, psychoanalysts, literary critics and researchers since time immemorial. Some have argued in favour of it; some have totally rejected it and observed celibacy. The classics like Plato have emphasized spirituality and valued the spiritual world. On contrary, modernists like John Donne, D. H. Lawrence and Sigmund Freud have stressed carnality and logic as well as argumentatively documented their observations and thoughts about the completion of self and soul. Some literary writers have brought the notion of instinct under their meditation as a way of expressing their own arguments i.e. *Ecstasy* or

The Flea by John Donne or The Lady Chatterley's Lover by D. H. Lawrence, whereas others have shown the orthodox reaction of society towards sex, i.e. The Scarlet Letter by Nathaniel Hawthorne. All these evaluations on instinct or blood consciousness open the way for further discussion as to what significance sex has on humans life, why one needs to indulge in sexual activity or why man and woman feel desire for each other, what personality or ideology is shaped through this psychic energy whether humans' ideology should be submissive to this instinctive desire or their libido should be subservient to their ideology. The protagonist, Maria, in Paulo Coelho's Eleven Minutes is the follower of sexual instincts or id. Her ideology is subservient to the libido which prevents her to be contributing to

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society and having a balanced human personality. She observes no curbs or restrictions on her sexual desires and continues to live her life by herself. She denounces fatherly rod because she is too motherly than fatherly. She denies and rejects all the checks and restraints which are disciplined by ideology-generating institutions as she is a sexdriven and id-possessed character.

#### Literature Review

Eleven Minutes has been viewed by Kaushik and Ankita (2018) from the perspective of Personal Legend, Displacement and Self-Transcendence. Maria explores her own self through her journey from Brazil to Switzerland. While studying Maria as a displaced character, the researcher focuses on Maria's suffering which she experiences during her journey and the prostitute's pathetic condition in her quest for true love. Her journey opens a path of miseries as well as pleasures. It has been interpreted both as a destructor and a creator. Marleni (2010) holds his belief that Maria is critically suffering from her inability to have a vaginal orgasm through sexual intercourse, which is termed Female Orgasmic Disorder (FOD). The researcher studies her clitoral orgasm and interprets the orgasmic disorder by focusing on the central character's sexual experiences that become the cause of the inability to reach orgasm through intercourse. Jothi (2019) aims to find out that in her journey of re-exploring her soul, Maria loses her soul and then she finds it again. The study focuses on how Maria loses her soul in order to become financially independent and makes her survival better and in what ways she regains her soul. In the struggle of Maria, Sultana (2019) explores certain strategies that help Maria to come out of her inferiority feelings and then start living as an independent individual. The paper aims to "...point out those events in Maria's life that would have tended to inflict her with a feeling of inferiority reflected in her own psychological dilemma" (p.1). Rozana and Thoyibi (2020) have pointed out the pragmatic approach of Maria in becoming a prostitute. They have analyzed that Maria has willfully joined the sex profession based on the reasons that support a pragmatic approach. There are six different indicators of pragmatic reasons which include the need for survival, getting sexual pleasure, taking the existing opportunity, preparing for a better future, learning problems and solutions and seeking a new experience. Muzamil Abbas (2022), has interpreted and evaluated the journey of Maria in finding her lost half through sacred sex or coition. His study aims to emphasize that intellect is subservient to instinct and blood is wiser than the intellect. The paper analyzes "...in False coition Maria loses her interest in lovemaking..." because she uses her intellect "...but after meeting Ralf she realizes that having sex with a partner brings a new life, freshness and sacredness" (p.1).

Medista Ayu Ningsih (2015) studies Maria's life as a nonconformist against human trafficking and human exploitation. She is viewed as a rebel against the practice of human trafficking and dehumanization in the sex industry owned by patriarchy. The study focuses on how she has been offered to earn money, how she has been hired into prostitution as a sex worker, how she has been drifted into involuntary labour, how she is given instructions about the rules of a family nightclub, how she is directed about the rituals of sex club by its owner and then how she struggles against exploitation and protests against human degradation by leaving the profession. Santosh Ghimire (2019) has analyzed the involvement of Maria in sex clubs as a result of oppressive capitalism. The study aims to argue that Maria works as a prostitute for her survival in an oppressive patriarchal as well as capitalist society. It highlights the experiences of Maria as a prostitute who is treated as a commodity. Abia Anwar and Muhammad Asif Khan (2021) have interpreted Maria as an excluded, objectified, alienated marginalized and being. researchers' study analyses the central character as a prostitute, an outsider, who is otherwise because she is a corrupt seducer. She has been mistreated and humiliated as she is other, not sharing the same race, blood, language and skin while living in another country. According to Jabun Nahar (2021), Maria is the representative of Third Wave Feminism who is disrupting the binary pairs through her journey of selftranscendence to self-actualization. protagonist Maria is viewed as a character who struggles to break the shackles of women's slavery. Alanazi (2017) has interpreted the novels Eleven Minutes by Paulo Coelho and Woman at Point Zero by Nawa El Saadawi based on the argument that the central characters join prostitution in order to be free from the dominance of patriarchal norms in which women are always judged, objectified, kept submissive and given passive roles. The study focuses on "...how the sex industry is empowering women" concludes that the characters emancipated from a patriarchal society (p.1). Ika Puji Astuti (2014) evaluates Maria's journey as a struggle for a better life and interprets the psychological journey of Maria from Brazil to Switzerland and her visit to different nightclubs and hotels as an adventure to upgrade her life. Puspitajati (2015) has analyzed Maria as one who manages the ways to handle her difficulties and miseries in life. The paper aims to analyze the ability of Maria to cope with her stress. It focuses on two problems: "Maria's stresses..." and "...the way Maria copes with her stresses..." and the reasons that cause her stresses are "...her dreams to have a better life..." (p.vii). Alda (2021) has interpreted Eleven Minutes by Paulo Coelho and Jatisaba by Ramayada Akmal and examines the two main characters, Maria and Mae, and how they undergo a psychological transformation as they are brought up as strong characters by their mothers that protect them from castration and gender inferiority as a woman. The protagonists face several difficulties and psychologically suffer from human trafficking, sexual harassment and prostitution.

## Theoretical Design

The present study is qualitative in nature. In this study, the researcher evaluates the text from Marx's concept of Ideology and Freudian Id. The researcher focuses on Marx's theory of Base and Superstructure and Freud's structure of the human psyche i.e. id, ego and super-ego, and his theory of Narcissism and Castration complex. Sigmund Freud's idea of the super-ego drives a man to a human society where it introduces an individual to religion, culture, morality, social norms and values, civilization and with the role of ethics and traditions. Freudian Super-ego is the conscience that enables men to curb their sexual instincts that ultimately leads them towards creativity, innovation and production. The Freudian super-ego is the denial of erotic hunger, carnality and narcissistic attitude that drives society towards productivity and economic growth if the libido possession is restricted, controlled or checked. The attributes of the superego are the principles of reality that are contrary to the pleasure principles. They allow an individual to put healthy checks or restraints over the id and id-driving forces and thus the human society and its ideology become operational. Out of this healthy repression over libido or sexual instincts, the role of religion, culture, media, arts, school and family is operational and functional which Karl Marx terms as Superstructure. Marx believes that it is the ideology, being the important part of the Superstructure, that fosters a set of ideas and attitudes that make people how to think, act and behave by understanding their culture as Lois Tyson (2006) argues " For Marxism, an ideology is a belief system and all systems are products of cultural conditioning" (p.56). Individuals are led by the beliefs which the ideology fosters in them. It is the ideology through which the ruling class rules over the subjects. The ideology is operational when ideology-generating institutions work properly under the healthy repression of sexual drives. The law of the father or the castration complex threatens a child to stop taking sensual pleasures and it grows a fear in a child that regulates the ideology or Superstructure of the society and it ultimately makes human society a balanced society as Freud argues "the motive of human society is in the last resort an economic one" (Eagleton, 1996, p.131).

### **Collision of Rivals**

In Eleven Minutes, the protagonist, Maria, is a sexdriven character. Her character is guided and developed by her sexual instincts. She is ruled by the idea of fulfilling her sexual desires and sexual satisfaction. She is obsessed with sensuality and carnality and considers the lower part of her body more important and necessary than the upper part. She is governed by the notion of satisfying her inner animal which is uncontrollable, wild and unchained in her case. From the beginning of the novel, Maria appears as an innocent virgin character who dreams of getting married to a loving prince charming as it runs the "...was always hoping that one day her prince charming would arrive, sweep her off her feet and take her away with him..."(Coelho, 2004, p.1)\*. This first desire of dreaming and marrying her man by Maria enables the researcher to think of her as a sex-driven character. This first desire of Maria is backed by her sexual instincts or in the words of Sigmund Freud "libido or id" (Thurschwell, 2001, p.81). It develops an idea that her id is strong and dominant that lacks curbs and restraints as her first desire of sleeping with her man leads her to the experience of falling in love with a schoolboy when she is eleven years old. On her way to school, Maria becomes aware that she is not alone, but she is followed by her lover, a schoolboy. These few moments of being in the company of her love on the way to school become the best part of the day and this brief meeting leaves her many hours imagining and thinking about him that it would be a source of great happiness if they may be able to talk. Maria starts romanticizing her days as she is overwhelmed by feelings and desires of meeting and talk with her love. She finds peace and comfort in the company of her lover and wishes to love him as she has been waiting and longing for him and dreaming that she can take his hand in hers. Soon she develops strong and intense feelings for another lover whom she meets during Holy Week Procession as she misses him and romanticizes her meeting with him. She misses her newly met boyfriend intensely and spends a lot of time imagining what they two would talk about when the lovers meet next time. These moments that pass between Maria and her lover become a source of happiness, joy and satisfaction for Maria. Her feelings of sensuality and pleasure with that boy can be observed as the lovers touch and kiss each other for the first time. They find themselves under the rhythmical flow and in frenzied feelings when they are aroused by hot love and passion. Kissing is the first physical contact that Maria experiences with her lover. Maria is a libido-driven character as she leads her life experiencing love that evokes her sensuality and makes her satisfy her erotic hunger. She is an Id-led character as she experiences selfstimulation and practices masturbation. In the absence of her parents, she starts touching and loving her body parts. She tries to get self-pleasure because she is under the sway of eroticism and sex-hunger. Her sexuality is exceeded by physical touch with her lover. Her first kiss intensifies the fire of sexual instincts inside her body that make her restless as her feelings while practising masturbation can be examined "...the feelings provoked were so strong and so pleasurable" that she finds herself entering paradise where the worldly vision and worldly things are no longer meaningful and worthy than the orgasmic feelings she experiences during self-stimulation (p.13).

She is overwhelmed with the feelings of joy, pleasure and bliss while satisfying her erotic hunger because "Masturbation gave her enormous pleasure..." and she keeps on taking sexual pleasure once a week (p. 13). Her meeting with different boys makes libido-driven Maria bold and it heightens her sexual feelings so much that one day she falls in love with another boy and sleeps with him. The two lovers touch each other's bodies and as their sexuality is aroused, they start relaxing their bodies by having sexual intercourse. It is the first sex-act of Maria when she lies to her boyfriend and loses her virginity. During her stay in Switzerland, Maria enrols herself in taking French-language classes so that she can communicate in the local language with the natives. In French class, she meets an Arab who is studying with her and soon falls in love with him, but their affair lasts three weeks before she entertains her time with him on the outskirts of Geneva. Her intimacy with her classmate is a clear and vivid representation of her strong sexual instincts or libido. Impressed by the sexuality of Maria, an Arab gentleman, working in the fashion industry, calls her to meet at a restaurant where he proposes to her in his hotel room with the offer of a thousand francs. This Arab gentleman's offer to Maria creates an inner conflict or clash in her mind about whether she should agree with his offer or refuse it, whether she should answer to her sexual instincts or her conscience, whether she should say yes or no to it, but ultimately she resolves and submits her conscience to her sexual instincts. Maria's willingness to the offer of the fashion designer and rich Arab gentleman is the manifestation of the assumption that she is a sexdriven or id-led character.

Maria lives and enjoys her life in accordance with pleasure principles. Since the beginning of the novel, Maria appears to be fallen in love with her boyfriend on the way from her house to school. House and school are the two ideology-making institutions which Maria is denying as she is encouraging herself towards libido. She is not interested in the learning environment of the school, but interested in the way to school that brings her close to her boyfriend. She feels delighted and joyful not in school but in the moments in which they are on the way to school and the "...moments spent going to school" make her day best (p.2). In fact, she hates the studying and learning environment of the school and

becomes impatient to see her boyfriend and unhappy during weekends. Not only does Maria lack interest in school, but she also romanticizes her going to school with her lover. She thinks of him taking hand in hand and walking "...straight past the school gates with him..."; the moments spent with him put her in the hangover of his memories and then she cannot "...concentrate on her lessons..." (p.2-3). Her going away from school with her lover and enjoying the company, her best moments, are pieces of evidence that she prefers love over learning, sensuality over studies, and pleasure over practising knowledge of the school. Her act of leaving the school behind her is symbolic of denying the ideology fostered by the school. In his theory of the castration complex, Sigmund Freud believes that the father of a child threatens him to stop taking pleasure in his mother's breastfeeding and thus he weans him off. In this way, the child develops a sense of fear in him that disallows him to take sensual pleasure as it runs "this fear of the father's power becomes the baby's super-ego, the internal voice which stops the child from doing things he shouldn't do..." (Thurschwell, 2001, p.48). This fear of the father is the metaphor for the law of the father which becomes the inner voice of a child that introduces human society, morality, social norms, religion, culture, family and different values working in society. This fear of the fatherly rod curbs the sensuality and erotic stimulation that the protagonist Maria lacks as she practices masturbation since her childhood during her parents' absence. In the text, it goes "she used to do this when she was a child and she liked the feeling, until one day, her father saw her and slapped her hard, without explaining why" (p.11). This act of slapping Maria by her father creates a sense of fear in her because she has never been slapped like that and that gives her a sense of masturbating not in front of her parents and other people and stops "...touching herself in front of other people..." (p.12). This act of slapping her by her ideology-driven father represents the role of an ideology-generating family which Maria rejects and continues to take pleasure from her act of selfstimulation during the absence of her parents. The ideology-fostering Vivian, the director of the dance club, informs Maria about the restrictions of the club that they are forbidden to talk to the customers in private and that she should avoid so. Maria is instructed on the club rituals that she has to abide by. The restrictions given to Maria by

Vivian give her a sense that it is the family nightclub where she is employed to work because the club has strict restrictions just like family's and the dancers have suspended anytime if they are found denying the club rituals. Soon Maria "succumbs to sadness and boredom" (p.44). Her secret meeting with the Arab lover is an act of transgression and she goes against the rituals which the ideology-driven Vivian instructs her. This act of transgression by Maria becomes the cause of her suspension by the Swiss man, Roger, the owner of the "family nightclub" because of setting a bad example for the club (p.64). The ideology-driven Roger tries to drift the id-led Maria according to the rituals of the nightclub, but when she transgresses the limits and restraints, he dismisses her immediately. This clash of id and ideology brings Maria and Roger face to face and after their arguments, she leaves the club and finds her way to her Arab lover to spend time with him and to satisfy sexual gratification. As the Maria\_ the ideology-resisting protagonist character is offered a job as a samba dancer by a Swiss man, she reasons the job offer with a conflict of saying yes or no to this life as it goes "Everything tells me that I am about to make a wrong decision... Does [the world] want me to take no risks, to go back where I came from because I didn't have the courage to say 'yes' to life?" (p.26). These feelings show her inner conflict to move forward. The inner voice of Maria tries to stop her from moving towards the life of herself. This inner voice in an individual leads him/her to a life of repression and enables them to conform to the ideology. Easthope (1999) explains the words of Mitchell "...the Oedipus system the incestuous wish and the threat of castration presided over by the father is necessary to produce human society" (p.33). Antony is of the view that human society is born and introduced out of the threat of castration presiding over by the father. This threat of castration or the inner voice curbs the erotic hunger and thus the ideological structures i.e. "...the political parties, schools, the media, churches, the family and art(including literature) which foster an ideology a set of ideas and attitudes which is sympathetic to the aims of the state..." become operational in the human society (Barry, 2002, p.163). Keeping in view the inner conflict of id-driven Maria expressed in her diary, it shows that she is struggling against the inner voice that stops her to accept the offer of becoming a "Lovely Brazilian samba star!" (p.32), but she resolves the conflict and accepts the offer. The offer of sexual intercourse for money by the Arab puts her in a terrible inner conflict that reminds her of her home, family and her mother's arms. The feelings to be in her hometown and in her mother's arms can be taken symbolically to harmonize with the ideology-led institution. She feels helpless, trapped and humiliated and starts crying which reveals her denial to sleep with the Arab. This act of crying by id-potent Maria is due to the influence of set restrictions that reflect the moment that she is denying stimulation. She becomes a victim of conflict that whether she should submit to the offer of sexual intercourse for money or reject it, whether she should return home or should move forward. She does not understand whether it is a great chance or a trial set by Virgin Mary. All these conflicting remarks and disturbed mentality reveal that Maria is struggling against the inner voice of saying yes or no to the Arab's offer, but ultimately she resolves the conflict and feels free as she submits to the sex offer for the money. She writes in her diary that she feels no guilt or repentance for having sex with the Arab as a prostitute. Caught between the pleasure principles and the reality principles, the id and the super-ego, the sensuality and the inner fear, Maria struggles against set norms shaped by ideology and moves to take a decision to become a prostitute without any threats, risks, restrictions and checks.

Senhora Maria is a sex-driven and ideologydenying protagonist who observes no checks and restraints set by ideology-generating institutions in order to take sexual gratification and satisfy her sexual desires. She opposes the ideology represented by certain institutions that constitute a society and that helps to drive the life of community rather than the life of oneself which Maria prefers and leads confidently. She is an idled character who knows no restraints but channels, no restrictions and curbs but outlet and releases the body's tension not only through selfstimulation but also through sex-act. She appears as an individual while ignoring ideology-fostering bodies and denying the healthy repression that leads her to the life of herself rather than to the life of a community. Some poetic lines can be interpreted in the context of Maria who is living the life of two women which appear in the preface of the Eleven Minutes text by author, Paulo

Coelho. They are: "For I am the first and the last/I am venerated and the despised/I am the prostitute and the saint/I am the wife and the virgin" (p.ix). Maria appears as the first woman like Eve who observes a healthy check on her sexual desires, but she is the last woman who may be taken as ideology denying and the one who seeks sexual fulfilment. She is the one who is given respect by her boss and club owner, Milan, and her dignity is restored by Ralf Hart while she is disliked by the librarian, Heidi when she asks for sex books at the library. She is the libidopossessed character whose decisions, choices and actions to fulfil her sexual desires turn her into a prostitute whereas she is pious like Virgin Mary if she curbs her stimulation. She is the wife of Ralf Hart because she supports and consoles him as a wife does, but she is a virgin if she follows ideology. She is the mother of all the clients at the sex club, Copacabana, and even Ralf Hart when she helps them to remove their hopelessness and disappointment and revives in them the light of hope and positivity by sleeping with them as it goes "I am the mother and the daughter/ I am the arms of my mother/I am barren and my children are many/ I am the married woman and the spinster/...I am the shameful and the magnificent one" (p.ix). Maria as a prostitute sleeps with many men in order to satisfy her sexual hunger, but she is the unwed mother of all the unborn children as the semen is released by her sex partners inside her womb. In this way, she is a married woman as she enjoys sexual intercourse with many as well as an unwed girl whom no one owns as a wife or a married woman. She is both the shameful one for ideology-possessed characters like her father, Roger and the library in charge, Heidi, for seeking sexual satisfaction and the magnificent one if she observes restraints and healthy checks on her libido. She is a libido-possessed character and thus her ideology is subservient to her libido. Freud argues that Narcissism is "...the sexual attitude in which a person directs his love towards himself, rather than towards another" and it is "...the love of oneself and erotic interest in one's own body" (Thurschwell, 2001, p.80). The protagonist Maria is also indulged in self-love and erotic interest in her own body. She bestows her love on herself which leads her to take erotic satisfaction from masturbation and she continues to take sexual pleasure, feeling that she does not need any man to take erotic pleasure and fulfils her bodily needs (Coelho, 2004). Maria is guided by the pleasure principles while denying the role of ideology represented by certain institutions as Eagleton (2002) says "the ideology is the product of the concrete social relations into which men enter at a particular time and place" (p.6). Maria does not let herself be influenced by concrete social relations as she challenges and questions the institutions that restrict her from taking erotic pleasure and enjoying the excitement of sex-act. She feels confident and proud of herself to be a prostitute as she runs "I'm a prostitute through and through, from head to toe, and I don't care who knows. That's my one great virtue" (p.113). She thinks that to satisfy one's sexual instincts and to fulfil erotic desires is a virtuous thing and thus she is a libido-possessed character who works according to the pleasure principle as argued by Pamela Thurschwell in the words of Freud "the pleasure principle is aligned with the libido the drive towards happiness, wish-fulfilment, the release of sexual energy" (p.85). In the pursuit of sexual gratification and getting excited, Maria lacks healthy repression of her libido and ignores the restraints which Freud calls the reality principle which is "the state of frustration of expectation, this confrontation with the outer circumstances which have the power to ruin our imagined joy" (p.86). Maria does not feel frustration that can ruin her joy, love or intense fire of hot passion, but she and Ralf Hart continue to make love and enjoy touching. This act of lovemaking of Maria and Ralf Hart is evidence of the sensual experience they have in order to refuse their lost souls. Maria explores her own self through the re-fusion of her soul with Ralf Hart as it goes "she felt she had discovered herself through love..." (p.235) All these experiences of erotic stimulations and orgasms by Maria with her lover explicitly manifest that she is a sex-driven and ideology-resisting character who bears no curbs and checks on her sexual instincts and continues to live the life of love, sexual satisfaction, wishfulfilment, happiness and eroticism. This act of fulfilling her own sexual desires confines her to herself instead of others and leads her towards individual life aiming to wish-fulfilment and release of sexual energy rather than group psychology which, according to Freud, is maintained by observing the attributes of the super-ego, but Maria while ignoring the demands of community becomes habitual to say 'yes' to the life of eroticism. For her, the denial of restrictions and restraints drives their bodies through "...the gardens of paradise..." and beyond the limits of eleven minutes (p. 279).

### Conclusion

Observing the protagonist of *Eleven Minutes*, Maria appears as a character who is controlled by her sexual instincts throughout the novel. Her first wish is to find her man or prince charming until she meets up with Ralf Hart, Maria's actions, choices and decisions are represented by her sexuality, carnality and dominant libido. She becomes a prostitute and denies the restrictions of the Church, fatherly rod, conscience, family, and school and follows the path of wish-fulfilment and pleasure principle. Due to a lack of healthy repression of her sexual desires, she becomes habitual to or addicted to sex acts and masturbating practices. She does not live in social or group psychology as her actions drive her to the life of herself. In order to fulfil her sex hunger or satisfy her sexual desires, she discourages the role of ideology as it constitutes a society. If Maria had observed healthy repression of her sexual desires, she would have been productive, contributive and creative for society. Her contribution is lacking due to satisfying her sexual instincts.

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