Picaro as Hero: A Psychological Study of Michael Jackson

Every individual has a unique personality and traits are one of the major influences in a person’s personality. The endeavour in the present study has been to demonstrate that the understanding of an individual’s character can be enhanced from a study of theories formulated by psychologists, with specific regard to personality. Personality Theory provides us with the ability to analyse a character and the ability to understand the personality that is found through the analysis.

This project studies Michael Jackson’s personality from a psychological viewpoint and compares him to the picaro. The endeavour has been to study all aspects of Jackson’s personality, his personal life, his public life – where he wore the mask of a performer – and his relations with his friends and family. The analysis has been carried out by using Gordon Allport’s and Henry Murray’s ‘trait theories’ and applying these to an empirical study of Michael Jackson’s personality. The study is based on the premise that there are a lot of similarities between Michael Jackson and the picaro. The main focus of the study is the similarity in their persona, their characteristic traits, similarity in their situations and circumstances, behaviour, and attitude towards life. With the application of Allport’s and Murray’s trait theories Michael Jackson’s character and traits have been studied and a comparison has been made between Jackson and the picaro.

The thesis focuses on the antihero discussing in detail his characteristics with reference to some notable picaresque characters. The endeavour has been to study the heroic as well as the anti-heroic traits of the picaro while analysing his characteristic traits and personality. The argument is that the picaro does not conform to the traditional definition of heroism and challenges the established codes of the society. Despite refuting the conventions and living his life on his own terms what is it that makes him a hero? The picaros are also heroes but in quite a different sense. What this different sense is, and how the picaros are different from the traditional heroes and yet heroes? Picaros are anti-heroes who are looked down upon and who do not possess the qualities of classical heroism. How despite being so pushed against the wall and disliked for their low social background and mean behaviour do these characters go on to become the heroes of their novels is the basic argument. Their characters have been explored in depth and an attempt has been made to establish them as heroes – although unconventional ones.
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