

Under the ribs of death by john marlyn

Literature



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UNDER THE RIBS OF DEATH –“ A STUDY OF A RAMBLING PERSONALITY” “

Under the Ribs of Death highlights the major theme of the adoption of the false values and their terrible consequences of damaging dislocation. This novel is based on the ambiguous concept of multiculturalism. The title of this novel sounds somewhat grisly and horrified and seems to entail the pressure of capitalist society which results into the death of individual hopes and aspirations. After reading the novel personally I felt that the hypocrisy and false acceptance of the alien culture lead the protagonist to the tragic end. Everybody wants to have name, fame, and status in the life. But for gaining these things one should not deny his originality. If an apple becomes stubborn to grow on mango tree like a mango and if it decides to forget his status of being an apple, can it become so? It is necessary for every human being to cherish his originality. But the protagonist Sandor wants to forget that he is a Hungarian and tries to behave like an Englishman. No doubt he wants to be a successful person in his life but for that it is not right to forget the originality. Sandor Hunyadi accepts blindly all the values of the modern world and keeps himself away from his origin and the old values which are the marks of his real identity. “ When you’re the English it’s the same as bein’ Canadian” (Pg. 24, “ Under the Ribs of Death”). It is a question whether it is right to be isolated from our originality. By doing this we kill the unique personality within us.

Unlike Sandor his father is persistent about the humanist and old world values while Sandor on the contrary is ready to degrade himself at any level to get the economic prosperity. Economic prosperity is definitely an important factor, in fact the most important factor but there are other important factors also which matter in the life. Sandor’s father seems to be

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very solicitous when he says, “ It is shameful to be a money chaser, to be dishonest, and to remain ignorant when the opportunity for learning is so great here. But to be ashamed of your name because you are Hungarian and are poor! When you grow up you will laugh to think that such things ever trouble you.... Do you understand, Sandor?” (Page 25, “ Under the Ribs of Death”)

It is the height of hostility about self when Sandor changes his name to fit himself in the Canadian Community. But this hostility exists in his mind due to the humiliation and from the continuous pressure of tremendous inferiority complex about himself. He calls himself “ Alex Hunter,” the name which suggests “ Alexander the Great, conqueror of the world.

“ Alex Hunter. He repeated it softly, reached for a pen, and wrote his signature on a clean sheet of paper. But it was still not right.

He tried again. Something bold was wanted here, particularly in the A and H; something with the imprint of his character in it, the statement of a man who has nothing to conceal (page 129)”

If Sandor’s character is studied from various perspectives sometimes he gets the sympathy from the readers. Whatever weird is there in his personality, it is because of the circumstances. Sandor is imprudent and indiscreet person. Perhaps Sandor feels that by changing name one can change his or her destiny. But according to me when you try to run away from your name your own personality, your own language how would you survive? Sandor in the entire novel tries to run away from himself and if you hate yourself then success hates you. It should be the doctrine of everybody’s life.

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