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Gulf University of Science and Technology

Madness and Sanity: Wisdom of Madmen and the Wise Men Madness in the 19th century

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Abstract:

This research is based on a careful examination of the concept of insanity and reason. In addition to mentioning some examples from the nineteenth century in the literature to illustrate how each of them used the concept of insanity. Despite the different reason for describing each of the above names and personalities as insane, through analyzes and questions posed it becomes clear that insanity in the end may have a different meaning from what today's concept represent. The research concludes with the main reason behind the presentation of literature to some famous figures of insanity in a manner that reflects their rationality, despite the approval of many writers of her madness despite their intelligence, cleverness.love ego? Or the punishment of the mighty?

Keywords: madness, insanity, ego, wisdom, psychology

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Literary Analysis Essay

The wisdom of the madmen and Wisemen madness is a literal paradox where the character who is identified as a fool comes to be regarded as the beholder of wisdom. An identifiable trope established in the literature from antiquity to the 19th century, the Fool's wisdom typically highlights the reason that fails to illuminate something's significance. The Arabic saying posits that "madness is of various forms" (Aljunun Funun). The madness of particular wise madmen seemingly has a significant fascination for different notable figures in the classic literal traditions. Paradoxically, the literature of the 19th century has used wise characters depicting insanity and madmen expressing wisdom. Concisely, this paper discusses the wisdom of Madmen /Women and the Wise Men/Women in the Victorian period. references how Ahab's wisdom bloomed with his insanity in *Moby Dick*, Al-Naysaburi's explanation on the rationality of madmen in *Wise Madmen* and The escapement from sanity to insanity in *Jane Eyer*.

Firstly, Ahab is the most insane character according to *Moby Dick* novel. However, despite all the assertions and conclusions regarding Ahab's insanity, it is imperative to note that his early reactions to the sea was well-timed and was executed appropriately. However ,It was not uncommon in the 19th century for an able person to rise to stardom and rapidly attain a ship captain's status (Thomson 38). The determination and brilliance of Ahab were the major factors contributing to his rise. Whenever Ahab took over the captain's roles, his capabilities were second to none. He was a quick learner, and his adaptation to duties was on

point. All these factors showed how the perceived madman was wise. However, it was until the year of whaling difficulties and routines that frustrated and hardened the character. His senses were subject to suffering. He started being lonely and isolated. The initial symptoms of moral insanity would have surfaced previously in what Ahab later called the "the forty years of privation and peril" (Melville 443). The early years were the first stage of this character's madness when privacy and loneliness were the realities of life. Ahab often shared his ideas and thoughts with few people close to him in his wisdom, but now he was not close to anyone. In his more than three years of the voyage, there was little more than whaling maps, daily routines, precise chit-a-chat with mates, extended periods of no whale sights, moments of introspection, and homesickness . At this moment, he was not in a better position to think independently, thus increasing the gap between others and his conscience. Unfortunately, a person who has been forced to the extreme, like in this case ,is now being considered an unwise person. Isolation, difficulties, moments of frustrations and the change in every task psychologically would change every human at any point. Ahab was now crotchety, aloof, and he had a vague understanding of anger and discontents when reaching forty. At forty, the obscure incidents were testified by Elijah who affirmed that he would strengthen the hatreds and determination simultaneously, lying like a dead person for three nights and days.

At past fifty, Ahab gets married, and at this point, the start of the second stage of illness confronts him. At this moment, an important leader and a whaling captain, and as Peleg describes him, 'a swearing good man' wanted affection and companionship through marriage. However, all these seem to have disappeared the next day after the wedding as Ahab goes back to the whaling journey. In later stages, Ahab's son and wife miss him because of him being a the great father and wiseman. They would be frustrated and disturbed by the thoughts of Ahab. After informing Starbuck that by marrying a girl and widowing her,

he immediately asserts that " 'And then, the madness, the frenzy, the boiling blood and the smoking brow, with which, for a thousand lowerings old Ahab has furiously, foamingly chased his prey-more a demon than a man' " (Melville 443-44). In this case, the letdowns could be hyperbolically used to refer to the dramatic impact or by pointing out the forty-year career to the period after he was the 'old Ahab,' to the times of his marriage. There is a high likelihood that the thousand lowerings would go beyond the ten to twenty years or probably more than that. Consequently, these lowerings cannot mean the time of monomania, a relatively recent activity, but to the point of being detached from the moods to the periods of robust anger and hatred, all of which are controlled by the wide mentality and strong intelligence. Generally, and normally, the resulting condition would be that of moral insanity.

The third and the last stage of madness starts with the Ahab's traumatic loss of the leg. The documented and the involved stage entails the initial monomania anger and hatred that comes along with the huge "corporal animosity" (Melville 160) originating from the loss. This is the loss that physically contributes to the insanity as pointed out in the whole story. This stage further entails the different months of suffering at the period when the "final monomania" attacks Ahab as the Pequod and "torn body and gashed soul bled into one another, and so interfusing made him mad" (p. 160). Additionally, the stage further incorporates a deceptive calmness that makes the crew believe that the Cape Horn winds have left behind Ahab's delirium. The calmness is a resemblance of the wisdom showcased by Ahab. In summary, the three stages of madness show the level of normalcy and wisdom of Ahab. By indicating that Ahab was a committed captain before these troubles show that there is something more to his wisdom than madness in a negative way.

The Al-Nays Aburi's *Wise Madmen* book talks about the derivation of the word "madness" in the etymological approach, which in Arabic means 'concealment'. It is said that "if a thing got concealed it will go insane, and the madman has a veil on his mind". In other

words, Al-Nays Aburi explains linguistically, that madness works as a veil that deters the mad person from seeing the 'logical truth' or prudence. In the next chapter, he discusses 'the proverbs and forms of madmen' he referred to one line from Badi' Al-Zaman Al-Hamdhani's poem which says, "Do not lie speaking about sanity, Sanity is nothing but madness"(Al-Nays Aburi 36) which amazingly, shows that being mad is not different from being sane. Another outstanding encounter is when he mentioned an unfamiliar figure named Bakkar bin Ali that he once heard "Crazy Bakkar" saying "O people, be ashamed of God the right of modesty, and do not worship Him in fear of His fire, nor greed for His Paradise, but rather slavery and entitlement" (Al-Nays Aburi 153) . Bakkar bin Ali is historically unknown, but the most important thing here is that he made the reader realise that Bakkar bin Ali the 'Sane Bakkar' played the 'student' part meanwhile, "Crazy Bakkar" played the 'teacher' or the 'instructor' part. Confusion exists between the sanity and insanity in terms of roles and similarity of names. Furthermore, he also mentioned another story "On the authority of Ibn Wahib, he said: I rode one day from Basra, I want a seraph, and when we were in the middle of the sea a strong wind blew, and Thoban al-Majnun " Crazy Thoban" I swear to you, O shelter of the knowledgeable ones, that you keep us away from harm.. the words did not end until the wind ceased, and we escaped" (p.167). This places Thoban at the top of the ranks of those who are able to do miracles. Regardless, where does the line between sanity and madness fall? This could indicate that the Al-Nays Aburi does believe that both terms cannot be negotiated separately. In his article about "The Wisdom of The Fool", Walter Kaiser highlights the different names and implications individuals have on real fools in society, and when these are combined, they reveal the overall features of the wise Fool in the form of a construct. For instance, there are empty-headed fools, dull-witted ones, the feeble-minded and the ones who have no comprehension of anything (Walter 85-94). Madness can also be

described based on constructs such as acting like a child, not acting like other men, either incoherent or inarticulate, and one with the natural simplicity and innocence.

“The prisons of the Victorian era inspired Dickinson to select characters who were put in prison because of their insanity, but their insanity reflected their wisdom, and they took prisons and asylum as a place because of their dangerous wisdom in his fictional and non-fictional narratives ” (McKnight 25). Therefore , this is an indication that many wise people were accused of insanity to “conceal” their unwanted wisdom either fearing the harsh words on many controversial topics or simply to punish them for speaking boldly. The instincts seemingly guide a fool and he or she is expected to hold the social conventions; hence he is given a chance to enjoy freedom, mainly in his or her freedom of speech only if he accepted to submit to the authority’s power and not to utter on any controversial issues “To be a free wise fool only means to be submissive” (Dickinson 56).

Wise men madness is widely expressed in *Jane Eyre* ’s story. Even though the author seems to have artistic and educational pursuits and are critical components of Jane’s personality, she has a feeling of asserting herself via rebellion. At the start of the novel’s chapters, Jane calls herself the rebel slave, and across the whole story, she opposes the forces that avert her to be St. John’s mistress , and the need of changing her to a missionary wife by St. John. Despite being a wise woman, she decides to fall in love with Rochester, and she decides to rebel against the dictates of the class boundaries that limits her governess to a lower level than that of a master (Snyder 19). With her wittiness, she rejects the traditional view of the class, and further denigrates the attempts of the community of restricting women’s practices. She points out that women should actively engage in pursuits and the intellectual processes, the same way men do. At the same time, a lot of Jane’s rebellions are more focused on the inequalities of the society in the 19th century ; however, a lot of her personality traits are more traditional. Indeed, Jane looks like she will provide a model of

appropriate English womanhood which talks about sincerity, openness, and lack of personal vanity. The narrator's personality (Jane) is about balancing spiritual power and social awareness. In the novel, Jane is often called an imp, which refers to the relative of "the men in green." (Brontë 58) Jane, despite being a fairy, is more identifying as the magical creature. With the connection to the mythical beings in the story, Jane is linked to the imagination realms.

In summary, There are three primary examples, each on how madmen including, women madness in literature of the 19th century's work moreover, the previous characters have pearls of wisdom and the other one on how Wisemen and wise women have madness in the literature work. These concepts are paradoxically explained, but they describe madness and sanity at the same time. Primarily, this paper showed that by indicating that Ahab was a committed captain before these troubles show that there is something more to his wisdom than madness and how *The WiseMen's* book shows the strong relationship between the two terms, Lastly, *Jane Eyre* is the most fitting example of how is like for a woman to be disguised in both sanity and madness. The questions that this paper would leaves us with are, are the previous examples of mad people who culture and literature wanted to restore consideration of the wisdom and superiority of their consciousness? Or is it merely a punishment for their harsh practices on culture by placing them in front of a mirror that reflects everything that culture is keen to subtly and conceal, therefore, the culture decided to punish them with exclusion by classifying them as insane?

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