

CRYING AND SOBBING AS CATHARTIC ACT TO RELEASE GRIEF: A PSYCHOANALYTIC STUDY OF TESS OF D'URBERVILLES

Humaira Yaqoob

M.Phil Candidate

University of Sargodha, Women Campus, Faisalabad, Pakistan.

Anila Jamil

Lecturer in English Literature

University of Sargodha, Women Campus, Faisalabad, Pakistan.

ABSTRACT: *This paper aims to discuss the cathartic acts (cry, sob weep etc.) that occur to release grief are stimulated by distress, loss and frustration. These activities compensate by restoring process of disabling tension, which results preventing mental illness and destruction and restore flexible functioning again. To support this assumption Freud's psychoanalytic theory has been used as theoretical frame work for this research. To justify the theory proclamation Tess of D'Urbervilles character has been analyzed who in different miserable situations used to shed tears, cries and sobs in to release and exit grief.*

KEYWORDS: cathartic, cry, psychoanalytic, sob, Tess, weep.

INTRODUCTION

Cathartic act of Tess is justified under psychoanalytical theory which provides a solid ground to present this research as Eagleton (1996) views "the problem of literary value and pleasure would seem to lie somewhere at the juncture of psychoanalysis, linguistic and ideology" (p.167). Catharsis has also been defined as "an involuntarily instinctive body progress" (Breuer and Freud 1974) and "the process of reducing and eliminating a complex by recalling it to conscious awareness and allowing it to be expressed" (Schultz & Schultz, 2004).

Some possible outlets for emotional release include the resources as artistic or bodily activities (music, sports, poetry, drama etc), transpersonal activities (prayer, worship, praise etc) and post orgasmic activities (trembling, laughing, sobbing etc). Heron(1998) has asserted that physical distress can occur through different activities as the discharge of grief is stimulated by any loss, pain of separation, love frustration etc. occurs through crying and sobbing and sometimes physical holds and embracing. The discharge of fear is stimulated by physical danger, threat and lack of comprehension etc can occur through trembling and cold perspiration. The discharge of anger is stimulated by annoying and irritation can occur through unnatural high frequency burst of sound and storming movements. The discharge of embarrassment stimulated by mortification occurs through laughter in order to break unidentified rigid fear of the opinion of others. The discharge of guilt and shame is discharged of as laughter together with some release of fear and anger through trembling and storming. The discharge of boredom is reflexive distress like shame, guilt and disgust can be induced by uninteresting or useless meetings and encounters. The discharge of Physical Fatigue and Tension appears to involve deep repetitutive yaw ling and stretching (p. 12-15).

Crying is a cathartic experience for releasing and discharging grief and tension and frustration because of overloading of emotions that cannot be expressed effectively in the miserable situation. Scheff (2001) has asserted that “emotional expressions such as crying are biological necessities” is a body reaction in hurtful experiences rather than cultural phenomenon (p. 10) and it is exemplified by Tess character that in miserable conditions cries and sobs to discharge her grief.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Catharsis concerns with the amputation of emotions which is helpful in releasing of emotional frustration and furthermore Lutz (1999) has presented Aristotle’s view about crying that “cleanses the mind” of suffers emotions through the process of catharsis which reduce the distress. Ellis (1883) has considered Hardy as “a psychologist who is also an artist” because “his most serious work in English Fiction” gives “a foremost place to the element of art and psychology” (p.163-77). He also has observed that Hardy in its physical correlation tries to find out psychical element and “this dislike to use the subjective method or to deal directly with mental phenomena is a feature in Hardy’s psychology which has left a strong mark on his art” (p.175).

William (1973) has described that Hardy has strong feeling for Wessex as he expresses his affection and feelings by presenting rural society into complex structure. It is observed “The profound disturbance that Hardy records cannot then be seen in the sentimental terms of neo-pastoral. The exposed and separated individuals, whom Hardy puts at the center of his fiction, are only the most developed case of a general exposure and separation. Yet they are never merely illustration of this change in a way of life, each has a dominated personal history, which in psychological terms bears a direct relation to the social character of change” (p.254).

Tess has been analyzed by many psychoanalytically oriented critics under intra psychic variation of characters. Sumner (1981) has analyzed the conflict between the super ego and libidinal drives in characters. Meisel (1972) has asserted that in Hardy fiction external forces frustrates man’s ambition and inner self against his temperament and as a result man acts above the normal behavior as in Tess of d’Urbervilles

METHODOLOGICAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This paper has offered the psychoanalytic study of Tess of d’Urbervilles by Hardy by presenting the Tess’s cathartic act (crying and sobbing) under the theoretical and conceptual framework under the theory of Freud and Breuer. Psychoanalysis is about the concept that unconscious factors are behind the emotions and behavior of an individual. Farrell (1981) has detailed it as “a method of understanding mental functioning and the stages of growth and development” and it is “a general theory of individual human behavior and experience” and it “explains the complex relationship between body and the mind” (p. 202).

Oberndrof has asserted that in 1929 when he found Freud busy in reading Tess he got hearty surprised, at this Freud showed his corroboration by passing remarks about Hardy that “He knew psychoanalysis” (Oberndrof, 1953, p.182). About his Hardy’s work Dale Kramer (1990) has asserted that it “tends to test the validity of matured theories more than they offer early opportunities for theoretical display” (p.99-107).

ANALYSIS

Tess of D'Urbervilles is a "pure woman faithfully represented character" possessing bewitching beauty, youthfulness and freshness as she has "deep and sparking eyes, fair cheeks, arched brows, sharply throat and chin" also "flower like mouth and tender eyes retain her pretty and sharply figure was crushed under the dead weight of poverty and family responsibilities force her to become mistress at Trantridge where her maidenhood was burnt by the diminished fire from the Alec D'Urbervilles who was "on the lowest level " because he was mainly " motivated by the instinct for animal gratification".

The pure, simple and innocent virgin was deprived of her physical chastity. This made her so miserable that she started crying. "The sudden vision of his passion for herself as a factor in this result so distressed her that, beginning with one slow tear and then following with another, she wept outright. " When asked what made her cry she said, "I wish, I would never been born there, or anywhere else" (p.125).

When her mother comes to be known about all happening, she scolded her for not insisting Alec to marry her. Judging her hatred toward Alec, mother shouted that she should be careful towards him. This all situation made her hurt as Frey (1985) has view about crying "It is a relief to weep; grief is satisfied and carried off by tears" Frey, p.-) Tess was so full of grief that Hardy described the situation as "cried the agonized girl, turning passionately upon her parent as if her poor heart would break." She cried "O mother, my mother! How could I be expected to know? I was a child when I left this house four months ago, why didn't you tell me there was danger in men-folk?" (p.140).

An illegitimate child as a result of Tess's seduction and defilement by Alec came into the world against all the social customs of his time. She was rebuked and locked in room when she requested for baptism for her dying son. There she found herself in deep misery "O merciful God, have pity; have pity upon my poor baby! She cried" and wept bitterly. As in view of Mayman and Pruyser (1964) the crying is the most human and the most universal in sense of providing relief and relaxation same in this case of Tess as she baptized her son herself along with her siblings. Cornelius (1986) has presented that crying has beneficial effect on human for both psychological and physiological point of view and further more in (1997) he explained the effect of crying on the mood, the situation and relationship of other present person. Tess reaction can be understood under Cornelius assumption when next morning parson refused to give a Christian burial, she was much psychological effected that instead of being hearty religious she angrily replied" I will never come to your church" (p.158).

People pointed her out and questioned her character so she lived in complete isolation that they gradually forget her and her hardly born a new life in her. She was forced to join Talbothays dairy to overcome family poverty. There she acquaintances with Angel Clare the son of clergyman, who has "the perfection of masculine beauty" also having "definite aim or concern about his material future" and was loved and liked by everybody. Unconsciously they came closer to each other and one day Angel confesses his feelings and proposed her. But her conscience did not allow her to precede more without disclosing her past though her mother strictly forbids her to discuss her past. One Sunday when he inquired her willing for marriage, she was overwhelmed by the mental conflict of revealing her past on not and as a result "she

burst into a dry, hard sobbing” (p.305) as Hobbes, (1658) and Plessner (1970) views that crying process occur when someone overwhelmed and unable to control them.

One evening when Clare set his proposal again she said “I am not worthy of you- no, I am not! She burst out” (p.314). At night her colleagues congratulate her by saying that she deserves it for being more virtuous and worthier than all. Her inner self was so burdened that she “suddenly tearing away from their clinging arms, she burst into a hysterical fit of tears, bowing herself on the chest of drawers” (p.320).

Tess was continuously upset and in try to reveal her past to him whereas Angel was insisting her to fix the marriage date. One day after shopping somebody recognized Tess and passed bad remarks. Angel couldn’t tolerate and beat him also at night he dreamt of beating him. His warmth of love made her more conscious about her past so she took courage to write all in a letter and put in his room. She waited his reaction but couldn’t found. When she came in room she found that letter was slipped under the carpet. This made her more distressed “the house being in full bustle of preparation” she tore it and wept bitterly (p.338).

When they got married she again took courage and told the story calmly. As Bylsma et al. (2008) viewed that crying depend on social content and beneficial expressions for elders to make mantel and physical state of worse same occur when she asked forgiveness she was filled with grief to know that instead of having warmth of love he behaved like a traditional man and refused to forgive her. When she realized that she had lost all hers “Her eyes filled as she regarded her position further; she turned round and burst into a flood of self-sympathetic tears” (p.364)

CONCLUSION:

Tess is spiritually and morally pure and innocent, and nobility of her character, her pride, loyalty and honesty fascinate us instead of sincerity, modesty and self sacrificing nature she suffered throughout her life. She wept and sobbed many times. She cried whenever she realized her chastity loss, whenever she found herself weak and helpless, she felt herself in miserable condition and whenever she indulges in conflicting situation to do or do not.. She cried many times and to get relaxation, and release herself from grief and frustration. Crying and sobbing are acts of catharsis which keep her out of mental disorder or illness in frustrated condition, sorrow and suffering of her life.

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