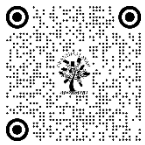


EMOTIONAL NEGLIGENCE: A PSYCHOANALYTICAL STUDY ON COLLEEN HOOVER'S VERITY

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ABSTRACT

Childhood maltreatment is commonly described as physical, sexual or emotional abuse and physical or emotional neglect by parent, caregiver or other adult, with all kinds of abuse resulting from acts of commission, and neglect from acts of omission. There has been relatively less societal and research attention on emotional abuse and emotional neglect, compared with physical and sexual abuse and physical neglect. The emotional neglect manifest in the individual's daily life though unconsciously as anger outburst, resentment/hatred, bitterness, poor relations with the peers and parents, low self-confidence, cannot handle criticism, rebellion, poor academic performance, loneliness, mistrust, fear, feelings of inadequacy, drug and substance abuse and in extreme cases hopelessness, depression and suicidal tendencies. The study on the novel Verity recommends the empowerment of the children to accept themselves, express their thoughts and feelings, and create awareness among parents and caregivers to be responsive to children's thoughts and feelings therefore promote holistic growth.

Keywords: Emotional Neglect, Psychological Imbalance, Poor Parental Relation



When a person continuously ignores or undervalues the other person's affectional needs, it is known as emotional neglect. Ignoring the child's emotional needs, whether on purpose or accidentally, is known as childhood emotional neglect. There are several types of childhood emotional neglect. While some caregivers could pay close attention to a child's emotional needs, while others can ignore them entirely. In dealing with the various aspects of the situations in our life, especially the one connected with teaching and the other connected with learning and it is bound to encounter the peculiar style in which one receives instruction. The uniqueness of a person is generally known as personality. Therefore, personality is that which permits a prediction of what a person will do in a given situation.

The nature of personality may be described with reference to some keywords used in explaining its structural and functional characteristics. Personality is a whole rather than the sum of its parts. The physique, intellect, temperament, character and sociability of a person alone does not constitute one's personality. Instead, it is a union of all the qualities which makes personality. Personality is the result of both hereditary and environment. The outcome of the dynamic interaction of an organism with its social, psychological, and physical environment is called personality.

Both hereditary and environment forces to shape the personality structure of a person. Hereditary is represented by genes and environment is represented by any stimulation disadvantage the genes. Thus, it is found that our body size, the colour of our skin and the ceiling of our intellectual capacities are all genetically determined, but the final shape of a personality emerges through a person's interactions with varied physical, geographical, social, and cultural environment

which envelop a person. The development of personality is thus a dynamic process. Over the years, various psychologists have conducted and still conducting research on personality. Psychologists have coined various empirical terms to define personality.

According to Austrian psychologist, Sigmund Freud, in his psychoanalysis, divides the theory into two fundamental principles: The principle of psychic determinism and the principle of compromise between the pleasure principle. The pleasure principle attempts to satisfy inborn instincts like life urge and death urge. The first principle refers that the human behaviour does not happen randomly but in terms of intra-psychic causes which is not obvious to the outsider or even to the person who displays the behaviour. Freud calls it the unconscious. The behaviour cannot be explained with reference to the conscious motive, it is in terms of unconscious motivation, this is called psychic determinism of being

In the second principle, Freud believed that personality is an arena in which the person wants to do conflicts with which he has learned and also to compromise with the present atmosphere. Thus, he argues that personality is formed out of such a continuous struggle between the demands of basic urges and the demands. Rules and realities of the environment. Sigmund Freud defines that, "We choose not randomly each other. We meet only those who already exist in our subconscious" (*The Interpretation of Dream* 154).

In psychoanalytic theory there is a continuity in growth which begins in the earliest childhood. A process shapes humans resulting in personality structure. Freud has proposed five stages of development, the Oral stage, Analysis stage, Phallic stage, Latency and Genital stage. He also refers to fixation which refers to arrested development and is an important one in explaining the fact that earlier modes of dealing with crisis. An individual may in some senses have remained immature by being fixed or caught at one stage of development, so that there is excessive manifestation of the stage in his adult behaviour.

Two forms of personality structure are expressed the Authoritarian Personality and Compulsive Personality. The authoritarian personality is said to arise from extreme parental rejection or domination in childhood, leading to repressed hostility, such personality structure includes highly conventional behaviour superstition, desire for power, and concern over sex.

Extreme parental rejection is felt in the novel *Verity* by the protagonist Verity, when her parents neglect her emotional needs, and she is deeply traumatized by her childhood experiences. Her trauma reflects on how poor she treats her own children. Verity's parents are very religious, and they restrict her to write novels of things that said otherwise. Her parents insist her to be pious like them and to stop her fantasies. Verity is absorbed in her work and refuses to leave her writing. Her parents are not supportive and refuse to support. Her father blackmail her to not to write what she truly loves. Verity holds this helplessness and reflects it through her body she feels if she cannot control her life she might as well control her body. She laments as:

They're strange Victor and Marjorie, insanely religious to their core. When they found out verity was writing thriller and suspense novels. They acted like she was suddenly denouncing her religion to join a satanic cult. They told her if she didn't stop, they would never speak to her again.
(195)

Verity has this excessive fear that if she is not in control, her body might turn like her mother's body and Jeremy would not like it anymore. So she goes to any extent to keep her body well equipped. Furthermore, Verity craves control, whether be it in her physical body or in her life. She expresses her control in the form of writing. Verity through her impressive writing skills mesmerize the readers and appreciates the attention that she receives from it. Writing is her power, and she even uses her real-life boyfriend as an inspiration to write her story.

Unlike Verity's parents Jeremy supports her even though he feels uncomfortable. He is genuinely interested in what she has to say and do. She never wants to leave him or break her bond with him, instead she hides him of all her monstrous thoughts and actions from being emotionally deprived to receiving wholesome affection makes her to obsesses over him. Jeremy loves her work and feels proud of her. At first, she feels reluctant to give her manuscript to Jeremy as the character that she wrote on was inspired by him, she feels terrified and doubts that he would not like it as much as she did. She fears that he would consider her to be a bad writer. Jeremy seems optimistic about her work. She lets him finish the rest of the manuscript. Jeremy, unlike her parents is encouraging and kind towards her. She expresses her feelings as:

It was my first taste of what it felt like for a reader to enjoy what I had created for them. That one comment- that sweet, simple comment-made me want him to finish

reading It. I left him after that. I went to our bed, crawled under the covers, and fell asleep with a smile on my face.
(88)

The psyche of a person can be represented in three layers. They are the Conscious, Subconscious and Preconscious. Further there are three subsystems which make the personality of an individual. They are id, ego, and superego. Each subsystem has a mechanism of their own, but they can interact with each other, and the human behaviour is the result of such inter- actions. The id belongs to the subconscious, and it represents all the psychic energy that motivates the behaviour, and this is available at birth. The ego receives its energy from the id, but it is partly conscious. The super ego is roughly same as the 'conscience' it contains the teachings, culture, morals, and values.

The relationship between id, ego and superego is interrelated. The ego postpones the gratification which the id wants at once, the superego fights against both ego and id, because they lack moral force. In case of Verity who has a weak ego and is mostly controlled by her id. She always shows an affinity towards gratifying her instincts when it comes to her life. First in the form of rage and then in the form of obsession. She is obsessed with Jeremy, the moment she meets him and deceives him into believing that she is well off. The brief meeting at the club makes them hooked. Verity gets addicted to him especially because, she is not emotionally connected with anybody else, and he treats her gently thistles her even interested in him. Verity and Jeremy has good understanding of each other. She exclaims that his presence is the only nourishment to her soul and if he leaves it feels as if it is being ripped away from her.

Rage and obsession make her to harm her own body which she considers holy. Verity is resolute to kill her children Harper and Chastin even when they are foetus in her womb. She feels that they have stripped away Jeremy's love for her and feels insecure about their relationship. She goes an extent of killing them with a wire hanger, drinking wine falling from a flight of stairs. The cruelty does not stop there it continues to ruin the lives of two innocent children and what she does to them is a form of child abuse which remains unnoticed throughout the novel. She starves them when Jeremy's out for work and even refuses to breastfeed her children moreover she finds it disgusting. Her attempt to kill her children permanently alters Chastin's face. She understands that his children mean more to him than she is, so she takes in a fake self, the exposure of self lies at the hearts neurotic shame, escape from the real self is necessary. This is done by creating a false self. The authentic self goes into hiding. Years later the defence and pretence are so intense that one loses all awareness of who she truly is. Verity travels to different places and met different personalities. She loves how her audience respond to her work. Another medium through which she gains her sense of control and comfort is through her writing. Once she lies to Jeremy about her work to get rid of her responsibility as a mother taking care of her children. She loses all the control of her life with the birth of her children.

Lowen claims that this behaviour of Verity might be inherent and might also be inherited from her parents, Victor and Marjorie, due to their emotional deprivation and neglect. In another incident, she plans to kill her own daughter, because she feels that her daughter Harper is responsible for the death of her other daughter Chastin, Verity is disillusioned and not in her right mind when she does all this. She feels emotionally connected to her daughter Chastin because she feels guilty on causing the scar on her face.

Sometimes guilt can be healthy or toxic. Healthy guilt is the emotional core of human conscience. Guilt presupposes internalized rules and develops much later than shame. Guilt is developmentally more mature than shame. Guilt does not reflect directly upon a person's sense of personal worth. Guilt flows from an integrated set of values. One day as she prepares food in the kitchen, she hears the horrible news that her daughter Chastin is taken to the hospital due to an allergic reaction and seems to be dead for few hours. The family is devastated. Verity instantly blames Harper due to her dream she is seen to be extremely superstitious.

Verity's dream makes her to abuse her daughter Harper even more, one night one of her daughters cries due to hunger, Verity finds it to be Harper this infuriates her, she tries to kill her by making her choke in her own vomit. Jeremy makes her to read in an article while she was pregnant. She puts her two fingers in Harpers mouth and chokes her the kid screams in pain, but she never let go and keeps on choking her.

Verity puts her children to day care to get rid of them without discussing it with Jeremy, he gets mad to solve this she lies to him saying that she is pregnant with another child and that she truly cares about them. On the outside she seems happy but inside she plans on how to act out a miscarriage for her fake pregnancy. Fortunately, she gets pregnant within two weeks of lying. She defies every opportunity to prove that her inmate quality is evil. At one point she even convinces Jeremy into believing that she cares for Harper. Jeremy returns home one day to find that all Verity talk about is Chastin and how good she at her studies. Jeremy is pissed, so he shouts at Verity that she does not care about Harper. Being the best manipulator that she is, she convinces him by using something that her daughter's teacher told her she says that

Harper is different from Chastin and that their needs are different too. She informs Jeremy, that they should check Harper for Asperger's. Verity is cunning and clever, she outsmarts Jeremy, and this gives her a chance to earn sympathy in his eyes.

Verity fakes the death of her daughter and hides the fact that she killed her and that it was not an accident. Verity along with her daughter Harper and son Crew goes on a ride in the Lake on a canoe, Harper insists on sitting at the edge of the dock. Meanwhile, Verity plans to tip the canoe over kill her daughter. The children seem to be excited for the ride on their way over in the canoe, but the three of them drown in the lake. Verity intentionally only saves crew and goes to the shore after few minutes with caution not to accidentally save her she talks her time to search for Harper to no avail. She tells Crew to inform his dad about it. Crew informs Jeremy, who comes along with the police to save Harper. Police inquire about the incident, she acts all innocent and continues to scream "My daughter!" and "My baby girl" (125). She acts hysterical, almost like a madwoman. Her monstrous thoughts became physical with this uncanny incident. She feels satisfied with her daughter's death, Jeremy on the other hand is seriously affected by the death, of not one but two of his daughters. Emotional toll takes over him to the point where he grieves the death of his children in an unhealthy way. Everybody in life makes mistakes, but refusing to accept own child in the name of religious superstitions can be disturbing for the child. All the traits of Verity point towards an emotionally immature person, her parenting skills are so poor, and they seem to have been inherited from her parents.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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