

**Winnicott's Theory of Sexuality and Sexual Awakening in
Bapsi Sidhwa's Ice-Candy-Man**

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نظرية وينيكوت عن النشاط الجنسي والصحة الجنسية
في رواية رجل الحلوى الباردة ل بابسي سيدهوا
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Abstract

This study will follow Bapsi Sidhwa's characters undergoing the process of sexual awakening through examining Winnicott's theory of sexuality. It analyzes fictional characters in their personal and psychological contexts . The main goal of this study is to explore the role of sexuality in discovering the Self. Differences between male and female characters in the novel are examined in terms of Winnicott's theory focusing on the characters' behavior. So this article determines the sexual awakening of the main characters in Sidhwa's novels. Ice-Candy-Man is analyzed in the light of sexuality theory. This study portrays childhood's complexity, especially on the female protagonist of the novel, Lenny, and her tough experiences as a child flawed by sexual and emotional changes. **Keywords:** Sidhwa; Self; Sexuality; Winnicott; awareness

المخلص

تهتم هذه الدراسة بشخصيات بابسي سيدهوا التي تمر بمرحلة "الصحة الجنسية" حسب نظرية وينيكوت. كما تدرس الشخصيات الخيالية في سياقاتها الشخصية والنفسية. الهدف الرئيسي من هذه الدراسة هو فهم دور الجنس في اكتشاف الذات. حيث ان نظرية وينيكوت توضح الاختلافات بين الشخصيات من الذكور والإناث في الرواية التي تركز على سلوك الشخصيات. تبحث شخصيات الروائية سيدهوا عن الذات الحقيقية من خلال وعيهم الجنسي. لذلك تحدد هذه المقالة الصحة الجنسية للشخصيات الرئيسية في روايات سيدهوا. وتحلل هذه الدراسة رواية رجل الحلوى الباردة ل بابسي سيدهوا في ضوء نظرية وينيكوت لتحقيق هدف البحث. كما تركز الدراسة على الطفولة المعقدة وتحديدًا طفولة البطلة في الرواية والتي تدعى ليني، وتجاربها الصعبة عندما كانت طفلة تعاني من التغيرات الجنسية والعاطفية. **كلمات مفتاحية:** سيدهوا، الذات، الجنسية، وينيكوت، الصحة الجنسية

Introduction

Psychology has been concerned about the representation of the self and the role it plays in understanding human behaviour. Winnicott's theory explains Sidhwa's characters' behavior. Winnicott and Sidhwa regard childhood as a difficult stage in which Winnicott links a person's growth their family and society as well (Winnicott,2001, p.5). Anyway, Winnicott has attempted to study the sexual awakening of humans According to Winnicott, bisexuality is normal and he describes the female and male side of human nature. He does not believe in pure male and female elements (Winnicott 2011, p.43). He places a great importance on childhood and he defines a child as "born with inherited tendencies that fiercely drive the individual on in a growth process". (Winnicott, 1990, p.45). In fact, the development of the child happens only through good conditions and "when conditions are not good enough these forces are contained within the child, and in one way or another tend to destroy the child". (Winnicott, 1987, p.65). These good conditions comprise the good mother, the good family, the good society respectively These conditions allow the child to experience things, to develop his personality, to have sexual awakening and to face all the difficulties in life (Winnicott,2011, p.304). The child learns through experience and undergoes a psychological process of development from his mother. The development of the child can be disturbed if the mother or if the environment are unhelpful, and thus the child has a trauma (Winnicott,1990, p.9). Winnicott considers home as the first place where this interruption occurs. The interrupted state of Lenny will be analysed in the light of Winnicott's theory Sidhwa stages a dysfunctional family and society as well which do not accomplish any of the good conditions previously mentioned. Lenny experiences an emotional and physical separation from her family and she cannot have a normal relationship with her parents. The novel reveals family dynamics through children and parents' relationships (Finkel, 2019, p.22). Coming from a dysfunctional family, Lenny is a weak child and she is paralytic. Paralysis is manifested in her dreams and memories. The novel revolves around the sexual identity of a young girl called Lenny who is shattered because of her mother's ignorance of her. Winnicott regards "the good-enough mother" as the child's saviour who most influences the child's development. He links the role of the good-enough mother to the "primary maternal preoccupation" which is "a state of heightened sensitivity" (Winnicott, 2001, p.301). According to Winnicott's theory, the protagonist undergoes a failure of the mother's caring process. Lenny's mother does not display any maternal concern. She fails as a mother, as she does not help her daughter in healthily assembling herself, so the mother cannot foster a healthy development for the child. Winnicott believes that the mother defines the relationship between father and child, so she can build this relationship or destroy it completely (Winnicott, 1987, p.118). The novel highlights the characters' life experiences such as her sexual awakening. Sidhwa's exploration of the traumatic experiences can be considered as a testimony to relationships and psychological disorders.

Bāpsi Sidhwa, the Pakistani-American novelist, examines the women's rights by demonstrating Winnicott's theory through her characters in the novel in question. She was born in Karachi, Pakistan in 1938. She wrote about the partition of India which changed people both politically and socially. So this article focuses on the sexual awakening of the main character of the novel. Winnicott's postulations have been adopted in this paper. Winnicott's theory of sexuality is based on two roots: the instinctive root and the identity root. Sidhwa places her female characters in hard circumstances to show how they live in the society, and how they manage to enhance their life conditions. This study introduces her notions respectively from theoretical principles, psychological visions and recurrent themes. On this basis, traumatic experiences are outlined and analyzed as well. Winnicott (2001) considers "primary maternal preoccupation," as the psychological and emotional development of the true self. He thinks that the mother is the only person who can provide the child's development. Moreover, Winnicott (1990) considers that the self develops as a result of different experiences which contain the mother's care and love (p. 52). This study will attempt to analyze Lenny's sexual awakening throughout different incidents in her life portrayed in the novel. The study aims to highlight the sexual awakening through different incidents and experiences. This study will examine how Lenny is going to recover from the effects of violence whether sexual or emotional. Sidhwa portrays what happens to children when they lose ties with their families and societies. Lenny experiences a traumatic process of her sexual awakening. Through analyzing her process of sexual awakening, this paper offers a deep study of the self and the body through focusing from Winnicott's psychoanalytic perspective. The novel portrays the female child who undergoes traumatic experiences.

Analysis and Discussion Basing the novel on political narratives, Sidhwa represents the female characters, especially in the context of Partition and she achieves a deep sense of identity by mingling reality and imagination in this novel. The novel forms an attitude of the misunderstanding between children and parents. The novel can also be seen as a psychological work. It focuses on the characters' needs whether physical or emotional. Ice-Candy-Man is a tragic panorama of a paralytic child's life whose name is Lenny. She is the character who portrays how the environment influences children in any society. She is a little child who experiences the incidents of the partition. Sidhwa portrays the traumatic events of brutality and cruelties perpetrated by one community against other. Sidhwa's interrupted girl is part of a society which controls the child's development which occurs between the protagonist and the other characters (Singh, 2005: p.37). The novelist portrays a harsh community which breaks its people, for instance, Lenny becomes an object of physical and emotional harassment. Her paralytic illness causes traumatic pains for her. She is connected with her past through haunting memories of the sexual process illustrated in the novel. Sidhwa shows the struggles of her female character and her attempts to create the true self through breaking free from the oppressive society Sidhwa creates Lenny as a universal character who portrays the sufferings of all children. Lenny is both a child and a woman in her sexual awakening when she observes the sexual attraction of Ayah and her sexual desires for the charming boys. Moreover, her paralysis makes her struggle with the conflation of desire. Lenny is a dependent child who desires to get married and have children and at the same time, she tries to accept her life as a paralytic child. Thus she can be seen as the strong and dependent girl at the same time. Partition increases the oppression of women in the novel. Women are expected to be submissive and obedient, so they cannot express their sexual desires. The restrictions and strict rules of the Parsee culture are complicated because of culture. Lenny realizes that as a paralytic child, she should ignore all her sexual and physical desires. Thus Sidhwa reveals all the difficulties and challenges of Partition of India which face the Parsee society. Lenny is forced to suffer: as a paralytic child and as a girl, so she struggles against these difficulties in order to survive. Partition has negative effects on the emotional and social life of children especially females. Sidhwa portrays motherhood's influence on the lives of children because it is central in the development of their identities. Thus motherhood plays an essential role in the children's lives in the novel. The responsibilities of motherhood is part of women's identity. Sidhwa portrays the different effects of motherhood on Lenny who tries to find refuge because of her careless mother. Set within a political context, Sidhwa reveals the historic roots of child suffering in her society. She gives voice to the voiceless children in the novel. She portrays her character Lenny as a weak and dependent child who can struggle to survive. Lenny is the leading figure in the novel that rebels against her position as an inferior child. She emerges as a victim because she defends encounters several horrors. Moreover, the novel mirrors the social life of abused children showing the relationship between parents and children. Sidhwa gives a moral lesson of the children during the Partition. She calls for their rights and condemns their unjust treatment through

highlighting their sufferings. Lenny can neither forget nor forgive her suffering especially during the Partition. She suffers physically and emotionally throughout the novel and she is traumatized repeatedly. When she witnesses the naked bodies or the sexual rape of Ayah, she is unable to heal from her emotional and physical traumas at the end of the novel. Lenny examines the experience of sexual awakening as she faces the reality of violence within her community. She represents the abused child who suffers from her first sexual awakening. She is subjected to her society, but she manages to survive. She has proven her ability to survive the difficult times. Lenny is a neglected child who seeks for the emotional bond which connects her with her family. Schwarz demonstrates that: "The role of neglect is often underrated in working with trauma and abuse. . . Neglect forces a child to attempt to self-regulate before the child is able to do so effectively." (Schwarz, 2002: p.4) Lenny's sexual awakening begins when Ice-candy-man, Yousaf, strips off Hari's dhoti. This fearful scene mixes with the scene of a child's mutilation by German soldiers. Lenny can see, "a naked child" (p.135). Lenny plays with a doll with Adi after witnessing the brutal killing of "an emaciated Banya". They tear its legs apart: "Adi and I pull the doll's legs, stretching it in a fierce tug-of-war, until making a wrenching sound it suddenly splits I examine the doll's spilled insides and, holding them in my hands, collapse on the bed sobbing" (pp.138-39). This brings to mind Winnicott's theory which describes how the sexual awakening of the child functions. A toy can help the child discover sexuality and becomes objective (Winnicott, 1971, pp.2-3). Winnicott explains that playing helps the child become free, and the child starts his sexual awakening by exploring the toy, (Winnicott, 1971, pp.72-73). The harsh reality ruins Lenny's childish activity of playing. Sidhwa highlights the burden of the child's experience of playing. The scenes of nakedness and brutality are painful elements which produce aggressive conditions for sexual awakening. Winnicott explains that the "environmental disturbances" distract "the emotional development" of children (Green, 2005, p.29). Lenny is a victim of 'the inferiority complex'. People make fun of Lenny because of her disability and physical appearance. Lenny states, "I'm dark enough. . . . It's a pity Adi's fair and Lenny so dark. He's a boy. Anyone will marry him" (p.81). Lenny is a victimized child who has "emotional scars throughout the victim's life" (Anderson, 2015, p.74). Winnicott describes the development of "the feeling that one's person is in one's body" during the process of sexual awakening (Winnicott, 2011, p.63). The relation between the development of the body and the Self is crucial. Lenny is a young child whose body has clearly developed. Self and Body develop together. Lenny feels the change of her body. This body-development occurs regularly and her body's change is connected with an event or memory in her mind. Her body's second change occurs after the encounter with the doctor – When Lenny is taken to the hospital, the doctor orders her mother to take off Lenny's clothes for her medical check-up shouting at her, "How do you expect me to examine her through all this quilting"..."Take her clothes off, woman" (p.14)! Lenny becomes afraid of his physical check-up of her. When her mother takes her to the hospital, she shouts. (Sidhwa, 1989: p.6). Winnicott claims that "If emotional development has got hung up at some spot, a child has to be going back whenever certain circumstances recur, to act as if still an infant or a little child" (Winnicott, 1987, pp.124-25) and this is exactly what happens to Lenny. Thus, she starts to discover herself and her body. Lenny becomes an abused child because of her mother who fails to surround her with a safe environment. Lenny's next sexual awakening emerged when the Muslim gangsters capture her ayah (Shanta) after they investigate the servants' religions. The Icecandy-man plans her kidnapping after he manipulates Lenny to reveal Shanta's hidden place. Icecandy-man befools and betrays Lenny through promising to protect Ayah, but he kidnaps her cunningly. Lenny can see how the Icecandy-man drags Ayah out of the house. The men strip off her clothes and lift her monstrosly propping her body upright. Lenny cannot forget this scene blaming herself for disclosing Ayah's place. Lenny discovers that Ice-candy-man sexually exploits Ayah. Lenny describes her sexual condition saying, "That night I take all I've heard and learnt and been shown to bed and by morning I reel dizzily on a fleetingly glimpsed and terrible grown-up world" (Sidhwa, 1989: p.241). This is the second time that Lenny feels her sexual awakening. Being embarrassed and ashamed, she loathes and hurts herself. She also hates Icecandy-man when she finds out that he has sexually exploited Ayah. Lenny encounters her sexual awakening through many incidents such as her medical check-up, her witnessing of the brutal killing of a naked child, witnessing of the moneylender's murder and her tearing the doll's legs apart and lastly the rape of Ayah. Clearly, these occurrences cause Lenny's sexual awakening. Winnicott believes that the "capacity of concern" continues from childhood to adulthood (Winnicott, 1990, p.174). Thus, a child can only mature within a loving family. Lenny comes from a toxic society and fails to function properly.

Conclusion

The study explores the factors of sexual awakening through the analysis of the novel using Winnicott's sexuality theory. Lenny employs a mixture of her sexual awareness as a child with her naïve vision when dealing with events. Underneath this naïve vision is Lenny's childhood. Thus, there is a connection between the simple thoughts and the complex meanings that are hidden behind them. Both Sidhwa and Winnicott indicate the importance of children and meeting their needs. Children should belong to a loving family and a caring society. By analyzing and comparing Sidhwa's novel through Winnicott's theory, the study draws the main conclusion. Lenny experiences her sexual awakening within the hostile environment dominated by war and violence. Moreover, Sidhwa portrays the children awakened by sexual experiences. She encourages the adults to take their responsibilities for constructing children's identity and guiding them in the outside world in order to avoid wrong sexual awareness. Lastly, this study proves that both Winnicott and Sidhwa consider childhood as a crucial stage, the period that develops the self and the body and determines their strengths and weaknesses. Thus, this study can serve as a guide for the understanding of Sidhwa's novels in the light of Winnicott's psychological analysis.

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