

Sterility and Decay of Marriage in Eliot's (The Cocktail Party)

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ABSTRACT

T. S. Eliot's *The Cocktail Party* (1950) focuses on the failing marriage between Edward and Lavinia Chamberlayne. Based on the play, the prime reason that drives a couple to marry in the 20th century is social pretence and this creates major marriage problems. From a Freudian psychoanalytic view, marriage or its dissolution have deep underlying causes. This paper investigates how unintelligible reasons cause the sterility and decay of this sacred bond. The paper will show how these reasons combined, whether conscious or unconscious, lead to the destruction of marriage. The inexplicable sets of behaviour will be demystified after reading the play from a Freudian psychoanalytic perspective.

Keywords: T. S. Eliot; *The Cocktail Party*; Freud, Psychoanalysis; Family; Sterility; Decay.

Introduction

Moral and emotional corruption dampens the anticipated pleasure of finding love and enjoying familial bonds causing isolation between family members especially between the husband and the wife and this creates sterility and childless families. Even couples who have children keep suffering from total isolation and lack of love and sex. Within a sociological and socioeconomic context in the first half of the 20th century, love and devotion are no longer sacred. Dull hard work routine to bring wealth and lack of emotional and sexual satisfaction have penetrated the social life creating a new reality that restricts emotional and physical stability. As a result marriage has become a faulty tool to achieve desires.

Eliot's literary works address the moral and emotional decadence that the west suffers from. Eliot's major works address the broken relationship between the husband and the wife. Eliot's *The Cocktail Party* (1950), is about a married couple, Edward and Lavinia Chamberlayne, who are emotionally and sexually detached from each other after five years of marriage. The paper will delve in the psychological reasons that lead to this whole new reality. Eliot contends that marriage during his time instigates isolation and misery. This is noted when a number of parallels are drawn between *the Cocktail Party* and some of Eliot's other literary works. For example, the relationship between Albert and Lil in *the Waste Land* (1922) is similar to that between Edward and Lavinia. Albert wants only to have a good time with Lil, something that Lil is submissive to and unable to change. For Lavinia, she seeks true romance but cannot find it with Edward. All what she can do is to be rebellious against the lack of romance and submissive to her body desires. Towards the end of the play, she dreams of breaking all such barriers and having romantic moments with Edward. The tensions between spouses and their causes in this paper acquire a Freudian psychological dimension.

Freudian theories have been used in literature to conceptualize characters' suffering. Freud contends that there are hidden and unhidden causes that influence and shape behavior. His studies examine the nexus between the unseen incentives and the sensed motivations. Critical analysis, in general, delves into the unhidden reasons that drive characters to act. Freudian psychoanalysis demystifies some inexplicable situations This paper reveals the buried unconscious incentives that lead to the downfall of marriage and their influence on the unhidden motives. In T.S. Eliot, *the Cocktail Party*, three main reasons lead to the failure of marriage. The deprivation of sex, the lack of emotional

* University of Petra, Jordan. Received on 26/1/2020 and Accepted for Publication on 16/6/2020.

harmony and the quest after a perfect marriage. From a psychoanalytic perspective, these reasons are a facade to deeper elements. In his seminal book, *Studies on Hysteria* (1895), Freud argues that marital satisfaction stems from the right choice of the partner and this causes hysteria which is a mental disorder that can be inflicted on both sexes. He explains that hysteria is an emotional or mental repression. He says:

Now I already knew from the analysis of similar cases that before hysteria can be acquired for the first time one essential condition must be fulfilled: an idea must be *intentionally repressed from consciousness* and excluded from associative modification. In my view, this intentional repression is also the basis for the conversion, whether total or partial, of the sum of excitation. [...] The basis for repression itself can only be a feeling of unpleasure (Freud, 1895, 102)

Through his close study of several patients who either suffer from hysteria or other similar disorders like neurosis or nervous breakdown, he concludes that the absence of libido and intimacy, due to different factors, is the prime motivation behind such illnesses. For example, after carefully studying Anna O, one of his patients, he says, "The element of sexuality was astonishingly undeveloped in her. The patient, whose life became known to me to an extent to which one person's life is seldom known to another, had never been in love; and in all the enormous number of hallucinations which occurred during her illness that element of mental life never emerged." (Freud: 1895: 21). In 'An Analysis of a Case of Hysteria' (1905), Freud notes that another patient, Frau Emmy, is severely neurotic and hysterical because of her repressed sexual and emotional desires after the death of her husband. In a third case, investigated by Freud and his friend, Breuer, Freud finds that deprivation of desires can trigger dissatisfaction. In her article, 'Hysteria, Psychoanalysis, and Feminism: The Case of Anna O.' (Freud: 1905:1983), Dianne Hunter argues that Bertha suffers from paralysis and inability to speak. She says, "Although Breuer does not state what had offended Bertha, it is easy to infer that she resented and rejected her inferior position as a daughter in an Orthodox Jewish family. Although her intellectual and poetic gifts were remarkable, and she was a lively and charming person, Bertha Pappenheim at twenty one was assigned routine and monotonous household tasks" (Freud, 1983: 464). The three cases that Freud has studied suffer from the suppression and repression of certain sexual or emotional desires.

Critics and psychologists generally contend that Freud limits the causes of neurosis and hysteria to sexual factors. R. G. Gordon argues in *The Neurotic Personality* (1927) that, "It is well known, that for Freud, neurosis essentially depends on conflicts and repression within the sexual life, and since we must admit that though not of universal application this is true in a large number of cases, in our efforts to describe the neurotic personality" (Gordon, 1927: 52). Freud's beliefs regarding sexual satisfaction can be studied within the larger Freudian theories about pleasure and reality. Freud's main interest is in revealing the causes that help man acquire pleasure. Sexual pleasure or repression, emotional satisfaction or dissatisfaction, and past experience (whether pleasing or distressing) all play a role in whether an individual considers reality to be gratifying or stressful. Terry Eagleton in *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (1983) disagrees with the idea that psychoanalysis links all psychological illnesses to the repression of sexual pleasure. He states, "psychoanalysis criticism can do more than hunt for phallic symbols: it can tell us something about how literary texts are actually formed, and reveal something of the meaning of that formation" (Eagleton, 1983: 179). There are common points to take into consideration from the stories of the patients of Freud. Absence or lack of libido and intimacy, betrayal and distorted roles and ties, and exposure to reality principle lead to the emergence of inexplicable reactions which will herald the downfall of human relationships particularly the one that marriage establishes between spouses.

The Cocktail Party (1950) is about a married couple, Edward and Lavinia Chamberlayne, who are unable to enjoy their relationship after five years of marriage. The first and last acts of the play feature cocktail parties held at their home where their marital problems are aggravated by the pressure of having to keep up social appearances. Lavinia gives no convincing reason for marrying Edward. She gives a flimsy excuse that Edward lies to her by insisting that he

loves her. Edward treats his wife as a commodity. He has an affair with a beautiful young woman, Celia, who is deceived by Edward's claims that his wife is uninterested in him and this drives him to start a new serious relationship. Lavinia deserts Edward who feels that he is on the brink of a nervous breakdown. Celia discovers that Edward is mediocre, asks for salvation and commits suicide.

In his essay 'The Three Worlds of the Cocktail Party: The Wit of T. S. Eliot' (1954), Robert A. Colby argues that Edward and Lavinia marry for no significant reasons while Celia's dream to marry Edward is based on realistic reasons. He notes, "The Central action of the play involves the reconciliation of a married couple, on the brink of separation, through a deepening understanding of each other. It is necessary that Edward and Lavinia, two non – spiritually minded people, become aware of the relevancy of certain insights." (Colby, 1954: 58). He also says that the death of Celia at the end of the play foreshadows the destiny of the relationship between Edward and Lavinia whose marriage is based on lies. He adds, "Celia's fate stimulates Edward and Lavinia mentally rather than physically – towards overt action, bearing on the future rather than the present" (ibid.: 58). In this play, sexual, emotional and physical detachment from the partner, social twisted beliefs, and mistrust lead to the decay of ties between Edward and Lavinia who represent a large number of similar couples in real life. From a psychoanalytic perspective, these conditions are controlled by underlying desires that are connected to the psyche of the character. Edward, Lavinia and Celia share with the patients of Freud the same situations that drive them to suffer.

2. Sex – Starved Marriage or Unrestricted Libido Drives:

In his book, *Studies on Hysteria* (1895), Freud contends that all the troubles of Frau Von lie in deprivation of sex. He says, "It has also struck me that amongst all the intimate information given me by the patient, there was a complete absence of the sexual element, which is, after all, more liable than any other to provide occasion for traumas." (Freud, 1895: 92). In *the Cocktail Party* (1950), Edward lusts after women and his libido is never fulfilled with Lavinia. He is the id character whose desires ominously drive him to play with Celia's emotions to have sex with him regardless of the consequences. According to Freud in his book *The Ego and the Id* (1923), there are three types of characters: the id, Ego and Superego. The id is the part of the unconscious psyche that is only concerned with sexual pleasure and unrestricted feelings of joy. The ego is the part of the conscious mind which balances between desire and law. The superego character is the part of the conscious mind which develops moral standards and rules that limit joy and pleasure. Edward is not interested in love and tells Peter, one of his friends, that Peter is fortunate to have missed out on the affair with Celia, because it would turn boring after a short period of time. Edward breaks off his relationship with Celia while other characters are walking in and out of his living room during the party. He cares only about his own social image and ignores Celia's feelings. Celia mistakenly thinks that her sexual affair with Edward will end up with marriage. She states after discovering the truth about Edward that love is only found in dreams,

For what happened is remembered like a dream
 In which one is exalted by the intensity of loving.
 In the spirit, a vibration of delight
 Without desire, for desire is fulfilled.
 In the delight of loving. A state one does not know.
 When awake. But what, or whom I loved,
 Or what in me was loving, I do not know.
 And if that is all meaningless, I want to be cured. (II. 139)

Celia is the superego character whose libido is governed by strict religious, cultural and social rules. She commits adultery with Edward because she thinks that their future marriage is guaranteed. This affair with Edward makes her fall into the trap of sin and lust but not love. To repent, she goes to Africa to do charity. She describes Edward, "But

why should that man want to bring her back / unless he is the devil! I could believe he was" (I. II. 57). She discovers that she has also broken her rules of life by explaining, "Perhaps it was I who betrayed my own dream / all the while, and to find I wanted / This world as well as that, it is humiliating" (I.II. 62). This makes her feel deeply humiliated. Freud clarifies in his paper "Obsessive Actions and Religious Practises" (1907) that the formation of religion, too, seems to be based on the suppression, the renunciation, of certain instinctual impulses (Freud, 1907: 1908). As a superego, Celia realizes that she has broken the sacred rules of love and getting married and this unconsciously drives her to commit suicide as a punishment of her sin. Her death is not caused by her conscious emotional shock. It is the result of her unconscious feeling of guilt and breaking rules.

Since Edward is not in true love with Lavinia, he barely remembers how she looks. He tells the unidentified guest, "I no longer remember what my wife is like / I am not quite sure that I could describe her" (I. I. 32). In the play, the presence of the Unidentified Guest in the party, who later turns out to be the secret psychiatrist of both Edward and Lavinia, alludes to Freud and his patients. Despite his lack of love to Lavinia and his sexless marriage, Edward wants her back. He is unable to understand why he needs her. The psychiatrist reveals the reason when he tells Edward, "You've lost touch with the person / you thought you were / you no longer feel quite a human / you are suddenly reduced to the status of an object / a living object but no longer a human" (I. I. 29). Freud explains what Henry means in a little essay on 'The Anxiety Neurosis' (1901). He states, "I maintained that neurotic fear has its origin in the sexual life, and corresponds to a libido which has been turned away from its object and has not succeeded in being applied" (Freud, 1901: 136). Edward is unconsciously unaware of the sacred bond between him and his wife and this makes him miss sex with her. His sexual life is turned away from marriage and lost in an illegal affair. He feels himself an object with no sense of sexual or emotional joy. In Celia's case, Edward looks at her as a lover and as soon as the libido is fulfilled, he no longer needs her. In Lavinia's case, he is unconsciously connected to her emotionally but his sexual desires for more women eclipses such feeling. This has created a sense of vague emotional discomfort and helplessness in his mind. The point is that Freudian psychoanalysis reveals that Edward is unable consciously to understand the contradiction between his need to have her back and his faint love to her. Edwards' inability to balance between the reality principle, in this case, his sacred bond with his wife, and the pleasure principle, in this case, his libido, has led him to feel lost and unable to enjoy any sort of love. Freud has noted that the unconscious has the truth about how we perceive the world. He says in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899),

The unconscious is the true physical reality, in its innermost nature it is as much unknown to us as the reality of the external world, and it is as incompletely presented by the data of consciousness as is the external world by the communications of our sense organs (Freud, 1899: 1038).

Freud states that the unconscious mind is not easily accessible and it holds the hidden truth. Our inexplicable actions become explicable and logical when the unconscious truth is uncovered. Lavinia has directly revealed this unconscious fact to Edward. Her biting criticism to Edward as an impractical person summarises the whole situation. She says, "One can be practical, even in hell: And you know I am much more practical than you are" (I. III. 99). Edward is unable to understand the unconscious desire of love and sex under the institution of marriage. In the play, Lavinia and Celia enjoy love through marriage and this is why they hate Edward after realizing that he is not serious. Lavinia's full realization of this broken sacred relationship compels her to abhor Edward. She is the ego character who keeps balance between her libido and her reality principles. This is why she alienates herself from Edward. Freud's concept of alienation is mainly connected to sexual desires. Both sexes, particularly women, intentionally repress emotional and sexual desires so that they do not suffer from neurosis. In 'A Reply To Criticisms Of My Paper On Anxiety Neurosis' (1895), Freud states, "The alienation between the somatic and the physical sphere is established more readily and is more difficult to remove in women more than in men" (Freud, 1895: 346). However, Freud concludes that any event that blocks pleasure, particularly sexual pleasure, can create a

sense of alienation within individuals to protect them from hysteria. Freud summarises the nexus between pleasure and sex and its influence on the mental and emotional state in 'Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning' (1911) by saying,

In the psychology which is founded on psycho-analysis we have become accustomed to taking as our starting-point the unconscious mental processes, with the peculiarities of which we have become acquainted through analysis. [...] These processes strive towards gaining pleasure; psychical activity draws back from any event which might arouse unpleasure (Freud, 1911: 2552).

Freud notes that pleasure is a mental process that is governed mostly by the unconscious mind. If the unconscious mental image about an activity is identified as unsatisfactory, the person will withdraw or change it even though the conscious perception seems satisfactory. Although sexual pleasure is the prime cause of the decay of love between spouses, there are other Freudian underlying motivations that aggravate this dilemma. The following argument will shed light on these causes that lead to the decay of marriage.

3. Emotional Harmony or Emotional Suppression and Repression.

In his 1951 essay 'Poetry and Drama,' Eliot explained that *Alcestis* by Euripides was the source play for *The Cocktail Party* (1950):

I was still inclined to go to a Greek dramatist for my theme, but I was determined to do so merely as a point of departure, and to conceal the origins so well that nobody would identify them until I pointed them out myself. In this at least I have been successful; for no one of my acquaintance (and no dramatic critics) recognised the source of my story in the *Alcestis* of Euripides. (Eliot, 1950: 85)

From Euripides, Eliot takes the idea of the faithful wife, willing to sacrifice her life for her husband. Alcestis, in Greek mythology, is the daughter of Pelias, king of Iolcus in Thessaly. She marries Admetus, king of Pherae who is destined to be killed by the god Apollo as punishment for killing the Cyclopes. During this period, Apollo and Admetus become friends. When it is time for Admetus to die, Apollo persuades the Fates to let him live if he can persuade another to die in his place. Alcestis willingly dies to spare Admetus's life. Later, Hercules rescues her from Hades. The character of Alcestis symbolises the image of a faithful emotional wife who sacrifices her life for the sake of the happiness of her husband. The image of the ideal wife who wins if her husband appreciates her devotion and emotion is also found in *The Clerk's Tale* in the *Canterbury Tales* (1476) by Geoffrey Chaucer. Griselda obeys her husband, King Walter, in all what he orders. Despite Walter's harsh tests and ordeals exercised on Griselda, she remains patient and wins the true love and respect of Walter. Penelope also in *the Odyssey* (675 – 725 BCE) never gives up the idea of the return of her husband after a long absence after the end of the Trojan War. She refuses to remarry and keeps these offers away by insisting that she must first complete weaving a shroud for Laretes, her father – in – law. She wins the affections of her husband when he reappears.

In nearly all of his works, Freud looks at emotional stability as an integral part of the psyche of humans. When emotions are disturbed due to reality principle, pleasure principle will not be achieved. Somatic symptoms follow and each body will react differently. In the case of one of his patients, Elisabeth, Freud contends that the death of her sister badly and profoundly affects her emotions. As a result, she suffers psychologically and physically. In *Studies on Hysteria* (1895), he notes,

If we put greater misfortunes on one side and enter into a girl's feelings, we cannot refrain from deep human sympathy with Fraulein Elisabeth. But what shall we say of the purely medical interest of this tale of suffering,

of its relations to her painful locomotor weakness, and of the chances of an explanation and cure afforded by our knowledge of these psychical traumas? (Freud, 1895: 130).

In the case of Edward and Lavinia, both will suffer from a nervous breakdown if they keep suppressing and repressing their emotions. Freud differentiates between suppression and repression. The first term refers to the conscious activity while the second refers to the unconscious mental processes. In *Studies on Hysteria*, Freud associates suppression with deliberate action while repression with the unconscious psychological defence mechanisms. Edward expects Lavinia to be excessively caring rather than controlling and Lavinia expects Edward to be considerate rather than mediocre. According to Freud, the ego attempts to control the unrequited passion of the id and this is what the id hates. He notes in *Inhibitions, Symptoms And Anxiety* (1926) that "the ego is, indeed, the organized portion of the id" (Freud: 1926: 4258). He argues in this book that the attempts of the ego to control the id are always faced by resistance. The *Cocktail Party* delves into the reasons that make a woman relinquish her role as a devoted wife in the 20th Century. 'Faithfulness' must not be misconceived with the word 'submission'. Women seek serious relationship in marriage based on devotion, love and respect. Eliot, in this play, examines the ideal role of the man and the woman under the institution of marriage where both want to be valued as humans not objects. The unidentified guest in the first act tells Edward from the beginning of the play about the feeling of being an object, "You're suddenly reduced to the status of an object / A Living object but no longer a person." (I.I. 29)

The unidentified guest who later turns out to be the psychiatrist of Lavinia and Edward is the man who goes deeply into the psyches of this couple to let us know why they fail in such marriage. For him, to be an object, is to be with no emotions. Lavinia's misery is caused by the absence of the emotional need for the other. Edward is a lawyer, a boring and unimaginative man who feels that he is stifled by Lavinia. When the play begins, we learn that he has an affair with Celia Copplestone, a fact that does not come out until later. For Lavinia, she admits that she is not satisfied with Edward because of his lack of seriousness and commitment. She says, "No one can say my husband has an honest mind" (I.III. 119). She strictly believes that her husband is selfish in love, "My Husband has never been in love with anybody" (I. III. 123). From the beginning of the play, Eliot sets up marriage on the pillars of cheating and lies. Marriage is wasted before it begins and both spouses realise this but pretend not to know. Edward admits that he is not in love with Lavinia, "It's not that I am in love with Lavinia / I don't think I was ever really in love with her." (I.II. 64). The absence of honesty leads to such drastic failure. David Chinitz says in his book, *A Companion to T.S. Eliot* (2009) that "Edward in the Cocktail Party struggles to accept himself and his wife Lavinia in a loveless marriage" (Chinitz, 2009: 332). True romantic love has hardly anything to do with the events depicted in the play. Edward wonders why he is married to Lavinia and asks her why she accepts him but she fails to give a reasonable cause,

Edward: I've often wondered why I loved you.

Lavinia: Well, you really were attractive, you know, and you kept saying that you were in love with me. I believe you were trying to persuade yourself you were. I seemed always on the verge of some wonderful experience and then it never happened. (I. III. 97)

Lavinia persuades herself that she is in love with Edward. She pretends to love and accept him. The broken relationship between Edward and Lavinia is clear despite the efforts done by Edward to conceal it in the party when Lavinia does not appear. Left in the awkward position of hosting a dinner party that Lavinia arranges before she leaves him, he makes up a flimsy excuse about her being away to visit a sick aunt—an excuse nobody believes. He does not love her but he is used to her presence. He explains to the Unidentified Guest, "Why speak of love? We were used to each other" (I. I. 29). Ironically, Edward is not interested in the absence of Lavinia. On the emotional level, Edward is so uncomfortable at the change of his routine. As a result, he wishes for her back and when Harcourt-Reilly says that

he can arrange it, he asks him to do so. He worries about looking ridiculous, but Sir Henry assures him that a little humiliation would be good for him. Dr. Reilly says, "You will find that you survive humiliation / And that's an experience of incalculable value" (I. I. 31).

Only the Unidentified Guest knows that Edwards' feelings cause his physical exhaustion. Edward's mixed emotions about Lavinia's disappearance becomes even more confusing when it is revealed that he and Celia are involved in an affair, but having decided that he wants Lavinia back, he is able to end the affair quickly. Edward looks for his own interests and joys. For him, the love of a woman means temporal moments of joys like attending parties for a couple of hours for wasting time in drinking, dancing and cheering. As Sir Henry Harcourt-Reilly puts it later, he is a man incapable of loving. When he breaks the news that he has asked Lavinia to come back, Celia sees Edward with newly opened eyes, and he appears to her as a hollow man. She realises that her love for him is an illusion and her passion is transient and superficial, "a vibration of delight without desire" (II, 39). Edward and Lavinia look upon each other as a burden or responsibility. Edward sees himself as the practical one of the pair. Lavinia is not satisfied with the practicality which Edward claims,

Lavinia: One can be practical, even in hell: And you know I am much more practical than you are.

Edward: I ought to know by now what you consider practical. Practical! I remember, on our honeymoon, You were always wrapping things up in tissue paper And then had to unwrap everything again. (I. III. 99)

When Edward goes to see Harcourt-Reilly, he does so, because, as he puts it, "I can no longer act for myself. Coming to see you—that's the last decision I was capable of making" (II. 109). He wants to be locked away in a sanatorium where he will not be responsible for the decisions of his life. He turns to be impractical and weak. In the extract above, Edward becomes void of ambition of life due to the behavior of Lavinia towards him. He finds her out of her feminine role as a wife and a woman who must be emotional, not practical. Lavinia, too, expects to be sent to a sanatorium because of her marriage troubles. Instead, Harcourt-Reilly tells them to stay together, to be responsible for each other. They complement each other in social matters. Lavinia points out, "Edward has a practical mind for tasks like filling out an income tax form, but she herself is practical in the things that really matter" (II. 118). Their brief separation is a result of missing love and the desire to be free of responsibility. As long as they treat each other as a duty, instead of lovers, their relationship works out just fine. They are acting as acquaintances not spouses.

The party that they are preparing for at the end of the play is not something that they look forward to, but something that they feel that they must do because of their social position, and this sort of responsibility brings Edward and Lavinia together. Even when Lavinia is back to Edward, he is not emotionally interested. He feels so much regret when Lavinia returns to him. He moves out of the house and wants to be admitted into a sanatorium, but his psychiatrist, Sir Henry Harcourt-Reilly, pairs him up with Lavinia, saying that they are perfectly matched. On the doctor's advice, they stay together, and in the end they are seen as a couple preparing to host a cocktail party. Edward is a little more emotionally close to Lavinia in the end, but their relationship is still cold and decayed. In the case of Edward and Lavinia, their love to each other is a lie, as a result, each one suppresses and represses these shocking feelings to avoid the nervous breakdown.

Freud observes that emotions are repressed when they are unachieved and emotional repression and physical symptoms are interrelated. Anna O, one of the patients of Freud, suffers from paralysis in her right arm and leg along with involuntary eye movements. Freud contends that these physical symptoms are influenced by her repressed emotions that badly influence her nervous system which in return negatively controls her muscles and body. The death of her father whom she loves a lot has deeply influenced her life. Unconsciously, her father represents for her the model man that she aspires to live with. Henry McDonald Spencer in his article 'The Psychology of Repressed Emotions.' (1918) believes that "these thoughts are pushed back in the unconscious, become repressed and the effort of

these repressed thoughts to find an outlet, produces the nervous illness" (Spencer, 1918: 309). Lois A Cudy states, in his book, *T.S. Eliot of the Poetics of Evolution/Subversion of classicism Culture and Progress* (2000) that "The Cocktail Party peels away the Waste's Land layers of suggestions and examines the psychological relationship between a husband and a wife" (Cudy, 2000: 188). Edward and Lavinia accept their dismal situation and find that they are involved in a struggle rather than partnership. As both realise that their fight will lead to their own emotional defeat and disappointment, they rather choose to coexist with each other like living creatures. Lavinia tells Edward: "You must sit beside me, That I can relax" and Edwards replies, "This is the best moment of the whole party" (III. I. 157-158). This is what the couple can only do to escape from the sordid reality that their marriage creates.

4. Illusion or Disillusionment:

In Freudian psychoanalysis, disillusionment is a mental state in which despair or loss of hope, caused by a false belief, dominates man's view of life. Freud addresses this concept in 'Delusions and Dreams in Jensen's *Gradiva*' (1906), "We feel a sense of disillusionment when the solution falls flat and seems unworthy of our expectations" (Freud, 1906: 1833). Lavinia and Celia are victims of Edward's selfishness. Both hope that Edward can be a model husband. Their realization that Edward is a mediocre shatters their dreams of establishing an ideal family. For both women, their aspiration to a flawless marriage is an illusion. As a result, they lie to themselves and accept Edward although they are suspicious towards his intentions. Edward admits that he is unworthy of marriage. He says,

But in men like me, the dull, the implacable,
The indomitable spirit of mediocrity.
The willing self can contrive the disaster
Of this unwilling partnership -- but can only flourish
In submission to the rule of the stronger partner. (I. II. 66)

Edward's confession about his insincere love to Lavinia and how he ruins her life emotionally goes with what Freud states in 'Civilized Sexual Morality and Modern Nervous Illness' (1908) about how women feel when they are emotionally deceived, "Women, when they are subjected to the disillusionment of marriage, fall ill of severe neuroses which permanently darken their lives" (Freud, 1908: 1957). After experiencing a frivolous relationship, Lavinia and Celia have become pessimistic of life. In the case of Lavinia, isolation is her outlet whereas in the case of Celia, death is her sole sanctuary. In his *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* (1916), Freud summarizes the nexus between illusion and disillusionment when he says, "The spiritual disillusionment and bodily deprivation to which most marriages are thus doomed puts both partners back in the state they were in before their marriage, except being the poorer by the loss of illusion" (Freud, 1916: 1975). The shift in setting from the Chamberlayne flat to Sir Henry Harcourt-Reilly's office in act (II) changes the whole mood of the play. Scene (II) puts the three characters back in the state they are before their serious relationships are established. All of act (I) has the atmosphere of superficiality, regarding an unhappy husband who cannot make up his mind about whether he wants his wife to stay or go. There is a sense of the disappointment in the relationship between Edward and Lavinia and how Edward is far from being honest with his wife. The scene in the psychiatrist's office is more intimate, concerned with serious matter of the inner self. Edward and Lavinia are brought to see the truth about themselves. Edward seeks psychiatric help. He explains, "I have ceased to believe in my own personality" (II. 110). Sir Henry replies to this with the observation that it is a 'very common malady. Very prevalent indeed' (II. 110). It is significant that the first time Edward opens up to anyone and talks about the reality of his marriage is when he is left alone with a character whom he does not know, named "Unidentified Guest." To the stranger, Edward admits his uncertainty about his life without Lavinia, and when the stranger offers to bring her back, he accepts, despite her attempts to control Edwards' behaviour, something that Edward hates a lot.

When she comes back, Edward realises almost immediately that it is a mistake. He is not comfortable with himself, either with or without her. He realizes that the best place for him would be isolated in a sanatorium where he will not have to put on any outward appearance at all. Lavinia's search for self, as Sir Henry explains it, starts when she realises that her lover, Peter, is not only in love with another woman, but that the other woman is Celia, the woman with whom Edward has an affair. It is really satirical that Lavinia wants to be loved, and the fact that no one loves her makes her question whether this is a practical goal at all. For her, Edward is only practical when he pretends that he genuinely loves a woman. To deal with this biting truth, Sir Henry suggests that Lavinia throws herself back into the life that she has been leading, believing that she can at least be comfortable with her husband because he cannot be far from her. Moreover, Sir Henry admits to Lavinia that Edward is incapable of love.

Like Lavinia, Celia's search for love fails. After her affair ends, she comes to a pair of conclusions about herself, that she is alone and that she is a product of sin. Sir Henry does not try to convince her that she is wrong in these conclusions, but instead treats them as her awakening to the truth about the human condition. Sir Henry is certain about the death of love and the erection of desire and selfishness. His role in the play is the Freudian psychiatrist who reveals the hidden truth about the causes of the absence of love and faithfulness. Realizing that her affair with Edward is a dream, Celia decides to go to the jungle of Kinkanja where she walks between monkeys who lead a primitive way of life which totally depends on survival. Celia is living in a jungle full of savage animals. Those monkeys only look for mating, food and survival. Peter confesses to Edward that Celia is honest to him but he is not,

But I thought that she really cared about me.
And I was so happy when we were together --
So ... contented, so ... at peace: I can't express it;
I had never imagined such quiet happiness.
I had only experienced excitement, delirium. (I. I. 44)

Peter, like the monkeys, is happy with her because she cares about him. In return, he offers her nothing after having his desires fulfilled. At the beginning of the play, Celia does not appear to be a significant character, just one of the crowd. She turns out to give her life the sort of meaning that all of the other characters have been hoping love would bring. This does not mean that she wants to fall into sin. For her, love is something so sacred and its sacredness leads to successful serious relationships. She is similar to the decent lady who says in Eliot's *the Portrait of the Lady* (1881), "For everybody said so, all our friends / they were sure our feelings would relate" (102 – 103). Her failure to get married is the outcome of the realization that love does not exist after her bitter experience with two men. She has a new philosophy about love being unreal. She talks to Sir Henry about reality that shocks,

Are we all in fact unloving and unlovable?
Then one is alone, and if one is alone.
Then the lover and beloved are equally unreal.
Then the dreamer is no more real than his dreams. (II. 138)

Similarly, Lavinia finds no love with Peter as well. Harcourt-Reilly explains that the end of her affair with Peter makes Lavinia realise the truth about herself, "It was a shock. You had wanted to be loved, you had come to see that no one had ever loved you. Then you began to feel that no one could ever love you" (2. 124). With this realization, Lavinia finds out that Edward, a man who is incapable of loving anyone, is the destined mate for her, because he will not leave her and will act kindly towards her to assure her continuing companionship. Whenever he tries to portray Lavinia as being demanding, she points out that he is indecisive and needs someone to tell him what to do. This is how their relationship goes and will continue to go. Lavinia mocks Edward accusing him of being weak and incapable of

doing something great in his life as a man. Edward tells Lavinia that people believe that they are suited to each other. She mocks him by saying,

It's pity that you had no opinion of your own. Oh, Edward, I should like to be good to you. Or if that's possible, at least be horrid to you – Anything but nothing, which is all you seem to want of me. But, I'm sorry for you.

Edward: Don't say you are sorry for me! I have had enough people being sorry for me (II. 97).

When marriage becomes an unattainable illusion, disillusionment occurs. This has devastating effects on the married couple. This drives Edward to a nervous breakdown at the end of the play. Lavinia as well finds herself unworthy and becomes silent because she seeks nothing. For her, Edward deserves being on the edge of a nervous breakdown. She believes that she is dead in life at the end. *Alceste* sacrifices her life for her husband and is rescued by God, Apollo. Here, Lavinia sacrifices her life for herself and finds nobody to save her from her emotional death. In the last act, two years later, they are together again, functioning smoothly as a couple. Lavinia is worn out and tired. Like Edward, she feels guilty about Celia's death which will be revealed at the beginning of the last act, but unlike him, she realises that it would be good for them all to try to understand Celia better. In the third act, Edward learns that Celia is dead in her mission in Kinkanja. Love for her is an illusion while her death is her way to escape from disillusionment. Lavinia understands that Celia is the victim of deceit and lust. Lavinia still finds it difficult to have a true love relationship with Edward. Sunil Sarker in his book *T.S. Eliot: Poetry, Play and Prose* (2008) believes that "Lavinia in *the Cocktail Party* rises from the past as from the tomb to be reunited with her husband" (Sarker, 2008: 212). She begins the last act tired and wishes that she does not have to host the coming cocktail party, but stirred up by her curiosity about Celia, she finds new enthusiasm. Her last line in the play, "Oh, I'm glad. It's begun" (III. 190), shows more optimism than she previously has. She tries to escape from her disappointment about Celia's death and Edward's indifference by indulging herself in the party. These parties are her sole outlet from her disillusionment.

Sir Henry listens to Edward's situation as if it is unfamiliar to him and gives his advice and sings a foolish song as if Edward's troubles mean nothing to him. Sir Henry is the character who shrewdly spots the lights on the problems that make love unreal and fictional. Although he pretends to be studying Edward's case in act (II), the audience understands that he has already planned what would be best for the Chamberlaynes because of the arrangements he makes before their arrival. He refuses to send Edward to a sanatorium and tells Lavinia that the place that he sends her to previously is not a sanatorium. His refusal to isolate his patients, even when they ask to be sent somewhere to be alone, is consistent with the advice he later gives Celia. To her, he explains that there are two ways of dealing with life. The first one is to become reconciled with reality, to avoid excess, and to become tolerant; this is the one Edward and Lavinia follow. Sir Henry says,

And after that, the prologue to my treatment
Is to try to show them that they are mistaken
About the nature of their illness, and lead them to see
That it's not so interesting as they had imagined.
When I get as far as that, there is something to be done (III. 131).

The second, which Celia follows, is more intricate and involves taking a perilous journey, with no knowledge of where one will end up. Sir Henry says,

The second is unknown, and so requires faith
The kind of faith that issues from despair
The destination cannot be described

You will know very little until you get there
 You will journey blind. But the way leads towards possession
 Of what you have sought for in the wrong place (I. III. 141)

When news comes at the end of the play that Celia has suffered a violent death in an exotic location, Lavinia notices that Sir Henry's reaction is normal. He only recites a complex poem filled with classical allusions, in contrast to the song he has sung earlier. Sir Henry anticipates that Celia will find the love she seeks in the other world and be released from deceit and lies. She is already dead in life since she has no one to love or be loved by.

5. Conclusion:

The Freudian psychoanalytic reading of the play reveals why some couples are not satisfied after marriage. In the play, Edward and Lavinia marry for social reasons. They have realized that their marriage is devoid of love, sex and perfection by all means. Their visits to the psychiatrist, Dr. Henry, who represents Freud, give them an insight of their situation. Such visits allude to the meeting of Freud with his patients to study them and help them change their lives. Their conversations with each other and their psychiatrist reveal so many things that they are unaware of. First, they have discovered that their sex – starved marriage is the outcome of how each one looks at sex. Edward has unrestricted libido that drives him to seek sex with other women. Lavinia's role as the ego restricts Edward's uncontrollable passions which drives him to treat his wife as a sexual object.

On the emotional level, each one seeks attention in accordance with his or her psyche. For Edward, he has no care for the others since he is governed by his libidino. Lavinia realizes that she will gain nothing from being a faithful emotional wife. Love is not only a matter of emotion or attraction as Lavinia comments about Edward's repetitive words of attraction. She is unable to feel calm or find peace of mind and mercy. Lavinia keeps teasing Edward never giving him the chance to enjoy peace of mind because of his treachery and indifference. Their different psyches as an ego or an id instigate all such trouble and tensions. Sir Henry summarizes the whole emotional situation and tensions between this couple when he says,

The stale thoughts mouldering in their minds.
 Each unable to disguise his own meanness
 From himself, because it is known to the other.
 It's not the knowledge of the mutual treachery
 But the knowledge that the other understands the motive
 Mirror to mirror, reflecting vanity. (III. 146)

The presence of proper sexual passion outlet, love and faithfulness create the atmosphere of pursuing an everlasting serious relationship. If these desires are achieved, reality and pleasure principle meet and traumas disappear. Marriage has become a disheartening illusion for couples like Edward and Lavinia. As a result, disillusionment occurs. Edward's sole escape from this disillusionment is to experience a nervous breakdown while Lavinia's outlet is to remain silent and isolated. For Celia, death rescues her from the world where true love and marriage no longer exist. If Lavinia is honest in her choice of the partner and Edward makes control of his libidino, then, marriage will breed pleasure in sex and love.

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اللاجدوى في الزواج في مسرحية اليوت حفلة الكوكيتيل

طارق محمود *

ملخص

تسلط مسرحية إليوت حفلة الكوكيتيل الضوء على علاقة الزواج الفاشلة بين إدوارد ولافينيا شامبرلين وفقاً للمسرحية، يعد المظهر الاجتماعي سبباً رئيسياً لمشاكل وفشل الزواج بالقرن العشرين. ولكن من وجه نظر فرويد، فإن الزواج وفشله، له أسباب أعمق ليس من السهل على الفرد إدراكها. وهذا البحث يحلل هذه الأسباب التي تسبب الهلاك لهذه العلاقة المقدسة، وإن هذه الدراسة تظهر أن هذه الأسباب مجتمعة، سواء كان على مستوى العقل الواعي أو اللاوعي، تؤدي إلى انحلال الزواج، وإن الدراسة تهدف إلى فك الغموض الذي يكتنف بعض التصرفات اللامنطقية بعد قراءة المسرحية قراءة نفسية مبنية على نظريات فرويد.

الكلمات الدالة: تي اس اليوت، حفلة الكوكيتيل، فرويد، علم النفس، العائلة، العقم الانحلال.

* جامعة البتراء، الأردن. تاريخ استلام البحث 2020/1/26، وتاريخ قبوله 2020/6/16.