



Examining the Psychosexual Development in Bryony Lavery’s *Frozen*

Shaaban Sulaiman Sadeeq

Department of General Education, College of Education and Languages, Lebanese French University, Erbil, Kurdistan Region, Iraq

shaxawansuliman4@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received: 25/10/2021

Accepted: 8/12/2021

Published: Winter 2022

Keywords:

psychosexual, sexual
misconduct, child
abuse, psychopathy

Doi:

10.25212/lfu.qzj.7.1.43

ABSTRACT

Sexual abuse is a common phenomenon across the globe; this crime has gained much attention to the extent that a great number of studies have been carried out on this subject. Hence, kids have always been victims of this reprehensible act. One will wonder why some men are stimulated to commit this heinous crime especially against the underage; many of these kids never open up to anyone due to some factors: most of them have always been victimised by the perpetrator—their lives have always been threatened, while some of them are scared of being stigmatised by the society. But it is essential to understand that the act of sexual abuse is also connected to psychopathic problem. This psychopathic problem requires the service of a competent psychiatrist to provide permanent solution. Therefore, this article examines the psychosexual development in the *Frozen* as presented by Bryony Lavery; and how she proffers solution to this critical problem is brought under focus. Lavery examines the cause of sexual misconduct—pedophilia and also provides solution to it. But Lavery has refused to propose punishment for the offender, rather, she suggests that he should be forgiven due to the fact that he has been overwhelmed by the feelings he has no power to control—therefore forgiveness is needed rather than getting frozen in hatred.

1. Introduction

1.1 Sexual misconduct

Sexual misconduct isn't new in the society; it has been a common crime that has been given so much attention through the media. The media always spreads information about this crime; and the accounts given by the media have caused studies about sexual misconduct across the globe to evolve. This has led to a variety of discussions about sexual abuse and this has made the topic become very popular. Hence, those who indulge in sexual misconduct do not only make adult their victims, but kids have mainly become the victims of sexual predation. In this sense, many studies have been carried out about the cause of sexual abuse; many results have revealed that some of these sexual predators are sexual psychopath (Cathy, 1995, p. 3).

As Estelle Freeman, George Chauncey and Philip Jenkins postulate in their comprehensive explications, they confirm that this feeling is one of the most difficult problems that can only be handled by a psychiatrist. Some studies also reveal that those who find it difficult to control their sexual urge are emotionally weak and different psychiatric services are given to them in order to stop their uncontrolled psychosexual developments (Jackie, 1998). The source of sexual psychopathy is said to have been traced to the period of infancy through the relationship a male child has with his parents or the painful sexual knowledge that has gotten hold of his growth process. And this makes him become an adult who is weak to control his sexual feeling.

1.2 Preventing sexual misconduct

One of the principal solutions to this problem is that the parents should give attention to their male children by giving them sex education in order to avoid finding themselves in this peculiar mess. (Wald, 2006, p. 111). Thus, this component is very crucial in tackling sexual misconduct, knowing the fact that it has a fundamental origin that should be dealt with. This could help in preventing sexual psychopathy. Many questions have arisen with regard to this topic: this also depends on how the psychiatrist has been able to establish himself to reflect this profession and then proffer solution to the misconduct. This idea of psychosexual

evolution had started becoming a central topic towards the end of the 19th century, and it was revealed that sexual impulse surfaced at a tender age and it began to go through the process of metamorphosis. Thus, psychiatrists have gotten the idea of psychosexual evolution in order to talk about the sexual predators—how they mostly prefer to use kids to commit their sexual crime; and some men become sexually attracted to the same sex because of the way they evolve (Wald, 2008, p. 171).

The analysis of the psychiatrists has likewise succeeded in inculcating two different persons: this includes the *older person of the dirty old man* and the *newer phantom of the cruel gay* into the hierarchy of psychopathic development. It is said that the *dirty old man* and a *gay* both went through puerile urge and they are not matured enough to have control over their drives.

In the course of exploring this subject in line with psychosexual development in *Frozen*, Lavery as a playwright has a great sense of artistic freedom in her writing career and she has added a great contribution to Women's Theatre Group via politically motivated performances—and her effort in women's theatre has contributed vehemently to lesbian theatre in Britain.

She has also been part of the theatre that reflects profusely the sidelined women in a long-run show in Monstrous Regiment Theatre Company; she places emphasis on feminist theatre production (Kareem, 2020; Keyssar, 1996; cited in Öğütçü, 2018, p. 158). In her theatrical performances, Lavery overturns the traditional mechanisms of Aristotle's concept of theatrical performances but applies Brechtian methods such as light, music, sound etc. She also sometimes creates innovation for theatrical qualities. In this sense, this paper attempts to analyse the psychosexual components in *Frozen*.

2. Exploring the Psychosexual Components in *Frozen*

In attempt to explore Lavery's *frozen*, she presents the themes of domestic violence and sexual abuse. Categorized as an iconoclast, Lavery has always loved to break the conventional rules of the theatre and this is reflected in the way she handles social challenges, vices and catastrophe. This method has made her become vehemently

fruitful than her previous simple-minded drama (Hamad, 2018; Brown et al, 2006; cited in Öğütçü, 2018). Her *Frozen* has been characterised as pedophile and trauma drama and many critics have reacted to it in their various intellectual capacities. It was first staged at Birmingham Repertory Theatre and was considered a disputable play from the thematic and technical angle. This is because the play reflects a very sensitive issue—that is, child sexual molestation in an uncommon manner. Thus, “*Frozen* confronts the audience with the horrible act of child abuse which traumatises individuals, families and societies. The play displays the circumstances of the convict through which the audience may comprehend the motives of the child abuser” (Öğütçü, 2018, p. 157).

The play’s geographical background is first set in New York and subsequently taken to an unknown town in England. The play principally presents Wantage as a dangerous murderer and pedophile who is eventually apprehended by the police Nancy one of his sitting targets. As various kinds of traumatic situations occur in different areas, the characters eventually get over their emotional irregularity, though not absolutely. Looking at it from the technical angle, the play applies a lot of dramatic mechanisms that are not conventional and this is reflected in the way monologues are used which eventually leads to conversation. Also, the play reflects some humour and this is done to reduce tension, thus the examples of the humours are established in dark comedy form and this is in confinement with a situation when darkness becomes victorious in the play. “*Frozen* confronts the audience with the horrible act of child abuse which traumatises individuals, families and societies. The play displays the circumstances of the convict through which the audience may comprehend the motives of the child abuser, and makes it muse on the possibility of forgiving him” (Öğütçü, 2018; Hamanajm, 2020).

Thus, the most surprising aspect of the *Frozen* is that despite all those heinous atrocities committed, Lavery proposes forgiveness to take preeminence instead of getting frozen in hostility. This suggestion, though disputable does not proffer solution to a complex problem. The play also speaks for the perpetrator of evil via his psychological records and this is a novel technique when the play was first staged in the year 1998. The play reveals and treats Ralph as a pedophile and this is

contrary to the common way the society treats those who indulge in child sexual abuse—they are completely excluded or probably alienated, although total alienation hasn't brought drastic solution to the problem.

The play marvels its spectators as it was brought to stage in 1998. Really, the work of art should produce a climatic situation in which the readers/audience should expect a big shock in a big scene. The beauty of artistic works is not to present common phenomenon, but to create an awe, strangeness, uncommonness and shocking surprises—capable of shaking the spectators from their head to toes. This is where we tend to see or experience how the arts of the theatre produce graceful feelings or atmosphere in people.

Hence, *Frozen* is able to establish this unusual sentimentality in which the society appears to apply it as an effective measure of confronting their tormentors by relieving their suppressed trauma and psychological injury in them. This is presented intelligently to strike terror in the heart of those who victimise the downtrodden and discombobulate them in their nefarious inner circle. Since, the problem of child sexual abuse hasn't been absolutely solved in the society; Lavery's concept of anti-child abuse still plays a very indispensable role. Therefore, by examining the psychosexual past records of Ralph it accentuates that *Frozen* is a very indispensable drama—very relevant to this modern society where child sexual molestation has become very habitual, and this snag hasn't been given any absolute solution (Sabri, 2021). Ralph here represents the vicious men who take pleasure in amatory satisfaction with kids. Hence Priebe pontificates that:

Priebe (2009, p. 21) asserts that the consolidation of knowledge about child sexual abuse made three general conclusions possible. First, exposure to unwanted sexual experience during childhood was not uncommon. Second, children reared in certain social or family circumstances were at increased risk for being sexually abused. Third, exposure to child sexual abuse was associated with increased risks of mental health and adjustment problems both during childhood and in adulthood.

Therefore, Lavery accentuates the hidden taboo, dehumanisation and child violation that have submerged many people into unspeakable trauma and internal pandemonium. Thus, "the term "trauma" does not only refer to a medial concept, it

rather serves as an explanatory pattern for individual fates, society issues and collective phenomena” (Dellbrügge, 2009, p. 4).

Many for several years have kept this to themselves for the fear of social stigmatisation or the fear of being victimised by the perpetrator. This silent secret has become very poisonous to many people’s psyche. The play demonstrates the situations of the perpetrator in which the spectators may have an adequate perspicacity of the child violator’s intention and eventually see the reason that forgiveness is paramount in such a situation. Therefore, this study accentuates the concept of anti-child abuse and analyses of the gregarious and psychological rationale behind the delineation of amatory satisfaction in the *Frozen*. Thus, there has been a “great number of studies that deal with the impact of sexual abuse, often penetrating abuse, in terms of traumatising and the development of psychiatric disorders such as depression and posttraumatic stress disorder” (Priebe, 2009, p. 18).

By relating the psychosexual background in the *Frozen* it is clear that Lavery’s intention is to establish a campaign against child sexual abuse which has become a common trend in the modern society; this issue hasn’t been provided any solution but rather, it is given a little attention and for this reason, it is becoming degenerated. However, the play accentuates the causes of child sexual abuse and reveals how the problem can be solved from the socio-psychological angle. More so, “Sexual abuse may be understood as the involvement of children and teenagers in sexual activities that they do not totally understand and do not approve of” (Godoi and Fiamenghi-Jr, 2018, p. 24). Hence, “the psychological impact of traumatic events became more recognised and by the end of the nineteenth century the term began to be associated with a wounding of the psyche. Since then, different names were created for describing this impact, among them “compensation neurosis”, “nervous shock”, “hysteria” and “war neurosis” (Yadin and Foa 2007, p. 178 cited in Dellbrügge, 2009).

Therefore, in order to explicate the causes of child sexual violation and the future assassination of the victim and if such social-misconduct is forgivable Ralph Wantage the child violator is presented by the author in a very active way. In this

sense, a “traumatized victim of sexual abuse in childhood will have to confront with life situations that will appear stressing, such as further sexual experiences” (Godoi and Fiamenghi-Jr, 2018, p. 26).

Instead of revealing a vicious and dualistic violator that is needed to be precluded from the society, the sequence of Ralph’s issue is presented to establish a campaign for people to see a psychological reason behind these child violators’ attitude who indulge in such heinous act. This approach applied by Lavery can be considered as a solution for this problem, highlighting the essence of focusing on the causes of the problem and its solution rather than drawing anomalous attention to the problem and the perpetrator. This source-oriented method applied by Lavery is assumed to be a measure that will prevent subsequent occurrences of this sexual misconduct against the minors. Unlike the other way of treating child molestation sensationally in other plays, Ralph character is presented with psychological condition. Starting from visible causes to psychological intentions of Lavery’s dramatic personae and some other areas of medical text is applied to establish the totality of her characters. But Ralph is presented as the most nefarious of them all. In attempt to examine the psychological history of Ralph, and trying to discover if he has been physically injured; Agnetha, starting her study of Ralph by attempting to detect if he has had any physical wounds first, Agnetha, in New York, an academic postulate that physical injury to the brain is a crucial element in developing a future criminal propensity.

In accordance with her study, it is seen that Ralph’s mum throws him in the sink as a child and this leads to both physical and psychological injury on him. Furthermore, Agnetha explains to the spectator that her research with Dr. Nabkus on “more than two hundred and fifty dangerous criminals” reveals that “in significant numbers / these [criminals] have incurred physical damage to / the brain” the closeness that reveals “verifiable evidence” (149) in terms of nexus between physical injury and aggressive disposition. So, the evidence of constant application of physical aggression results in Agnethan and the spectators to challenge how regular and in what way has Ralph been beaten as a child and thereafter.

Looking at it from the successive Ralph's amatory satisfaction the essence of family cordiality for child's development is importantly accentuated. In its first performance in Birmingham Repertory Theatre, the value of good family cordiality was established by the modern British legislation. Hence, as it has become a serious subject in 1998, it makes Agnetha's quest for other physical injuries in Ralph—and about Ralph first. The essence of Agnetha's investigation isn't just meant to retell the story of Ralph as a child but a cogent explication of the way Ralph retells his own previous life. Therefore, the psychosexual background of Ralph does not only tell us about him but also enlightens the spectators about the causes of reprehensible sexual disposition. Furthermore "Child sexual abuse is a peculiar problem in that often the people who are expected to protect and nurture the child are involved. This paradox makes it difficult to accept and much easier to blame strangers for the problem" (McCrann, 2017, p. 3).

As the play proceeds, there is a big discovery that shows that Ralph himself has been, on several occasions sexually molested by his stepfathers. Therefore, as it has been shown that Ralph has had a very bad sexual experience that has had a negative influence on his psyche, it can be postulated that Ralph's abnormal sexual disposition is caused by his childhood sexual orientation. Thus," Child sexual abuse cuts across all economic, social, cultural, religious and racial lines. Children of both sexes, all ages, races, religions, economic and social backgrounds are victims. There have been a number of definitions that have attempted to encapsulate the full meaning of child sexual abuse" (McCrann, 2017, p. 3).

Therefore, the bad influence of his stepfathers counts a lot in his life as an adult whether consciously or unconsciously. In this sense, the family of Ralph is found in the situation of multi-dimensional incest problems; this is complicated as Ralph's mother's physical abuse on him contributes to this problem at the same time being sexually molested by his step fathers. Thus, this is in conformity with "the pathological triangle, most involving some complicity on the part of the mother" (Schlesinger, 1982, p. 23; cited in Murat, 2018). From this triangular angle Ralph's mother has failed as a mother to rescue her son from this peculiar mess. Thus, "Freud argued that development of psychosexual problems would occur in an

individual if the process of expressing instinctual libido is faulty” (Gesinde et al, 2013, p. 2).

3. Conclusion

Lavery’s *Frozen* creates a very sensitive, significant and controversial topic and also proffers a solution to the conflicting issue even as the play unfolds sequentially. In this case, she hasn’t only revealed the causes of child sexual abuse but also provides solution—that is, forgiveness rather than being frozen in hostility. This faulty foundation in a man plays a significant role in how he behaves. Therefore, Lavery creates an awareness that will be helpful in solving the current child sexual abuse and prevent its subsequent occurrence. Looking at *Frozen* from two different angles: theme and technique, it addresses critical topics that are considered social and cultural abomination. Hence, the most outrageous aspect of Lavery’s idea in her play is her resolution: she proposes that despite that this act of sexual abuse is a crime, it is essential to create a space one’s heart for forgiveness, one needs to let life continue instead of being frozen in hostility and bitterness of heart. This resolution is very controversial because it refuses to provide actual solution to this problem. The play also permits the perpetrator to connect himself with his psychosocial past. This resolution provided by Lavery is totally in contrast with the traditional approach to solving the problem of child sexual abuse—the traditional approach is to annihilate or isolate such a person completely from the society rather than forgiving the offender. Therefore, the issue of pedophilia that has been a common phenomenon in the society hasn’t been given a logical solution, thus the Lavery’s approach in solving this problem is highly controversial. She eventually shocks the audience in which they are not provided with the equipment they can use in confronting their oppressors. However, the play places the audience in the crossroads where they have to decide on their own, how the problem of child sexual abuse can be solved rather than relying absolutely on what Lavery has proposed.

References

Abiodun. M. Gesinde, Gbadebo. O. Adejumo & Ariyo A Motunrayo (2013) *Self-Reported Psychosexual Lifestyles of University Students in Southwestern Nigeria: Implication*

for Professional Counseling Practice Global Journal of HUMAN SOCIAL SCIENCE
Arts, Humanities & Psychology Volume 13 Issue 3 Version 1.0

Aston, Elaine (2003). *Feminist Views on the English Stage: Women Playwrights, 1990-2000*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.

Caruth, Cathy (1995). "Trauma and Experience Intro" In Trauma. Explorations in Memory. ed. Cathy Caruth. Baltimore: John Hopkins UP. 3-12.

Certeau, Michel de (1997). *Culture in the Plural*. trans. Luce Giard. Minneapolis, MN: U of Minnesota P. Craissati, Jackie (1998). *Child Sexual Abusers: A Community Treatment Approach*. Sussex: Psychology P.

Craissati, Jackie (1998). *Child Sexual Abusers: A Community Treatment Approach*. Sussex: Psychology P.

Godoi, Daniela and Fiamenghi-Jr, Geraldo (2018) *Effects of a Rupture in Psychosexual Development: A Theoretical Case Study on Sexual Abuse*. Open Science Journal of Psychology; 5(3): 24-27 <http://www.openscienceonline.com/journal/osjp>

Hamad, K. Q. (2018). The Impact of Workforce Diversity On Knowledge Sharing: Case Of Near East University Diversity Management.

Hamanajm, S. A. (2020). Social impact of foreign drama in the kurdistan region. *Qalaai Zanist Scientific Journal*, 5(4), 125-144.

areem, K. F. (2020). Methods and preventive measures for juveniles from committing a felony from an Islamic perspective. *Qalaai Zanist Scientific Journal*, 5(4), 428-448.

Katharina Dellbrügge. (2009) Representation of Trauma and Recovery in Bryony Lavery's Play *Frozen*, Munich, GRIN Verlag, <https://www.grin.com/document/145014--retrieved-28/12/2020>

Lavery, Bryony (2007). *Frozen*. In *Plays One*. London: Faber and Faber. 95-197

McCann, D. (2017) An exploratory study of child sexual abuse in Tanzania. Doctoral thesis.

Mckinley, Jesse (2004.09.25). *Playwright Created a Psychiatrist by Plagiarizing One, Accusers Say*. The New York

Öğütçü, Üyesi Murat (2018). *Lavery's Frozen: The Psychosexual History of a Sexual Predator and the Poetics of Anti-Paedophilia*. Selçuk Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi. SEFAD, (39): 157-168.

- Priebe, G. (2009). Adolescents' Experiences of sexual abuse - Prevalence, abuse characteristics, disclosure, health and ethical aspects. Lund University: Faculty of Medicine.
- Schlesinger, Benjamin (1982). *Sexual Abuse of Children: A Resource Guide and Annotated Bibliography*. Toronto and London: U of Toronto P.
- Sabri, S. (2021). Individuals And Society in Liquid Modernity. *Qalaai Zanist Scientific Journal*, 6(3), 984-1002.
- Sedehe, K. T., T. L. Kit, and W. R. W. Yahya (2016). *Revenge and Retribution: Reli(E)Ving Trauma in Frozen by Bryony Lavery*. International Journal of Comparative Literature and Translation Studies IV (4)
- Wald, Christina (2006). "What discoveries do we bring back from that alien terrain?": *The Spatialisation of Trauma and the Exploration of the Paedophile's Mind in Bryony Lavery's Frozen.* In *Mapping Uncertain Territories: Space and Place in Contemporary Theatre and Drama: Papers Given on the Occasion of the Fourteenth Annual Conference of the German Society for Contemporary Theatre and Drama in English*. ed. Thomas Rommel et al. Trier: WVT Wissenschaftlicher Verlag. 111-126.
- Wald, Christina (2008). *Reproductions and No Original: Gender and Traumatic Memory*". In *Iterationen: Geschlecht im Kulturellen Gedchtnis*. ed. Anja Schwarz and Sabine Lucia Müller. Göttingen: Wallstein-Verlag. 171-190.

پوخته

دهستدریژیکردن دیاردهیهکی بهربلاوه له جیهان، گرینگییهکی زۆری پێ دراوه له و کاتهی بلاو بۆتهوه، بهشیویهک که چەندین لیکۆلینهوه دهبرارهی ئەم بابەتە ئەنجام دراوه و دەرکەوتوو قوربانیانی دەستی ئەم کردەوه قیزهوهنه زیاتر مندالانن، پرسیار ئەوهیه بۆچی پیاوان پەنا ئەبەنه بەر ئەنجامدانی ئەم کردەوه ناپەسەند و ناشرینه بەتایبەت بەرامبەر مندالانی پێنگەیشو. ئەم مندالانە تیکەلاو نابن لەگەل خەلکانی تر بەهۆی چەند هۆکارێک. زۆرەیان قوربانی کەسی تاوانکارن که هەرەشه له ژانیان ئەکریت، یاخود بێدەنگی هەلدەبژێرن بەهۆی ئابروچون لەناو کۆمەلگا. گرنگە لەمە بگەین دەستدریژی جەستەیی پەيوەندی بە کێشەیی(سایکۆپاتی) یهوه ههیه، ئەم نەخۆشییه پێویستی بە دکتۆری پسپۆری دەروونی ههیه بۆ پێدانی چارهسەری بەردهوام. ئەم وتارە باس له

پیشکەوتنی چاره‌سەری دەروونی ئەم نەخۆشییە ئەکات لە فرۆزن که برانی لە یقەری پیشکەشی کردووە، تیشک دەخریتە سەر چۆنییەتی پیشکەشکردنی چاره‌سەری دەروونی ئەم دیاردە ناپەسەندە. لە یقەری ھۆکارەکانی خراپی مامەلە ی جەستە ی دەخاتەرۆو، لەوانە دەستدریژی جەستەیی بۆ سەر مندال، ھۆکارەکان و پیشنیارو چاره‌سەریەکان چین، بەلام لافری پیشنیاری سزادانی تاوانبار رەتدەکاتووە، لەبری سزادان، پیشنیاری لیبوردن ئەکات لە کەسی تاوانکار بەھۆی ئەو ی نقومی ئەم ھەستە بوو و توانای خۆکۆنترۆلکردنی نییە. لەدوایدا لیبوردن باشترو پێویستترە لەبری ئەو ی بچیتە دۆخی رقلیبوونەو.

الملخص

تعتبر الاعتداء الجنسي ظاهرة شائعة في جميع أنحاء العالم. وقد مرت باهتمامات كثيرة منذ انتشارها لدرجة إنه تم إجراء عدد كبير من الدراسات حول هذا الموضوع. وتبين ان الأطفال هم أكثر ضحايا هذا العمل البغيض. والسؤال هو لماذا تلجئ الرجال الي ارتكاب هذه الجريمة النكراء خاصة ضد القاصرات؟ كما ان هؤلاء الأطفال لا يلتبسون أبداً مع الاشخاص الاخرين بسبب بعض العوامل: معظمهم دائماً ضحايا من قبل الجاني - لطالما تعرضت حياتهم للتهديد، في حين أن بعضهم يخاف من وصم المجتمع. لكن من الضروري أن نفهم أن فعل الاعتداء الجنسي مرتبط أيضاً بمشكلة السيكوباتية. تتطلب مشكلة السيكوباتية هذه الاستعانة بطبيب نفسي مختص لتقديم حل دائم. لذلك، تتناول هذه المقالة التطور النفسي الجنسي في The Frozen كما قدمه Bryony Lavery؛ ويتم التركيز على كيفية تقديمها لحل لهذه المشكلة البشعة. يعرض Lavery اسباب سلوك الجنسي السيء منها الاعتداء الجنسي على الأطفال ويقترح حلول لذلك، لكن Lavery رفضت اقتراح عقاب الجاني، وبدلاً من ذلك، اقترحت أنه يجب أن يُسمح لأنه هو غارق في المشاعر التي ليس لديه القدرة للسيطرة عليها - وبالتالي فإن التسامح مطلوب بدلاً من أن يتجمد في الكراهية.