

The Application of Lacan's Mirror Theory to Long Day's Journey into the Night

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Abstract: *Long Day's Journey into The Night* is called Eugene O'Neill's autobiographical drama. It is a day at James Tyrone's house and happens between the front and back of living room. At the heart of the story is his wife Mary Tyrone's drug addiction and his son Edmund Tyrone's illness. From the first to the last act, the fog grows thicker and thicker, and the family atmosphere changes from relaxed and hopeful to heavy, disappointed and suspicious. They deny, scold and repent each other. At last Mary falls into a fantasy world brought by drugs; Tyrone, Jamie and Edmund immerse themselves in alcohol. The future of the family is hazy. This paper mainly uses mirror theory to analyse the image of the other in the subject construction, especially in the relationship among four characters: Mary and Tyrone, Mary and Edmund, Tyrone and Jamie and Jamie and Edmund. So it arouses people's thoughts the relationship of self and the other.

1. Introduction

As a psychoanalyst and structuralist scholar in France, Jaques Lacan has reinterpreted George Floyd's theory from linguistics and put forward two important theories: three orders and mirror phase and some important concepts such as: the big other, the little other and gaze etc. The mirror theory refers to children between 6-18 months. He divided the mirror theory into three stages. In the first stage, a child can only identify the various parts of the body, he or she does not know who the parts of the mirror are, and he or she thinks that is the real thing in the mirror. In the second stage, the child thinks that it is another one's image. In the third stage, the child understands that the image in the mirror is his or her own, which signifies that the construction of the subject in mis-identification is completed. This is an image that contains the little other (parents, friends and other families), not the real self. The mirror stage is not limited to children between 6-18 months, since it is a life-long stage. Everyone constructs the subject self through the others[3]. After entering the symbolism order, the self-construction of perfect image in the mirror stage is broken down and an attempt is made to reconstruct it.

2. Tyrone was Mary's own identity

Mary was born in a family where her father spoiled her and her mother was a devout Catholic. This had an impact on the construction of her subject. In addition, as can be seen from the first act, Mary in

her youth had a pair of beautiful hands, long hair and dark brown eyes and she was well-rounded, talented and pious. Therefore, the image of this perfect girl was deeply rooted in her mind. This is Mary's ideal self before she got married. When she met Tyrone backstage, she fell in love with him. "he had remarkably good looking - a big, finely shaped head, a handsome profile, deep-set light-brown eyes." [1] and he was also a talent actor. Therefore, Mary was deeply attracted by him. This is actually Mary's narcissistic knot. It is the affirmation of self-identity. But after Mary got married, the ideal self of the mirror phase disappeared. Rheumatism in her hands, protruding white hair and dark eyes all made her lose the confidence of the perfect image in the mirror stage. Therefore, she was sensitive every time her hand was exposed, the hair was always combed neatly and had been looking for glasses to cover her eyes. As for Tyrone, "His grey hair is thin with a bald spot like a monk's tonsure." [2] and his clothes were scruffy. These imperfect images were unacceptable to Mary, so she was in a struggle.

From love to hate for Tyrone. At first, she loved Tyrone very much, even though she had been living with Tyrone without a fixed place. But since her second son Eugene was dead, it had been changed. She was in great pain and began to blame Tyrone. Actually, she reproached herself. Mary because of relying on Tyrone, lost herself. Tyrone didn't satisfy Mary's need for love. So she fell into a deep sense of inferiority. What she wanted was a stable home, but Tyrone stayed in a hotel all day; what she wanted was Tyrone's company, but Tyrone always went to philandering and threw herself alone in the hotel; what she wanted to communicate with friends, but her friends stayed away from her since she married Tyrone. So she had a strong sense of loneliness and gradually lost herself in this love. She began doubt herself. Therefore, her love for Tyrone gradually turned into hate, that is, her confidence for herself turned into doubt.

It can be seen that the image of Tyrone after marriage had a great influence on the reconstruction of Mary.

Mary didn't want to enter the world of the symbolism order (marriage), and even if she did, she kept running away and tried to return to the baby's state. And once into the symbolic world, the rich, complete self-image that the subject created through the mirror disappeared. But the subject constantly wanted to relive the illusion of her childhood in his dreams - the perfect self-image. In fact, it was because women's bodies characterized by "deprivation" evoked fear and anxiety about "castration" [5], she chose to leave the bird's nest of fear in search of their freedom. When Mary imposed fear on men, they also bore the corresponding consequences of the loss of subject. When the old perfect image had been shattered, but the new one had not yet been established, Mary was always indulging in the fantasied past. Therefore, she was always dissatisfied with the real world. Mary's love for Tyrone turned into hate. In fact, it was the hatred of losing herself [4].

3. Edmund was another Mary herself

Mary's over-concern for Edmund was also her desire to make up for her own sacrifice for the family - a sick self. She wanted to find herself through Edmund, but it could not be achieved. Firstly, Mary cared about Edmund's health and wanted him to recover. Actually, she wanted to get rid of her addiction and get back to normal as soon as possible. When Jamie and Tyrone suspected Mary of relapsing, only Edmund still had confidence in her. It was also an expression of Mary's determination to quit drugs. But when Edmund did show a little doubt, Mary broke down and she said; "If it's true, it's what you deserve." [1] So it was self-doubt that put Mary in a desperate position. Secondly, When Edmund was born, Mary was given morphine by Dr. Hardy to relieve pains, so Edmund grew up in a family where his mother was a drug addict. Escaping is the eternal subject of his character, so he picked up the books at home or went sailing. it was the same as Mary's state of mind. When Mary returned home from detox, the gaze and distrust of her family made her want to escape. Thirdly, Mary transferred her ideals to the child-Edmund. It was indicated in Edmund's attitude towards his father.

He thought his father Tyrone was largely responsible for his mother Mary's current state. In the last scene, while drinking with his father, he accused his father of not giving Mary active help and timely treatment in the early days of her morphine addiction, and letting Mary run around with him but leaving her alone. He said what Mary wanted to say.

4. Jamie was another rebel Tyrone

First of all, Jamie and Tyrone's appearance and behavior were similar and they were the eldest sons of their families, both of whom were pinned to hope. Tyrone had already taken on the burden of the family when he was ten years old because Tyrone's father had left his wife and children to commit suicide. But he ruined his dream in order to earn a large sum of money. So he produced an instinctive aversion to making money, and it was reflected in Jamie. Who was an dawdler. Secondly, James's love for his mother. In Jamie's view, the father and mother gave love to Edmund, so he was full of jealousy. He wanted to gain his mother's love by having sex with her. When Jamie's own desires were not satisfied, he vented them on the fat girls. (his mother is also fat). Tyrone was just like him. He was also like an ungrown-up child who needed Mary's love, but since Mary give birth to Edmund, Mary poured all her love into her son. Beyond that, Mary took more morphine, so he had no sense of belonging, and always said that it was not like a home. Thirdly, Jamie's hatred of Edmund was also Jamie's hatred of himself and Tyrone. Jamie told Edmund: "I hate myself. Got to take revenge. On everyone else. Especially you." [1] When Edmund's illness was very serious, Tyrone ignored the objections of his family and still wanted to sent him to the public hospital. On the way to take Edmond to go to see the doctor Hardy, he changed the past stingy behavior, and gave Edmund a large sum of money. In his opinion, Edmund would not live long. It was shown by Jamie. He told Edmund: "He can save money if you die." Tyrone always wanted to be respected by the children, but the children didn't understand him and even were against him. It was also Tyrone's dislike of himself. His meanness caused resentment in the family, but he never admitted it and always found other excuses. This aversion to himself was suppressed unconsciously, and ultimately manifested through Jamie [4].

5. Jamie and Edmund's complicated relationship

Jimmy's relationship with Edmund went beyond his brother's. As Jamie said: "We've been more than brothers. You're the only pal I've ever had. I love your guts. I'd do anything for you." [2] Jamie and Edmund's relationship presented a father-son relationship, because Jamie himself was Tyrone. Tyrone said it was Jamie who took Edmund out and taught him to drink. In fact, when Edmund was young, he comforted him with alcohol when he was afraid of being woken up. Actually, this was Tyrone's reflection on Edmund. In addition, Edmund's attitude towards Jamie was similar to his father's. Although he understood Jamie had many faults, for example, he was rude to his father, always doubted his mother and thought things as bad, he (Edmund) always couldn't help but like him. Even when mom and dad scolded Jamie, Edmund would protect him. Edmund felt the same way about his father. Jamie was like Edmund's another father. Jamie said: "You reflect credit on me. I've had more to do with bringing you up than anyone." [1] Jamie's love for Edmund and Edmund's adoration for Jamie was like a father's relationship with his son. The other one, Jimmy's relationship with Edmund was like marriage bonds. For example, Jamie's good intensions for Edmund. "You know me, I've never told you anything, but Dr. Hardy is right to tell you to quit drinking." This was the same as Tyrone's attempt to exhort his wife. Tyrone begged Mary to stay away from drugs for the sake of their children and the family. Besides, Edmund was Mary's another self. His admiration for Jamie was similar to Mary's worship for Tyrone. This was also an important reason why Mary lost herself. Edmund resisted Jamie because he always offended Mary. This forced Edmund to give him two punches, which was also Mary's revolt to Tyrone.

This family members tried to construct themselves by gazing at each other, which was interwoven by love and hate. In fact, it was the love and hate of their own, because the self always contains the image of the other. In this drama, the other three men were all centered on Mary's identity, but Mary was unable to unite the family. At last, they had not completed the construction of self-identity. The most typical was Mary's last re-establishment of identity.

In the third act, she wanted to reestablish self-identity by rediscovering her faith, so she prayed to the Blessed Virgin. But another voice said: "You expect the Blessed Virgin to be fooled by a lying dope fiend reciting words! You can't hide from her!"[1] So she gave in and wanted to go back to the illusion of drugs. She could not stand the disillusionment. Therefore, she always wanted to take too much morphine and thus fully integrated with the big other-the Virgin Maria in real order, but her religious belief would not allow her to do so.

6. Conclusion

Even though Mary did not finish her identity construction, she was always looking for a way out. The dependence and suspicion of the three men in her family was a kind of oppression to her identity construction. The gaze to Mary continued to erode her until she did not know who she was and could not tell the self and the other, so she wanted to get rid of them. However, it was impossible, so she fell into great pain and nothingness. And so do other people. Therefore, the subject construction involves the illusion of the others, and men always present himself in the image of the other.

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