

Psychology of Sex : Its Application In Henry Fielding's Tom Jones

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Abstract

The two factors which shape the personality of every person and so of writer also are heredity and environment. It is the point to notice, since we all have similar beginning, what makes us all so different as we grow older. Apart from heredity and environment instincts and emotions also influence our actions.

Among all instincts sex instinct plays a vital role in every youths life. In this paper I will make a study of Henry fielding's Tom Jones as sex its basis to control and guide character's actions. The factors which contribute to sexual appeal would also be elaborated in the paper with a study of well know pshychologists. Sensual appeal for sex can be visual, aural tactual and even olfactory. Sphia is able to conquer the heart of poor Jones with the harmony of her voice. Tactile sense is also involved in developing their relationship though not directly . There also is a study of feminine propensity to masculine quality. When there is any discussion about bodily love, suspicion or jealousy essentially are to be included. Lady Bellaston is jealous even at the mention of the name of Sophia b Tom. Suspicion of Mrs. Partridge works so strongly upon her that she roars to her husband.

Keyword : Henry fielding, Tom Jones, Psychological approach, Instincts, Sexual instincts.

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Sex plays an important part in life. Sigmund Freud refers to 'the importance of child's semi-consciousness of sex as a factor in mental development'. Sex has a dominant role in adolescence and youth. A psychological analysis of sex in Fielding's Tom Jones will be richly rewarding.

According to Havelock Ellis, the factors which operate in the attraction of sexes are – (i) sensual appeal, (ii) feminine propensity to masculine qualities and

(iii) masculine delight in domination and feminine delight in submission to masculine strength. Extra-sensual factors such as compatibility of tastes, outlook and other traits also come into play in the attraction of the sexes. Sexual love has some concomitants also such as suspicion and jealousy. There is impulsiveness in sexual attraction during adolescence. There is maturity in adulthood.

Sensual appeal for sex can be visual, aural, tactual and even olfactory. Of these the visual appeal is dominant.

Visual appeal; Havelock Ellis says "It is not surprising... that from the point of view of sexual selection vision should be the supreme sense". He observes that "in nearly all the most elaborate descriptions of attractive individuals it is the visible elements that are in most cases chiefly emphasized". Fielding also emphasizes such elements. Mrs. Waters consciously attracts Tom by displaying her visual beauty –

"First having planted her right
eyes side ways against Mr. Jones, she
shot from its corner a most penetrating
glance; which, tho' great part of its
force was spent before it reached our
hero, did not vent itself absolutely
without effect.

X X X X X

And now, gently lifting up these
two bright orbs which had already begun
to make an impression on poor Jones,
she discharged a volley of small charms...
at once from her whole countenance in a

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smile, Not a smile of mirth, nor of joy; but a smile of affection, which most ladies have always ready at their command, and which serves them to show at once their good humour, their pretty dimples and their white teeth.(Page 456)

No less captivating is the visual appeal of Sophia :

“Sophia then, the only daughter of Mr. Western, was a middle- sized women; but rather inclining to tall. Her shape was not only exact, but extremely delicate; and the nice proportion of her arms promised the truest symmetry in her limbs. Her hair which was black was so luxuriant, that it reached her middle,... Her eye-brows were full, even, and arched beyond the power of art to imitate. Her black eyes had a luster in them, which all her softness could not extinguish. Her nose was exact, regular, and her mouth in which was... (had) two rows of ivory... Her cheeks were of oval kind; and in her right she had a dimple which the least smile discovered ... Her complexion had rather more of lilly than of rose: but when exercise, or modesty, increased her natural colour, no vermilion could equal it. (Page 155)

With all the above-mentioned visual features, “her beautyseemed to demand” “higher respect (from Tom) than he paid to any other”.

Aural appeal :

Aural appeal also contributes a good deal to sexual attraction. Havelock Ellis says “... as a matter of fact, I believe that we may attach a considerable degree of importance to the voice and music generally as method of sexual appeal. On this point I agree with Hall who remarks that the sense of hearing here plays a considerable part and the stimulation received through the ears is much larger than is usually believed”.

In Tom Jones Sophia with “the harmony of her voice” is able to conquer and enslave the heart of poor Jones “to no small extent” There is aural appeal to Tom even in the soft and sweet and tender sigh of Mrs. Waters. She heaves a “sigh which none could have heard unmoved, and which was sufficient at once to have swept off a dozen beaus, so soft, so sweet, so tender, that the insinuating air must have found its subtle way to the heart of our heroine.....”

Along with Tom’s look, his voice also has a tenderness which makes Sophia

desist from withdrawing her hand from him. “Both his voice and look were full of inexpressible tenderness when he spoke these words and at the same time he laid gently hold on her hand, which she did not withdraw from him”.(Tom Jones. P. 197.)

There is one more instance of aural appeal. Though the aural appeal to Tom Jones in this instance, is not created directly by the voice of Sophia, yet it is associated with Sophia. Sophia is playing on harpsicord whose sound creates in Tom a melancholy, born of wistfulness and attraction, Mrs. Honour conveys this to Sophia “... one day as your ladyship was playing on harpsicord to my master, Mr. Jones was sitting in the next room, and me thought he looked melancholy”. “La” says I, “Mr. Jones, What’s the matter? A penny for your thoughts”, say I: “why hussy,” says he, starting up from a dream, “what can I be thinking of then that angel your mistress is playing?” And then squeezing me by the hand – “Oh: Mrs. Honour”, says he “how happy will that man be; “ (who marries Sophia)”.

Tactile sensations :

Not a little of the pleasure of kisses and other amorous activities in **Tom Jones** flows from tactile sensations involved in them, Sophia experiences a thrill as she is kissed by Tom Jones :

He then snatched her hand, and eagerly kissed it, which was the first time his lips had ever touched her. The blood which before had forsaken her cheeks, now made her sufficient amends, by rushing all over her face and neck with such violence that they become all of a scarlet colour. She now first felt a sensation to which she had been before a stranger, and which, when she had leisure to reflect on it, began to acquaint her with some secrets, which the reader, if he does not already guess them, will know in due time. (Page 165)

There is one more instance of tactual appeal. Although Sophia’s appeal to Tom Jones in this instance is not direct and not the result of Sophia and Tom already touching each other, the tactile sense is involved in this instance, though indirectly and remotely. A muffler which has been worn by Sophia and has, in the process experienced the constant touch of her skin is found by Tom who wraps it around his hand, and thereby enjoys its touch, imaginatively experiencing the touch of Sophia herself as it were.

Feminine propensity to masculine quality :

Havelock Ellis observes that “most women are in some degree emotionally affected by strength and courage”. According to him, “women admire man’s strength rather than his beauty. The maiden.... who has to choose between Adonais and Hercules will turn to Hercules”. Sophia is also attracted by Tom’s manliness and

courage, When her horse turns unruly in course of hunting, Tom Jones leaps down from his own horse and catches hold of hers. He holds her in his arms as she is falling. He breaks his arm in the process. Sophia is attracted to him :

On the second day of her hunting as she was returning from the chase, and was arrived within a little distance, from Mr. Western's house, her horse, whose mettlesome spirit required a better rider, fell suddenly to prancing and capering, in such a manner, that she was in the most eminent peril of falling. Tom Jones who was at a little distance behind, saw this, and immediately galloped up to her assistance. As soon as he came up, he immediately leaped from his own horse, and caught hold of here by the bridle. The unruly beast presently reared himself on his hind legs, and threw this lovely burthen from his back, and Jones caught her in his arms.

She was so affected with the fright that she was not immediately able to satisfy Jones, who was very solicitous to know whether she had received any hurt. She soon after, however, recovered her spirits, assured him she was safe, and thanked him for the care he had taken of her. Jones answered, "If I have preserved you, madam, I am sufficiently repaid for I promise you, I would have secured you from the least harm, at the expense of a much greater misfortune to myself, than I have suffered on this occasion".

'What misfortune', replied Sophia eagerly 'I hope you have come to no mischief?'

'Be not concerned ,madam', answered Jones, 'Heaven be praised, you have escaped so well, considering the danger you was in. If I have broke my arm. I consider it as a trifle, in comparison to what I feared upon your account'.

Sophia then screamed out, 'Broke your arm, Heaven forbid, ' I am afraid I have, madam; says Jones, ' but I beg you will suffer me first to take care of you. I have a right hand yet at your service, to keep you into the next field, where we have but a very little walk to your father's house'.

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Sophia, seeing his arm dangling by his side, while he was using the other to lead her, no longer doubted of the truth. She now grew much paler than her fears for herself had made her before. All her limbs were seized with a trembling, in so much that Jones could scarce support her; and as her thoughts were in no less agitation, she could not refrain from giving Jones a look so full of tenderness, that it almost argued a stronger sensation in her mind, than even gratitude and pity united can raise in the gentlest female bosom, without the assistance of a third more powerful passion. (P.191-192)

Adolescence :

Abraham Sperling says, "Adolescence officially ends at twenty one, by which age a man is supposed to have fully matured". Quoting Aristotle on adolescence, John Janeway Conger, Professor of Clinical Psychology in the University of Colorado, says "... it is easy to recognize some contemporary views in those irritably thrown out by Aristotle 23 centuries ago : the young, he said, 'are passionate, irascible and apt to be carried away by their impulses, especially sexual impulses, in regard to which they exercise no self -restraint".

Sophia is 18. She is adolescent. Impulsiveness, a characteristic of adolescence, is observed in her love for Tom Jones. She speaks to Mrs. Western, of the quality of Tom Jones in superlative terms :

'Nay, I'll own; says Sophia, "I know none with such perfections. So brave and yet so gentle; so witty, yet so inoffensive, so humane, so civil, so genteel, so handsome, What signifies his being base born, when compared with such qualifications as these?

x x x x

Whatever were my thoughts of that poor unhappy young man, I intended to have carried them with me to my grave – to that grave where now I find, I am only to seek repose'.(P. 267)

No less impulsive is the letter of Tom Jones to Sophia when Tom has heard of Sophia's miserable condition in her father's house from Mrs. Honour :

Was not I sensible to whom I have the honour of writing, I should endeavour, however, difficult to paint the horrors of my mind, at the account brought me by Mrs. Honour : but as

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tenderness alone can have any true idea of pangs which tenderness is capable of feeling; so can this most amiable quality which my Sophia possesses in the most eminent degree, sufficiently inform her what her Jones must have suffered on this melancholy occasion..... Can the most perfect admiration, the most watchful observant, the most ardent love, the most melting tenderness, the most resigned submission to your will, make you amend for what you are to sacrifice to my happiness? If they can fly, my lovely angel, to those arms which are ever open to receive and protect you; and to which, whether you bring yourself alone, or the riches of the world with you, is, in my opinion, an alternative not worth regarding. (P.749)

The adolescents are changeful too and fickle in their desires which are as transitory as they are vehement "... If the young commit a fault it is always on the side of excess and exaggerationThey carry everything too far whether it be their love or hatred or anything else" This characteristic is observed in Molly and Tom in their sexual attachments. Molly is sixteen. She gets sexually attached to Tom, to Mr. Square and to will Barnes :

.... She grew towards the age of sixteen, when Tom, who was near three years older, began first to cast the eyes of affection upon her.

x x x x x

..... So little had she of modesty that Jones had more regard for her virtue than she herself. And most probably she liked Tom as well as he liked her, so when she perceived his backwardness, she herself grew proportionably forward; and when she saw he had entirely deserted the house, she found means of throwing herself in his way, and behaved in such a manner that the youth must have had very much, or very little of the hero, if her endeavours had proved unsuccessful. In a word she soon triumphed over all the virtuous resolutions of Jones: for though she behaved at last with all decent reluctance, yet I rather choose to attribute the triumph to her, since, in fact, it was her design which succeeded.(P. 169-170)

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Mr. Western grew every day fonder and fonder of Sophia, in so much that his beloved dogs themselves almost gave place to her in his affections; but as he could not prevail on himself to adonon these, he contrived very cunningly to enjoy their company, together with that of his daughter, by insisting on her riding a hunting with him.

Sophia to whom her father's word was a law, readily complied with his desires, though she had not the least delight in a sport, which was of too rough and masculine a nature to suit with her disposition. She had, however, another motive, besides her obedience, to accompany the old gentleman in chase; for by her presence she hoped in some measure to restrain his impetuosity, and to prevent him from so frequently, exposing his neck to the utmost hazard. (P. 191)

Since Sophia is a girl and as illustrated above, she has been under the affectionate authority of her father. Love for Tom in her heart has priority over sex. While her lover Tom has sex with Molly, more than once, and later on with Mrs. Waters, Sophia does not indulge with any one. She continues to have the ardour of love for Tom althrough. For the sake of Tom, she leaves her own house, undertakes a journey in search of him and going after him, reaches London despite all the risks of journey. So sincere is her love that she marries him despite all his sexual misadventures.

Sophia cannot have sexual freedom because she is tied down to her affectionate father on account of the circumstances of the family and her father's fondness for her. This is clear from the following account of her father's insistence upon her to accompany him for hunting and Sophia's compliance with the insistence:

Nancy also has been under the control of a mother who does not believe in freedom for girls. When Mr. Nightingale offers to give tickets to Nancy and her mother, the mother does not accept the tickets, saying that she does not like women and girls to attend such functions as may bring them bad name.

Again since Nancy is a girl and has enjoyed no sexual freedom, her love for Nightingale is sincere, so sincere that she even swoons twice after receiving Nightingale's letter to the effect that his father wants him to pay his addresses to another young lady of fortune.

Molly has enjoyed a great deal of sexual freedom. There is an atmosphere of such freedom in her family. Her eldest sister and mother point this out to her.

Nymphomania :

Set in contrast with frigidity in women, nymphomania is explained by Munn as follows : “Frigidity (in women) and importance (in men) represent this low tide in sexual drive. At the other extremes are nymphomania (in women) satyriasis (in men). Individuals thus affected, because of excessive social stimulation involving sex, have an unusually strong sex drive” Joseph Stole and Joseph Church also speak of the unusually strong sex drive in some girls. According to them, “some girls experience desire in much the same way the boys do, and few are avid for constant experience to the point of nymphomania:.

Such an unusually strong sex drive is seen in Molly, in Mrs. Hunt, and Lady Belloston, Mrs. Hunt lives painfully ... in a state of great self denial with her husband, she wants to please herself in her second husband as she has been pleasing her friends in her first husband.

With him she lived without reproach, but not without pain, in a state of great self-denial, for about twelve years; and her virtue was rewarded by his dying....

x x x x

She resolved to please herself in her second husband as she had done her friends. (P.733)

Unusually strong sex desire is observed in the behaviour of Mrs. Waters also, She already has had sexual relations with more than one person. Even then she casts amorous glances at Tom Jones. Her nymphomaniac tendency is brought into light by the Sergeant :

She was the wife of Mr. Waters, who was a captain in their regiment, and had often been with him at quarters. ‘Some Folks’, says he, ‘used indeed to doubt whether they were lawfully married in a church or no... Northerton and she were very well acquainted together, at our last quarters, that is the very right and truth of the matter, But the Captain he knows nothing about it: and as long as there is enough for him too, what does it signify?.(P.457)

x x x x x

... Mrs. Waters had, in truth, not only a good opinion of our hero but a very great affection for him. To speak out boldly at once, she was in love according to the present universally reserved sense of that phrase, by which love is applied

indiscriminately to the desirable object of all our passions, appetites and senses, and is understood to be that preference which we give to one kind of food rather than to another?.(P. 454)

The part played by Mrs. Waters clearly indicates that she can not resist the temptation of sexual intercourse with a young charming youth. She uses all the womanly weapons in order to satisfy her unusually strong sex drive.

Lady Bellaston is a still greater nymphomaniac. She is extremely 'haughty and amorous'. She is in the habit of inviting every young man she comes in contact with, to come to her room all alone, in the late hours of the night, at least for four hours. So does she invite Tom Jones, but a little hindrance in her way is Sophia, the sweetheart of young Tom. Lady Bellaston comes before Tom very disordered in her dress' and 'very discomposed in her looks'. Her tendency to run after men is clear from the account given by Mrs. Miller to Tom, and by her reply to Tom's letter. Here is Mrs. Miller's account of her in the first quotation and her (lady Bellaston's) reply to Tom in the second one :

.... But I am sure no women of virtue, unless a very near relation indeed, would visit a young gentleman at ten at night, and stay four hours in her room with him alone: besides, Sir, the behaviour of her chairman shews what she was; for they did nothing but make jests all the evening in the entry, and asked Mr. Partridge in the hearing of my own maid, if madam intended to stay with his master all night; with a great deal of stuff not proper to be repeated.

I was never more surprised than when I found you was gone. When you left the room, I little imagined you intended to have left the house without seeing me again, your behaviour is all of a piece and convinces me how much I ought to despise a heart which can dote upon an idiot (Sophia) (P. 658)

Tom, entrapped by Lady Bellaston, puts his problem before Mr. Nightingale. Tom says to Nightingale, "I am so entangled with this woman that I know not how to extricate myself". Mr. Nightingale suggests to Tom that he should propose marriage to her. Butterfly as she is, she will refuse the marriage., She may find it difficult to satisfy her 'unusually strong' sex urge by marriage. This is clear from the quotation below – the first quotation containing Mr. Nightingale's suggestion :

I have it, my boy; I have found out a sure method: propose marriage to her, and I would venture hanging upon success... And she will declare off in a

moment. I knew a young fellow whom she kept formerly, who made the offer to her in earnest, and was presently turned off for his pains' ..

Extra-sexual factors :

In the mutual attraction of the sexes, the sexual and extra- sexual factors are inextricably linked up. Havelock Ellis says, "Practically so far as man and his immediate ancestors are concerned, the sexual and extra-sexual factors of beauty have been interwoven from the first".

Tom Jones is passionately in love with Sophia Western but there are some extra-sexual factors which help a lot in bringing the two lovers closer together. His indulgence with Molly also has several extra-sexual factors behind it. Of the two quotations given below, the first presents the extra-sexual factors in the attachment of Tom to Sophia and the second highlights the extra-sexual factors in Tom's early passion for Molly :

He was truly sensible of the great worth of Sophia. He extremely liked her person, no less admired her accomplishments, and tenderly loved her goodness. (P. 207)

Her beauty was still the object of desire, though greater beauty, or fresher object, might have been more so; but the little abatement which fruition had occasioned to this , was highly overbalanced by the consideration of the affection which she visibly bore him, and of situation into which he had brought her. The former of these created gratitude, the latter compassion; and both together with his desire for her person raised in him a passion, which might, without any great violence to the word, be called love, (P. 170)

Concomitants of sexual love: jealousy and suspicion :

Suspicion and jealousy are concomitants of sexual love in certain conditions. They are often presented as such in literature, In Great Expectations by Dickens, Miss Estalla's seeming inclination to Drummel rouses jealousy in her lover, Pip, though this jealousy does not express itself in violent action.

In Tom Jones one comes across instances of both jealousy and suspicion. Lady Bellaston is sexually attracted to Tom Jones. She finds that Tom is lost all the time in the memories of Sophia Western. First she promises him to tell him all about Sophia but she does not do so. Gradually, she starts feeling jealous even at the mention of the name of Sophia. She begins "to treat even the mention of the name of Sophia with resentment:. So strong is her jealousy for Sophia that she plans to defame Sophia by trying to get her chastity violated by Lord Fellamar and without

giving any prior information to Sophia when Sophia is all alone in her room :

The next evening at seven was appointed for fatal purpose, when Lady Bellaston undertook that Sophia should be alone, and his lordship (Lord Fellamar) should be introduced to her. The whole family were regulated for the purpose, most of the servants dispatched out of the house: and for Mrs. Honour, who, to prevent suspicion was to be left with her mistress till his lordship's arrival. Lady Bellaston herself was to engage her in an apartment as distant as possible from the scene of the intended mischief, and out of the hearing of Sophia.(P. 702)

Suspicious also arise in sexual and matrimonial relations, Mr. Partridge, a pedagogue, has got in his house a maid servant named Jenny Jones. She is a very modest girl. Partridge in leisure hours starts teaching her (Jenny) with the permission of his wife. Thus pass four years. But one day Mrs. Partridge observes her husband just leaning over her and all of a sudden suspicion enters her mind :

... Mrs. Partridge,..... had submitted four years to her husband's teaching this young woman, and had suffered her often to neglect her work, in order to pursue her learning. For passing by one day, as the girl was reading, and her master leaning over her, the girl I know not for what reason, suddenly started up from her chair; and this was the first time that suspicion ever, entered into the head of her mistress. (P.92)

The suspicion of Mrs. Partridge works so strongly upon her that she roars to her husband, injures him and orders Jenny Jones to leave the house the same moment.

Suspicious enter the mind of the Irish gentleman Mr. Fitzpatrick also. He comes in search of his wife at Upton inn. All of a sudden he opens the door of a room at night. Tom Jones and Mrs. Waters are on the same bed. By observing so many articles of women scattered all around, he suspects that his wife may be in bed with Tom. He goes closer to bed :

The gentleman at first thought he had committed a mistake, and was going to ask pardon and retreat, when, on a sudden, as the moon shone very bright, he cast his eyes on stays, gowns, petticoats, caps, ribbons, stockings, garters, shoes, clogs etc. all which lay in a disordered manner on the floor. All these operating on the natural jealousy

of his temper, so enraged him, that he lost all power of speech and without returning any answer to Jones, he endeavoured to approach the bed.

Fitzpatrick now perceiving, as well by the glimpse he had of the lady, as by her voice, which might have been distinguished at a greater distance than he now stood from her, that he had made a very unfortunate mistake, began to ask many pardons of the lady.... . (P. 472)

To sum up, visual, aural and tactile appeal appears as a factor in sexual attraction in Tom Jones. Feminine propensity to masculine quality is also observed as playing a part in such attraction. Several characters in love are in their period of adolescence. Symptoms of adolescence are clearly perceptible in them. Sexual abnormality called nymphomania is also a trait of some characters. Extra-sexual factors have a role in mutual sexual attraction. The concomitants of love such as jealousy and suspicion are also observed.

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