

DRUG ABUSER PERSONALITY REFLECTED IN BEV'S CHARACTER IN HOWARD'S MOVIE *HILLBILLY ELEGY* (2020)

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Abstract

This study is aimed to analyze Drug Abuser Personality Reflected In Bev's Character In Howard's Movie "Hillbilly Elegy (2020)". There are two problem statements in this research. The first is how is the personality of Bev before using drugs in Howard's movie? and second is how the personality of Bev after using drugs in Howard's movie "Hillbilly Elegy". The study uses descriptive qualitative method to analyzed the film entitle "Hillbilly Elegy" directed by Howard as the objective of the research. The method of collecting data includes watching and reading, identifying, classifying, and selecting. The method of analyzing the data by displaying, explaining, and interpreting. The data analyzed by using Abnormal psychology and Sigmund Freud Psychoanalysis. The results of the study shows that Hillbilly Elegy gives new hope that people with mental disability can live like other normal people after get addicted to drugs, there are two points from the result (1) Bev's psychological condition before using drugs as reflected in Howard's Hillbilly Elegy. (2) Bev's psychological condition after using drugs as reflected in Howard's Hillbilly Elegy such as generalized stress disorder anxiety disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Keywords: *Drugs, Abnormal Psychology, Psychoanalysis*

Introduction

Movie is a medium that disseminates moving pictures, that is the series of images projected on a screen in order to create the illusion motion of the living. Movie is one of important part of human life because nowadays, movie becomes one of sources of entertainment, education, and knowledge. As the popular entertainment, it can make people dissolving themselves in a world of imagination for a certain time and the one important parts of movie is communication that means dialogue.

Movie is one of kind literature. Sir John Pollock (1958) says, "A play as a work of art composed of work spoken or motion performed by imagined characters and having a subject, action, development, climax and conclusion". Languages are more than systems of thought transference. They are invisible garments that drape themselves about our spirit and give a predetermined form to all its

symbolic expression. When the expression is of unusual significance, its called literature. (Sapir, 1921:221). In this study, the researcher wants to explain the literature, in this movie. By applying Freud's theory as a basic of analysis, describing the changes of Bev's personality before and after using drugs, the personality of Bev as a character that will be analyzed in *Hillbilly Elegy* (2020) movie, could be presented clearly in this thesis.

Literary Review

Psychology of Literature

Psychology and literature are the studies of humans, but they have different objects of concern. Psychology deals with real life situations and literature deals with imaginary people. "What is meant by literary psychology, we mean the study of the psychology of the writer, as a type and as an individual of the study of creative compositions, or the study of the types and psychological laws that exist in literary works or ultimately influence the literature on the reader (audience)" (Wellek and Warren, 1956: 81). Psychology can enter literature by studying author psychology, character psychology, and also the psychology of readers. Psychology can enter into literature because the author uses his feelings and emotions in creating works like what happens in film.

Freud's Psychoanalysis

Sigmund Freud introduced a three-part structural model during the 1920s. This division of the mind into three provinces does not replace the topographical model, but helps to explain the mental picture according to its function or purpose. The most primitive parts of the mind are the id, self-image, and superego. These provinces of course have no territorial existence, but are just hypothetical constructs. They interact with the three levels of mental life so that the conscience crosses the various topographical levels and has conscious, preconscious and unconscious components, whereas the superego is both subconscious and unconscious and the id completely unconscious (Norton, 1965).

Personality

Personality can be defined as a long-lasting collection of unique characteristics that can change in different situations. Differences in gender, ethnicity, and cultural background can influence personality development and the results of personality assessment tests. Research in cross-cultural psychology shows how personality can vary from one culture or country to another.

Mental Condition of Drug Abuser

1. Anxiety Disorders

Anxiety is a state of understanding or worry that complains that something bad will happen soon (Nevid, 2005). There are many things to worry about, for

example health, social relations, exams, career, environmental conditions and so on. It is typical, even adaptive, to be a little anxious about these aspects of life. Anxiety is useful when it encourages regular medical examinations or motivates study ahead of the exam. Anxiety is an appropriate response to a threat, but anxiety can be unusual if the level does not match the proportion of the threat, or seems to come without a cause that is, if it is not a response to environmental changes (Nevid, 2005).

2. Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)

GAD (generalized anxiety disorder) which is an anxiety disorder characterized by a general feeling of anxiety and that something bad will happen and a state of increased arousal. GAD is marked with persistent anxiety that is not triggered by an object, a situation or a specific activity, but rather a so-called Freud with "free floating". GAD is a stable disorder, appearing in mid-teens to mid-twenties and then lasts throughout life (Rapee in Nevid, 2005). This disorder occurs twice as often in women compared to men (APA in Nevid, 2005).

3. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Post-traumatic stress disorder (post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)) is an ongoing maladaptive reaction to a traumatic experience. ASD (Acute Stress Disorder) is a major risk factor for PTSD as many people with ASD are likely to develop PTSD (Harvey & Bryant in Nevid, 2005). In contrast to ASD, PTSD may last months, years, or decades and possibly only appear after several months or years after existence exposure to a traumatic event (Zlotnic in Nevid, 2005).

Methods

Methodology used is in the form descriptive and qualitative research in order to examine the problem. In the other words, finding and exploring the representation, meaning, or the enhancement of shared pattern of behavior over the time are the focus of descriptive qualitative research. Descriptive qualitative research tends to apply words rather than numbers. By that, the researcher uses data that is in form of text.

The object of the research is film entitled *Hillbilly Elegy*. The researcher focus on word and sentences of subtitle in the movie. The data are downloaded from www.netflix.com. The researcher describe the data in her own language. Qualitative research data can be collected from documents.

Findings and Discussions

Hillbilly Elegy tells about Beverly Vance and her struggles with addiction. Formerly she was salutatorian of her high school class but later had to postpone a Bachelor's degree at the age of 19 when her daughter, Lindsay, was born. She later had J.D. and when they were young she grappled with the perils of substance abuse, which affected her relationships with both her family and potential partners. She became dependent on prescription pain medication when her father

passed away, but later began using heroin. When J.D. was at Yale she overdosed on the drug. She also worked as a nurse but was fired after rollerblading through the halls while on drugs.

The personality of Bev before using drugs

Before using drugs, Bev was very obedient child and loved her parents so much. Besides that, she also really cares for her family. Some of the evidence below is how personality of Bev that shows a caring attitude to her father and sister before using drugs

Mamaw : Beverly, hide your sister in the closet! Go on!
Papaw : Shut up!
Mamaw : What kinda man are you? You come home drunk one more time, I'm gonna light your ass on fire!
Papaw : I'll come home whenever I goddamn please!
Mamaw : Get out, your drunk asshole! [groans]
Papaw : Shut your mouth! See what happens!
Mamaw : Stop! Stop it! Get out! You goddamn son of a bitch. You're lying there in your own piss! I told you what I was gonna do!
Mamaw : This is your own doing! You're no goddamn father!
[Papaw continues screaming]
[Bev run and hide her sister, Lori]
(*Hillbilly Elegy*, 2020, 01:02:48)

This was because Mamaw very angry with Papaw, "*You goddamn son of a bitch. You're lying there in your own piss! I told you what I was gonna do!*" these words happen when Mamaw lit a match then burned Papaw's body. Bev is crying when she saw Mamaw burning Papaw while hugging her sister, Lori, and after Mamaw leaves Papaw alone then Bev came out of the cupboard and immediately extinguished the fire that was burning in Papaw's body, and because of Bev's help, she has saved Papaw's life. This is shows that Bev's had a very soft heart before she is becoming a drug addict.

The personality of Bev after using drugs

According to Sujanto (1997: 11) personality is a dynamic organization in 1 individual in a psychophysical system that determines the uniqueness of adjustment to their environment.

Anxiety Disorders

Bev in *Hillbilly Elegy* experiencing anxiety disorder can be proven in the conversation between Bev, Lindsay (Bev's daughter, and Matt (Bev's boyfriend) in her yard. When Bev cuts her own hand and then leaves the house crying hysterically, and the police who are patrolling around Bev's house come over.

[sirens wailing]- [voices clamoring]
 Police 1 : We need help! Someone calls 911!
 Bev : What about me? Huh? Anybody?
 Police 2 : Ma'am, get out of the road
 Bev : Help me! You won't help me!
 Lindsay : Please help her!
 Bev : Help me! Can anyone help me?
 Matt : Calm down! Bev! Hey!
 Lindsay : You're just upset—
 Bev : No!
 Lindsay : Mom? Hey! You're just upset! We all miss him!
 Bev : Stop acting like he was your dad! He was my dad! You little
 bitch! He's my dad!
 (*Hillbilly Elegy*, 2020, 00:51:16)

In this section, Bev shows her mental illness that is anxiety disorder when she cries and hurts her own hand. This sadness has been recurring since her father, Papaw, passed away. *"What about me? Huh? Anybody?"* this quote describe that the sadness of Bev's feeling will never end. This became a very deep pressure and sadness that Bev felt, because it was her father who had understood her the most, it felt like Bev had lost everything. So, the theory of Nevid (2005) Anxiety is a state of understanding or worry that complains that something bad will happen soon, happen to Bev that anxiety or something bad will happen soon or never end.

Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)

The characteristics of GAD are seen through change in nature and deviation behavior. People with GAD are chronic anxious, perhaps they worry excessively about their life circumstances, such as finances, children's welfare, and their social relationships (APA in Nevid, 2005).

Experiencing Excessive Anxiety or Worry

Excessive anxiety or worry referred to in the first characteristic of people with GAD is an unnatural feeling of not being able to control negative feelings

Bev : Dad! Dad!
 Mamaw : Oh, my God. Call an ambulance.
 Bev : Dad?
 Mamaw : Call!
 Bev : It's too late.
 Mamaw : How do you know?
 Bev : 'Cause I'm a nurse, Mom. I know. He's dead.
 (*Hillbilly Elegy*, 2020, 00:41:41)

The quote *"Cause I'm a nurse, Mom. I know. He's dead."* is an expression of Bev's excessive anxiety as a child towards her great affection for her father, Papaw. Papaw is a male character who understands and loves his daughter, Bev. Bev felt very sad when she saw the fact that the father she loved so dearly had

died, it was because of her feelings that she loved her father so much. Excessive anxiety in people with GAD is seen through topics of conversation that focus on worries and possible future events (Davison, 2014:200) in chapter two.

Easy to Feel Tired

The second characteristic of people with GAD is that they feel tired easily. Fatigue is a condition of decreased body resistance to activities due to psychological-psychological conditions (Davison, 2014: 52).

Matt : Hey, you all right, babe?

Bev : Matt, I'm fine.

(Hillbilly Elegy, 2020, 00:43:56)

The data above is Matt's expression, Bev's boyfriend, who became the first person to find Bev in a weak state like she would be unconscious in the quote "*Hey, you all right, babe?*". Nevid (2005) stated that People with GAD are tired easily and have difficulty concentrating. In this case, Bev's want to be watching the funeral procession of her father, Papaw. Who accidentally saw her mother, Mamaw, crying and looking very sad when her husband's funeral was about to be held, seeing this Bev felt even more sad and her body looked very weak. Matt, who saw Bev about to fall, then asked Bev's condition.

Easy to Feel Angry and Offended

Feelings of irritability and irritability are the third characteristic of a person with GAD. Anger is the culmination of an individual's failure to control emotions, thus creating erratic behavior. A person can control her feelings of anger. Nevid (2005) said that People with GAD are easy to irritability.

Bev : It isn't easy, all right? Just wait till you get pregnant.

Lindsay : I'm not having a kid.

Bev : You think you're special? That's what happens to girls.

Lindsay : Only girls that are stupid.

Bev : You wanna call me stupid? Little bitch!

(Hillbilly Elegy, 2020, 00:47:34)

The data shows that Bev felt very angry and offended by Lindsay's words that "*only stupid women want to get pregnant*". It started with Bev being fired as a nurse because she was accused of using drugs, then when she got home she got a lot of questions from her mother, Mamaw, she emphasized that Bev had to think about the fate of her children, while Bev was already thinking about her children since she was 18 years old. Then Lindsay seemed to offend her mother that she always used her child as a tool, then Bev said that Lindsay would experience it when she had children of her own.

Feeling Restless or Under Pressure

The fourth characteristics of people with GAD is feeling restless or under pressure. Generalized Anxiety Disorder can cause feelings of stress sustainably.

Bev : J.D., get back in your goddamn seat! Quit your crying! You really think I was gonna kill us?
 J.D. : Chris is right! You're a bitch!
 Bev : Is that what you think of your mother?
 J.D. : You're a loser!
 Bev : Yeah? Just look at yourself, your little fat ass! Yeah? You think you can say that to me? You can't!
 J.D. : Let go of me, Mom!
 (Hillbilly Elegy, 2020, 00:30:09)

The data above is a conversation between Bev and her biological child that is J.D. who said that she is a prostitute "*Chris is right! You're a bitch!*" that quote prove that's J.D. always put the restless or under pressure feelings for her mother with recover the memory of failure Bev in the past.

Taking Deviant Actions

Deviant actions are the fifth characteristic of GAD sufferers. People with GAD have difficulty concentrating or finding that his mind is becoming empty (Nevid, 2005). And this can set a bad example for children, such as the conversation example below, in which J.D. visited a shop that sold calculators for his school needs, but he did not have the money to buy them, so he stole the calculator and the shopkeeper saw it and was chased, and picked up by Mamaw. Then Mamaw scolded J.D. but still buy the calculator

The Shopkeeper : Hey. Hey! Hey! Take it out! Take it out now! Give it to me. The hell do you think you're doing?
 Mamaw : You do that again, I'll leave you there. You're welcome.
 J.D : I don't want new friends.
 Mamaw : Then you're not gonna have any. [tires screeching]
 J.D : Mamaw!
 Mamaw : Now get outbefore I cancel your birth certificate. Get out and get that calculator
 (Hillbilly Elegy, 2020, 01:29:28)

The conversation above proves that J.D. follow or imitate Bev's negative attitude that is stealing. In the sentence "*Then you're not gonna have any*" is Mamaw's caring attitude that she doesn't want her grandson to have a negative attitude like Bev's traits.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

In this section, the researcher will describe the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder experienced by Bev, who had experienced trauma from parental violence in childhood. Researchers will use 4 main symptoms of PTSD based on the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder (American Psychiatric Association DSM-5, 2013) which consists of intrusive re-experiencing,

avoidance, negative interactions in mood and cognition, arousal that loss of interest in activities that have been of interest for a long time.

Intrusive re-Experiencing

Intrusive re-experiencing is the constant return of the traumatic event in the patient's memory. A similar incident is also found in the conversation below, where when Mamaw came to Bev's new house and wanted to bring J.D. left because she was worried that J.D. got the wrong education and the wrong associations. Mamaw didn't want J.D. became a loser so wanted to bring J.D. leave the house

J.D. : I want to go.

Bev : You want to go? And live with her? She's crazy, you know that. She's been crazy my whole life. If you wanna live with that crazy old witch, go right ahead. You two were made for each other.
(*Hillbilly Elegy*, 2020, 01:23:40)

In the sentence *"You want to go? And live with her? She's crazy, you know that. She's been crazy my whole life. If you wanna live with that crazy old witch, go right ahead. You two were made for each other"* Bev shows the attitude that she is experiencing Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) that is Intrusive Re-Experiencing which is characterized by flashbacks of events that occur.

Avoidance

A person can be said to experience avoidance symptoms if she rejects objects or events related to the trauma, tries to avoid places and feelings associated with the trauma. People with traumatic stress reactions tend to avoid stimuli that evoke memories of trauma (Glenn Schiraldi, 2009) in chapter two.

Bev : J.D.!

J.D. : I didn't mean--

Bev : How many times have I told you not to be so fucking careless?

J.D. : I'm sorry!

Bev : You're sorry? "I'm sorry." Go to your room!

Chip : C'mon, babe. They're just eggs.

Bev : Oh, fuck you. Those are heirlooms. My family heirlooms.
[door thuds] - [Bev grunts and snuffles]
(*Hillbilly Elegy*, 2020, 00:24:59)

Based on the conversation above, The quote of *"Oh, fuck you. Those are heirlooms. My family heirlooms"* is Bev's experiences avoidance symptoms which are characterized by symptoms of avoiding thinking, feeling, and conversations related to traumatic events felt by Bev with a long enough duration, Bev wants to end the memory so that no one else feels what she feels.

Negative Interactions in Mood and Cognition

Bev experienced negative changes in the way of thinking and mood that is persistent deviation. This can be seen in the conversation between Bev, J.D., and Ray (Bev's ex-boyfriend) in the Ray's yard, when Bev refuses rehab and chooses to live with Ray at Ray's house

Bev : What the fuck, Ray?
J.D. : The hell?
Ray : Stay out of my house!
Bev : You're a piece of shit!
Ray : Take your shit, bitch!
J.D. : Get down and talk to me, motherfucker!
Ray : It's none of your goddamn business, boy!
Bev : You're a hillbilly loser. You ain't even got any of your teeth.
Ray : You junkie whore!
J.D. : Don't call my mom a whore, you son of a bitch!
Ray : She is a whore! She'll suck anybody's dick that's got one!
(*Hillbilly Elegy*, 2020, 01:17:43)

Based on the research above, from the Ray's quote "*She is a whore! She'll suck anybody's dick that's got one!*" Bev's experiences the symptoms of negative interactions in mood and cognition, that is negative thoughts about other people, oneself, the environment and even the world.

Arousal

Following to Brewin in Davison (2004) that individuals can be said to experience arousal if the individual experiences excessive awareness of something. In this study the symptoms of arousal what appears on Bev is the increased sensitivity so that the person are easily angry.

Mamaw : What in God's name happened back there?
Bev : That lard-ass called the cops on me.
Mamaw : Why did J.D. think you was going to kill him? What'd you do to him?
Bev : Nothing. He said some shit. I got mad—
Mamaw : Did you hit him?
Bev : It's not serious. Should I have let him get hit by a car? If he wasn't being a little shit---
Mamaw : You've always got a reason!
(*Hillbilly Elegy*, 2020, 01:20:54)

Based on the research above, Response the threat includes feelings of intense fear, feelings of helplessness (Glenn Schiraldi, 2009) is experienced by Bev's character that signs of arousal symptoms.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis, the researcher concludes that in Ron Howard's *Hillbilly Elegy* contains the issue stated in problem statement. The first issue is

about the personality of Bev before using drugs that reflected on the film and the second issue is about the personality of Bev after using drugs that reflected in Howard's movie. The symptoms of several mental illnesses suffered by Bev as a drug addict.

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