

The Psychological Condition of Major Character with Deaf Family in Movie *Coda* (2021)

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze how the deaf family affects the psychological of the major character in Coda (2021) and the major character's struggle to overcome her psychological condition in Coda (2021). The study uses a descriptive qualitative method to analyze the film entitled Coda, directed by Sian Heder and produced by Fabrice Gianfermi, Philippe Rousselet, Jérôme Seydoux, and Patrick Wachsberger in 2021 as the objective research. The collecting data of the research method includes watching and reading, identifying, and selecting. The data of the research method is displayed, analyzed, and explained. The researcher analyzes the data by using Sigmund Freud's theory of Psychoanalysis to analyze the data by displaying, explaining, and interpreting it. The result of the study are the representation of the deaf family's influence on the major character's psychology in the movie Coda (2021), the deaf family's influence on Ruby's psychology includes components such as id, ego, and super-ego. In addition, this study identifies various forms of anxiety and ego defense mechanisms experienced by Ruby; and the major character struggles to overcome her psychological condition. This study includes the major character's way of dealing with her psychological problems.

Keywords: *coda, psychoanalytic, struggle.*

Introduction

Film is one of the manifestations of literary works that are used to convey a message to a large audience. The message conveyed can be an explicit message or an implied message. The explicit message in a film can be found in the dialog between characters. The way the message is conveyed between one movie and another is different; each movie packages and conveys the contents of the story according to its respective genre. The genre will underlie the outline of a movie so that later the resulting film has the same elements or storyline from beginning to end. There are several movie genres, such as horror, action, animation, mystery, and romance. Apart from being used as a medium for conveying messages, movies can also be used as a good educational medium for children and parents.

In their 1986 publication, Palapah and Syamsudin posit that a film is essentially a medium that harmoniously blends the power of words with the dynamic allure of moving images. This fusion of elements elevates the film beyond mere entertainment, transforming it into a profound and holistic artistic experience that resonates with the spiritual sensibilities of its audience. In essence, films become a canvas where multiple art forms converge, creating a transcendent sensory journey.

There are two types of films: short films and long films. The material or content of short films must be short, concise, and clear. This is because the duration of short films is ideally around 10-20 minutes. The problems that arise in short films are also fewer than in long films; short films usually only discuss one problem to solve. Unlike short films, the duration of long films ranges from 2-4 hours and has no maximum time limit. The problems that must be faced in long films are also more complicated and complicated because, in some long films, the characters not only experience one problem but also have to experience other problems.

Of the many movies, *Coda* is one of the movies with a fairly complicated and complicated problem plot. Sian Heder skillfully directs the *Coda*. Premiered on August 13, 2021, the film earned acclaim by clinching the prestigious Best Film (Best Picture) award at the 2022 Oscars held on March 28, 2022, Indonesian time. Conflicts that occur in humans can be analyzed by psychologists or people who can give good suggestions or provide positive motivation. Literary psychology deals with the psychological activities of the characters in a story (Citra, 2020).

This study centers on investigating the impact of the main character's family dynamics on her well-being. With Ruby constantly shouldering the responsibilities for her family's every need, the researcher aims to explore the psychological toll this dynamic has on her. Balancing her family's heavy reliance on the demands of her own busy school life, Ruby becomes a focal point for understanding the interplay between familial expectations and personal pursuits.

Literary Review

Psychology Literature

Literary psychology is the science that sees literary works as psychological activities. The conflict that generally arises in humans is from the negative ego (Widiastiti et al., 2019). The negative ego can be interpreted as the source of the problem because humans have an ego that prioritizes themselves and does not care about the reality of others.

According to Russel (1964: 551), "Psychologists prefer replicable observations, while serious writers deal in analogies, metaphors, and perhaps deliberate ambiguities ."Nevertheless, both share the common goal of understanding the development of their subjects, real/fictional characters, through the conflicts and problems they face in life or the plot. This quality, again, according to Russell, leads to the fact that knowledge of one field can contribute to the other in at least four categories: psychology of the writer, psychology of the creative process, behavioral studies, and responses to literature.

Krech and Crutchfield ((1973:13 - Milana: 2020) state that denominations of the following type: "humans who understand," "humans who need," and "humans who solve problems" represent tripartitions that act as didactic intelligence for studying humans. Literary psychology is the study of how people think, act, influence, and relate to each other is part of the context of Social Psychology, a branch of Psychology that in the 20th century has been devoted to attempts to dialogue with the Social Sciences, which also deal with the social experiences gained by individuals participating in different social movements.

Psychoanalytic Sigmund Freud

"Sigmund Freud emphasized the importance of the unconscious mind, and a primary assumption of Freudian theory is that the unconscious mind governs behavior to a greater degree than people suspect. Indeed, the goal of psychoanalysis is to make the unconscious conscious." (Snowden, 2000: 127). From this statement, Sigmund Freud's structural model of the psyche, consisting of the id, ego, and superego, is a fundamental aspect of his psychoanalytic theory.

These three components collectively form the basis for understanding the dynamic interactions within the human mind. Freud divided the human psyche into three parts, namely the id, ego, and superego.

1. Id

Selvi and Baskaran (2015: 13) say that the way the id works is completely unconscious to us. It is irrational; it imagines, dreams, and creates things to get what we want. Daniel, Lapsey, and Stey (2011: 5–6) also convey the same opinion: the id operates unconsciously by primary processes and encourages the organism to engage in an activity that satisfies needs and reduces tension, which is experienced as pleasure.

Based on the above information, it can be concluded that the id is part of the phylogenetic heritage that operates unconsciously or that our brain does not realize how it works.

2. Ego

According to Selvi & Baskaran (2015: 13), ego operates by reality where the ego tries to help the id get what it wants. In other terms, the ego helps a person fulfill needs through reality. "Ego"

Based on the above information, it can be concluded that the ego works consciously and unconsciously. The ego works consciously on external stimuli and will work unconsciously on internal stimuli. Both help the id fulfill its needs.

3. Super Ego

Boeree (2006: 6) divides the superego into two aspects, namely conscience as the internalization of punishments and warnings and the ego ideal as rewards and positive models given to children. Both communicate the ego with feelings such as pride, shame, and guilt.

Based on the above opinion, the superego can be interpreted as a conscience that communicates feelings such as pride, pleasure, shame, or guilt.

Anxiety

Types of Anxiety, according to Sigmund Freud (in Corey, 1996: 95), suggest or state that anxiety is a description of a state of tension experienced by an individual that forces an individual to do something. Sigmund Freud (1936: 69) argues that anxiety is a practical, unpleasant state accompanied by physical sensations that

warn the person of impending danger. Freud divides three main types of anxiety, namely: 1) Reality Anxiety, 2) Neurotic Anxiety, and 3) Moral Anxiety.

Ego Defense Mechanisms

Ego Defense is a useful mechanism for reducing or preventing negative emotions, especially anxiety, from arising in a person when he/she experiences an uncomfortable situation (Syahran, 2019). Freud (1896) categorized Ego Defense Mechanisms into nine types: repression, sublimation, projection, displacement, rationalization, formation reaction, regression, aggression, and fantasy (Minderop, 2010).

Research Methodology

The research method used in this study is qualitative research. According to Creswell (2016), "Qualitative research is a type of research that explores and understands meaning in several individuals or groups of people who come from social problems." The qualitative method is used in this study to explain the psychological condition of the main character in the movie Coda.

The object of this research is Coda, directed by Sian Heder and produced by Fabrice Gianfermi, Philippe Rousselet, Jérôme Seydoux, and Patrick Wachsberger in 2021. The movie lasts 111 minutes and is entitled Coda (Child of Deaf Adult), a term used to describe children of parents with hearing impairment.

The method of collecting data in this research is by doing observation. The procedures are watching the movie and reading the scripts, identifying the data from the scripts and subtitles, and selecting the data.

Finding and Discussion

The Psychological Condition of The Major Character

Referring to Sigmund Freud's psychological theory, the researcher will analyze Ruby's psychological changes through the concepts of id, ego, super-ego, anxiety, and ego defense mechanisms. This analysis will show how Ruby struggles and develops in dealing with various conflicts in her life.

It can be seen in this dialogue:

Ruby's Unpleasant Situation Due to Her Deaf Family

Jackie: "Take those off. It's rude."

Ruby: "What's rude is how noisy you guys are! I can't focus."

(Coda, 2021, 00:08:43-00:09:23)

The above conversation occurred when Ruby explained that she was annoyed by the sound of her father and brother. Her father was cleaning the grill while her brother was playing on his cell phone at a loud volume. When Ruby's mother came, she scolded Ruby by saying it was rude that Ruby was using a headset. This disturbed Ruby's Id because of her parent's actions. Ruby wanted peace so she could concentrate on her studies. The chaos around her was too distracting, and she felt her frustration mounting. In an attempt to create her own quiet space, Ruby's ego grabbed her headset and put it on. The soft padding covered her ears, and she felt relieved as the noise was muffled. She started playing soothing music, hoping it would help her focus. As she began to finish her work, her mother walked into the room, looked at Ruby with the headset on, and then frowned. Her mother's rebuke triggered Ruby's sense of right and wrong. Ruby's super-ego knows her mother has a point that wearing a headset in the living room could be considered rude. She felt trapped between her need for a quiet learning environment and her desire to respect her family dynamic. Moral anxiety gnawed at her, making her feel guilty for speaking up, yet also feeling the need for silence. To cope with her emotional conflict, Ruby unconsciously uses several defense mechanisms. She uses rationalization to justify her headset use, telling herself that it is the only way to get her work done amidst the noise.

Ruby's Joy Studying Music at Berklee

Jackie: "You sure you don't want us to come? We can help set up your dorm room?"

Ruby: "No, no! Let's not make this a thing. Bye-bye, monkey ass."

Leo: "Bye, shit nugget."

Ruby: "Stop...Wait, wait, wait! Stop, stop!"

Frank: "Go!"

(Coda, 2021, 01:43:34-01:45:09)

The above conversation occurs when Ruby finally gets to study at Berklee and is escorted by her friend Gertie. Ruby also said goodbye to her family; as she was about to leave, she stopped to hug her family before going to Berklee. In this

situation, Ruby's id yearns to study at Berklee, a dream she finally achieves. However, Ruby's super-ego faces a profound internal dilemma. While she is excited to continue her education at Berklee, she also feels a heavy heart about leaving her family, especially since they are deaf. Ruby experiences a touching moral anxiety at the moment of separation from her family, characterized by crying before leaving. To cope with her feelings, Ruby may have used ego defense mechanisms such as denial, which reduces the severity of emotions by trying to minimize her guilt and sadness over her decision to leave her family. Although challenging, she eventually stepped forward toward her academic dreams at Berklee.

The Struggle of the Main Character

Through an in-depth analysis of each vital scene, we will see how Ruby struggles with her family responsibilities, pursues her dreams, and finds a balance between two worlds.

It can be seen in this dialogue:

School Life and Bullying

Students at school: "Do you smell fish?"

Gertie: "Well, at least she's not doing deaf voice anymore. That's progress."

(Coda, 2021, 00:05:34-00:05:45)

The above conversation occurred when Ruby was chatting with her friend Gertie in front of the school lockers. Suddenly, Ruby gets a bully taunt, and Ruby's body smells of fish from another student. Ruby immediately fell silent, and Gertie calmed her down. Her struggle was not only with teasing but also with the insecurities that haunted her every day. Although Ruby tried to stay calm, the bullying added to her emotional burden. In her heart, Ruby longed to be accepted for who she was without feeling ashamed or treated differently just because of her family circumstances. Her feelings were a mixture of anger and sadness, but she tried hard not to show her vulnerability in front of her peers. However, behind that vulnerability, Ruby had an invisible strength. She fought against her inferiority complex and insecurities, summoning the courage to endure the inevitable social pressures. Although she sometimes felt alone, Ruby found the support to stay strong and get back up whenever she felt knocked down by the piercing taunts at school.

Resolution and Growth

Jackie: "You sure you don't want us to come? We can help set up your dorm room?"

Ruby: "No, no! Let's not make this a thing. Bye-bye, monkey ass."

Leo: "Bye, shit nugget."

Ruby: "Stop...Wait, wait, wait! Stop, stop!"

Frank: "Go!"

(Coda, 2021, 01:43:34-01:45:09)

The above conversation occurred on a sunny morning; Ruby was getting ready to leave her house. She was ready with her luggage and to be dropped off by Gertie, who was full of hopes and dreams. Ruby knew it was time to take a big step in her life, leaving the comfort and routine of her family to pursue her passion at Berklee. This decision was challenging for Ruby as she needed time to face uncertainty, assert her independence, and pursue a long-cherished dream. For Ruby, this move was about pursuing her music and finding her identity beyond the role of translator and family support. While there are concerns and feelings of loss, there is also a deep sense of relief and pride as she steps into her future. While perhaps initially shocked and saddened by Ruby's departure, her family eventually supported her with love and understanding. They recognized the importance of Ruby's individuality and happiness and the need to give her the space to grow and develop. In this parting of ways, Ruby struggles not only to find herself as an artist but also to show her family that the courage to follow a dream is one of the most profound and sacrificial forms of love.

Conclusion

Based on the result of the analysis in the previous chapter, the researcher concludes that the movie *Coda* (2021) by Sian Heder contains the issues mentioned in the problem formulation. The first issue concerns Ruby's Psychological Condition as the main character in the movie *Coda* (2021) and Ruby's struggle to deal with her life in *Coda* (2021).

The movie *Coda* (2021) shows the main character, Ruby, who experiences a series of problems due to her deaf family background. Based on the theory applied in this study, Ruby's psychological conditions are: 1) Id: Ruby has basic drives and personal desires that often conflict with the expectations of her deaf family. Ruby's id directs her to pursue a music career, her passion. 2) Ego: Ruby

acts as a mediator between her desire to pursue a music career and her responsibilities to her family. Ruby's ego tries to balance her internal needs and the external demands of her family. 3) Super-ego: Ruby's internalized norms and values often make her feel guilty or anxious when trying to fulfill her desires. Ruby's super-ego reflects her family's expectations and the social norms she considers essential. 4) Anxiety: Ruby often experiences anxiety caused by the conflict between her desires and her responsibilities towards her family. This anxiety comes in the form of uncertainty, guilt, and pressure to meet family and societal expectations. 5) Ego Defense Mechanism: Repression: Ruby tends to repress her feelings and desires to maintain harmony within her family. This study also found that the main character, Ruby, shows her struggles in dealing with various complex psychological challenges related to her role as a child of a deaf family.

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