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BELLA SWAN'S BORDERLINE PERSONALITY DISORDER AS A RESULT OF THE ABSENCE OF MATERNAL CARE IN STEPHENIE MEYER'S *TWILIGHT SAGA*

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Abstract

Mental disorders are common in modern times. It can be seen in the novel Stephanie Meyer's *Twilight Saga*. It describes that the main character has a psychological problem. As a result of her failed expectations about her mother's figure, she experienced early trauma and disappointment, which culminated in mental changes that led to Borderline Personality Disorder. Two problems are proposed in this research; how does the absence of maternal care trigger mental disorders and the impact of Borderline Personality Disorder suffered by Bella Swan. This research uses the theory of Object Relations by Otto F. Kernberg. Two of Kernberg's concepts are considered appropriate to be utilized: mother-daughter relationships and the concept of Borderline Personality Disorder. Those concepts help this research to describe how the absence of maternal care trigger mental disorder and the kind of Borderline Personality Disorder suffered by Bella Swan. The result of this research shows two main points. First, the absence of maternal care is the cause of the failure of character-forming and it led to Borderline Personality Disorder. Second, the impact is shown through her being unconfident and split up from the social.

Keywords: mental disorder, borderline personality disorder, a mother-daughter relationship

I. Introduction

Absence of Maternal Care is a phenomenon where the mother's role in her child's life is emptied, resulting in mental development problems. This is becoming more common today due to a lack of understanding of human brain growth. Kernberg (1984) said that in the early stages, the infant is thought to have two separate representations of objects; a good mother object to store positively toned effects and a bad mother object used to store negatively-toned effects. Meanwhile, in the growing and maturing stage of childhood, these two representations form and are expected to merge into a single object of positive and negative influence in one being; the mother.

However, in some cases, this integration does not occur and produces mental disorders which in this study focuses on Borderline Personality Disorder. According to the National Institute of Mental Health (2013), Borderline Personality Disorder is a mental disorder characterized by mood and self-image constantly changing, and impulsive behavior. A person who experiences Borderline Personality Disorder has a different way of thinking, outlook, and feeling than others in general. As a result, problems arise in

living daily life and in developing relationships with others, such as those in the family and in the social environment.

According to Kernberg (1985), Borderline personality disorder is the result of the failure of separation between mother and child. From this statement, it can be seen that the condition of people with mental disorders is caused by deep feelings of disappointment and the failure of the integration between mother and child which lead to Borderline Personality Disorder, in which children will feel that they are unconfident and self-distrust that leads them to avoid the social environment.

In this research, the writer applies the Object Relation Theory by Otto F. Kernberg. Object relations theory is based on psychoanalysis theory, which focuses a strong emphasis on interpersonal relationships, particularly in the family, and in particular the bond between mother and child throughout the child's early development. This theory believes that a child's early interpersonal relationships with "others" have a significant impact on the child's personality as an adult. Everyone's adult life is influenced significantly by their childhood experiences with their primary love objects, especially mothers.

However, if the mother does not play the role as she is supposed to, it can cause an issue in the child's mental development that leads to Borderline Personality Disorder.

The writer takes *Twilight Saga; Twilight, New Moon, Eclipse*, which was published in 2005, 2006, and 2007 by Stephanie Meyer as the source of the analysis because it has a theme of absence of maternal care and Borderline Personality Disorder. Bella is described as a teen who has gone through her parents' divorce. This divorce makes Bella have to live with her mother for a long time. Bella refused to have expectations after her mother's failures, so she cut herself off from social circles because she feels unconfident to socialize. Based on the problem, the writer finds two urgent issues to discuss; how does the absence of maternal care trigger developmental disorder and what kind of Borderline Personality Disorder suffered by Bella Swan.

II. Review of Related Literature

In conducting the research, Otto F. Kernberg's object relation theory is considered the most appropriate theory to be utilized. According to Kernberg (1995), Object Relations aim to understand human actions, growth, relationships, psychopathology, and psychotherapy from a

psychodynamic perspective. In this theory, there are two concepts that determine how absent maternal care trigger Bella Swan's Personality Disorder and affects her mental development as will be discussed below.

2.1 Internalization

Internalization is a process of child development that is absorbed through maternal behavior and roles in her children's lives. Internalization of object relations is an ordered developmental process that contains three stages; introjection, identification, and ego identity. In this case, the writer focuses only on the first stage of internalization, that is introjection. Introjection is crucial to Kernberg's metapsychology because it involves the initial internalization of the object relations unit, his "building block". Affirming that mothers as building-block become the main foundation in a child's development. Introjection, according to Kernberg, is both a mechanism and a structure. It forms a child's memory as a result of internalization. According to Kernberg (1984), attachment and separation are several phases initiated by the child's sense of being in bond with the mother which the child feels like a union of the mother. Afterward, he gradually becomes conscious of the

mother's absence, and eventually identifies himself as a separate being. This step colors all other aspects of the infant's perception (self and object representations) and is the means by which the infant's experiences become organized. If the separation of the mother and child takes place properly then the child's mentality will develop healthily. However, if this separation process goes wrong, it will cause disorders that lead to childhood trauma and the result of this theory refers to Borderline Personality Disorder.

2.2 Borderline Personality Disorder

Borderline personality disorder I. appears as triggered by trauma resulting from the failure of the mother and child separating process. Kernberg (1995) stated that early experiences shaped assumptions about relationships with important people in the lives of people with Borderline Personality Disorder. These early relationships form "internal objects," which are the foundations of a person's self-concept and how they relate to and perceive others later in life. When the object does not fully satisfy the ego, it causes intense feelings of abandonment or rejection, which leads to anxiety and it will trigger psychological dysfunction. As a result of these feelings, the child uses imagination to manipulate his or her perception of the mother. As a

consequence, object relations therapists view psychological dysfunction as a manifestation of being trapped at a developmental stage that leads to unstable and symptomatic actions, which are immature efforts to overcome early childhood trauma.

III. Research Method

The qualitative method is considered to be an appropriate method for this research. This method does not require participants but requires books as a source of the data. The data collected from the novel for this research will be analyzed using the

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses Borderline Personality Disorder as the result of the absence of maternal care perceived by Bella Swan in the Twilight Saga related into two scopes of idea; how do the absence of maternal care trigger mental disorder and the impact of Borderline Personality Disorder.

4.1 Absent Maternal Care as a Trigger of Borderline Personality Disorder Perceived by Bella Swan.

According to American Psychiatric Association (2018), Mental illnesses are health conditions involving changes in emotion, and effects of Borderline Personality Disorder that are caused by misappropriation of the expectations of the self-seeking object.

Thus, it found how does mother figure significantly affects a child's mental development. Furthermore, Kernberg (1994) mentions that patients with Borderline Personality Disorder tend to close themselves off because they no longer want to have expectations and tend to be afraid to socialize. This reflects the emergence of self-dissociation as an act of avoiding socialization.

Over time there were periods when children could think logically and have expectations about something in particular about their relationship with the mother. On the other hand, there is always an inevitable failure where mothers cannot meet the expectations of their children both in terms of intimacy and attention and it causes the failure of the separation. According to Kernberg (1989), Object relations refer to the developing relationships between the child and significant others or love objects in the child's life, especially the mother. The focus is on how the child views or internalizes consciously or unconsciously, the relationship. Bella is one example of a disappointment for her mother's figure because her mother does not play a good role as it supposed to be, as can be seen through the quotation below:

I was a very different person from my mother. Someone thoughtful and cautious. The responsible one, the grown-up. That's how I saw myself. That was the person I knew. (Eclipse, 53)

From the quotation above, the sentence *I was a very different person from my mother*, indicates that Bella saw herself growing up in a very opposite way from her mother. Bella was thoughtful and cautious, whereas the mother was easily tendency to ignore and be careless. Then the sentence *The responsible one, the grown-up*, indicates that in the life of Bella and her mother, Bella is the responsible figure for their life and the most mature person than her mother. The phrase also indicates Bella's view of her mother's lack of responsibility as a mother figure and the childish one. Moreover, it also represents the mother's neglect of her daughter. These attributes of her mother left Bella's expectations of a broken mother and she inevitably had to take on the role of caretaker without feeling that she was well guarded and guided.

Not only Bella's expectations are ruined because of the absence of her mother's figure of caretaker, but Bella must also take charge of the household and caretaker's position to guard and direct her mother. It can be seen through

the quotation below:

I'd spent most of my life taking care of Renée, patiently guiding her away from her craziest plans, good-naturedly enduring the ones I couldn't talk her out of. I'd always been indulgent with my mom, amused by her, even a little condescending to her. I saw her cornucopia of mistakes and laughed privately to myself. (Eclipse, 52-53)

From the quotation above, the sentence *patiently guiding her away from her craziest plans* indicates that Bella is very instrumental in keeping her mother from doing silly and dangerous things. Also, Bella who acts as a caretaker and this proves that the introjection process between Bella and her mother failed because the caretaker's position was reversed in the relationship between Bella and her mother. Then the sentence *I'd always been indulgent with my mom, amused by her, even a little condescending to her*, proves that Bella is very good at playing the role of a caretaker who is taking over the position that should belong to her mother. Further, the sentence *I saw her cornucopia of mistakes and laughed privately to myself*, shows that the changing the role of caretaker in the life

of Bella and her mother makes Bella look down on her mother and slightly underestimate her.

The failure of the bonding between Bella and her mother did not make Bella hate the woman who had given birth to her. On the other hand, because she is used to acting like a mother to her own mother, Bella loves her mother very much, so there is a feeling of jealousy that arises when her mother gets married and has a new life. Therefore, her mother's new life makes her feel worthless and unwanted. It can be seen through the quotation below:

How could I leave my loving, erratic, harebrained mother to fend for herself? Of course she had Phil now, so the bills would probably get paid, there would be food in the refrigerator, gas in her car, and someone to call when she got lost, but still... "I want to go," I lied. I'd always been a bad liar, but I'd been saying this lie so frequently lately that it sounded almost convincing now. (Twilight, 4)

From the quotation above, the sentence, *Of course she had Phil now, so the bills would probably get paid, there would be food in the refrigerator, gas in her car, and someone to call when she got lost, but still...*, indicates a feeling of

worthless because of the emergence of new people who are considered more powerful and profitable, especially regarding the material in her mother's life. So, Bella feels that she is not enough and is no longer useful even though she has taken care and acted as a caretaker very well in her mother's life. While in the sentence *I'd always been a bad wild, but I'd been saying this lie so frequently lately that it sounds almost convincing now*, indicates Bella's lies become very natural because she suppresses her feelings too often and succumbs to her mother's happiness. These lies occur because Bella feels that she is no longer wanted and needed in her mother's life. On the other hand, she is just a burden that will interfere with her mother's life with her new husband.

In short, the loss of a mother figure in a child's life can affect the personality and mindset of the child. For the worse, the mother can be a bad model because her figure cannot meet the expectations of the child and she did not teach good things.

4.2 Impact of The Absence of Maternal Care Towards Bella Swan's Borderline Personality Disorder.

The absence of a mother in the growth and development of their child can cause mental damage that affects the personality of the child. This happens

because of the clash between environmental influences and the expectations of the child. Bella is a child who is absent from maternal care because her mother is not responsible for maintaining, teaching, and giving Bella the true values of life. On the other hand, the mother acts like a child so Bella has to take on the role of caretaker and take care of her mother. This trauma has an impact on Bella's mental development and triggers Borderline Personality Disorder on her. She suffers from self-dissociation.

The role of the mother in her children's lives is like a floor and a pillar that can be both a footing and a back, so it is a theory and a discourse. In real life, many mothers fail in their roles and this becomes mental damage to their children and may trigger Borderline Personality Disorder. According to Kernberg (1993), Borderline Personality Disorder appears because of environmental influences that cannot satisfy children's drives because reality is inverted to their expectations. Bella should grow up with an abundance of love, attention, direction, and motivation from her parents. but her parents' divorce and her mother's behavior made Bella not get these things, especially the mother figure as a guide and source of information so she did not have the confidence to blend in with

people her age. However, Bella's teenage years were spent guarding and directing her mother on the right path so that she became more mature than her age. As a result of her mental maturity, Bella finds it difficult to understand individuals her age. It can be seen through the quotation below:

I didn't relate well to people my age. Maybe the truth was that I didn't relate well to people, period. Even my mother, who I was closer to than anyone else on the planet, was never in harmony with me, never on exactly the same page. (Twilight, 10-11)

From the quotation above, it seems that Bella finds it difficult to understand people her age. In the sentence, *I didn't relate well to people my age. Maybe the truth was that I didn't relate well to people, period*, indicates the difficulty of Bella understanding her surroundings and getting into a new environment. This happened because of the clash between environmental influences and expectations in Bella's life that caused her to grow up too fast as a mentally mature that she couldn't understand children her age even other people well. This is also influenced by the absence of a mother figure where Bella's mother does not teach the values of a good life

for her child so when Bella enters a larger environment she cannot adapt well and becomes very closed. Since childhood Bella was busy replacing her mother's position as a caretaker and was responsible for their home life. So, she must mature faster than other children because of the responsibilities she should have. This is also supported by Winnicott's' (1995) opinion on Object Relation Theory, the absence of a mother's role will build a new wall in the infant which produces memories and views that object figures are not a good thing because the infants tend to like satisfaction and perfection. From the statement it can reflect the failure of the introjection process between Bella and her mother, it makes Bella see her mother as a bad model in her life and this destroys Bella's expectations about the role of a good mother. This is a trigger for Bella's Borderline Personality Disorder to appear which she likes to close herself to the social.

One mental problem that has been developed by Bella as the result of her absent maternal care is being split up from the social. A disappointing past is always having an impact and a lesson in the future that a person who is familiar with disappointment is likely to isolate themselves from a social environment because of fear of undue expectation.

According to Kernberg (1989), self-dissociation is one of the psychological effects of Borderline Personality Disorder that is caused by misappropriation of the expectations of the self-seeking object. Bella as the main character in the novel is someone who covers herself and avoids too much attention from the social environment because of the past between herself and her mother where the “caretaker” positions are inverted. It can be seen from the quotation below:

Attention is never a good thing, as any other accident prone klutz would agree. No one wants a spotlight when they're likely to fall on their face. (New Moon, 13)

From the quotation above, the sentence *Attention is never a good thing, as any other accident prone klutz would agree. No one wants a spotlight when they're likely to fall on their face* indicates Bella's self-distrust emerged as the effect of the clash between environmental influences and expectation. It means the reverse relationship between Bella and her mother makes Bella feel that she is overgrown and insecure because she is not cared for properly and instead takes care of her mother. Also, Bella's self-distrust affects her low self-esteem behavior so that she never feels

worthy of the attention and spotlight.

Furthermore, Kernberg (1994) mention that patients with Borderline Personality Disorder tend to close themselves off because they no longer want to have expectations and tend to be afraid to socialize. Bella is no exception, she feels that she is not good enough and is not confident enough to be in a social environment, so she prefers to close herself and avoid new environments. It can be seen through the quotation below:

I had always been slender, but soft somehow, obviously not an athlete; I didn't have the necessary hand-eye coordination to play sports without humiliating myself—and harming both myself and anyone else who stood too close...

Facing my pallid reflection in the mirror, I was forced to admit that I was lying to myself. It wasn't just physically that I'd never fit in. And if I couldn't find a niche in a school with three thousand people, what were my chances here? (Twilight, 10)

From the quotation above, the sentence *I did not have the necessary hand-eye coordination to play sports without humiliating myself - and harming both myself and anyone else who stood too close ...*, indicates that Bella feels unconfident to be in a social

environment. While in the sentence *It wasn't just physically that I'd never fit in. And if I couldn't find a niche in a school with three thousand people, what were my chances here?*, indicates feelings of anxiety due to trauma in her relationship with her mother which evokes the self-distrust of Bella. This is supported by Malone's (2000) opinion where that children with Borderline Personality Disorder caused by the failure of separation will create small feelings in the social environment which then refers to anxiety which is continued with self-closing behavior.

The broken expectations of Bella and the upside-down of the caretaker position in her life make her feel worthless and unwanted, which is indicated by mental illness Borderline Personality Disorder with Object Relation Theory. Bella also realized this when she felt strange about herself. It can be seen through the quotation below:

Sometimes I wondered if I was seeing the same things through my eyes that the rest of the world was seeing through theirs. Maybe there was a glitch in my brain. But the cause didn't matter. All that mattered was the effect (Twilight, 11)

From the quotation above, the sentence *Sometimes I wondered if I was seeing the*

same things through my eyes that the rest of the world was seeing through theirs, Bella seemed to doubt how she saw the world, whether it was normal or not when compared to other people. This is due to the failure of separation and the destruction of Bella's expectations of a mother figure. This is also supported by Klein's opinion

V. CONCLUSION

The results of the study are expected to convey to readers the figure of a mother who has a significant impact on a child's mental development. Bella Swan, an adolescent whose parents divorced when she was a newborn, experienced a conflict between expectations and reality when her mother was unable to fulfill her position properly. As a result, Bella is forced to take on the role of caretaker to look after and direct her mother. Bella's expectations about the figure of a mother are shattered as a result of the shift of caretaker positions, resulting in trauma and the beginnings of Borderline Personality Disorder. The impacts of Borderline Personality Disorder on Bella Swan are loss of self-confidence, feeling worthless and unwanted that resulting in her becoming a closed person. The writer concludes that children might be traumatized by an absence of maternal

care, which can influence their personality and mental development.

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