

REVEALING PTSD SYMPTOMS EXPERIENCED BY KAT BAKER USING INTERNAL CONFLICTS IN *SPINNING OUT* TV SERIES

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REVEALING PTSD SYMPTOMS EXPERIENCED BY KAT BAKER USING INTERNAL CONFLICTS IN *SPINNING OUT* TV SERIES

Abstract. This article presents a qualitative psychoanalysis study on the main character named Kat Baker in TV Series titled "Spinning Out". The main character of this series is vividly clear to correlate with PTSD symptoms, which makes it very interesting to analyze the internal conflict that experienced by Kat Baker. Therefore, following article analyze Kat Baker's PTSD symptoms with Internal conflict theory and identify the cause of Kat Baker's PTSD in the Spinning Out TV series. The methodology applied was descriptive qualitative where the writer analyzed the non-numerical data from Spinning Out TV series in video form. The results of this study reveals two Interpersonal conflict identification that reveals Intrusion, Avoidance, Negative Alterations in Cognitions and Mood, and Arousal and Reactivity PTSD symptoms. Kat Baker's PTSD symptoms can be explained with internal conflict theory that considers the character's mental state and her battle to overcome her trauma.

Keywords: internal conflic, PTSD, trauma, TV series

INTRODUCTION

This paper correlate literary works with a character's psychological state—many literary works concern the characters' psychological conditions. Literary works are one of human psychological state in guise. Discovering man's psychological state by analyzing and observing the character behavior's activity is possible to do. According to Hardjana (1994:6), a literary study that uses psychology as an approach is a study to search and find the same concept or perception of psychological aspect in characterizations of the characters in the literary work with certain theories of psychology through the help of psychological approach and knowledge.

American TV Serial titled Spinning Out, created by Samantha Stratton, premiered in 2020 on one of the biggest streaming service platforms, Netflix. This series told a story about a young ice skater named Kat Baker who just experienced a terrifying incident at her competition that left a serious injury. The series takes setting in Sun Valley at the Pinecrest Winter resort in the town of Hawkley. Spinning out mostly focuses on Kat Baker's struggle to overcome her trauma, but at the same time,

this series also portrays the struggle and many main problems that every ice skater athlete has to face.

The main character of this series is vividly clear to correlate with PTSD symptoms, which makes it very interesting to analyze the internal conflict that experienced by Kat Baker. PTSD stands for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, one of the mental disorder categorizations which result from traumatic events, mostly life-threatening events. One particular traumatic event can make one person feel frightened and hopeless. Kat's incident is considered traumatic because, after that incident, Kat is struggling to face her trauma and showing the essential symptoms of PTSD.

Several works correlates PTSD symptoms with literary works have been done before. They mostly focused on the character's act and expression in. One study by Fadillah (2021) tells a story about Anna, who experienced a deadly car crash that killed her husband and daughter and got stuck in a blizzard for two days straight in the process. Fadilla (2021) focusing on finding the differences and affinities of PTSD portrayed through the characters of both novels, on revealing the portrayed PTSD through the character, the author used PTSD symptoms theory based on the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder (DSM-5) explanation. The theory used in this study to reveal the PTSD symptoms (DSM-5) is the main source of the current study's theory. Despite immensely different causes of trauma and each character's background, the symptoms found are similar: intrusive thought, avoiding reminders of traumatic events and having negative thoughts and feelings. This similarity is proved the statement that PTSD can happen to anyone; it could be from extreme life-threatening events to changing life events. Another study by Nugraha (2020) is focusing in reveal the PTSD symptoms experienced by a character named Ruth Weber and how it has affected her psychological state. Within the process of the main purpose, the author also reveals the causes of her PTSD. The data source of this study is a novel titled "The Huntress" by Kate Quinn that set time in World War II, which is highly well-chosen according to the latest study about PTSD that revealing the percentage of people that experienced PTSD are war victims (71%) It aimed to identify the self-defense mechanisms and core issues evidence of the character named Hazel Lancaster. In revealing the symptoms and effects of PTSD, the author used a theory of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder by Gerald C. Davison. According to his theory, the author found three categories of PTSD symptoms in this study: avoidance, re-experiencing, and arousal. Lastly, a study by Azis (2019) Focusing on the main character named Dawson Scott that suffering from PTSD after finished his work in Afghanistan as journalist in war situations, this study widely explore the portrayal of

PTSD within the main character. Revealing the symptoms of PTSD this study used the theory based on DSM-5 which is also the source of theory on current study.

All the studies above and our study similarly correlate the Literary works with PTSD symptoms. However, the previous study only analyzing the character from literary work that portraying the victim of PTSD. Particular event can stimulate character's PTSD come from many story backgrounds, mostly related to war, violent, extreme grieve, and traffic incident, but rarely related to character having a background in sporty environment or athletes life. Based on study, the number of young athletes that experience PTSD is high, and the symptoms beyond fear of re-injuring, including trouble sleeping, poor concentration, numbness, and avoidance of speaking about the injury (Orthop J Sports Med [OJSM], 2018). Therefore, this study chose to analyze the internal conflict and then reveal the PTSD symptoms experienced by Kat Baker in *Spinning Out* TV series.

This paper reported a qualitative study which according to Creswell (1994:32), a qualitative approach is used to put objective ideas or theories to the test by looking at the interrelationships between data sets. Therefore, in this article, the researcher analyzed will be analyzing the non-numerical data from *Spinning Out* TV series in video form. First, the data were categorized based on concept of Intrapersonal conflict proposed by Kurt Lewin (1948). Second, the categorized data explained with conflict theory by Kenny, W.P (1933). Then the last step is revealing the PTSD symptoms according to Blake (1995) and Weis (1997) based on the data that have analyzed to reveal the symptoms shown by the main character of this TV series.

Result and Discussion

This chapter is presented in two central parts. First is the identification based on internal conflicts in particular ones related to the intrapersonal concepts (i.e. approach-avoidance, approach-approach, approach-avoidance), followed by the second part reveals the PTSD symptoms experienced by Kat Baker based on internal conflicts.

1. Internal Conflict based on Intrapersonal Conflict Concepts and PTSD Symptoms experienced by Kat Baker
 - 1.1 Approach-Avoidance Conflict

This concept occurs when a person has to choose an option that puts them in a situation that possesses both positive and negative aspects (Lewin, 1948).

Approach-Avoidance conflict happens when Kat practices on the ice rink for her senior test. Kat tries to do her jumps routine even though she is still

scared. According to Lewis (1948) on Approach-Avoidance conflict, this conflict puts Kat in a situation where she has to choose between two options that can result in positive or negative outcomes. On that account, she still considered herself a figure skater Kat still wants to try out her jump routine, but she is aware of her trauma and afraid of doing it

Mick: Does your sister always jumps like that ?

Selena: Yes, she always chicken out at the last seconds.

Mick: Pity, she's beautiful skater.

Following to the dialogue above, Unfortunately, Kat's effort ended up with a negative result (i.e. by negative result it refers to Kat failing doing her jump routine). After the traumatic incident, doing the jumps in her routine is very traumatic for her. Since then, whenever she tried the jumps routine, Kat conflicted with herself because her confidence in doing the jump decreases significantly, despite being a talented skater which can be proof by Mick's opinion about Kat's skill. Therefore the Internal conflict is about the conflict between Kat' as a figure skater and her trauma.

Regarding the second research question about the PTSD symptoms that showed by Kat Baker, the concept of the *Intrusion* symptom reveals. Theory by Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (2013) supports This criteria refers to symptoms where the sufferer feels the sudden recollection of the traumatic event involuntary, experiencing such a flashback and nightmare that related to the trauma and showing Psychological distress and reaction towards the exposure of the slight mark of the traumatic event. After her disastrous fall that caused her trauma in doing the jump routine, she felt a sudden recollection of the traumatic event involuntary whenever she tried to jump. This sudden feeling is also supported by Kat's constant failure to do the jump routine, which is proof of how her skill decreases constantly.

Not only affect her skill as an athlete, Kat's trauma also affected her as a human being. After her disastrous fall took her over, Kat had difficulty opening herself. After deciding to be a pair figure skater with Justin, Kat has trouble gaining trust with him, resulting in a lack of chemistry, which is terrible for a pair figure skater. This situation put Kat in a situation where she should open herself to Justin and trust him, but it put her in a difficult place because her PTSD affected her to trust other people. This can be seen between Kat and Justin on the following dialogue:

Justin: 'Cause usually, I connect with everyone.

Kat Baker: Everyone you fuck?

Justin : *Everyone except you, apparently. Uh, okay. Maybe this would work better if you tried not to be so...*

Kat Baker: *So what?*

Justin: *Like you're being right now. Shutting me out, like you do with everybody. Like...*

Kat Baker: *Like I'm a lone wolf? Fuck my mother. Fuck you!*

Justin: *What the fuck are you talking about?*

Kat Baker: *You're right. This is stupid.*

As mentioned above, this data concerns Kat's PTSD and her relationship with other people. As seen in the dialogue above, Justin shared his thought about how Kat is always shutting herself toward him and other people. According to DSM-5, this data can be identified as Negative Alterations in *Cognition and Mood symptom*, this symptom can be seen when Kat suddenly shows sudden outbursts of anger resulting from her PTSD, which makes her overly think pessimistic about Justin. This situation makes Kat feel distant from others and have difficulty opening herself to people.

1. 2 Avoidance-Avoidance Conflict

This concept occurs when each of the competing alternatives possesses negative consequences; that is, they are equally repulsive (Lewin, 1948).

Facing her trauma and try to get over it in the edge where she might lose her career is very stressful for Kat Baker. Biting her shoulder is the bad way for Kat to let out her frustration, by not doing that, her frustration will be piled up but, in the same time biting her shoulder is bad habit and can be labeled as self-harm. This situation can be identified as Avoidance-Avoidance conflict, where the two outcomes are equally undesirable for Kat Baker. Kat knows that this is the wrong way to let out her frustration; this can be seen where doubt and guilt show on her face before she bit her shoulder. Therefore, Internal conflict between her frustration and her acknowledge of doing a bad thing is portrayed in this scene.

Focusing on Kat's self-destructive, Kat was showing Arousal and Reactivity symptoms of PTSD in this scene. The Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (2013) states that *Arousal and Reactivity* symptom is when the sufferer shows reckless or self-destructive behavior. After failing her senior test, Kat went to the restroom. Kat developed a bad habit where she tended to hurting herself by biting her shoulder so hard that it bled and left some teeth marks, which can be identified as self-destructive behavior.

CONCLUSION

Regarding on the discussion, there are three data with each data analyzed the internal conflict based on Interpersonal conflict concepts also reveals the PTSD symptoms of Kat Baker. Within Interpersonal conflict concepts, there are Approach-Avoidance conflict concepts, Avoidance-Avoidance conflict concepts, and Approach-Approach conflict concepts. Revealing the PTSD symptoms, there are Intrusion, Avoidance, Negative Alterations in Cognitions and Mood, and Arousal and Reactivity.

The data source of this study is the TV series: *Spinning Out*, only focusing on the main character named Kat Baker. The identified conflict concepts are Approach-Avoidance and Avoidance-Avoidance only. This result is apprehensible and reflects on the main character's mental state and struggle to overcome her trauma; therefore, no single situation put her in the Approach-Approach conflict concept that resulted in desirable outcomes. The number of founded concepts are two Approach-Avoidance and one Avoidance-Avoidance conflict concepts. The study also reveals the three PTSD symptoms that Kat Baker experienced: Intrusion, Cognition, Mood, and Arousal and Reactivity.

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I Nengah Sudipa, M.A. has been a professor in Linguistics since 1 Nov 2006 having supervised a number of undergraduate, magister as well Ph.D students. I entered the English Department, Faculty of Letters Udayana University in 1974, continued to take Magister program in Linguistics Department, Monash University Melbourne Australia (1985-1987). I graduated from the Doctoral Program of Linguistics in Udayana University (2004).