

PSYCHOLOGICAL DISORDER OF GEORGE HARVEY, AS SEEN IN *THE LOVELY BONES*

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INTISARI

Skripsi ini membahas gangguan psikologis yang ditemukan pada karakter Mr. Harvey. Tujuan skripsi ini adalah untuk menemukan bagaimana ketidakseimbangan mental membuat Mr. Harvey menjadi seorang pembunuh sekaligus pemerkosa dan mengkaji kenangan masa kecil yang mempengaruhi perilaku dalam perkembangan kepribadiannya.

Pengkajian ini menggunakan metode studi pustaka. Data dan referensi pendukung diperoleh dari perpustakaan dan situs-situs internet. Analisa di dalam skripsi ini menggunakan pendekatan psikologi untuk menemukan gangguan psikologis dalam menganalisis karakter Mr. Harvey dan memahami hubungan dari setiap kejadian dalam novel yang menunjukkan latar belakang Mr. Harvey.

Dalam pengkajian ini penulis menemukan bahwa kenangan masa kecil Mr. Harvey yang membuat dia menderita gangguan psikologis. Jenis gangguan psikologis yang ditemukan pada karakter ini adalah Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD), dan Pedophilia.

Kata Kunci: Kenangan Masa Kecil, Pengalaman Traumatik, Gangguan Psikologis.

ABSTRACT

This graduating paper discusses the psychological disorder found in the character Mr. Harvey. The objectives of this paper are to find out the cause that could make Mr. Harvey as a killer and also a rapist and, to study the childhood memories that influence his behavior in the development of his personality.

This study applies library research method. The data and other supporting references are gained from library and websites. This study uses Psychoanalytic Approach to find psychological disorder in analyzing the character, Mr. Harvey, and the coherence of every evidences that show Mr. Harvey's background.

In this study the present writer finds that it is the traumatic experience of Mr. Harvey that makes him suffer from psychological disorder. The types of psychological disorder found in the character are; Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD), and Pedophilia.

Keywords: Childhood memories, Traumatic Experience, Psychological Disorder.

INTRODUCTION

One of the ways of looking at a literary work is by applying the psychological approach, which, according to Wellek, is concerned with “the psychology of the writer, as a type and as individual, or the study of the creative process, or the study of the psychological types and laws present within works of literature” (Wellek and Warren, 1956, p.81).

Another reason of applying the psychological approach is that the analysis investigates mental processes and some other disorders of the mind, based on the assumption that such disorders are the rejection by the conscious mind of factors that then persist in unconscious mind, and then expressed in abnormal attitude. This is also the major discussion of this study, since the major character in this novel experiences a psychological disorder.

In this novel the author focuses on symptom of psychology seen in the character Mr. Harvey. The character expresses psychological disorder, he rapes and kills children. The novel draws the character that is suspected as murderer because of his psychological disorder.

In line with the objectives of this paper, the focus of examination is the psychological disorder that Mr. Harvey suffers from.

In order to achieve the objectives of this paper, the qualitative descriptive method would be applied. This method is a scientific procedure to get a conclusion from a particular thing to a general idea based on the theory. In analyzing *The Lovely Bones*, the present writer applied several steps. First, a close reading step to get a deep understanding of the novel and collecting references to support the analysis. Second, important information about the psychological disorder and sexual disorder indicated in the novel are

selected. Third, parts of the text are quoted as the data to support the analysis. Fourth, the data found in the novel are analyzed.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

As an American novelist and memoirist, Alice Sebold ranked among the most controversial literary figure of the 21st century. In her books, she shares similar thematic ground and explore the detrimental effects of rape and brutality on the lives of young women and their families. She has been praised for handling such dark material in honest, provocative, and imaginative ways.

Sebold's first book published in 1999 entitled *Lucky* began to take shape in the late 1990s, when Sebold was studying fiction writing at a graduate program at University of California-Irvine. *The Lovely Bones* (2002), her best-selling novel explores the emotional impact of a crime, sexual disorder, and psychological condition towards the criminal and his victim and the family. This novel not only evokes in minute detail how much was taken from this young girl, and how much she missed out on, but it also traces in exquisite, painful detail how this violent and undeserved crimes distorts her family. In this period, she also wrote *The Almost Moon* (2007) which is about a woman who is mentally ill.

The present writer chooses Alice Sebold because of her ability to deal with psychological aspect of human beings. Most of her novels are about psychological and sexual disorder. “Sexual disorder” is a common term for Sebold. She is a writer who experienced a horrible incident. When she was 18 years old and a freshman at Syracuse, she was attacked, beaten and brutally raped in a nearby park. Because of that incident, she becomes known as “the girl who was raped” by fellow classmates. That is why in her novels Sebold always writes about sexual disorder.

The Types of Psychological Disorder Suffered by the Character

A. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in the Character, Mr. Harvey

In *The Lovely Bones*, Mr. Harvey is the character who suffers from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) refers to the response that develops after exposure to a psychologically traumatic event that results in psychological trauma. When that trauma leads to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), the character has persistent symptoms of recurrent re-experiencing of the trauma, numbing of general responsiveness, increased anxiety and emotional arousal.

In the entire first half of the story, it shows that Mr. Harvey is described as the horrible man who murdered Susie Salmon. However, looking back to his life, Mr. Harvey's childhood was almost the complete opposite of his victim, Susie. Unlike Susie's life, Mr. Harvey did not have a happy, loved, and safe childhood. Mr. Harvey must cope with the painful memories of the traumatic events, which often involve vivid images of seeing his mother being assaulted and most likely raped.

The family's condition of Mr. Harvey is already worsened even when his father is still living with them. One night after grave robbing, Mr. Harvey and his mother are awakened by three drunkards. "It was three men, looking through the windows in a way George Harvey recognized. It was the way his own father looked when he was drunk sometimes. It had a double effect: the whole gaze was leveled at his mother and simultaneously absented his son" (Sebold, 2002, p.189).

The glance of the three drunkards reminds Mr. Harvey to the figure of his father who mostly do abusive acts. When they focus only on his mother and

disregard his existence, he realizes that his mother is not safe. She is in a terrible situation where the three drunkards are ready to attack. "One of the three men was standing in front of the truck, the other two were banging on either side of the truck's roof, laughing and lolling their tongues. His mother shook her head vehemently, but this only enraged them. The man blocking the truck started rocking his hips back and forth against the front end, which caused the other two men to laugh harder" (Sebold, 2002, p.189).

The three drunkards try to frighten his mother. In this situation, his mother tries to fight against them but it only makes the situation worse. When he witnesses the brutal actions of the three drunkards towards his mother, he learns that a woman's and a child's position is unfortunate and that they are the two worst position to be in. Mr. Harvey thinks that a woman or a child always becomes a victim of the environment like what happened to his mother.

The traumatic event gives a terrible impact on the development of Mr. Harvey's life. After the traumatic event, the mind and the body are in shock. But as he makes sense of what happened and process his emotions, he comes out of it. With Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), however, he remains in psychological shock. These make the character have trouble into returning to his normal life.

It is depicted in the novel how Mr. Harvey re-experiences the trauma. He frequently recalls the event and experiences nightmares about it. These flashbacks occur unexpectedly in the middle of the day, and he is thrown back into the emotional reality of his experiences. These flashbacks and the nightmares he often suffers from, have become a constant source of torment.

Another symptom of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) found

in the character is emotional numbing. It may present a lack of interest in activities that used to be enjoyed, emotional deadness, and distancing oneself from people. When the character remembers the traumatic experience, the thought will evoke an intense level of psychological distress. With this disorder, Mr. Harvey shuts down his contact with other people in a sort of numbness, which causes him to be generally unresponsive in most situations. It makes him purposely isolate himself from society. These long lasting effects of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) go on to develop another psychological disorder such as personality disorder.

B. The Evidence of Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD)

In the best-selling novel *The Lovely Bones*, the character Mr. Harvey has personality traits consistent with the diagnosis of Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD). Mr. Harvey with an Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD) shows a lack of concern toward the expectations and rules of society, and usually become involved in violations of the rules of society and the rights for others. His problem of Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD) begins in childhood and continues throughout most of his adulthood in crimes.

Mr. Harvey is categorized as a psychopath because of his extreme form of Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD). He shows many characteristics of this disorder such as lack of concern regarding society's rules, repeated violations of the rights of others, superficially charming, lack for regard for the truth, tendencies toward physical aggression and extreme irritability. The most important of all characteristics is that the character shows a total and utter lack of remorse for any past deeds.

The character, Mr. Harvey, with this personality disorder demonstrates few

emotions beyond contempt for others. His lack of empathy is often combined with an inflated sense of self-worth and superficial charm that tends to mask an inner indifference to the needs or feeling of others. He can only mimic the emotions associated with committed relationship toward other people because he does not have physiological responses to emotionally change. "No, Harvey said, he didn't know the Salmons well. Had seen the children. Everyone knew who had children and who didn't, he noted, his head hanging down and to left a bit. 'You can see the toys in the yard. The houses are always more lively,' he noted, his voice halting" (Sebold, 2002, p.63).

This part shows that the police does not find any clue that make Mr. Harvey a murderer. When the police asks Mr. Harvey about Salmon's family, Mr. Harvey tells the police that he does not know the Salmon's family, especially Susie. He lies to the police by saying that he knows Salmons have children only from the toys in their yard. Before he kills Susie, he is already spying and learns about Salmon's family. He does it to cover his crime. However, the police cannot arrest Mr. Harvey because there is no evidence linking him to Susie.

The Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD) in Mr. Harvey is caused by poor parenting, absent father and unattentive mother who fail to properly socialize him. The emotional and physical disturbances that precede the departure of parents are the greater importance in producing this disorder than the physical absence. His mother was a desperate woman, an alcoholic, and kleptomaniac. In addition, his father is an abusive person. Because of his abusive father, his father drives his mother away from the family when he is very young and this has a lasting effect on him. Disharmony between his parents played a major role in influencing the life that he would become an antisocial adult.

“He had forced her out of the car. George Harvey sat till as stone in the back seat—eyes wide, no more afraid than a stone, watching it all as he did everything by then—in slow-mo. She had run without stopping, her white body thin and fragile and disappearing, while her son clung on to the amber necklace she had torn from her neck to hand him, his father had watched the road: ‘She’s gone now son,’ he said that she won’t be coming back” (Sebold, 2002, p.97).

Mr. Harvey’s father forces his wife, Mr. Harvey’s mother, out of the car. Seeing his mother run out of the car, Mr. Harvey feels that he loses the only precious thing in his life. A mother, the only one that he wants now has gone. It makes him grow up as a loner. Mr. Harvey cannot forget these childhood memories.

His father’s expulsion of Mr. Harvey’s mother from the family make Mr. Harvey learn that being a woman is the worst thing to be. In this condition, Mr. Harvey fails to identify strongly with his father. When parents vacillate between unreasonable harshness and extreme laxity, they send confusing message to the child about what is right and what is wrong, or what is acceptable and what is unacceptable. Children with such parents fail to make a connection between their actions, bad or good, and the consequences.

Mr. Harvey’s childhood played an important role in his mental development and the man he became. The choices Mr. Harvey makes as a grown man are influenced from what he learned and was exposed to as a child. The childhood memories, when his mother has been trapped by the three drunkards and the expulsion of his mother by his father lead him to be a sexual killer. The early life experience of Mr. Harvey which leads childhood victim of abuse perpetrates similar acts of abuse when he reaches adulthood. It is such a connection that

which provides some greater insight into the mind of him who commits this disturbing crime. Mr. Harvey was victimized in his childhood and now he is a victimizer in his adulthood.

C. Mr. Harvey’s Psychological Disorder of Pedophilia

The character Mr. Harvey demonstrates many characteristics of pedophilia such as experiencing recurrent, sexual urges or actual behaviors involving sexual activity with prepubescent children, like child-like activities, and work around children.

Typically, Mr. Harvey is a pedophile who is attracted to female victims. He who does acts on his pedophilic impulses commit such acts as undressing the victim, touching the victim’s genital, and coercing the victim to participate on sex activity. It is depicted in the novel how he rapes his victim, Susie at the age of 14.

“I talked so that I would not have to take in this knowledge: Mr. Harvey was no character. He made me feel skeezy and icky now that he was blocking the door.

“Mr. Harvey, I really have to get home.”

“Take off your clothes.”

“What?”

“Take your clothes off, Mr. Harvey said. “I want to check that you’re still a virgin.”

“I am Mr. Harvey,” I said.

“I want to make sure. Your parents will thank me.” (Sebold, 2002, p. 12)

Susie feels not comfortable with the situation. There is something weird with Mr. Harvey’s appearance. While she decided to go home, Mr. Harvey tries to hold back against her. Then she realizes that she is trapped in a difficult situation. Seeing a young girl in front of him, Mr. Harvey cannot control his sexual desire to rape her. He tries to undress Susie. He views his actions as helpful to check her virgin. However, these activities are commonly explained with excuses that he

has educational value about virginity for Susie, the themes that are also common in pedophilic pornography.

As described in the novel, Susie is not the only one who becomes Mr. Harvey's victims. He has already raped several young girls under the age of 15 with similar violent ways. Mr. Harvey's victims are generally aged 13 years old or younger and most of his victims are close to puberty and sexually inexperienced.

Jackie Meyer. Delaware, 1967. Thirteen.

Flora Hernandez. Delaware, 1963. Eight.

Leah Fox. Delaware, 1969. Twelve.

Leidia Johnson. 1960. Six..

Wendy Richter. Connecticut, 1971. Thirteen. (Sebold, 2002, p.181)

Mr. Harvey knows every detail how to get his victims. He deliberately lives near a junior high school and a badminton court. All days, he watches the students from his house and imagining their bodies. As a rapist, he does not stand out and does not usually appear scary or weird. A child would not normally become afraid when meeting him. He becomes someone the child knows. His trap is successful. He relates well to his victim, Susie, easily gaining her trust, and be friend of her parents. He knows that children have an insatiable need for care and attention. With pedophilic behaviors, Mr. Harvey uses it to abuse her. When he subtly grows closer to her, he creates a mental environment where she sees him as a person who can be trusted. This makes it easy for him.

As described in the novel, Mr. Harvey has a traumatic childhood. He is denied of the love and the warmth of a woman. In his life, he never receives love from his mother and does not understand about the relationship with women. Mr. Harvey only has an imaginary wife with the name of his last victim. His childhood becomes a shadow which has carried over to his adulthood. With his unconscious and undeveloped emotional feelings he

feels that he can rape young girls. Mr. Harvey chooses young girls as his victims because he thinks that girls under the age of 13 are smaller and weaker than him. It makes him easier to dominate his sexual partner.

CONCLUSION

From the analysis, some conclusions can be drawn to answer the objectives related to psychological disorder that the character, Mr. Harvey suffers from in the novel *The Lovely Bones*. The conclusion reveals three kinds of psychological disorder that lead Mr. Harvey to become a sexual killer.

In the novel *The Lovely Bones*, Mr. Harvey is described as a sexual killer who suffers from psychological disorder. The first psychological disorder in the character, Mr. Harvey suffers is Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Mr. Harvey has trouble to get back to his normal life because of his traumatic experience. His traumatic experience makes him isolate himself from the society.

The second psychological disorder that Mr. Harvey suffers from is Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD). Mr. Harvey's antisocial behaviors lead him to be a criminal. He begins to disregard the rules by committing violent crimes. As described in the novel Mr. Harvey kills several young girls and has never been caught for his actions.

The third psychological disorder that is found in the character Mr. Harvey is Pedophilia. Before Mr. Harvey kills his victims, he also rapes them. He finds that raping children can fulfill his love desire that he never gets from his mother. This becomes a reason why he is seen as a sexual predator.

The factor that affects Mr. Harvey to suffer from those disorders is childhood memories. Mr. Harvey does not have a happy childhood. He grows up as a loner

because of his broken family. This parental loss becomes an important factor in the development of Mr. Harvey's life. It influences his thought and the choice of the man he becomes. That is why Mr. Harvey becomes a killer and also a rapist.

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