

Depression Symptoms on The Dialogues of Laney Brooks in "I Smile Back" Movie

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Abstract

This qualitative research aims to find out and analyze the depression symptoms of Laney Brooks in the dialogue of the "I Smile Back" movie. This research focuses on analyzing one of the four types of bipolar disease episodes called depression in the main character, Laney Brooks. The methods used in analyzing the data are descriptive and qualitative. The observation method was used to collect the data for this study by watching the movie and implementing a note-taking technique to identify and classify the data containing the depression symptoms of Laney Brooks in the dialog. NAMI (National Alliance Mental Illness) and Analyze Fiction by Kenney, W. P. (1966) theory have been applied in this research. The final result shows that Laney Brooks' depression symptoms are indicated by changes in appetite or weight, concentration and memory problems, irritability, and feelings of worthlessness or guilt. Laney shows the symptoms of depression through her dialogue, which greatly affects the people around her and Laney's daily life.

Keywords: *bipolar disorder, depression, dialogue, movie.*

INTRODUCTION

A person's mood, energy level, and capacity for clear thought can dramatically change as a result of bipolar disorder, a mental condition. According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), in contrast to the regular ups and downs that most people experience, those who have bipolar disorder have high and low moods known as mania and depression. Although bipolar disorder is not commonly noticed in society, it is quite common among adolescents and adults. Many people with bipolar disorder are usually unaware that they have this mental disorder. This is so despite the fact that the effects are the same as those of a physical illness, because society does not view mental illness as a true disease. People with this condition risk dying if they are not treated. The symptoms of bipolar disorder are mania, hypomania, depression, and mixed episodes; however, in particular, this study focuses on depression. WHO (2022).

Depression is a prevalent mental illness and the condition affects 5% of individuals worldwide. Consistent sorrow and a loss of interest in formerly fulfilling or joyful activities are its defining traits. Additionally, it may compromise appetite

and sleep. Concentration problems and fatigue are frequent. The largest cause of disability in the world today is depression, which also significantly increases the burden of sickness on the planet. A person's capacity to function and lead a fulfilling life can be significantly affected by the consequences of depression, which can be long-lasting or recurring. According to NAMI a loss of enjoyment in once pleasurable or stimulating activities is a sign of clinical depression. People frequently experience pessimism, cynicism, and feelings of hopelessness. These feelings are linked to a wide range of physical symptoms, including poor focus, forgetfulness, excessive fatigue, and changed eating patterns. This depression also has symptoms ranging from feeling hopeless, sad or empty, irritability, inability to experience pleasure, fatigue or loss of energy, physical and mental lethargy, appetite or weight changes, sleep problems, concentration and memory problems, feelings of inadequacy worth or guilt, thoughts about death or suicide (NAMI, 2009).

Dewi et al. (2022) argue that conflict is one of the elements that all literary works include, and it is crucial to the plot since it keeps the narrative interesting and because the id, ego, and superego are not the components of the personality that control it. But there are many opportunities for abnormal behavior to arise if there is a conflict between the three structures. This shows that conflict is very influential on the behavior of someone who has or is experiencing conflict, and even then, it applies to conflicts that occurred in the past that led to the emergence of abnormal behavior, usually deviant behavior or endangering oneself or others because of thoughts and feelings that are not normal and often self-harm and cause serious appetite disorders. Therefore, conflict can lead to abnormal behavior, and this abnormal behavior can lead to major depression. This statement amplifies the study that has been conducted by Haney et al. (2011:67), which states that symbolic interactionism has focused on the personal interaction between the actor and others, and the result of this interaction will define the self. In order to implement symbolic interaction, language and the development of symbolic meaning, which is embodied in situations that emerge in conflict, will become very clear examples of this interactive process. The research further shows an example

of how the behavior of the subject shows the manifestation of interaction with language and behavior in both positive and negative situations (2011:70).

Furthermore, Ratushima et al. (2017), Yuliantari (2015), Rizki et al. (2016), and Putra et al. (2015) mention the cause of bipolar expression, the symptoms that may occur in the subject, and give knowledge about bipolar disorder in order to know the symptoms of the disease and to be able to reduce the number of patients suffering from bipolar disorder by making articles that discuss bipolar disorder because most people are not aware that they are being diagnosed with bipolar disorder or not. As a result, the behavior and language shown by the subject are eventually becoming the implementation of symbolism interaction as a validation of the symptoms of bipolar disorder shown by the sentences, words, actions, and attitudes.

In relation to movie research conducted by Kurniawan, et.al. (2019) states that short film media can be used to convey information about bipolar disorder more fully and can make the audience able to clearly feel and know the character of someone who suffers from bipolar disorder. This shows that through films, people can be educated or learn about understanding the symptoms of bipolar disorder itself. This validates that this research is certainly very useful for the readers because the researcher wants to give understanding to the public to increase knowledge about the symptoms of bipolar disorder because this disease is rarely realized by the public because people who have this disease still look like normal when in fact they are not. Therefore, this study tries to analyze and find out the causes of bipolar disorder, especially in the depression phase of Laney's dialogue in the film.

The film *I Smile Back* is based on Amy Koppelman's novel with the same title. The film received numerous accolades that year, including the Washington DC Area Film Critics Association Award, Sundance Film Festival, Oldenburg Film Festival, Deauville Film Festival, and the 2016 Screen Actors Guild Awards and Young Entertainer Awards. This film depicts Laney, who suffers from bipolar disorder. The bipolar disorder experienced by Laney greatly affects the environment around her, especially her own family. In the film *I Smile Back*, Laney suffers from bipolar

disorder, which is characterized by bipolar symptoms, one of which is depression. Throughout the plot of the film, Laney often changes her mood every now and then from happy to very disappointed or sad. Besides, Laney sometimes looks like she has changed, but after a while she suddenly becomes anxious. Bipolar symptoms that occur in Laney are also seen in the dialogue she has with the people around her who show symptoms of bipolar disorder, namely depression.

RESEARCH METHOD

The data for this study were sourced from the movie "I Smile Back," directed by Adam Salky in 2015. To make it easier for the reader, at the beginning of the discussion section, the names of the symptoms of depression will be displayed, and then an orientation explanation will be displayed, which includes who, where, and what the relationship is between each of these characters and what happens to the data displayed. After that, pictures and dialogue snippets will be displayed, and dialogs in bold are relevant to showing bipolar symptoms in Laney. And at the very bottom is an overall explanation of the data displayed.

The observation method was employed to gather data for this study, utilizing a note-taking technique to identify and classify relevant information within the dialogue. The data collection process involved several steps. Firstly, the researcher carefully watched the movie "I Smile Back." Secondly, detailed notes were taken, recording each sentence and line of dialogue along with their corresponding points and names. Only the dialogue that pertained to the analysis of depressive symptoms in Laney was noted. Finally, the data were identified and classified according to the study's topics.

This study utilized a qualitative descriptive method, which involved collecting and analyzing data in the form of words rather than numerical values. The data analysis drew upon two theories: the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) theory was applied to analyze bipolar disorder, while the Analyze Fiction theory by Kenney, W. P. (1966) was used to analyze the dialogue within the literary work."

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings and provides an explanation of the analysis carried out based on the study as well as the findings presented using character and character conversations. There is also a table to clarify the amount of data and types of depressive symptoms contained in the film *I Smile Back* shown below:

Symptoms of Depression	Data
Changes in appetite or weight	2
Concentration and memory problems	1
Irritability	1
Feelings of worthless or guilt	1
Total	5

Table 1. Symptoms of depression in "I Smile Back" movie

The table above shows the names and total data from the symptoms of depression experienced by Laney, namely the researchers found four symptoms out of ten symptoms in the NAMI (National Alliance Mental Illness) theory, the symptom data found in the *I Smile Back* movie, starting from Changes in appetite or weight there are 2 data founds, Concentration and memory problems there is 1 data found, Irritability there is 1 data found, Feelings of worthless or guilt there is 1 data found and the total of the data becomes 5 data founds.

1. Changes in appetite or weight

Data 1

This conversation happened when Bruce, Laney, Donny, and Susan were eating together at Bruce's house. Bruce is the husband of Laney and Susan and Donny are a married couple they are neighbors of Laney. When everyone was enjoying the food and only Laney did not eat at all then Bruce told Laney to sit down and eat together. Laney denied with words like the dialogue below.



Picture 1. The scene when Laney breakfast with Donny family

- Bruce : Come on sit back down Laney. Everyone's here is enjoying the food.
Laney : **The ribs are sour.**
Bruce : How would you know? you didn't even eat them.
Laney : (sucking on candy)
Donny : Laney, come on, sit back down

According to the conversation that Laney said in the scene when Bruce asks her to join in for a meal, she emphasizes that "**ribs are sour**" and from these words, apparently, Laney saying ribs are sour is an approximation of Laney because she has not tried those ribs at all, but she can already tell that ribs are sour. The reason Laney said so was because the decrease in appetite experienced by Laney was caused by a disturbed mind or depression, which resulted in the hormonal balance in the body being disturbed, which indirectly affected activity in the brain, so that it affected Laney's decreasing appetite, which caused her to guess that the ribs tasted sour because Laney was depressed. She chooses to eat more candy than ribs. It shows that Laney tries to eat candy to make herself happy because, basically, it is known that eating sweet foods or candy can improve a person's mood, but not for people with bipolar disorder. The intake of carbohydrates and sugar is a form of inappropriate treatment. Bass explains that people with bipolar disorder who consume sugar can cause mood swings to be imbalanced, even wilder than before. Therefore, Laney's appetite became progressively lower as her mood and thoughts worsened. It seems that Laney's depression or distracted mind can reduce her appetite. According to the NAMI theory, symptoms of depression include changes in appetite or weight.

Data 2

This conversation took place at Laney's house, where they were having breakfast with her family. At that time, only Laney was smoking candy, while Laney's husband and children all had breakfast. Bruce started asking Laney why she did not eat, and Laney replied that she was not hungry. Then Bruce persuaded her to eat, but instead Laney denied it with a joke that can be seen in the conversation presented below.



Picture 2. The scene when Laney lunch with her family

- Bruce : Why aren't you eating?
Laney : **Not hungry.**
Bruce : You need to eat more food. Real food. Not lollipops.
Laney : Jesus what are you, the food police?
Kids : (laughs)

From the dialogue above it can be seen when Bruce asked Laney about not eating the food, Laney replied that she was **"not hungry"**. Judging from this word, Laney immediately expressed the word not hungry which refers directly to her decreased or disturbed appetite. It can be seen that Laney lost her appetite. She always does not feel hungry and only eat candy, as previously explained, eating sweet foods or candy can improve a person's mood but not for people with bipolar disorder, intake of carbohydrates and sugar is a form of inappropriate treatment it will cause mood swings to be imbalanced, even wilder than before. Therefore, it is known that the symptoms of depression greatly affect Laney's appetite because she always has a chaotic mind due to depression, Laney's chaotic thoughts always make Laney look like she is daydreaming in some scenes, but in this data, Laney seems

to be daydreaming and thinking about something while others are enjoying their food. It proves that she loses her appetite because of her chaotic mind. From the dialogue above, it can be seen that when Bruce asked Laney about not eating the food, Laney replied that she was "not hungry." Judging from this word, Laney immediately expressed the word "not hungry," which refers directly to her decreased or disturbed appetite. It can be seen that Laney lost her appetite. She always does not feel hungry and only eats candy. As previously explained, eating sweet foods or candy can improve a person's mood, but not for people with bipolar disorder. The intake of carbohydrates and sugar is a form of inappropriate treatment; it will cause mood swings to be imbalanced, even wilder than before. Therefore, it is known that the symptoms of depression greatly affect Laney's appetite because she always has a chaotic mind due to depression. Laney's chaotic thoughts always make her look like she is daydreaming in some scenes, but in this data, Laney seems to be daydreaming and thinking about something while others are enjoying their food. It proves that she loses her appetite because of her chaotic mind, and in addition, she always eats sweets, which will make her mood even worse. Concentration and memory problems mind and in addition, she always eats sweets which will make her mood even worse.

2. Concentration and memory problems

Data 3

This dialogue takes place at Janey and Eli's school when Laney is dropping the kids off at school. Mrs. Kosinski is a teacher at Janey and Eli's school, and Susan is also there to bring their kids to the school. Mrs. Kosinski asked for Laney's parent's ID, but Laney made excuses, as shown in the dialogue below:



Picture 3. The scene when Laney escort her kids to the school

Mrs. Kosinski : ID?

Laney : **I had crazy morning forgot it I'll bring it tomorrow I promise.**

Mrs. Kosinski : Parent IDs are mandatory now. We mailed them out last week. And sent an email.

Susan : I'll vouch for her.

Laney : Thank you

Eli : Ma?

Laney : It is okay E, I've been walking to class for two years surely you can make an exception for one day

Mrs. Kosinski : If I make an exception for you Mrs. Brooks, then I'm gonna have to make one for everyone. Is that how we want to teach our children? I wouldn't think so at this point in the year Eli is familiar enough get to his own classroom He'll be fine

Susan : I'll take Laney?

Laney : Okay

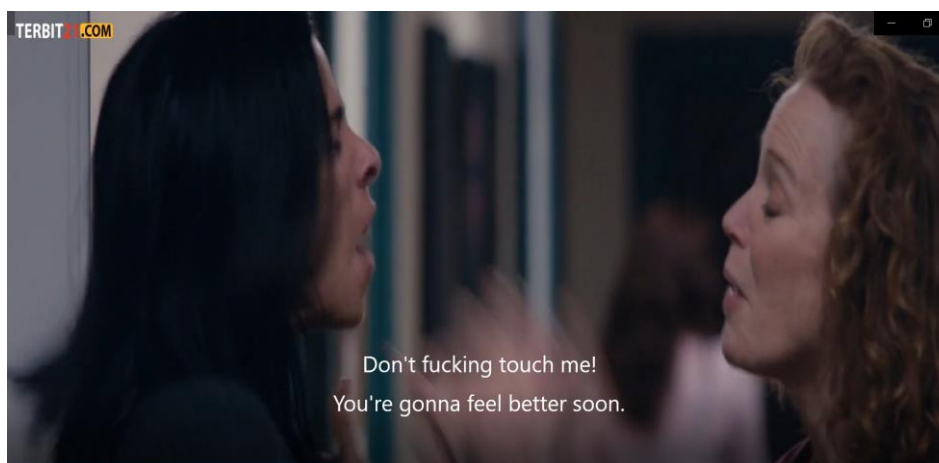
Laney looks calm when she enters the school. Still, when she realizes that all parents must bring their parents' ID when dropping their children off at school because that is the school's new role, Laney's mood immediately changes to anxiety and panic, as seen on Laney's face when she speaks to Mrs. Kosinski. Since she did not know that there was a new rule at her children's school that requires bringing the parent's ID, they have the right to escort their kids to class. Therefore, Laney makes excuses to keep the teacher from allowing her to escort her kids to class. **"I had crazy morning forgot it. I'll bring it tomorrow, I promise."** It is seen from the words that Laney said that she tried to make an excuse for not bringing her parent's ID at that time. She forgot to check the previous week's email sent by the school last week because, at that time, Laney looked depressed and took drugs. Hence, the

effects of her chaotic mind and drugs greatly affected her concentration and memory. From the conversation above, it is proven that Laney also had the symptoms of depression in the NAMI theory, which is a problem of concentration and memory.

3. Irritability

Data 4

This conversation took place at the hospital where Laney was being treated. The conversation happened between Laney and Nurse Pauline. At that time, Laney had an idea to call Bruce and leave the hospital because she was worried about being there without her family. Then Laney looked for an excuse to go back home by talking to Nurse Pauline. After hearing Laney, nurse Pauline told Laney to wait until she saw the doctor, but Laney suddenly got angry, as shown by the conversation.



Picture 4. The scene when Laney angry to nurse Pauline

Back in the lounge she spots Nurse Pauline. Laney rushes over to her in a panic.

Laney : I really need to call my husband. There's been a mistake.
It's honestly just not the place for me

Nurse Pauline : Your doctor will help you with that when you see him honey.

Laney : (angry) okay, well then I'd like to see the doctor now.

Nurse Pauline : You know, the first 48 hours are the worst.

Laney : **Well is this a fucking hospital? Because I'd like to see the doctor now.**

This a fucking hospital right?

Nurse Pauline : Relax, relax. You need to get some rest. This is the worst.

Laney : Don't fucking touch me!

Nurse Pauline : You're gonna better soon

From the conversation above, it can be seen that Laney suddenly spoke in a high tone and wanted to see a doctor immediately, but Nurse Pauline told her to wait patiently for the doctor. After hearing what was being said by Nurse Pauline, Laney uttered harsh words, and her emotions overflowed when she said, **"Well is this a fucking hospital?" Because I'd like to see the doctor now. This a fucking hospital right?"** The main factor that causes a sudden change in attitude is that Laney experienced an unpleasant event in the past, namely daddy issues. However, at that time, when Laney was in the hospital, her sudden attitude changed due to environmental conditions that made her feel uncomfortable because, when she was sick, Laney always looked anxious and depressed every time she was remembering her family. However, when she asked to see a doctor but Nurse Pauline did not allow it, her attitude changed drastically, driven by uncomfortable environmental factors. It can be seen from the words uttered by Laney, and it can also be seen from the emotions that Laney showed from being normal and suddenly turning very emotional and sensitive. It was greatly affected by Laney's life since she found it very difficult to control her emotions. From the conversation above, Laney's mood changed from relaxed to very emotional, which, according to the NAMI theory, is classified as one of the symptoms of depression, namely irritability.

4. Feelings of worthless or guilt

Data 5

This conversation took place in the hospital, or, to be precise, in the Dr. Page room, and the conversation happened between Laney and Dr. Page. At that time, Laney felt guilty because she felt she was trying so hard not to hurt her family. She found it very difficult to control herself, as shown by the dialogue below.



Picture 5. The scene when Laney talk to Dr. Page

- Laney : Neither of them will ever know how hard I tried not to hurt them.
Laney : **Am I goanna fuck this up?**
I don't want to fuck this up.
I don't want to fuck this up.
- Dr. Page : Well, you're gonna fuck up sometimes. You're goanna say things that you regret, you're gonna do things that you're not proud of and then you're gonna remember that you're a human being we all have our moments. But when you came here, you make conscious decision and that was to live.

From the conversation above, it can be seen that Laney is trying hard not to hurt her family, as shown by the words, "**Am I going to fuck this up?**" **I don't want to screw this up. I don't want to fuck this up.**" It is clear from the sentence uttered by Laney that the repetition of the words "**I don't want to fuck this up.**" occurred because of depression and anxiety factors, which then turn into guilt. Furthermore, Laney's purpose of repeating the word also shows that she wants to emphasize to her interlocutor that she really does not want to mess things up because she feels guilty towards her family. The guilty feeling occurred because she would hurt her family if she could not control herself and her emotions. According to NAMI, feelings of worthlessness or guilt are among the symptoms of depression. Thus, Laney has symptoms of depression because she got it from a gloomy experience, namely being abandoned by her father; this continues to traumatize her and makes Laney's depression worse. The effects of these depressive symptoms disrupt Laney's daily life, such as when she becomes unfocused and irritable. She and the people around her, such as her family, are also

affected by Laney's depression. Because of this depression, Laney also consumes drugs that endanger her and her family.

CONCLUSION

This study focuses on the symptoms of bipolar disorder experienced by Laney as the main character in the film *I Smile Back*, especially the symptoms of depression that she experienced. She has difficulty controlling her emotions, often does inappropriate things, and has no appetite. In this study, the researcher found four symptoms of depression that were seen during the dialogue that Laney had with the people around her, namely changes in appetite or weight, concentration and memory problems, irritability, and feelings of worthlessness or guilt. On this symptom of changes in appetite or weight, Laney often reveals that she often feels not hungry. In the dialogue she does, it shows that she has lost her appetite. Laney also often finds it difficult to concentrate and often forgets. Further, Laney is also very difficult to control her emotions and very easily offended by the words of those around her, and sometimes she feels guilty and worthless because she is difficult to control her emotions. Laney's symptom mentioned above indicates that people with bipolar disorder need attention from the people around them because, for people with mental illnesses such as bipolar or depression, caring is very important for healing. Awareness and concern for others around us are useful for a good life, especially for those with mental disorders such as bipolar, depression, and others. If you don't treat bipolar disorder, it will get worse, so keep an eye on those around you for a quick diagnosis of bipolar disorder by looking at the symptoms.

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