

Obsessive Love Disorder Portrayed Through Male Main Character in Ana Huang's Twisted Lies Novel

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Abstract

This thesis analyze the obsessive love disorder experienced by Christian Harper, the male main character in Ana Huang's novel, Twisted Lies. The objectives of this thesis are to know the symptoms of obsessive-love, the causes of the obsessive-love and the effects of obsessive-love in Ana Huang's Twisted Lies novel. The writer uses descriptive qualitative method. To analyze the novel the writer read the novel several times and uses theories from books and journal. The result of this study are the symptoms of male main character having obsessive love disorder are making Stella his idealized lover, delusional jealousy, and pursuit. The causes of male main character having obsessive love disorder is abandonment. Meanwhile, the effects of male main character having obsessive love disorder is isolation.

Keywords: Literature; Obsessive Love Disorder: Novel

1.Introduction

Literature is the way to express people's life, and people can learn things from literature that they would not otherwise know in this world. Literary works are typically interpreted as a reflection of the author's viewpoint during certain periods (Wibowo & Akbar, 2017). Literature serves as a powerful medium for expressing the complexities of human life, offering insights and perspectives that may not be readily apparent. Through literary works, individuals can gain a deeper understanding of diverse experiences, cultures, and historical contexts. A literary text can be defined as anything written in prose or poetry. However, if one were to take this definition literally, even a mail order item or the first poem could be considered a literary text. For this reason, a literary text needs to have excellent writing in order for its meaning to be understood (Isariyawat et al., 2020). The statement implies that although a literary text can take many different forms, what sets it apart from other written materials is not only whether it is written in prose or poetry but also how well it is written. Novel is an individual's thought process derived from their imagination of actual events that can be condensed and expressed in writing as literary works. because the author includes true accounts of human experiences in their novels (Maulidiyah et al., 2021). This implies that a novel is an artistic creation that comes from the mind of the writer. The author synthesizes and transforms real-life experiences, observations, and thoughts into a literary work, drawing inspiration from them. and highlights how real-life stories and human experiences are frequently incorporated into novel.

One of example of novel in literature is Ana Huang's *Twisted Lies* that tell about Christian and Stella love story. In essence, the dynamics of the relationship between Christian and this woman illustrate the potential for obsessive love disorder. Obsessive love is when someone becomes fixated on someone they believe they are in love with. An obsessive need to care for and protect the person they love is experienced by someone with obsessive-love disorder. This behaviour can then turn into a need to dominate the person they care about (Rohati et al., 2022). The statement emphasizes the idea of obsessive love, which is defined as a strong fixation on someone while harboring the conviction that one is in love. (Sandy & Setyawan, 2021) in Forward and Buck state that, "Obsessive love is the opposite of healthy love, where healthy love filled with mutual trust, care and respect. In contrast, obsessive love filled with jealousy, fear and possessiveness. In the end, obsessive love can be harmful and never satisfied". (Larasati, 2022) quoted the explanation of Susan Forward and Craig Buck state that the person who suffers forms obsessive love disorder have some symptoms, there are: idealized lover,

delusional jealousy, and pursuit. According to theory of Susan Forward & Craig Buck, obsessive love is often rooted in childhood experiences characterized by a pervasive sense of unloved, unwanted, ignored, or abandonment by parents. People with this illness frequently come from homes where rejection is a constant emotion. The very parents who have constantly rejected them become the main source of their desperate desire of love. These people experience rejection more frequently in spite of their persistent attempts to rebuild a relationship with their parents' affection, which contributes to their increasing desperation. Obsessive Love Disorder is shaped by an obsessive need for connection, which is often present throughout adulthood and was formed in the furnace of childhood. According to (Marici et al., 2023) abandonment refers to a circumstance in which a parent purposefully abandons their child, either overtly or covertly, with no intention of coming back. People who have deliberately been abandoned frequently struggle with severe emotional wounds in the setting of this condition. An obsession with love and connection grows out of the residual pain. This leads to an unhealthy and obsessive fixation on relationships as the dread of being abandoned again feeds compulsive behaviors to ensure attachment. When someone with Obsessive Love Disorder tries to fill the gap left by the intentional abandonment of their past, it's because of the painful and purposeful nature of the first abandonment that contributes to their obsessive habits.

Based on theory of Susan Forward & Craig Buck one of the effect of obsessive love is isolation. When someone engages in obsessive behavior, they may isolate themselves from friends, family, and coworkers. This is known as isolation. Because they are so consumed with their partner, obsessives frequently overlook their relationships, making others feel undervalued or unloved by canceling dates or being consistently unavailable. While they have some similarities, social isolation and loneliness are not the same. Having few social roles, relationships, or group memberships combined with infrequent social interaction is the objective definition of social isolation (HHS & Oash, 2023). Isolation, as delineated in the provided text, refers to a state characterized by a paucity of social relationships, roles, group affiliations, and infrequent engagement in social interactions. It is a condition devoid of substantial interpersonal connections, highlighting an objective scarcity in the social fabric of an individual's life.

2. Method

The method used in this study is descriptive qualitative. The descriptive qualitative method is an approach of expressing an interesting object into words so that the reader can relate to it or feel something similar to what the author has felt and experienced (Epa, 2019). Therefore, qualitative methods are applied in a study that needs to be analysed and presented in the form of description. The main data or material for this study were quotes, sentences that highlight the main character and the characteristics of the male character in novel *Twisted Lies* by Ana Huang. The writer defines the theory of theory obsessive-love-disorder. In processing data the writer will do some steps are follows: reading the novel repeatedly and identifying the topic of novel, looking and selecting the correlation of data and theory, taking notes of important information in both novel and references data source, and start analysis and drawing the conclusion of the analysis that has already done in the former chapter.

3. Findings and Discussion

a. Stella as Idealized Lover

The presence of Stella as Christian's idealized lover can be seen from his interest in Stella. Since the first time they met, Stella constantly running in Christian mind.

In the absence of conversation, my mind drifted toward a certain brunette.

If my thoughts were chaos, she was my anchor.

They always went back to her.

The memory of her walking down the snow-covered street, her hair tossed wild by the wind and her eyes shining like jade, lingered in my brain. The warmth of her, like a ray of sunshine peeking out after a storm, lingered everywhere else (Huang, 2022).

The idealized lover in this statement is portrayed as a calming and stabilizing force in Christian's life. Stella becomes the anchor amidst the chaos of Christian's mind, signifying a sense of security and emotional grounding. The repetition of thoughts returning to her underscores her significance, indicating that she holds a central place in Christian's emotions and thoughts. The vivid description of the brunette walking down a snow-covered street adds layers to the idealization. Her untamed hair and eyes shining like jade evoke an ethereal beauty, suggesting a romanticized perception of the lover. The metaphor comparing her warmth to a ray of sunshine after a storm emphasizes the comforting and uplifting nature of her presence. This idealized lover, with qualities that soothe and captivate, becomes a source of solace and brightness in Christian's world, offering a sanctuary from the tumultuous currents of the mind.

b. Delusional Jealousy

The presence of delusional jealousy can be seen in Christian's attitude and thoughts when he threatens other people who he thinks are too close to Stella. When Christian was chatting with Stella in the lobby and suddenly his business partner, Dante, appeared. He finds it annoying to see Stella getting to know Dante. He became even more jealous when Dante did not shake Stella hand but instead kissed her hand.

"I didn't like people touching what was mine. "Lighten that scowl, Harper." Dante took a lazy sip of his drink. "Otherwise, it'll freeze that way, and women won't like your face as much anymore." My cold smile told him how little I cared. "Perhaps if you took your own advice, you wouldn't be sleeping in a different room than your fiancée." Satisfaction filled my chest at his narrowed eyes. If Stella was my weakness, Vivian was his (Huang, 2022).

Delusional jealousy is evident in Christian's intense reaction to others touching what they perceive as theirs. Christian expresses discomfort with people encroaching on his belongings or relationships. This possessive nature is reinforced by the disdainful reaction to Dante's comment about his facial expression, emphasizing a fixation on maintaining control and ownership. Christian's satisfaction at pointing out Dante's apparent infidelity suggests a delusional belief that their possessiveness is justified, even if it involves monitoring others' relationships. The text also unveils a complex web of relationships, where jealousy becomes a driving force.

c. Pursuit to Stella

Obsessive pursuit is the next symptom that prove Christian's obsessive love for Stella. Ever since the first time Christian met Stella, his romantic sentiments have driven his to act irrational.

"I shouldn't have lowered her rent when she came to see the building, and I damn well shouldn't have let her keep the rent after Jules moved out. In exchange for taking care of my fucking plants, no less, because a selfless concession on my part would've been too suspicious.

I didn't give a shit about those plants. They were only there because my interior designer insisted they "rounded out the apartment." But I knew Stella loved plants, and it was better than asking her to file my papers (Huang, 2022).

The pursuit depicted in this narrative illustrates a manifestation of obsessive love disorder through Christian's actions, particularly in his decision to lower Stella's rent and let her keep the reduced rate after a previous tenant moved out. Christian's irrational concession of lowering Stella's rent reflects a compulsive desire to establish a connection or maintain proximity, even if it means sacrificing financial interests. The pretext of needing someone to care for the plants serves as a rationalization, masking the underlying obsession with Stella. This pursuit is not based on genuine concern for the plants but rather a calculated move to keep Stella in close quarters, revealing a distorted sense of prioritization driven by an obsessive fixation.

d. Cause of Obsessive Love

Individuals who have experienced the loss of parents, either through death or other forms of separation, may develop deep-seated fears of abandonment that influence their adult relationships. In the context of obsessive love disorder, the fear of abandonment can lead to intense and irrational efforts to maintain closeness and control in relationships. The individual may exhibit obsessive behaviors driven by an overwhelming fear of being abandoned or left alone. "Christian never talked about his parents, and I hadn't spotted a single photo of them in his house. "Dead.""(Huang, 2022). The statement hints at a potential cause of obsessive love disorder, specifically the fear of abandonment. Christian's reluctance to discuss his parents and the absence of any photos of them in his house, followed by the blunt revelation that they are deceased, suggests a significant emotional wound related to abandonment.

In Christian's case, the silence about his parents and the absence of any visual reminders may indicate a coping mechanism or a protective barrier erected to shield himself from revisiting the pain of abandonment. Understanding these underlying fears is crucial in addressing and managing the symptoms of obsessive love disorder, as they often stem from unresolved emotional issues related to past losses and separations.

Christian's disclosure that he was raised by his aunt until her death during his college years implies a significant loss and disruption in his attachment figures. As quoted, "My aunt raised me until she died when I was in college." Christian answered my unfinished question. "I've been on my own since."(Huang, 2022). Losing a primary caregiver can lead to profound emotional consequences, including feelings of abandonment and insecurity. Christian's experience of being on his own after his aunt's death may contribute to a heightened sensitivity to attachment and a deep-seated fear of losing those he cares about. Such experiences can create a strong emotional need for reassurance, closeness, and stability in subsequent relationships, potentially fueling obsessive patterns of behavior to prevent perceived threats of abandonment. Understanding the impact of past abandonment experiences is crucial in unraveling the roots of obsessive love disorder, as it sheds light on the emotional vulnerabilities that may drive the individual to seek extreme measures to maintain connection and avoid being left alone.

e. Effect of Obsessive Love Disorder

Christian's isolation is evident through his inner monologue and reflections on attending the party. His sigh and regret suggest a reluctance to engage in social interactions. The mention of Stella's insistence on attending the party highlights a potential external pressure, but Christian's desire for more productive activities reveals his longing for solitude. The mention of hunting down Stella's stalker and reorganizing his library implies a preference for solitary pursuits, emphasizing his need for control over his environment. The reference to the insufferable conversation further underscores his discomfort in social settings, painting a picture of voluntary withdrawal from typical social engagement.

Christian's situation aligns with a decrease in typical social input, as he finds the party undesirable and longs for alternative, solitary activities. As quoted, "I sighed, regretting my decision to attend this damned party. If Stella hadn't been so adamant about attending, I could've spent the day doing something more productive, like hunting down her stalker,

reorganizing my library, or finishing yesterday's crossword. Anything was better than this insufferable conversation" (Huang, 2022).

Drawing on the theory of isolation, His deliberate choice of more solitary endeavors, such as hunting down a stalker or reorganizing his library, suggests an intentional move to minimize social interactions. While the narrative doesn't explicitly mention restrictions on physical space or mobility, the emphasis on Christian's internal reflections and aversion to the party points to a self-imposed isolation where he seeks refuge from the social demands of the gathering.

Rhys was too busy laughing to pay attention to the drama unfolding less than three feet away.

"Wait till I tell Bridget. She's going to love this."

My temporary good mood evaporated. "You won't tell her shit."

"Sure I won't." His big frame shook with mirth.

My back teeth clenched with aggravation.

If there was one thing I despised, besides incompetence and Valentine's Day, it was people digging into my personal business (Huang, 2022).

In the given dialogue between Christian and Rhys, Christian's experiences a form of isolation through the invasion of his personal boundaries. While Rhys is immersed in laughter, Christian becomes increasingly agitated as he perceives the unfolding drama. The dismissive attitude displayed by Rhys, coupled with his intention to share Christian's personal matters with Bridget, triggers a negative shift in Christian's mood. The humor and laughter surrounding Rhys further accentuate Christian's isolation as he grapples with the intrusion into his personal life. The frustration and clenching of teeth highlight Christian's desire to maintain a sense of privacy, emphasizing his emotional separation from the carefree atmosphere created by Rhys's laughter. In this scenario, the decrease in typical social boundaries and the unintentional restriction on Christian's control over his personal information contribute to his sense of isolation. The dialogue reflects the nuanced nature of isolation, demonstrating how it can be induced not only by physical separation but also by breaches in personal boundaries within a social context.

4. Conclusion

. Christian's obsessive love symptoms can be seen throughout this novel's plot, first of which his belief that Stella is the ideal lover and the source of his peaceful. Second, Christian experiences delusional jealousy whenever Stella is too close to someone else or not within reach of his eyes. He is even jealous of irrational things like Stella's doll and the man in Stella's dream. Third, Christian's obsessive pursuit can be found when he lower the rent of his building so Stella did not move, offered Stella the fake dating relationship, gave her the watch after she just get the new job, gave her a bodyguard, help her make a business plan, and basically let her living rent-free in his condo after the stalker incident. There is one factor that cause Christian's obsession with stella: abandonment. Christian's experience of being on his own after his parents' and aunt's death may contribute to a heightened sensitivity to attachment and a deep-seated fear of losing those he cares about. Such experiences can create a strong emotional need for reassurance, closeness, and stability in subsequent relationships, potentially fueling obsessive patterns of behavior to prevent perceived threats of abandonment.

Because of his obsessive love, Christian experience the effect of obsessive love disorder: Isolation. Christian's isolation is palpable through his inner thoughts and reactions to social situations. Christian's hesitation and need for isolation indicate a wish to distance themselves from customary social interactions, even in the face of outside influences like Stella's insistence on going to the party. He makes a conscious decision to limit social interactions, as seen by his fondness for solitary pursuits like tracking down stalkers or arranging his library. Based to the isolation theory, Christian's behaviors are consistent with his deliberate attempt to reduce his usual social input in order to avoid the pressures of social gatherings. In their conversation, Christian and Rhys delve deeper into Christian's emotional entanglements and discuss the possible negative effects of compulsive emotional attachments. It also raises the possibility that Christian needs to reflect on his life and make amends with the areas he has ignored.

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