

“The Purgatory” Reaction Paper

The male character displayed manipulation, power, and control with dysfunctional sexual behavior toward his wife. According to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental disorders* (American Psychiatric Association, 2013), criteria A of Conduct disorder, a person demonstrates a repetitive and persistent pattern of behavior of at least three of the following behaviors: aggression to people or animals, destruction of property, deceitfulness or theft, a serious violation of rules; which the specify if a person has limited prosocial emotions such as the lake of remorse or guilt and callous (Lack of empathy). He controls his wife by treating and intimidating her, managing her daily activities, and abusing her emotionally and physically by having non-consent sexual activity. On the other hand, he displayed little prosocial emotions, such as a lack of remorse and empathy toward his wife; these two characteristics indicated that he could meet the criteria for Conduct disorder. Also, he displayed characteristics of the paraphilic disorder, which sexual sadism disorder involves a sexual desire for a non-consenting person. He prefers to drug her wife so he can rape her, showing the level of emotional and sexual abuse by his dysfunctional behavior of power and control over her.

On the other hand, the female character seems that someday it will be better. From my understanding, she portrayed the “Cinderella complex” by Colette Dowling in the 80s. According to Saha & Safri (2016), the Cinderella Complex is a psychological syndrome in which a woman needs to depend on a dominant figure (a prince) who rescues her. Women with this syndrome have emotional problems such as low self-esteem and dependency issues. The scene where she asks him if she should see a doctor because she is bleeding shows how she depends on him, which seems not to be the first time another person has controlled her before, such as her mother or father. Also, the female personality characteristics met the criteria of Dependent

Personality Disorder 301.6 (F60.7) of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental disorders* (American Psychiatric Association, 2013), such as having difficulty making everyday decisions, needing others to assume responsibility for her life, expressing disagreement with others, and having difficulty doing things on her own.

Furthermore, “Purgatory” movie exemplifies how Intimate Partner violence happens among ordinary couples; he is working to pay the bills, and she is home taking care of the house; today, it’s not common anymore. He portrayed abusive behaviors that included power and control over her activities, financial responsibilities, and isolation (he denied her parents visiting them). Even he controls their sexual activities by drugging them without her consent and knowledge. It’s abusive and criminal. Also, he displayed narcissistic behavior in which he controls everything for his desire and pleasure. The isolation tactic includes prohibiting her parents from visiting them and not going out to buy groceries or food because the food was delivered by someone, preventing her from going out. The “power and control” are overwhelming and involve the emotional, social, financial, professional, and sexual areas of her daily routine.

The female character seems to dream of a better life and doesn’t realize that her husband had been abusing her. Probably, it’s not her first experience of being abused because she just accepted by saying every day, “it would be a better day.” Her passive behavior towards abuse shows and reinforces that she probably meets the dependent personality disorder criteria. Jackson & Erford (2017, 239) stated that the concept of learned helplessness theory explains why Intimate Partner Victims don’t leave their relationships; the female character didn’t show the movie desire to leave or change her situation.

As a counselor, I would use a person-centered approach combined with Trauma-focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy; the first goal of the counseling will be to lead her that her husband has abused her. Then, helping her make goals to rebuild her self-esteem and confidence. Also, lead her to seek a doctor for checkup such as blood tests for drugs. Counseling her it will be a long-term therapy because she didn't realized the risks she has been staying with her husband.

Reference

- American Psychiatric Association. (2013). Posttraumatic Stress Disorder. In *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 5th, DSM-5* (pp. 271-280). New Delhi: CBS Publishers & Distributors.
- Jackson-Cherry, L.R. & Erford, B.T. (2017). *Crisis Assessment, Intervention and Prevention* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Pearson
- Saha, S., & Safri, T. S. (2016). Cinderella Complex: Theoretical roots to psychological dependency syndrome in women. *The International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 3(3), 118-122.