



Post traumatic stress disorder and complex post-traumatic stress disorder reflected in *Always Watching* by Chevy Stevens

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Abstract. Stress Disorder experienced by the two main characters, Nadine and Heather, in *Always Watching* by Chevy Stevens. The discussion focuses on the PTSD suffered by Nadine, CPTSD suffered by Heather, the effect of Nadine's PTSD to ward her life, and the effect of Heather's CPTSD to ward her life. This research applies descriptive qualitative method due to that fact the data is discriptive and the data analysis is presented discriptively. In addition, psychological approach is applied in this study because the study deals with the psychological aspects of the characters in the novel. The analysis shows that Nadine suffers from PTSD due to the traumatic event in her childhood. Nadine's PTSD is indicated by several symptoms i.e. avoidance of stimuli associated with the traumatic experience and anger, flashback to the traumatic event, blaming and feeling guilty, excessive alertness and overreaction to anything. Further, Heather suffers from CPTSD. There are several symptom to indicate that Heather suffers from CPTSD i.e. always being nervous, crying, being easily angry, having disturbed images of thoughts, decreasing desire to act and communicate with the surrounding environment, feeling of isolation from others, blaming and guilty, hypervigilance, fear, anger or hopelessness, and suicidal thoughts, plans or attempts. The PTSD suffered by Nadine makes her experience trust issue and anxiety. Moreover, the CPTSD suffered by Heather makes her to get difficalty socialiling with others, easily angry, and nervous.

Keywords: *post-traumatic stress disorder, trauma, child abuse*

INTRODUCTION

It is very normal when humans react to an event such as a traumatic event. People who experience bad events or circumstances in life can cause trauma. Trauma is described as a stressful event that presents tremendous challenges to coping and adapting (Agaibi & Wilson, (2005: 196). After a stressful event, individuals usually experience confusion and feelings of helplessness. That is, the traumatic experience has a significant impact on the individual's life. While experiencing a traumatic event, some individuals may experience mental health problems such as depression and anxiety. Trauma also makes it difficult for a person to carry out normal daily activities. This is due to excessive fear or worry about situations which are reminiscent of the traumatic event. Traumatic experience has a significant influence on human life. Wilson and Thomas (2000: 1) stated that, traumatic ordeal can cause a transformation of personality, spirit, belief, and understanding of the

meaning of life. Therefore, trauma disrupts some of our basic assumptions about the world. For example, many people believe to some degree that the world is predictable, or that bad things don't happen to good people. Trauma changes people's basic beliefs about the world and it's hard for us to process it by ourselves.

In principle, the discussion of trauma cannot be separated from the discussion of post-traumatic conditions. One of the most well-known post-traumatic disorders is post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Post-traumatic stress disorder is a mental disorder that occurs after a person experiences trauma. This condition has a huge impact on a person, both physically and psychologically. Trauma allows negative influences. Traumatic events can bring about change through the assimilation of experience and changes in the underlying schema of self and the world (Janoff-Bulman, (1989:113). People can grow positively through traumatic events, but some people also have post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Literature is a true phenomenon of social life. The history of literary works includes psychological changes after experiencing trauma, which is represented by characters in authors' literary works. Gillespie (2010:5) states that psychology and literature are closely related to the field of human studies. One of the mental disorders is post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), also the subject of Chevy Stevens' novel *Always Watching*. Schiraldi (2009:3) states that post-traumatic stress disorder is the result of exposure to a highly stressful event or series of events such as war, rape, and abuse. One of these mental disorders is post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Schwartz (2016) stated "Fear and lack of security may force you to continuously scan your environment for possible threats. You may rely on coping strategies for survival, such as dissociation, a protective mechanism that disconnects you from a threatening experience. If you can relate to this quality, you can also identify with related problems such as: self-criticism, emotional distress, and relationship difficulties. If this describes you, it's not your fault and you didn't fail. You have a form of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)". In this statement clearly explain that when a child is neglected or abused, their primary orientation or perspective on the world becomes one of threat, fear, or survival. It is natural that childhood experiences with unreliable parents or caregivers can leave the child with doubts and confusion about what constitutes a romantic relationship, feel and lose the sense of security. Some issues arise, such as self-criticism, emotional suffering, and relationship difficulties. Even into adulthood, people rely on coping strategies such as dissociation, and protective mechanisms to help them escape from threatening experiences, to survive. This possibility tells if someone has some form of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Referring to the statement of the problem, there are two objectives of the study. The first objective is to describe Nadine and Heather's Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorder reflected in the novel *Always Watching* by Chevy Stevens. The second objective is to describe how Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorder suffered by Nadine and Heather affects their life

METHOD

This research is a qualitative research that will use more theory than numbers. According to Creswell Satori and Komariah, (2010: 24), qualitative research is a process of understanding based on separate methodological traditions, examining social or human problems, building a holistic picture, researching words, and reports, and conducting studies in a natural setting. This research uses a qualitative descriptive method with data-

related analysis and uses theory as a way of examining the material objects under investigation. Qualitative research methods are research methods that are descriptive in nature, use analysis, refer to data, use existing theories as supporting material, and develop theories. This study is descriptive because it uses a novel. That is, the data or facts collected are in the form of text, words, or descriptions rather than numbers and statistics like in quantitative research.

1. Classifying data.

After collecting the data, the writer classifies the data based on the research problem. Because the problems in this study are focused on the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and (CPTSD) Complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder that occur and the causes and consequences of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and (CPTSD) Complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, the authors classify the data based on the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and (CPTSD) Complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder occur and the causes and effects of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and (CPTSD) Complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

2. Interpret the results and draw conclusions

In this step, the writer analyzes the data by interpreting it. After that for the final process, the authors draw conclusions based on the data that has been analyzed. The conclusion is followed by the findings obtained by the author after conducting the analysis.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Nadine's PTSD is the result of traumatic event she experienced. The traumatic event experienced by Nadine is sexual abuse when she was a kid. She ever lived in a commune or a community and its leader sexually abused Nadine. Nadine's PTSD can be indicated through many symptoms flashbacks (feelings like a sad event occurred). Anger, excessively emotional and physical reactions triggered by the memory of a sad event. Avoidance of stimuli associated with the traumatic experience or numbness in the ability to respond, blaming and feeling guilty, excessive alertness, and overreaction to anything. The traumatic event happens in Nadine's childhood. She begins to remember it again when she meets Heather, one of her patients at the hospital. Heather have just miscarried and needs treatment for her mental illness. Heather explains that she lived in the Commune for some time before she is pregnant. Heather is accompanied by her husband Daniel when Nadine asks her some questions. Nadine asks who runs the Commune and when she hears the name of the leader, Nadine starts to feel uncomfortable and her heart beats fast. It can be shown in the quotation below:

“Aaron Ouinn. He's the director of all the programs at the center” It couldn't be the same man.

Heather's voice was a whisper. “Most of the members call it the commune.” The commune. I hadn't heard that name in years. I hadn't wanted to hear it ever again. I stared at Heather, trying to think, my heart thudding in my ears. (Stevens, 2013: 16-17)

Another symptom of Nadine's PTSD is she cannot remember important aspects of the traumatic event. There are some memories that seem to disappear from her memory. To find out the pieces of memory she has forgotten, she begins to remember her old best friend. She starts to remember her friend who was in Commune when she was kid.

On the way home from the hospital, I thought back to the commune and Willow the first person to get me interested in medicine. (Stevens, 2013: 67)

The memory replay occurs when Heather tries to explain the atmosphere in the Commune. Nadine suddenly remembers a memory fragment that existed. The feeling of anger is a manifestation of Nadine's unwillingness to remember her traumatic event. She tries to avoid people, places, and situations that remind her of the traumatic event. The meeting with Heather, someone who brings Nadine to remember the traumatic events she had experienced, do not last long because Heather eventually committed suicide and leaves Nadine deep woun

ds. As the doctor who has treat Heather, Nadine is sad because she misses some signs that Heather may decide to attempt suicide in the future.

Yes, she did seem to be doing better

." I didn't have the heart to tell him that it's when suicidal patients start feeling better that they sometimes complete the process--they now had the the energy to follow through. Even though she'd told me that she wasn't thinking hurting herself, she'd likely had a plan for a while and just waiting for an opportunity. (Stevens, 2013: 117

The quotation above shows that Nadine blames herself for Heather's death. This is also one of the signs of PTSD that is happening to Nadine. The symptom is blaming and feeling guilty. She blames herself and feels guilty for Heather's death even though Nadine should not have felt guilty because she have helped Heather.

Not only does she experience sexual abuse, she also experienced a terrible event. She had been locked up in a hole when she was kid. She refused Aaron's invitation when Aron tried to sexually abused. Her Nadine was in pain that she pushed Aaron as hard as she could and tried to run away. But Aaron caught her and he became very angry. Aaron then put Nadine into the hole. Aaron punched her in the temple very hard that Nadine was limp and she ended up trap in the hole.

....I remembered.

I kick and struggle, but he's holding tight. He steps backward and swings me around, then grabs one of the old metal barrels that are stacked against the wall. With one hand, he pries the lid off. He lifts my body over the barrel. I catch a flicker out of the corner of my eye, a shadow moving by the door, blocking the crack of light. "Help!" I yell, thinking someone is there. He jams my legs into the barrel, uses his knee to press down on my back. I grasp at the metal rim. He raps my knuckles, bends my fingers back until I have to let go. (Stevens, 2013: 340-341)

The traumatic event happened to Nadine are sexual abuse and trap in hole. They were very horrific events that resulted in Nadine's PTSD. She experiences all the symptoms of PTSD, repetition of the traumatic experience indicated by persistent memories of the sad event, flashbacks (feelings like a sad event occurred), anger, excessively emotional and physical reactions triggered by the memory of a sad event, and avoidance of stimuli associated with the traumatic experience or numbness in the ability to respond.

CONCLUSION

After analyzing the novel written by Chevy Stevens entitled *Always Watching*, it can be concluded that Nadine and Heather suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (CPTSD). These two characters adequately

represent people who suffer from PTSD and CPTSD in the real world. The writer analyzes PTSD and CPTSD described by the characters Nadine and Heather including symptoms of persistent memories of the sad event, and flashbacks or feelings like a sad event occurred. Anger and excessively emotional and physical reactions are triggered by the memory of a sad event. Avoidance of stimuli associated with the traumatic experience or numbness in the ability to respond, feelings of detachment, irritability or inability to control anger, difficulty concentrating, excessive alertness, and overreaction to anything. Blaming and feeling guilty, always nervous, crying, and easily angry, disturbed Images or Thoughts, decreased desire to act and communicate with the surrounding environment, feeling of isolation from others, hypervigilance, fear, anger or hopelessness, and suicidal thoughts, plans or attempts are supported by PTSD and CPTSD theories put forward by several experts.

The results of the analysis have shown how the trauma experienced by Nadine and Heather make them suffer from PTSD and CPTSD. The PTSD that happens to Nadine is a result of the sexual abuse she experienced as a child. Nadine experiences several PTSD symptoms that affect her life. Heather also experienced CPTSD because the traumatic events she experiences have many negative impacts on her life. The process of coping with a traumatic event and the aftereffects of experiencing it should be dealt with through a process that continues in their lives with personal strength and social support able to help them. Like Heather who has a husband who always supports her and Nadine who has close friends who are always there for her. However, sometimes PTSD and CPTSD sufferers still cannot act normally like people in general, that many things affect their lives.

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