

The Struggle of a Person with Tourette Syndrome for Being a Teacher as Seen in “Front of The Class” Movie By Peter Werner

Julia Rose¹ Firdiansyah² Esy Solvera³
UIN SulthanThahaSaifudin Jambi
juliarose.blogspot@gmail.com
firdiansyah@uinjambi.ac.id

Article Info

Articlehistory:

Submitted Jun 10, 2023
Revised Jul 15, 2023
Accepted Jul 28, 2023
Published Aug 31, 2023

Keywords:

*Struggle, Person with
Tourette syndrome,
Teacher*

ABSTRACT

This study analyze the struggle of a Person with Tourette syndrome for being a teacher in “Front of The Class” movie by Peter Werner. The aims of this research are to identify the characteristics of a Person with Tourette syndrome and the kinds of struggle used by a Person with Tourette syndrome as seen in –Front of The Class|| movie by Peter Werner. This research also used James Leckman et al, American Psychiatric Association and Stephen Harrison theory to find the result of the research. Researcher used descriptive qualitative method. The source of the data in this study is “Front of The Class” Movie by Peter Werner. In the data collection, the researcher used documentation technique. Then, the data were analyzed used descriptive analysis. From the results of this research, the researcher found three of physical characteristics represented of a Person with Tourette syndrome by Brad Cohen, there are the presence of tics, tics appear between 5 or 6 years of age, and repeated tics for at least one year. The researcher also found two of the mental characteristic represented by Brad Cohen, there are hard to concentrate, demonstrate disruptive behavior (impolite) and difficulty in interpersonal relationships. Then, the researcher found two kinds of struggle used by Brad Cohen, internal struggle and external struggle. Internal struggle are Brad holding tics to study, Brad tries to convince recruiter and register to be a teacher in various school. External struggle are struggle from Brad’s family and struggle from Brad’s principal (Mr. Myer).



Corresponding Author:

UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi
Jambi, Indonesia
Email:juliarose.blogspot@gmail.com
<http://doi.org/10.30631/ellture.v5i2.77>

Introduction

Since a long time ago, literature has become one of the media used by people to express their experience, mind, emotion, ideas and things that happen in life. According to Hudson (2004), literature is a language medium for expressing life, so it can be said to be essential because it contains real life. There are some kinds of literary work, such as film, novel, drama, autobiography, short story, and poetry (Eagleton, 2005). In literary work such as movies, plays, and novels, the characters are the representation of a person in the story. According to Abrams and Harpham (2014), character is a person who appears in a drama or narrative work and seen by the audience as having moral, intellectual, and emotional qualities based on what they say, their distinctive way of saying it, and the actions they take.

Struggle is a process carried out with great effort to achieve of our goals. Struggle is made great efforts with body, try- 2 hard, work-hard, against difficulties (Barnhart, 2008). Apart from that, of course, obstacles must surround a struggle, someone who is relentless, without giving up on fighting despite the many obstacles that stand in his way, is a person who deserves to be appreciated and is a wise person. "Front of the Class" is a movie directed by Peter Werner in 2008 because we can take many lessons from it, one of which is the struggle to achieve the desired goal or to reach something we want. This movie is an inspiration, adapted from the real-life story of Brad Cohen, and tells about the disability of Brad Cohen, who has Tourette syndrome and dreams of becoming a teacher.

In Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2022) states that Tourette syndrome (TS) is a condition of the nervous system that makes sufferers have 'tics' which are sudden twitches, movements, or sounds that they do repeatedly. In accordance with that point, it is fascinating to describe characteristics and identify the kinds of struggle by a Person with Tourette syndrome. The researcher formulated the following research questions:

1. What are the characteristics of a Person with Tourette syndrome as seen in Front of the Class|| Movie by Peter Werner?
2. What are the kinds of struggle used by a Person with Tourette syndrome as seen in Front of the Class|| Movie by Peter Werner?

Literature Review

Physicological Approach

Literature and psychology are branches of science that both study the human soul. Eagleton (2005) states that, many attempts have been made to define literature. We may describe it as "imaginative" writing in the sense of fiction, which is writing that is not

literally accurate. Literature describes human behavior through fiction. The psychological approach is a literature criticism approach that focuses on the psychological aspects of literary works. Luman (2016) states that the psychological approach is a perspective that is in accordance with certain assumptions regarding behavior. Each approach has ideas about how to describe, predict, and explain the behavior. The benefits of the psychological approach theory in literary works are a consideration for researcher or critics when researching the nature and personality of a person.

Tourette Syndrome

Tourette syndrome is a condition of the nervous system that makes sufferers have 'tics'. In Leckman et al. (2001) states that, —Tics are a curious assemblage of abrupt repetitive movement and sound or tics are sudden, repetitive, occasionally stereotyped movement or sounds that involve discrete muscle groups. Said an other way, tics are isolated, perhaps innate, fragments of normal motor or vokal behaviours that occur out of context.|| For example, a sufferer might grunt unwillingly. Chronic form of Tourette's syndrome, beginning in childhood, where children are susceptible to simple motor tic attacks, such as jerking their heads or blinking their eyes.

Physical Characteristics

- a. The Presence of Tics : Tics can be characterized by their anatomic location, frequency, intensity and complexity. Tics have two variaties, motor tics and vocal tics.
- b. Tics Appear Between The Ages Of 5 Or 6 Years : This condition typically begins in childhood, usually between the ages of 5 and 6, and can also peak between the ages of 7 and 15.
- c. Characterized By Repeated Tics : For At Least One Year Motor and phonic tics occur in brief bursts throughout the day and vary in severity over several weeks, months, or even years (Leckman et al, 2001). It indicates that tics occur frequently, or frequently on most days.
- d. Their Suppressibility and Suggestibility : Almost always, patients can willfully hold back their tics for brief periods of time, they can.

Mental Characteristics

- a. Many Person with Tourette syndrome with mild to average tic severity experience no trouble or impairment in functioning, and may even be unconscious of their tics.

- b. More Aggressive Symmetry : Some people with tic severity experience obsessions, which usually include recurring thoughts of aggressive actions.
- c. Hard To Concentrate : Hard to concentrate, which can hinder activities and hinder productivity at work or in school.
- d. Anxiet Disorders, Namely Fear, Chame and Excessive Anxiety : People with Tourette's syndrome can experience anxiety disorders that can be felt at any time, even without a clear stress trigger.
- e. Demonstrate Disruptive Behavior (Impolite) and Difficulty : In Interpersonal Relationships A person with Tourette syndrome might respond to a gesture or sound they see in another person by making a similar gesture or sound, which other people might think was made with purpose.

The Struggle

Struggle is a process made by someone in their life in realizing things that are desired and achieving things better. Of course, in order to achieve what is desired and dreams of, one must try hard and enthusiastically. According to Harrison (2012), Struggle is not necessarily a bad thing. If we struggle to right a wrong, it hurts, there is pain involved, but the outcome is dsirable.

- a. Internal Struggle According to Harrison (2012), –Internal struggle includes conflict arising within ourselves, the sources of which include our attitudes, desires, choices, understanding or interpretation of life, habits, attachments to people or situations, and our expectation of how things ought to be.
- b. External Struggle External struggle occurs at global, international, and social levels. It is any location where two or more people have a relationship. Examples include fights between siblings, arguments between parents, war, political revolutions, and worker strikes against employers (Harrison, 2012).

Method

Instrument and Data Analysis

The research design for this study was qualitative method. The data is the movie that related tothe research. In this research, the researcher took the data from in “Front of the Class” movie is a 2008 America movie and co-produced by Peter Werner, adapted from the real-life story of Brad Cohen who had Tourette syndrome and dreamed of becoming a teacher. The researcher did some steps in analyzing the data theory of Miles, Huberman & Saldana (2014). The steps are data reduction, data display, conclusion.

- a. Data Reduction Miles : Before making data reduction, the researcher collected data based on the results of the documentation. After the data collection stage is carried out, the researcher selected the most important information. Then, the researcher identified the data that related to the research questions.
- b. Data Display : In this case, the researcher displays data in the form of a flowchart and a narrative in the form of descriptive data from qualitative research. The researcher described data based on the theory of struggle by Stephan Harrison, theory about characteristic of Person with Tourette syndrome by James Leckman et al., and American Psychiatric Association.
- c. Conclusion : In this case, the researcher drew conclusions based on valid data by explaining the problems at the beginning and then making a summary of what has been described. then connecting the data or facts that have been obtained with the core of the problem to be searched to get an overview of the results that have been studied.

Findings and Discussion

The Characteristics of a Person with Tourette syndrome as seen in "Front of The Class" Movie by Peter Werner

Physical Characteristics

a. *The Presence of Tics*

a.1 Simple Motor Tics

Datum 1



00.19.05 – 00.19.26

Mother : **That, that's Brad, isn't it?** The noises and **the twitches...**

Doctor : I'll still need to do more tests but, umm, you could be right. We may have been headed down the wrong road, here (Rickman, 2018).

Based on the pictures and dialogues above, shows the simple motor tics experienced by Brad. This is an example of a person with Tourette syndrome who is constantly making movements, which can be physically assessed based on the sense of human vision. The data above was closely related to the theory used in this research, where common

examples of simple motor tics include twitches, mouth movement, and head jerks (Leckman et al., 2001).

Datum 2



00.23.05 – 00.23.24

Brad : I'd never seen anyone with Tourette's before. **There were eye blinkers and nose twitchers. Foot stompers and neck jerkers. Some of them yelled and coughed.** Is this what I looked like to other people? (Rickman, 2018).

Based on the picture and monologue above, we can see that every Tourette syndrome patient has different motor tics, some even fall into the complex motor tic category, where stereotyped movements are of a longer duration. For example hitting the face, biting a hand or wrist, etc.

a.2 Simple phonic tics

Datum 3



00.33.19 – 00.33.56

Mr. Myer : What's that?

Brad : **It's a thing in my brain that causes me to make weird noises.**

Mr. Myer : But you could control it if you wanted to, right?

Brad : No, sir. It's a sickness.

Mr. Myer : Well, why can't you just get cured?

Brad : There isn't any cure. **I don't like making noises any more than you like hearing them. They're even worse when I get stressed, when you don't accept that I can't stop them. But when I feel accepted, then they're not so bad** (Rickman, 2018).

Based on the picture and dialogues above, shows that Brad is also included in the tic variations of simple phonic types. Where it is described that Brad makes a sound like a dog barking beyond Brad's control. The data above was closely related to the theory of simple phonic tics, where simple phonic tics are meaningless sounds or noises (Leckman et al., 2001).

Datum 4



01.03.55 – 01.04.07

Maxine :**You make more noise than my air horn. Sounds like you got healthy case of Tourette's.** (Rickman, 2018).

Based on the picture and dialogue above, shows that Brad, as a person with Tourette syndrome, makes sounds that are of course out of his control. The produced sound is a simple phonic tic. So, when Brad is in any condition, such as anxious, relaxed, or in a hurry, the tic sound will continue to appear without being able to be controlled and restrained by Brad.

a. *Tics appear between 5 or 6 years of age*

Datum 5

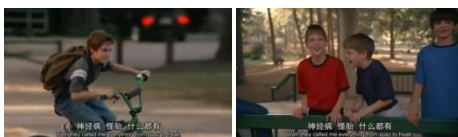


00.01.43 – 00.02.02

Brad : **My Companion first showed up, when I was six.**but it was years before it had a name. Now the shrinks said I was just hyper..... (Rickman, 2018).

Based on the picture and the monologue above, it can be known that since he was six years old, Brad has been experiencing signs of Tourette syndrome. This illustrates, when Brad was younger, he would make dog-barking noises, jerking the neck, his legs would shake, and he couldn't sit still. This happened without being able to be controlled by him.

Datum 6



00.00.06 – 00.00.35

Brad : **When I was a kid**, people called me by lots of names.

My brother, Jeff, called me Dr. Bobo.

My mom called me honey.

And the kids at school?

Well, **they called me everything from spaz to freak.**

I didn't have many friends actually. But **I did have a constant companion.** I can barely remember a time, when it wasn't there (Rickman, 2018).

Based on the pictures and the monologue above, shows that Brad grew up with his tics. Getting spaz to freak calls is becoming a regular thing for her. Brad didn't have any friends at school, but he always assumed he had a side friend, which we all know was Tourette syndrome. Brad's tic lasted until his growth.

Datum 7



01.32.43

Brad : The noise you just heard is the Tourette syndrome. **I've been living with since I was six years old**(Rickman, 2018).

Based on the picture and the monologue above, it can be known that, since the age of six, Brad has been diagnosed with Tourette syndrome. This symptom is characterized by simple motor tics and simple phonic tics that Brad has. Tics that appear several times a day. As a result, Brad is diagnosed as having Tourette syndrome.

b. Repeated tics for at least one year

Datum 8



00.05.13 – 00.05.22

Brad : I know, but **I'd like to tell you**, just like I tell the kids in my classes. See, **I explain to them that it's a brain thing that causes me to make strange noises they're like sneezes, irrepressible. When you have to, you have to** (Rickman, 2018).

Based on the picture and dialogue above, it can be said that Brad continues to live his life with a strange voice. However, Brad tries to make the strange sound so that it doesn't matter to other people and can be considered normal for everyone.

Mental Characteristics

a. Hard to concentrate

Datum 9



00.14.20 – 00.14.34

Brad :I mean, I loved learning, but I hated, hated reading. **Trying to concentrate brought out the worst in my Constant Companion** (Rickman, 2018).

Based on the picture and dialogue above, it can be known that Brad as Person with Tourette syndrome in the movie experiences concentrate problems. When he tried to concentrate, the tics would get worse and beyond Brad's control.

Datum 10



01.13.19 – 01.14.19

Brad : As it turned out, I needed more than just Dad's good luck. **I needed time.** With the clock, and my Tourette's, ticking away. **I failed to get all the way through the test** (Rickman, 2018).

Based on the picture and monologue above, shows the hard to concentrate that is experienced by Brad. This is an example of someone with Tourette's syndrome who can be assessed mentally.

b. *Demonstrate disruptive behavior (impolite) and difficulty in interpersonal relationships*

Datum 11



00.15.13 – 00.15.54

Teacher : **Brad? Come up here, please. I know you think you're the class clown, but I've had it with you.**

Brad : I can't help help it.

Teacher : **That's what you always say. I don't want to hear any more excuses. Your classmates are trying to study and your clowning makes it impossible.**

Brad : I'm sorry (Rickman, 2018).

Based on the picture and dialogues above, it can be known that Brad as Person with Tourette syndrome in the movie demonstrate disruptive behavior (impolite) and difficulty in interpersonal relationships. When the exam takes place, usually the children will work on and focus on the exam paper.

Datum 12



00.08.27– 00.08.37

Dad : Guys, listen! Hey, hey. Stop it! Brad! Help her out around the house, but most of all **let us stop the obnoxious behavior**, OK? ... Hey, listen. I mean it!OK? Quit the clowning.**Your brother may think its funny, but I don't.**

Brad : I can't help it. (Rickman, 2018).

Based on the picture and dialogues above, it can be known thatTourette syndrome which Brad suffers is getting worse because he doesn't get a positive climate from his environment or support from his father. His father considered Brad to be childish and unmanageable.

Kinds of Struggle Used by Person with Tourette syndrome as seen in “Front of the Class” movie by Peter Werner

1. Internal Struggle

a. Holding Tics to Study

Datum 13

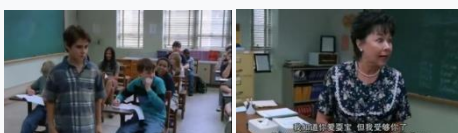


00.14.23 – 00.14.30

Brad : Now, somehow I don't know how, **I made okay grades.But, what would take a normal person an hour,took me two.Or three.** I mean, I loved learning,but I hated, hated reading (Rickman, 2018).

Based on the picture and dialogue above, it can be known Brad is a student who never gives up and keeps trying to be able to follow the lessons well even though Tourette syndrome makes it difficult for him to concentrate.

Datum 14



00.14.50 – 00.16.08

Teacher :**Brad? Come up here, please. I know you think you're the class clown, but I've had it with you.**

Brad : I can't help help it.

Based on the pictures and dialogues above, it can be known that Brad has tried his best not to make his tic sound. However, the tics remain uncontrollable. So, this did not get a good response from the people around Brad, including when class started.

b. Convince The Recruiter and Register to be A Teacher In Various Schools

Datum 15



00.05.18– 00.05.40

Brad : I know, but **I'd like to tell you, just like I tell the kids in my classes. See, I explain to them that it's a brain thing that causes me to make strange noises they're like sneezes, irrepressible. When you have to, you have to.** (Rickman, 2018).

Based on the picture and dialogues above, it can be known that the Person with Tourette syndrome (Brad Cohen) internal struggle with himself to convince recruiters that he is capable of teaching despite having Tourette's syndrome.

Datum 16



00.40.07 – 00.40.28

Brad : **If the Principal wasn't in, I'd give my resume to a secretary or a janitor, and ask them to drop it off when the principal returned. I didn't care. I needed a job. I wasn't going to stop until I had one** (Rickman, 2018).

Based on the pictures and the monologue, it can be known that Brad is struggling to realize his goals. With his determination, Brad made a map of every area where he had not interviewed schools and printed out lots of curriculum vitae to include various schools. Even though many schools have rejected him, Brad still doesn't give up.

Datum 17



00:52:54 – 00:53:32

Principal : And, Hilarie said that **if we're gonna talk the talk, we need to walk the walk**.She's waiting to show you your classroom.**Welcome** (Rickman, 2018).

Based on the picture above, it can be seen, finally, Brad's struggle was not in vain, Mountain View Elementary School that allowed him to teach. All the staff, including the teachers, were very enthusiastic about Brad's presence. His efforts to teach became real, Brad managed to create a fun learning atmosphere.

2. *External struggle*

a. Struggle from Brad's Family

Datum 18



00.11.23 – 00.11.30

Brad : **The hardest part was knowing how tough I made things for Mom.**I tried as best as I could for her (Rickman, 2018).

Based on the picture and the monologue above, it can be said that Brad admits how tough his mother is and how she doesn't give up on getting information about him.The data above was closely related to the theory used in this research, where external struggle is anywhere relationships exist between two or more people, a mother struggles to her son are example (Harrison, 2012).

Datum 19



00.22.36 – 00.24.20

Brad : It's a church, Mom!

Mother : Honey, you're not going to have to get a Bible lesson. This is just a support group.

Brad : Do I have to?

Mother :**You need to connect with other people who have Tourette's. Find out how they live with it.** OK? Let's do it (Rickman, 2018).

Based on the picture and dialogues above, it can be known that his mother hopes for Brad to learn from this group about how they live did not live up to her expectations. According to his mother, they were not a support group but resigned to hiding for life and being overcome by their own syndrome and his mother continues to support and motivate Brad to remain confident and not give in to his illness even though Tourette syndrome cannot be cured. And as for Brad, he won't forget the experience and won't let Tourette syndrome win.

b. Struggle from Brad's Principal (Mr. Myer)

Datum 20



00.30.40 – 00.31.22

- Mr. Myer : **What do you think a school's for, Brad?**
- Brad : I'm sorry. I keep disrupting the class
- Mr. Myer : You're not answering my question. **What's a school for? To educate, isn't it? To use knowledge to wipe out ignorance?**
- The school orchestra's having a concert this afternoon. You planning on going?
- Brad : **No, sir. My tics will ruin the music.**
- Mr. Myer : I want you to be there (Rickman, 2018).

Based on the pictures and the dialogues above, it can be known that the principal, Mr. Myer, is not like the previous principal Brad. Mr. Myer never blamed Brad for his tics. Instead, Mr. Myer provided space for Brad to be able to enjoy life like children in general. This was in accordance with the theory used in this research, where external struggle is anywhere relationships exist between two people to have high motivation in changing a better life occurs at global, and social levels (Harrison, 2012).

Datum 21



00.32.07 – 00.34.30

- Mr. Myer : What can we do and I mean everyone in this school. **What can we do to help you, Brad?**
- Brad : **I just want to be treated like everybody else** (Rickman, 2018).

Based on the picture and dialogues above, it can be known that because the actions taken by principal, has given room for Brad to fight. The principal has helped Brad avoid public discrimination. For Brad, a few words a little education and it has opened a door to a new world. Until someday, someday, Brad knew, Tourette's or no Tourette's, Brad was going to be a teacher.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the researcher concludes : there are three of the physical characteristics of Tourette syndrome, represented by Brad Cohen as seen in "Front of the Class" movie by Peter Werner. They are, the presence of tics such as simple motor tics and simple phonic tics, tics appear between the ages of 5 or 6 years, and repeated tics for at least one year. Furthermore, there are two mental characteristics of Tourette syndrome. They are, hard to concentrate and difficulty in understanding the lesson, and demonstrate disruptive behavior (impolite) and interpersonal relationships.

There are kinds of struggle by Brad Cohen for being a teacher as seen in "Front of the Class" movie by Peter Werner. There are, internal struggle and external struggle. Internal struggle such as convince the recruiter, more effort into studying, and struggle to register to be a teacher in various schools. While the external struggle such as struggle from Brad's family and struggle from Brad's Principal (Mr. Myer).

Based on the results above, it can be concluded that "Front of The Class" movie can be a reflection of characteristics of person with Tourette syndrome and being a teacher is not an easy process for person with Tourette syndrome, including Brad. Being a teacher is a calling for Brad, not necessarily a financial one. Even though, Brad has Tourette syndrome, he never gives up and never allows his tics to win.

References

- Abrams, M. H., & Harpham, G.G. (2014). A Glossary of Literary Terms. ninth ed.. USA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.
- Barnhart, Cyntia A. (2008). Student's Dictionary of English. New York: The Facts on File.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022). "Tourette Syndrome (TS)". <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/tourette/facts.html> accessed on 4th December 2022.
- Eagleton, Terry. (2005). Literary Theory An Introduction. second ed. Australia: Swanton Street, Carlton, Victoria.
- Harrison, Stephen. (2012). Appreciate the Fog. United States: Xlibris.

- Hudson, W.H. (2004). *An Introduction to The Study of Literature* (George G. Harrap & Company, Ed.). London Wellington Sydney.
- Leckman , James F. Cohen, Donald J, et al. (2001). *Tourette syndrome: Pieces of the Puzzle*. USA: Lippincott Wiliams & Wilkins.
- Lumen. (2016). *Psychological Approaches. Adolescent Psychology*.
<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/adolescent/part/psychologicalapproaches/>
accessed on 14th December 2022.
- Miles, Huberman & Saldana. (2014). *Qualitative Data Analysis : A Method Sourcebook*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc.