

**PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF FAMILY REJECTION OF HOMOSEXUALITY IN A  
FILM ENTITLED “PRAYERS FOR BOBBY: A MOTHER'S COMING TO TERMS  
WITH THE SUICIDE OF HER GAY SON (2009)”**



**Submitted as a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
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**APPROVAL**

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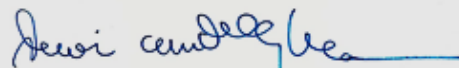
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If in the future there is evidence of untruth in my statement above, then I will take full responsibility.

**Surakarta, 6 August 2021**  
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# **PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF FAMILY REJECTION OF HOMOSEXUALITY IN A FILM ENTITLED "PRAYERS FOR BOBBY: A MOTHER'S COMING TO TERMS WITH THE SUICIDE OF HER GAY SON (2009)"**

## **Abstrak**

Film *Prayers For Bobby* (2009) mengangkat isu penolakan keluarga dan lingkungan terhadap seorang homoseksual. Penerimaan homoseksualitas dalam masyarakat dan keluarga masih menjadi hal yang sulit. Stigma negatif yang ada pada seorang homoseksual membuat masyarakat, terutama keluarga tidak mau membangun interaksi dengan seorang homoseksual. Penolakan yang diterima oleh kaum homoseksual, membuat kaum homoseksual menutup diri dari keluarga dan masyarakat. Penelitian ini menggunakan teori Sigmund Freud sebagai kerangka teori. Dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif sebagai pengumpulan dan analisis data. Hasil utama dari penelitian ini adalah faktor keluarga Bobby tidak menerima keadaan Bobby Griffith, dilanjutkan dengan dampak penolakan yang diterima Bobby berujung pada keputusan yang membuat Bobby memilih bunuh diri, Penulis membahas tentang Homoseksualitas karena ingin menyampaikan pentingnya pengetahuan yang mendalam tentang homoseksualitas dan penolakan buruk dan perlakuan buruk terhadap homoseksual.

Kata kunci: Homoseksual, Penerimaan Keluarga, Psikologi

## **Abstract**

The film *Prayers For Bobby* (2009) raises the issue of family and environmental rejection of a homosexual. The acceptance of homosexuality in society and the family is still difficult. The negative stigma that exists in a homosexual person makes people, especially families, refuse to build interactions with a homosexual. The rejection received by homosexuals makes homosexuals close themselves from their family and society. This study uses Sigmund Freud's theory as a theoretical framework. By using qualitative methods as data collection and analysis. The main result of this research is the factor of Bobby's family not accepting Bobby Griffith's condition, followed by the impact of rejection that Bobby received leads to despair that makes Bobby choose suicide. The author discusses Homosexuality because he wants to convey the importance of deep knowledge about homosexuality and bad rejection and treatment. bad towards homosexuals.

**Keywords:** Homosexual, Family Acceptance, Psychology.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Homosexual is a term for someone who is attracted to the type of person both physically and emotionally. Male interests towards men are gay, and women who are attracted to women are called lesbians (Nietzel et al, 1998, p. 489). Homosexuals are also interested in being attracted to the same sex as partners in having sex, as well as loving the same sex to become an escaped partner (Soekanto, 1990, p. 381).

According to this film "*Prayers for Bobby: A Mother's Coming to Terms with Suicide of Her Gay Son* by Sigourney Weaver (2009)" I want to adapt the problem of accepting

homosexuality. As we know in a society where many societies do not accept intermediaries. Some people experiment unfairly like bullying and don't even want to do it. They consider it to be a bad thing, violate destiny and deviate from religious teachings. Not accepted in the community made the revolution become insecure against itself. Being repaired unfairly and poorly adds to the burden of thought so that he closes himself off from society and is hopeless. because Feeling someone who is an adviser is a great sinner who does not deserve to live. Every person who participates has a different background.

The synopsis of film Prayers for Bobby 2009 is tells about the Boy who name is Bobby that become a gay amd committed suicide. Bobby Griffith grew up in a harmonious and loving family. Bobby's family is very religious and upholds God and the Bible. However, immediately Bobby felt something strange about him who was attracted to a man. Bobby was depressed because his family was a religious family and Bobby felt he had committed a grave sin. Bobby's concern continued to the point of wanting to take a lot of aspirin pills but he failed and the incident was mastered by his brother. Bobby told his brother Ed that he was gay. Ed promised that he would not tell anyone about Bobby's condition. But Ed's concern made Ed tell Marry Bobby's mother.

At that moment, Bobby's world fell apart. Marry began trying Bobby's treatment from a psychiatrist to writing Bible verses on almost all sides of the room where a homosexual was a big sinner and God would love his servant who repented. Bobby's condition spread by word of mouth so that Bobby became depressed. Bobby tries to get out of the corner environment and treat him badly. He chose to vacation in Portland where his cousin named Janneth. Janneth is an open minded woman who receives Bobby well. In Portland Bobby feels comfortable because he is treated well by those around him. Even Bobby has a lover who makes him feel better his lover named David. One time, Bobby came home to visit his parents. Bobby tries to introduce David to his parents then until finally Mary disagrees and chooses not to recognize Bobby as a child because Bobby is a Gay.

Bobby decided to return to Portland because according to him Portland was the place that could make Bobby most comfortable. Bobby also works as a part time hospital. At that time felt happy to have David and was introduced to his parents and made him jealous. However, Marry's words made Bobby imagine his sin. Until in the end Bobby got betrayal from David. David had an affair with another man and that made Bobby very frustrated.

Mothers who don't want to recognize him as a child are treated unfavorably by their environment, and are cheated on by their lovers. Bobby chose to commit suicide by dropping himself from the bridge. News of Bobby's death reached the ears of his parents. Ed felt guilty because the mastermind of all the problems was when Ed told Bobby's condition to Marry. Marry goes around the church and meets the pastor asking forgiveness from God for his bigotry towards religion to make Bobby like this. Marry who reads Bobby's diary is also sorry for blaming Bobby for treating him badly. Marry follows homosexual activities and realizes that Bobby is not wrong. Marry and her husband are wrong because they do not know much about homosexuality and are too fanatical about religion.

After reading this novel I can open my eyes wider it's the reason why I choose this film to be my paper. This film knocked me a lot more hearts. Where I once thought homosexuals were a big mistake that they deliberately did not turn out like that. The lessons to be learned are not only about respecting differences but also understanding everything that is happening with significant significance. Where judging someone for having a bad event by ostracizing them is a form of mistreatment. The treatment not only affected his social life but made him despair so he could choose to end his life. From some of the moral values of this novel I began to be interested in analyzing and hoping that readers could also be more open minded about homosexuals. In this research, the writer focus in analyzed the factor that causes Bobby's family reject Bobby's condition, Bobby's psychological conditions after his family does not accept his condition, and why did Bobby finally commit suicide.

## **2. METHOD**

The type of data in this study is qualitative. According to Creswell (2009) qualitative research is research that understands and explores the meaning of an individual or group that comes from a social problem or case, which can be in the form of activities, events and programs. With data validation triangulation techniques that make use something outside of the data.

This research uses literature study data collection methods. According to Sugiyono (2012) literature study relates to other references and theoretical studies that are interrelated with culture, and norms that develop in social events and problems in the society under study. Researchers collected data in the following ways:

- a. Watching the series over and over again. Understand what happened to Bobby Griffith and his mother Marry Griffith and their family and ward.
- b. Then the researcher made notes on the events and conflicts that occurred in each scene.
- c. The researcher also pays attention to and understands the dialogue between the players in order to examine the problems that will be.

After collecting data, then the researcher analyzed the character of the player and the main character for analysis. After that the researcher processed the data and analyzed the changes that showed the main player's psychological condition because the family did not accept the conditions experienced by the main character of the film *Prayer for Bobby: A Mother's Coming to Terms with the Suicide of Her Gay Son* (2009) , this research was started with process: Collect data on various conversations and expressions of the main character Bobby Griffith and his family in the film *Prayer for Bobby: A Mother's Coming to Terms with the Suicide of Her Gay Son* (2009). After obtaining data and analyzing the data obtained, it is displayed in tabular form in order to facilitate understanding of the analytical data in the form of expressions and conversations. From the results of data analysis, researchers can conclude with the study "Psychological Impact Of Family Rejection Of Homosexuality In A Film Entitled "Prayers For Bobby: A Mother's Coming To Terms With The Suicide Of Her Gay Son (2009)"

### **3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

The findings of this study were obtained from data analysis when researchers analyzed the data. The next part of the researcher presents a discussion about the family acceptance of homosexuality that causes the death of Bobby Griffith in the film *Prayers for Bobby*

Psychology literature is an analysis of texts by considering the relevance and role of psychological research (Ratna, 2004, p. 350). This means that psychology has a meaningful role in analyzing literary works by working from the psychological point of view of the literary work, both from the elements of the author, character and reader.

In the film "*Prayers for Bobby: A Mother's Coming to Terms with Suicide of Her Gay Son* by Sigourney Weaver (2009)" which was not accepted in his family because of his homosexual circumstances. The pressure given by Bobby's family aims so that Bobby can return to the norm of being a man who likes women, but the rejection and pressure

experienced by Bobby affects Bobby's psychological condition so that Bobby experiences a change in attitude which eventually decides to commit suicide.

### **3.1 Bobby's Family Factor That Reject Bobby's Condition As Homosexual**

Bobby was born from a harmonious and obedient family. After knowing Bobby's condition as a Gay family, especially Bobby's mother, Mary Griffith, tried to find a way for Bobby to recover. Bobby's family, especially Mary Griffith, thought that Bobby's situation was wrong and needed to be healed. If Bobby is not healed and continues to be homosexual, it means that Bobby committed a grave sin and became a disobedient person. Homosexuals are also interested in being attracted to the same sex as partners in having sex, as well as loving the same sex to become an escaped partner (Soekanto, 1990, p. 381). Mary worries that if Bobby becomes a big sinner this is on the scene on the day of death and Mary tried to treat Bobby in several ways,

#### **3.1.1 Writing Notes Posted All Over The Corner Of The Room.**

Note's contains verses containing punishment and sins about being homosexual to remind Bobby that being homosexual is a major sin committed by humans. In every corner of the room Bobby always saw the Note written by his mother, this of course annoyed Bobby a little because he felt that every time, he read warnings about his condition.

#### **3.1.2 Invite a Psychologist to Bobby.**

The statement that the psychologist received from Bobby made the psychologist a little sure that Bobby wanted to be homosexual. The psychologist told Mary that Bobby should do more to recover and suggested that Bobby spend more time with his father.

#### **3.1.3 Ask Bobby To Spend More Time With His Father And His Brother**

They go on an adventure in the forest and her father delivers a little message for Bobby but Bobby is a little disappointed with his father who doesn't support his aspirations as a writer. His father just thought that being a writer was an imagination, it showed Bobby's disappointment that Bobby wanted to be a writer.

#### **3.1.4 Include Bobby In Church Youth Activities.**

This was done by Mary Griffith so that Bobby wanted to get closer to God so that Bobby would avoid sin and return to the right path. Bobby felt that he did not find something he was looking for, no matter how he tried to get closer to God Bobby felt there was no change in him.

### **3.1.5 Invite Sheila.**

Sheila is a student of Mary at the Sunday school to be introduced to Bobby Griffith. Mary wants Bobby to date lots of women to recover from Homosexual. After arriving at Sheila and Bobby's farewell party, Bobby began to feel uncomfortable with other people's gazes upon him.

All the efforts made by Bobby's family, especially his mother Mary Griffith, are aimed at getting Bobbi to recover and return to being a normal man who likes women and not being a sinner because according to Mary, Bobby's mother and her family being a homosexual is a mistake and a very big sin in God's eyes.

### **3.2 Bobby's Psychological Condition after Receiving Rejection From His Family.**

Bobby knew full well that things weren't right. Sometimes he also experiences rejection for himself, this is experienced by Bobby because Bobby feels sad and feels like a cursed sinner. This was experienced by Bobby because of the rejection he received in his environment such as at parties

Bobby's self-rejection was due to an environment that did not support him at all. According to Cooley (as cited in Bracken, 1996) an individual sees himself when he gets a reflection of the opinions and treatment of others about himself, this affects how he sees himself. After telling his family about his situation,

#### **3.2.1 Bobby Felt Depressed and Stress.**

Stress is a word used to describe experiences that are challenging emotionally and physiologically (McEwen, 2007). This is because Bobby gets a lot of pressure from his family, especially his mother, Mary Griffith, to try to get better. The things his mother did, such as writing notes containing verses about the grave sin of a homosexuality, which were posted in every corner of the room made Bobby even more depressed and sad. Mary's cornering in every conversation between Bobby and Mary also made Bobby feel sad that his mother couldn't understand his situation.

#### **3.2.2 Feeling Sad.**

The pressure and family rejection that Bobby experienced causes sadness for Bobby. Bobby had tried as he could but he can't change his condition.

### **3.2.3 Angry**

After trying to do everything his mother told him to heal, but Bobby was always cornered by his mother, making Bobby angry and rebellious.

### **3.2.4 Bobby also Felt Guilty and Felt that he was A Big Sinner.**

Bobby realized that his situation was the wrong situation. Bobby always remembered the verse that his mother always gave in every corner of the room that being homosexual was the treatment of a sinner. But anyway, Bobby's attempts to be normal like a woman Bobby always fail. Bobby couldn't resist the desire to stop liking men. The difficult conditions experienced by Bobby made Bobby want to get positive support from his family. Family support is an act and nature of family acceptance for family members, in the form of assessment support, instrumental support, emotional support, and informational support (Friedman, 2013).

The family support that Bobby needs has a big effect on Bobby's condition as a homosexual, Bobby does not get this support, this is made him even more depressed and sad because Bobby is confused about how to live in the midst of family rejection of being Homosexual. Bobby's rejection and pressure gradually made Bobby dare to rebel against his mother, that he too had tried as hard as he could.

Another factor that Bobby experienced from changing attitudes in difficult circumstances was feelings of guilt and sin. Being born in a harmonious family and being very obedient to God often makes Bobby often remember the sins he has committed due to being a homosexual.

### **3.3 Bobby Finally Chose to Commit Suicide.**

After accepting rejection, receiving constant pressure even when he was away from his mother, feeling like a cursed great sinner, and accepting betrayal from David made Bobby feel that he was a worthless human being. After daring to voice his heart to his mother when he returned from Portland Bobby decided to move to Portland.

Bobby found his happiness in Portland because he felt accepted by his environment without having to cover up his identity as a gay. After moving to Portland Bobby became a nurse and had a girlfriend named David. Bobby felt that Portland was the most comfortable place because he was well received by the environment. This is explained by Sigmund Freud in the Chapter Superego.

According to Freud Sigmund, "The superego is an aspect of character that accommodates all moral internalization standards and aspirations obtained from both parents and citizens - admitting right and wrong. Superego provides guidelines for conducting evaluations. It is remarkable that the ego is the morality or fairness branch of the personality, which represents the perfect world rather than the real world and leads in the direction of perfection, which is a component of character associated with good standards or norms of beating. and bad, right and wrong. "

This was a situation that Bobby experienced until he decided to move to Portland because he felt that being accepted into the environment without having to cover his circumstances was the best choice because he felt at peace. However, the pressure given by Mary continued with Mary sending gifts on Bobby's birthday along with a note containing the verse that being homosexual is a cursed sinner and will get AIDS and punishment from God.

Slowly Bobby goes through life with a gap because he feels that he is a cursed big sinner so that several times he feels useless. As in the sentence he wrote for himself. Every day he felt that his situation was not okay, so he contacted David to share his concerns. Since David didn't pick up the phone from Bobby, Bobby decided to go see David. However, Bobby found David with another man.

This clearly makes Bobby feel betrayed, his decision to move to Portland because he feels welcome and appreciated but the betrayal of David makes Bobby feel even more useless, damned and a big sinner because he indirectly chose David over his family. After feeling guilty, sad, worried, depressed, angry, hurt, cursed, being a sinner, and useless, David finally decided to commit suicide by jumping off the bridge.

Suicide is the last escape done by humans in the real world, because they feel pain or sadness that cannot be tolerated. The difficult circumstances experienced by Bobby became the main impetus to commit suicide because of pressure, not being accepted in the family, feeling like a sinner and being betrayed made Bobby feel useless to continue his life.

This study found a match between the mental conflicts experienced by Bobby Griffith's character and the psychoanalysis theory of Sigmund Freud (1923) who said that this mental conflict involves all three elements, namely Id, Ego, and Superego. Id is a personality that is brought from birth in the sense that Id is the Original personality while

Ego and Superego are actions to fulfill Id. This can be attributed to Bobby Griffith who has Id's biological needs not for women but with the same sex, namely Men, Bobby tries to stop his biological needs that are different from other men but Bobby cannot control it. Bobby has two choices to still fulfill his needs by dating men or forcing himself to stop liking men.

The choice that Bobby experienced was not easy. When he chose to continue to fulfill his biological needs by dating a man, he had to be willing to accept family rejection against him, on the other hand, he couldn't force himself to keep trying to return to normal because he couldn't find changes in himself. Anxiety and confusion about the difficulties he was facing made Bobby decide to commit suicide. Bobby's mental conflict involves Ego and Superego, who cannot meet their biological needs because they accept rejection from the surrounding environment, especially Mary Griffith's mother. The rejection and pressure that Bobby constantly received made Bobby feel even more unworthy and sinful until Bobby chose to end his life.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Through the data obtained and the wetting of the previous chapter, the researcher can conclude: First, the factors that influence Bobby's family do not accept Bobby's condition because they think that being Homosexual is sinful and abnormal. A harmonious family background and obedience to God made Mary Griffith not accept that her son Bobby Griffith, who was considered intelligent from his other children, experienced an unnatural state because he liked the same sex or was homosexual. This also encouraged Mary Griffith to put more pressure on Bobby by doing various ways so that Bobby would get well soon and get closer to God.

Second, Bobby Griffith's psychological condition after accepting rejection from his family and being more pressured by his mother, Marry Griffith, underwent serious changes and underwent serious pressure, besides that Bobby also felt sad, angry, and felt that he was a cursed sinner. His difficult condition plus the pressure he received made Bobby hate himself even more. What Bobby needs when Bobby realizes that he is different from other men and has done the best he can is to get support from family and the family accepts that he is not like other boys. The rejection that Bobby received made Bobby even more angry because no matter how hard he tried he couldn't feel the change. Bobby's anger became a Boomerang for Bobby and his family until at one point Bobby gave up on the situation.

Third, Bobby finally chose to end his life after receiving rejection from his family, feeling sad and angry with his situation. When he was feeling uncertainty about life, Bobby also saw his lover David holding another man. This also has an impact on Bobby's condition who is not okay. Feelings of anger, sadness, and feeling betrayed became a mental conflict for Bobby so he decided to commit suicide by knocking himself off the bridge.

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