

## LADY DIANA'S CONSTRUCTED REPRESENTATION OF PSYCHOLOGICAL DISORDER IN THE DOCUMENTARY "DIANA: IN HER OWN WORDS"

Anastasia Aurellia  
[anastasiaurell@gmail.com](mailto:anastasiaurell@gmail.com)  
Universitas Udayana

### ABSTRACT

Documentaries represent facts by wrapping them into structured films. However, the figures in documentaries are still constructed by the directors. Lady Diana as the main figure of the documentary in "Diana: In Her Own Words" was analyzed in terms of three-dimensional aspects: physically, socially, and psychologically. The methods that were used in collecting the data were documentation and observation methods. The theories that were used in this study were Egri's tridimensional theory and American Psychiatric Association's theory of psychological disorder. Several findings that were found from the analysis are; Lady Diana's physical and sociological dimensions that were linked to her psychologically; and her psychological disorders; bulimia nervosa and borderline personality disorder (BPD).

**Keywords:** Lady Diana, Constructed Representation, Psychological Disorder, Documentary

### ABSTRAK

*Dokumenter menyajikan fakta dengan menggabungkannya sebagai satu kesatuan film. Meskipun demikian, figur dalam dokumenter terkonstruksi oleh sang direktur. Lady Diana sebagai figur utama dalam dokumenter Diana: In Her Own Words dianalisis dari segi aspek tiga dimensi: fisik, sosial, dan psikologi. Metode yang digunakan dalam mengumpulkan data adalah dokumentasi dan observasi. Teori-teori yang digunakan di dalam studi ini didapat dari teori tridimensional oleh Egri dan teori kelainan psikologis oleh American Psychiatric Association. Beberapa temuan yang ditemukan dari Analisa data adalah dimensi fisik dan sosial dari Lady Diana yang berhubungan dengannya secara psikologis; dan kelainan psikologisnya, yaitu bulimia nervosa dan gangguan kepribadian ambang (BPD).*

*Kata kunci: Lady Diana, Representasi Terkonstruksi, Kelainan Psikologis, Dokumenter*

## I. INTRODUCTION

In general, literature refers to written expressions, with the restriction that not all kind of writings are considered as literature in the more exact sense of the word (Klarer, 2004:1). As a form of art that tells the story, dramatizes

a situation, expresses emotions, analyzes and advocates ideas (Roberts and Jacobs, 2007:2); literature entertains the readers or audience; and can be useful to some people (e.g., as the material for research).

Psychology also influences literary work. The writers often depict

their own cases, turning their life's experience into their material of art (Wellek & Warren, 1963: 90). Kagan & Havemann (1968:13) described psychology as the science that observes and studies behavior and its relationship to the unseen mental process inside a mortal and to the environment including the events. Psychology in literature may mean to the way we study the writer's psychological, as type and as individual; or the study of the imagination or original ideas in relation with the production of an artistic work; or the study of the psychological varieties and laws express within the literary work; or, finally, the literature's effects upon the readers (Wellek and Warren, 1963: 81).

This study focused on identifying and analyzing Lady Diana's character from the documentary "Diana: In Her Own Words" based on the three-dimensional aspects: physiological, sociological, and psychological; in order to achieve a deeper and clearer analysis in a character. As Egri (1960: 33) stated that it is not enough if your study of a human being only explained the way he looks, such as: rude, polite, religious, degenerate; we therefore must find why man is as he is, why his character is constantly changing, and why it must change whether he wishes it or no; from these three aspects. This study also explained and revealed how far mental disorder affects someone's life.

From the explanation above, Lady Diana's character based on three-dimensional aspects was the main point to be analyzed. Furthermore, this study was conducted to analyze how the Princess of Wales' role affected her life, especially her mental health.

## II. RESEARCH METHOD

The data is a 113-minute-documentary movie entitled *Diana: In*

*Her Own Words* that is under the banner of National Geographic Documentary Films. The documentary was broadcasted on Channel 4 in the United Kingdom on August 6, 2017. The movie was first watched by the researcher two years ago via Net Geo YouTube channel.

Documentation and observation methoda were used in collecting the data. The documentary was watched and observed in order to find out about Lady Diana's character in terms of three-dimensional aspects along with her psychological disorders. Technical aids that were used for this research to collect the data was note-taking techniques.

Descriptive method was used for analyzing the data. Lady Diana's answer throughout the interview in the documentary was observed. This study focuses on analyzing Lady Diana from the others' perspectives in the documentary. After collecting the important points, the data will be identified using the theory of three dimensions of character from Egri (1960) as well as the psychological disorder theory from Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5, 2013).

## III. DISCUSSION

### 3.1 Physiological Dimension

As a figure who influenced the public, Lady Diana's outward appearance always catches someone's eye. She shines in her own way which the Royal Family members have never done before. For further explanation, Lady Diana's physiological dimension was analyzed in this part.

#### Royal Dressing Rule-breaking and Fashion-forward Style

The Royal Family have their own dress code for each occasion. The curator

at Historic Royal Palaces who holds the Royal Ceremonial Dress collection, Matthew Storey, stated that mourning dress has been part of the royal culture of Europe for centuries and its peak was in the 19th century.

[1] Narrator: It was a black taffeta. It was off shoulder and **by normal royal standards it was very revealing.**

Diana: I thought that was okay cause girls my age wore this. **I hadn't appreciated that I was now seen as a royal lady.**" (00:23:31 – 00:23:44)

Diana was still not used to the royal protocol, as the data [1] shows; that she thought wearing a black dress was okay. The black dress immediately caught the public's attention. Back then she was criticized by her husband-to-be, Prince Charles; "It's black! But only people in mourning wear black" (00:23:59 – 00:24:04). The designer of the dress who also designed Lady Diana's wedding dress, Elizabeth Emanuel, said, "We witnessed the birth of a fashion icon before our very eyes". Being fashion-forward is characterized by the following and even setting the latests trend in fashion; or refers to someone who is interested in wearing things that will soon become very fashionable (Cambridge Dictionary). The data [1] proves that Diana also followed the fashion trend by the way she said girls her age wore that kind of dress.

### 3.2 Sociological Dimension

The next dimension proposed by Egri, is the sociological dimension. Diana was the daughter of the 8th Earl Spencer. She grew up with her three siblings Lady Sarah and Lady Jane, and her brother Charles.

### Parental Divorce

Home life which includes parents separated or divorced; and their acts toward the child; is the sociological dimension's bone structure in a character (Egri, 1946:37). Diana had a happy and stable childhood at first. But then everything changed drastically when Diana's mother left her father. Her parents divorced in 1967, when she was only 7.

[2] Diana's answered the questions of her parents' divorce

Diana: It was a **very unhappy childhood** – All I see was my mother crying. Daddy never spoke to us about it. **Very unstable, the whole thing. I'm being very detached from everybody else.**

Interviewer: How did you first learn about the divorce?

Diana: **I remember seeing my father slapped my mother across the face.** I hid behind the door and she was crying – **Which for a 7-year-old was devastating.** And my brother and I were very sort of mmm – **wishy-washy with painful experience.** (00:09:13 – 00:10:25)

Through the family environment, young men and women, from infancy to adulthood, developed physically, psychologically, and sociologically (WHO, 1978:7). As mentioned in the data [2], Diana's childhood was ruined and unhappy; as she described the condition with the word 'devastating'. The 7-year-old Diana accidentally – or not; saw her father slapped her mother across the face. This can be regarded as the 'violence in the home'. Intimate partner violence or domestic violence is a pattern of assaultive and coercive behaviors including slapping, beating with fist or object, burning, and so on (UNICEF, 3: 2006).

According to Asian Journal of Humanities and Social Studies, children who experience parental divorce may lack balance training; since single parenthood has its own flaws (2018: 175). Diana described as in the data [2] how the separation made her life change drastically into an unstable one. Her brother was affected too; even until he got married. They became wishy-washy; which lacked in determination or character (Merriam-Webster). The divorce was a painful experience for her and; could not be denied that affected Diana's psychology.

[3] Interviewer: As a child, any idea of futures or ambitions?

Diana: No. **Always felt very different from everyone else. Very detached.** Knew I was going somewhere different. Had no idea where. (00:11:17 – 00:11:30)

Children of divorced parents sometimes feel withdrawn when they are with their peers; moreover, when their peers are talking about their own family life (Ubong, 2018:175). This statement supported the data [] that Diana was experiencing the situation in which she felt very different from everyone else, very detached. Derealization is the feeling of detachment from the real world; and is one of the cognitive symptoms in BPD patients (San Jose Behavioral Health). It might be regarded as the first symptoms of young Diana leading to her mental illness in her adolescent and adult age. Even if she never said that she felt withdrawn due to her friends talking about their family lives, the feeling of being a different one; could be the proof that it was the cause of parental divorce.

### 3.3. Psychological Dimension

The product of physiological and sociological dimension; is psychology. It requires important 'bone structure' such as temperament and attitude toward life (Egri: 1946:34). Lady Diana's psychological dimension also has connection with both her physiology and sociology aspect.

#### Attitude towards life: Insecure, Low Self-esteem

According to Collins Dictionary, insecure is the condition whereby a person lacks confidence because they think either they are not good enough; or are not loved. It is the unstable feeling of being anxious or afraid. Low self-esteem is one sign of insecurity. If someone has low self-esteem, they do not like themselves and behave unconfidently. Abraham Maslow stated that an insecure person lacks confidence in their own value; they felt anxious; generally pessimistic (1942: 35). Lady Diana had the symptoms of insecurity, that is low self-esteem.

[4] The first time Diana met Charles. At that time, her sister still dated Charles  
Diana: – **I remember being a fat, podgy, non-makeup, unsmart lady** but I made a lot of noise and he liked that. (00:02:19 - 00:02:46)

[5] Diana says that Charles came to her after dinner, they had a big dance, and he asked her to show the gallery. As a 16-year-old, she was amazed by the attention that he showed.

Diana: **Why would anyone like him be interested with me?** (00:02:50 – 00:03:03)

Based on data [4], 16-year-old Diana described herself as an unattractive person; a fat, podgy, non-makeup, unsmart lady; the first time she

met Prince Charles in 1977 at Althorp. As Diana thought that she was not a good-looking one, she did not approach him. It continued to the data [5] wherein Charles approached her. Diana was amazed since she got the attention from the Prince of Wales. It led Diana to the thought, why would someone like him be interested in her. However, it was not quite true since her physiological appearance that had been analyzed on the previous notion proved that she was good-looking; even before she got married. The 16-year-old Diana was not podgy at all and had a proportional body; even after she became a princess and had two children.

### Postnatal Depression

[6] Diana: When we had William, we had to find a date in the diary that suited him and his polo. **William had to be induced because I couldn't handle the press pressure any longer.** It was becoming unbearable. It was as if everybody was monitoring every day for me. (00:57:36 – 00:57:45)

According to University Health Network, research studies have shown that depression or anxiety during pregnancy, having a stressful life, no social support, and having experienced depression before; are strong predictors of postnatal depression (2003: 2). The data [6] describes the situation of Diana struggling with her postnatal depression when she had William. She revealed that due to the birth of her first child, the pressure from the media was unbearable Diana even said that William had to be induced since the press pressure could not be handled any longer by her. The stress that was caused by the media was one of the strong predictors of postnatal depression. And despite the pressure from the press, her bulimia was also one

of the reasons that triggered the postnatal depression.

[7] Diana: Came home and then, **postnatal depression hit me hard** – It was the baby that triggered off all else that was going on in my mind. If Charles didn't come home when she said he was coming home. I thought something dreadful happened to him. **Tears, panic, all the rest of it**" (01:00:53 – 01:01:10)

Things did not get any better after giving birth. Data [7] shows that Diana said the postnatal depression hit her hard and mentioned the baby was the reason which led her to overthinking thought. She scared when Prince Charles had not arrived yet at home when he said he was coming. Her mind was filled with nightmare thoughts; that something dreadful happened to her husband. She cried and panicked, but Charles did not see it because she pretended to be alright. One of the moderate predictors of postnatal depression is low self-esteem; and the small predictors has poor relationship with partner in it (2003: 2). Both of the predictors occurred in Diana's life. As what has been discussed on the previous part, that Diana had low self-esteem; it could be said that that was one of the reasons which drove her to postnatal depression. Another reason was absolutely because her relationship with Prince Charles that was far from perfect.

### 3.4 Psychological Disorder

Eating disorders are particularly common in those who suffer from borderline personality disorder. BPD itself was the most common personality disorder in bulimia nervosa, with a prevalence rate of about 28% (Sansone, 2011: 4). In relation to that, Diana was



one of those people who struggled with bulimia nervosa and borderline personality disorder (BPD).

### Bulimia Nervosa

Eating disorder is a type of psychiatric disorder characterized by the problems with eating behavior and related emotions and thoughts (DSM-5, 2013). Among all of the eating disorders types proposed by the American Psychiatric Association, Lady Diana had the strong symptoms of bulimia nervosa.

[8] Prince Charles called her chubby

Diana: **The bulimia started the week after we got engaged.** My husband put his hand on my waistline and said, "Oooh, a bit chubby here, aren't we?" **And that triggered something in me.** And I remember **the first time I made myself sick, I was so thrilled.** Because I thought, "Right, this is the release, the tension." (00:31:07 – 00:31:25)

A person with bulimia nervosa really pays attention to their weight and body shape; in which they may judge their flaws harshly. The act to prevent weight gain, such as self-induced vomiting; is the criteria for bulimia nervosa (DSM-5, 2013). The data [8] shows the moment when Prince Charles said that her waist was a bit chubby. She stated that it was the first time that triggered her bulimia; which led her to the act of forcing herself to vomit after she ate something. Prince Charles' statement about her look made her feel insecure. Moreover, she had low self-esteem long before she dated Prince Charles. It has been discussed on the psychological dimension part; Diana judged herself as a fat-podgy lady when she met Prince Charles for the first time. According to a study by the University of Oslo, people with low self-esteem are closely related to eating disorders (1998: 95). Moreover, Diana thought it was the

way to release the pressure that burdened her; by making herself sick.

[9] The night before Diana's wedding

Diana: **I had a very bad fit bulimia than I'd had before.** I ate everything I could possibly find which amused my sister, because she was staying at Clarence House with me. Nobody understood what was going on there, sort of hush-hush. I was sick as a parrot that night. **It was such an indication of what was going on.** (00:36:07 – 00:36:24)

Diana tried to stop the wedding the day before, but her sisters told her it was too late. The reason was because of the pressure knowing that her husband-to-be was having an affair with his so-called-friend. She found out that Charles went to see Camilla and gave her a gift. The first diagnostic criteria for bulimia nervosa; is eating a large amount of food that most people would have not done the same thing (DSM-5, 2013). The data [9] described the condition wherein Lady Diana experienced a very bad fit bulimia due to her stress. She ate everything she could find. Diana also mentioned 'sick as parrot' that means she was very disappointed at that moment (Cambridge Dictionary). She felt like nobody understood what was happened to her back then. According to the American Psychiatric Association, people with bulimia usually concealed their binge behavior because it is associated with feelings of shame or embarrassment. Hush-hush is the informal way to describe a highly secret or confidential thing (Oxford Dictionary). Diana tried to say that her bulimia was like something that could not be discussed with anyone; because people thought she was wasting food. Diana mentioned that the bulimia was the sign that something was not right through the word 'an indication'.

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stressful life under the pressure from the media and having no social support, even from her husband; led Lady Diana to postnatal depression.

Lady Diana's psychological disorders were found in the documentary; that are bulimia nervosa and borderline personality disorder (BPD). She showed strong symptoms of suffering from both of the mental illnesses. There are several reasons that trigger someone's bulimia, such as stressful and under-pressure situations.

Traumatic childhood caused Lady Diana's psychological problems and disorders; also resulting in her poor

academic record. The pressure of living as the Princess of Wales and bad relationship with her husband; were other reasons of her unstable psychology. She could not dress as she liked to and had to adapt with the princess life within a short period of time. The reporters kept following her every move giving more pressure to Lady Diana. Low self-esteem also contributed in prompting bulimia and borderline personality disorder. As per the analysis, the results indicate that all of the dimensions, including the disorders; were linked to each other.

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in the papers even led Diana to the thought that nobody wanted to see her. She was panicking and did not want to go out doing her engagement as the Princess of Wales. It was the sign of rejection that scared her as a BPD patient. The news revolving around Diana at that moment horrified herself, creating another stressful situation for her. It considered as the cause of intense emotional dysregulation that led to one of the BPD 'triggers'

#### Diana's non suicidal self-injury moments

[12] Diana: I was just talked to Charles about something and **he wouldn't listen me**; so, I start crying wolf. **So, I picked up his penknife off his dressing table and scratched myself heavily down my chest and both thighs.** There was a lot of blood – and it hadn't made any reaction whatsoever to him (01:15:04 – 01:15:23)

Non-suicidal self-injury refers to one who does deliberate infliction of pain, damage, or both to their body (Nock & Favazza, 2009). It can also be found in people with other psychiatric diagnoses such as eating disorders. The most common reasons of why a person engage in non-suicidal self-injury are; to relieve intense distressing feelings, make other people feel guilty toward them and change their behavior, and to gain attention so that others know their distress (Wilkinson & Goodyer, 2011). People with BPD tend to do non-suicidal self-injury repeatedly; and suicide attempts (DSM-5, 2013). Lady Diana suffered from both eating disorders and BPD. She did a lot of things to get Prince Charles' attention, but ended up failing on multiple occasions. People with BPD tend to do non-suicidal self-injury repeatedly; and suicide attempts (DSM-5, 2013).

As in the data [12] described the situation of Diana's self-injury moment. It happened during a heated argument with her husband. She then came to the action of scratching her chest and thighs. She used a penknife, a small pocket knife with a blade that can be folded into its handle. Prince Charles would not listen to her wife when she was talking to her during the argument. The feeling of being neglected combined with the heated argument resulting in her action. All of Diana's action in harming herself, whether suicidal or non-suicidal, referred as the strong symptoms of BPD patients. Even though there are differences between non-suicidal self-injury with suicidal behaviors, these behaviors are somehow linked to each other.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The study aimed to identify and analyze Lady Diana's character in terms of tri-dimensionality and her psychological disorders in *Diana: In Her Own Words* documentary. Several results that were found from the analysis explained below.

From the physiological dimension, Diana was largely known for her royal dressing rule – breaking combined with fashion-forward style. From the sociological dimension, it was found from the documentary that she was living a happy childhood due to parental divorce that drastically changed her life, physically and psychologically. It then led her to keep failing several tests and did not have good academic records.

Physiological and psychological dimensions then produced psychological dimensions. Lady Diana had insecure and low self-esteem attitude toward her life. Lady Diana was not confident with her appearance when she met Prince Charles for the first time. Living a

### 3.5 Borderline Personality Disorder

People with personality disorder have the patterns that continue for a long time such as instability in mood, interpersonal relationships, and self-image that is severe enough that lead to serious damage to relationships and other life areas (DSM-5, 2013). Lady Diana was really famous with her eating disorder as well as borderline personality disorder. In the report of International Journal of Eating Disorders (2009), the rate of BPD patients with eating disorders was raised about 6 to 11%, compared to 2 to 4% in the general population. People who have eating disorders; are more likely linked with having a higher risk of BPD than others. Each of Lady Diana's psychological disorders were linked, including her childhood trauma that has been explained on the sociological dimension. Parental divorce did traumatize her. The other causes that provoked the illness and its symptoms were provided by several data below.

[10] Diana found out Charles made a bracelet for Camilla

Diana: So, rage, rage, rage. You know, "Why can't you be honest with me?" – **it was hot and cold, hot and cold. You never knew what mood it was going to be. Up and down, up and down.** (00:28:26 – 00:28:48)

According to Wikipedia, a person who has mood swings experience extreme changes their in mood. As mentioned in the data [10], Diana was experiencing mood swing or instability in mood. She stated, "– but it was hot and cold, hot and cold. You never knew what mood it was going to be. Up and down, up and down". Shifting moods is one of the manifestations of BPD.

Diana was experiencing the same situation when she found out that her

husband got a present from someone; whom she knew was having an affair with him. According to Amanda Smith, the founder of Florida Borderline Personality Disorder Association; anything that makes a person feel disregarded could be categorized as the 'trigger' to BPD patients. Charles just ignored Diana who was angry with him. Diana described that she was not sure with her feelings which caused hot and cold, up and down, mood.

[11] Prince Charles and Diana did the interview for Charities Trusts

MC: You feel hurt by them? (the papers that said she was a determined-dominating woman)

Diana: Well obviously one does. **You feel very wounded.** If it comes out, you'd think, "**Oh gosh, I don't want to go out and do my engagement as nobody wants to see me,**" **hell-panic.** But you got to push yourself out – It far too much about me in newspaper, **horrifies me.** (01:10:25 – 01:11:12)

The program 'Charities Trusts' followed Diana for 18 months. As a figure who really wished to have a private life, she stated that it was a very strange moment. As in the data [11], the parental divorce, again, affected Diana's behavior in dealing with her adult-life. National Education Alliance for Borderline Personality Disorder stated that having one's feelings hurt and any form of rejection (even from strangers); are two of the most common catalysts in BPD patients. The MC asked Diana with a question "you feel hurt by them?", referring to the papers that wrote her as a determined-dominating woman. She then responded with "you feel very wounded". Her statement was the sign of hurt feelings and it did have the effect on her BPD, along with the pressure from the media. The wrong perception of her