

FATHER'S ROLE IN JESSI NELSON'S " I AM SAM "

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Abstract: This study is carried to describe the father's roles depicted by the main character in the movie "I AM SAM" by Jessi Nelson. The study is focused on the father's role depicted by Sam as Lucy's father who is psychologically retarded. This research applies qualitative research design. In carrying out this research, the data are obtained from the movie by Jessi Nelson entitled I am Sam as primary source and also supported by other relevant references such as books, documents and web sources as secondary sources. In doing the data analysis, the researcher uses objective approach. The result shows that Sam is a good father figure for Lucy whose roles are influential although in his disability namely assisting and giving affection, fighting for custody, seeking lawyer in court and motivating to socialize. He also doesn't want to force perfection since he is retarded but does not lower his spirit to raise Lucy the daughter. Sam puts forward about how parents treat their children. Here it can be seen how a person's intellectual capacity or IQ does not hinder the affection that parents give to their children, as well as affection for other people. The main thing every child raised by his parents is in need of love and a mentally retarded person is not deterred from giving that.

Keywords: *Jessi Nelson, Movie Script, Father's Role, I am Sam, Literature.*

INTRODUCTION

Movie is a sequence of moving visuals synchronized with audio that narrate a tale and are displayed either on television or in cinemas (Keith, 2007). A story that is relevant to our lives can be found in movies, which are both a kind of entertainment and a source of culture, moral principles, knowledge, fashion, and politics. The film's plot, however, can be challenging to predict at points. People gain life lessons from conflict and its resolution. In the realm of literature, a moviescript is also referred to as fiction. The term "fiction" originates from the Latin word "Ficto," which signifies a process of shaping, crafting, and even simulating. It denotes a narrative that is not

entirely rooted in facts but is, to some extent, crafted, fabricated, and imagined. (Kennedy, 2004).

Written works that serve as communication and entertainment tools allow people to express their thoughts, both real and imagined. There are numerous moral principles. Literature teaches society important lessons. Everyone is inspired by literature, which also entertains them as argued by (Kennedy, 2004). Additionally, literature has a practical dimension, as it can enhance knowledge and is inherently intertwined with moral teachings. Literature serves as a portrayal of life, constituting a significant aspect of our social reality, although it also frequently explores the natural and individual realms as subject matter.

A "role" is the expected behavior, duties, responsibilities, and functions associated with a particular position or status within a society or social group (Turner and Cho, 2017). The father's role involves providing emotional support, guidance, and a sense of security to his children (Lamb, 1995). A father's role is not limited to economic provision but extends to the emotional and psychological well-being of his children. Involved fathers contribute to their children's social and cognitive development by being actively engaged in their lives (Parke, 2019).

Father who has a more active role in caring for and helping children helps children in cognitive and emotional development. When fathers are involved in their children's lives, children learn more, do better in school, and exhibit good and healthy behaviors. It's just that there are still many fathers who don't know how or when to be involved with their own children, especially to educate them. In addition, there are still fathers who do not know that they can be role models for their children. A father has a role as a leader as well as an educator for his child. And there is some wise advice from a father for his son. He can't leave the problems of his children's education only to his mother and school. children need fathers in their development, who cannot be replaced.

"I Am Sam," a 2001 drama film helmed by Jessie Nelson, narrates the tale of Sam Dawson, portrayed by Sean Penn, a man with cognitive disabilities. He embarks on a legal battle to gain custody of his seven-year-old daughter, Lucy, who has been abandoned by her mother. Sam, whose mental capacity is that of a 7-year-old,

encounters a series of obstacles while attempting to demonstrate his abilities as a father. The film explores themes of parental love, intellectual disability, and the legal system's role in determining parental fitness. It portrays Sam's determination to be a responsible father, despite facing skepticism and opposition from society and the legal system. To aid his case, Sam receives support from his neighbor Annie, played by Dianne Wiest, and a high-profile lawyer, Rita, portrayed by Michelle Pfeiffer.

This film is able to inspire, motivate, and teach viewers important concepts. Movie. They claim that Sam, who has an IQ capacity below Lucy's, which is below 7 years old, is unable to nurture a child who is smarter than him and who is developing into an adult and needs foster parents to help raise Lucy.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

In this research, a descriptive-qualitative approach was employed by the researcher. The choice of qualitative research was made because it allows for a systematic description of the facts and characteristics of the data. Qualitative research is a method used to explore and understand the meaning associated with individuals or groups in the context of social or human issues within their natural settings (Creswell, 1994). Generally, this method is suitable for analyzing various aspects of society, history, behavior, concepts, phenomena, and social problems. It emphasizes delving into the depth of the data rather than collecting a vast amount of data. The researcher utilized the script authored by Jessie Nelson to depict the portrayal of the father's role in the movie "I Am Sam."

Data Collection

Primary data is in the form of a movie entitled "I Am Sam." This script shows that the movie is conveying father's role. Furthermore, secondary sources that researchers use to support primary sources are taken from several sources, including articles, books, journals, and the internet. Then the researcher also watched the movie repeatedly to strengthen the results of this study.

Data Analysis

In the process of analyzing the data, an objective approach is applied. This approach stems from the perspective of the reader, focusing on the study of the work itself. In essence, it places its primary emphasis on the work in isolation, considering it as a self-contained entity composed solely of its internal elements. As (Abrams, 1971) puts it, the objective approach regards a work of art independently of external references, treating it as a self-sustaining entity formed by its internal components and evaluating it based solely on criteria intrinsic to its own existence.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Sam Dawson (Sean Penn) is a retard. He is mentally retarded and only has an intelligence level of no more than a 7 year old child. This does not change his dedication as a father to Lucy (Dakota Fanning), his daughter. (Hm, Lucy is not Sam's biological child, but the child of Sam's friend who just left Lucy after giving birth).

However, when Lucy turned 7 years old, the children's governing body began to realize that Sam was considered incapable of taking care of her child further than that age, especially since Sam was only a Starbucks employee. Because of that, Lucy was taken by the government to be temporarily housed at the foster parents' residence while the case regarding management rights was continued in court.

Assisting and Giving Affection

Sam is a mentally retarded father. He is able to care for, raise and educate his daughter to be a daughter who is smart, full of great curiosity and willingly accepts all her father's shortcomings. He educated her by ordering her schoolwork every night, reading even she herself had no trouble reading what Lucy was reading. If Lucy refuses not to read she will be strict as a father but she doesn't scold Lucy, she just gives a reason that makes Lucy love her father even more why she wants Lucy to do that:

LUCY : How can we be so dif..dif...I don't know that word.

SAM : Yes you do. It starts with a "d" --
LUCY : I'm tired.
SAM : I don't believe you.
LUCY : Are you calling me a liar?
SAM : Yes. Now read the word.
LUCY : (crying) No...I'm stupid.
SAM : No you're not.
LUCY : I don't want to read it if you can't.
SAM : It makes me happy. I'm happy hearing you read it.

He holds the book open for Lucy. Now Lucy, pushing through a mountain of resistance, reads. And reads beautifully.

LUCY : "Why are we different and so much alike?" (27)
[<https://imsdb.com/scripts/I-am-Sam.html>]

It can be seen that Sam is an authoritative parent. Sam acts warmly but he is not a father who is demanding. Here it can be seen how a person's intellectual capacity or IQ does not hinder the affection that parents give to their children, as well as affection for other people. He would hug every woman he saw cry. As Lucy expressed when Mr. Turner gave a statement that he would get more than what his father gave him. The main thing every child raised by his parents is in need of love. And a mentally retarded person is not deterred from giving that.

Sam as a mentally retarded father is able to care for, raise and educate his daughter to be a daughter who is smart, full of great curiosity and willingly accepts all her father's shortcomings. He educated her by ordering her schoolwork every night, reading even she herself had no trouble reading what Lucy was reading. If Lucy refuses not to read she will be strict as a father but she doesn't scold Lucy, she just gives a reason that makes Lucy love her father even more why she wants Lucy to do that.

Fighting for Custody

Sam never thought that he would have to face the law in order to fully relinquish custody of Lucy to the Department of Children and Family Services, for later adoption. Sam, as a father who has the same intellectual abilities as 7-year-old Lucy, does not understand the trial. Sam knows that he will lose Lucy and feels lonely, and so does Lucy. His affection for Lucy is what Sam is determined to defend Lucy in court to reclaim custody of her.

Sam is straightening Sweet and Lows. Rita barrels in.

RITA : Look I don't think you understand what you're up against we have to be in court in three days and we don't have a decent witness. Now you've gotta know someone who can testify who's been to college - or has a degree of some kind - or some sort of way of expressing themselves that's gonna make the court believe that you deserve to get your daughter back Ineed a coffee. Big. Tall.

SAM : Tall's the smallest.

RITA : Of course. Of course, whatever. Okay okay okay. Damn! I forgot to call back no I did and once you think of this person and there has to be one person - I want you to call me at work - because I'm going back there now to my seven other cases --(her cellphone RINGS) What? Mrs. Robeck? I'm on my way, the traffic's horrible on the 405. Dorothy, we put in five months lets not let a three car pile up. I know it's been enormously stressful. Your Esczema? Oh, honey, nobody notices.. AH! They opened a lane!

SAM : (too loudly) Do you want it here or to go?

RITA : (dial tone) Dorothy? Dorothy? No no no I didn't stare at the eczema for five months for -She takes out her car beeper, clicks it towards the window and realizes that they're towing her car! (57)

[<https://imsdb.com/scripts/I-am-Sam.html>]

In this case, these limitations not only affect him, but also affect his daughter's life a lot. With intelligence that is only equivalent to a seven-year-old child, it is certainly considered to hinder his daughter's education. Because it can be said that Sam's intelligence will be below that of his daughter someday.

Besides, the social workers also thought that Sam was only capable of learning certain things. This was seen when in court, the social worker said that Sam would not understand Lucy's current needs teenager later. In fact, the fact that learning and developing can occur throughout life.

Seeking for Lawyer in Court

Defending the right seems to be an uneasy thing to do. Rita is a lawyer who is willing to help her in court. Initially, Rita, who is a lawyer capable of handling tough cases, rejected Sam. Rita considers Sam's case to be a trivial one. However, Sam kept trying, until one day Sam said to Rita that if they took their child away from him would he do the same and hire a lawyer who had a long name and was fast in speech. Rita was touched and willing to become Sam's lawyer in court.

A group of Rita's colleagues are celebrating a big win.

Rita is backing out of the room with her glass of champagne.

RITA : I am celebrating congratulations to us these are the moments good night. She stops, stunned, as she sees Sam, sitting in the lobby holding out a Starbucks Cappuccino.

SAM : Non-fat vente cap. I'm sorry to bother you, but did you call your friend? (Rita's confused) Your friend from college, your friend who does this kind of work?

RITA : (there never was a friend) I don't have her number anymore, Sam. We lost touch.

SAM : (devastated) Oh, that happens. That happens. People lose touch. Will you call me if you find it? If you get back in touch?

RITA : Yes, I'm just in the middle..it's a special..I'll call you.

[<https://imsdb.com/scripts/I-am-Sam.html>]

The case gets more complicated since Rita begrudgingly works with Sam to help him keep his parental rights, but chaos arises when Lucy convinces Sam to help her run away from the foster home she is being kept in during the trial. Over the course of the trial, Sam gets a new job at Pizza Hut and Annie leaves her apartment for the first time in years. Sam also helps Rita with her family problems, and helps her to realize how much her son really means to her. Sam also convinces her to leave her husband, because Rita told him that he cheated on her.

Motivating to Socialize

A good father teaches her son to enjoy social life. One day while buying school shoes Lucy because she is going to start school. Sam was not alone with Lucy but accompanied by his friends. They all participated, choosing each other shoes that fit Lucy. Here we find funny scenes of Sam's friends who also experience various kinds of obstacles. Brad offers Lucy two pink shoes, one of which is equipped with a pop-up glow. Ifty also did not fail to give advice to Lucy, she showed pink shoes complete with her philosophy why she chose that one. Joe also offered with a calm expression black high-heeled shoes for adults. Finally, Robert, with his paranoid face, offers shoes for adults. Finally Lucy decided and chose her own favorite shoes.

Here you can see the concern of his friends for Sam and Lucy. The climax of this part of the scene is when paying for the shoes. Sam does not have enough money for the price of the shoes. However, his friends help each other by donating their money to reach the price set. Sam's friends support him both emotionally, physically and financially. Seeing this, the seller was touched, it was very visible from the facial expressions he displayed. They went home with the balloons they got from the shoe seller.

Sam reels with confusion. Lucy buries herself in his chest.

LUCY (CONT'D) : Daddy, it's the only way to be together. We'll start a new life, get new names. We'll live in a new apartment. They'll

never find us. The bus has stopped. Passengers for the park have exited. Sam doesn't move. As the BUSDRIVER closes the door and heads on, he holds Lucy protectively to his chest.

SAM : I love you Lucy. I love you.

LUCY : My name isn't Lucy anymore, it's Michelle. (68)

[<https://imsdb.com/scripts/I-am-Sam.html>]

It can be described that the way Sam educates Lucy brings her to that kind of attitude that Lucy loves and respects her dad

Sam and Lucy hold hands and look out the window. Sam sees Echo Park approaching and gets up. Lucy pulls him back to the seat. She looks Daddy in the eye and in a furtive whisper:

LUCY : Let's not get off. Let's keep going.

SAM : No, Lucy.

LUCY : Please.

SAM : That would be wrong... (78)

[<https://imsdb.com/scripts/I-am-Sam.html>]

It is inferred that Sam shows power to his daughter Lucy. However, Lucy is consistent to be willing in the togetherness with Sam no matter what is the condition. Lucy has good understanding and feeling about her father. In addition, she feels safety when she's with Sam, her father.

CONCLUSION

In summary, it is evident that Sam assumes the role of a father figure who wholeheartedly embraces his daughter's positive behaviors. His influence as a father is significant, involving tasks such as providing support and affection, fighting for custody, seeking legal representation in court, and encouraging socialization.

Importantly, he does not impose unrealistic expectations of perfection, as seen during Lucy's initial day at school and her class presentation. This stands in stark contrast to the father figure of one of Lucy's schoolmates, who becomes visibly upset and pressures his child to appear flawless when the child makes a mistake during a presentation. This contrasting approach can have a negative impact on a child's emotional well-being.

Sam's actions underscore a profound message about parental treatment of their daughter. It highlights that an individual's intellectual capacity or IQ does not hinder their ability to express love and affection, both for their own children and for others. Sam's willingness to comfort any crying woman he encounters exemplifies this notion. Ultimately, the most painful wound one can experience is betrayal, as it signifies that someone is willing to harm another for their own gain. It is more distressing to lose trust in our friends than to be deceived by them.

SUGGESTION

It is recommended that individuals can draw valuable lessons from Sam and his peers. Those facing challenges bestowed upon them by fate can engage in their activities with a joyful and complaint-free attitude. Despite their limitations, they exemplify a pure human spirit, offering mutual assistance with sincere hearts.

In essence, Sam imparts a profound message to both parents and educators on how to excel in their roles. It emphasizes qualities such as unwavering commitment, patience, active listening, and even pretending to listen when circumstances make it difficult to do so—all rooted in love. This message is eloquently expressed by Sam during his custody battle in court. It underscores the importance of steadfastness, loyalty, patience in teaching, and genuine love and care for children, transcending the confines of one's intellectual capacity (IQ).

For educators, it is advisable to take these study findings into consideration to prevent betrayals that may disrupt social relationships and harmony. Future research endeavors may explore this novel from various angles or within different literary

forms, including drama, poetry, and short stories. Moreover, employing alternative approaches to analyze the same novel is also encouraged.

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