

CHRISTOPHER CHUBB'S NARCISSISTIC PERSONALITY IN PETER CAREY'S *MY LIFE AS A FAKE*

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Abstrak. Artikel ini mencoba menguak kepribadian narsistik yang dialami oleh tokoh utama Chubb dalam novel *My Life as a Fake*. Dengan mengacu pada pengoalaan data, metode penelitian yang digunakan penulis adalah kualitatif. Ada lima tipe kepribadian narsistik: fantasi atas keberhasilan, kekuatan, kepandaian, ketampanan atau cinta ideal yang tidak terbatas. Ciri-ciri ini ditemukan pada Chubb. Akibat sikapnya yang narsistik, hubungan interpersonalnya dengan orang lain jadi terganggu, Chubb jadi teralienasi.

Kata kunci: narsistik, kepribadian narsistik

Introduction

Personality is a dynamic organization of individual that determines behavior and thought of an individual specifically. In addition, an individual personality is created by a combination of unique factors biology, constitution, temperament, genetic structure, social development, motivational patterns, specific family and cultural environment and life experiences (Kimble, 1980:384). All of the factors can influence an individual personality so that someone can become sensitive, insensitive, talkative or silent.

The problem of personality has become one of the interesting points to write in stories, poems, dramas, or novels. One of the personality problems is a narcissistic personality. In his novel *My Life as a Fake*, Peter Carey portrays Christopher Chubb as the main character as being narcissistic. Christopher Chubb tells the story of his life to an editor named Sarah Wode-Douglass. His strange character and behavior make him live in a fake. Chubb is also insisting Sarah on writing his strange and unbelievable story which Chubb admits to be his truly experience.

Narcissism Concept

The term of narcissism is used to identify someone who really loves himself or herself but in different of others (Jastrow,1932:68). According to Kernberg's opinion narcissism is suffered by a child who comes to believe that the only person whom he can trust and therefore love is himself. This behavior usually triggered by parental rejection (Kernberg, 1976, cited in Carver & Scheier,1992:321)

According to Kohut, the narcissistic personality is a person who has remarkable sense of self-importance and fantasies of limitless success mask a very fragile self esteem. There are two types of narcissistic; they are physical types such as feeling beautiful and handsome and also attitude types such as fantasies of unlimited success, power, brilliance, ideal love, arrogant and always taking advantages. People who are suffered from narcissistic personality have different type or maybe all type. In the

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research, a person with narcissistic personality believes that he/she is special and unique and cannot be understood by, or should associate with other special or high-status people or institutions. They also mention that an individual with narcissistic personality always takes advantages, lacks empathy, and arrogant, feeling of envy and fantasies of success and brilliance.

Freud said that parental rejection becomes a cause, which come from his family or if a child cannot trust others and he or she suffers rejection especially from their parents, he or she will have a low-esteem and it called as the narcissistic personality (Blum,1953:85). In addition, Freud also believes that a person can develop narcissistic personality because of his background, for example the attitude of fond parents toward their children and not being loved are the causes of narcissistic personality. On the other hand, (Hoft,2001:67), said that one of the causes of parental rejection is because parents do not give their love for their children. More specifically, Kohut explains more about the cause which comes from the family, especially the parents who do not respond their child with respect, warmth, empathy and do not provide support. In addition, (Hoft,2001:87), said that parental rejection is a situation when a child does not get their basic needs such as reception (needs to beloved, and to be wanted), feel motivated (feel importance, and extraordinary). Besides, Kohut also said that the other cause is comes from himself, which also becomes the root of his low self-esteem. Narcissism can cause them feel disappointed toward themselves because of their feeling of failure (Davidson & Neale,1990:65).

There are many things that make up the personality of a Narcissistic person and the behavior of a Narcissistic person. The prevailing opinion amongst psychodynamic theorist is the best way to address the narcissus is to utilize hands off type of application. He feels that he is in control and believes that he is in charge of his addiction and can quit with short notice at his own will (Mental health). This can accomplish by letting the narcissist "take control" of the session. After the cause of injury is discovered a therapist must carefully explain the issue so that the patient will not feel threatened. There are also other defense mechanisms which a narcissus uses. A narcissistic person views others as they are needed in the environment, not as they really are. When the person realizes what he is doing this may cause some disappointment and he will try to cover up the injury so that the therapist cannot notice. This restores the wounded ego a felling a superior over the offender is achieved. A Narcissistic person seeks admiration from others and avoids emotional interaction through fear of criticism. The patient must fell no matter what he does is right. Their addictions include work holism, alcoholism, drug abuse, pathological gambling, compulsory shopping, or reckless driving. Narcissists view other people differently than most.

Christopher Chubb's Narcissistic Personality

Chubb's narcissistic personality can be seen from his behaviors that indicate to the narcissistic personality's symptoms. Chubb's attitude is very aggressive, stubborn, not generous. He is also an egoist who has sense of self-importance and sense of self-centered which is shown by his action toward other people, although his performance is not good to look. Chubb does not realize that his performance is poor, but he is proud of his obsolete clothes. He assumes that his clothes is the best clothes for him. He does not care about others' critics toward his performance, so other people assume Chubb is a narcissist.

In the present Chubb believes that he is special because he has been created a human being, Bob McCorkle, and no other people can create a person like what he had done.

Jealous or not, said Chubb, I did submit my work to Personae, and Weiss took six months to reject it. But now I sent him the first two fakes by 'Bob McCorkle,' and seven days later there was the envelope in the Townsville P.O. mailbox I'd rented for just this purpose. (page 37)

Chubb has an obsession to be a good poet, but he cannot be himself. Chubb imitates Bob McCorkle's works who is more brilliant than Chubb. Chubb assumes that Bob McCorkle's works are Chubb's works because he is jealous against Bob McCorkle who is more brilliant than Chubb. He does not care that his plagiarism poems will be rejected.

He always thinks about himself when he is with Sarah Wode-Douglass or others. His feeling of envy is shown when he knows that Weiss has a good life which is better than him. Chubb also has fantasies of success and brilliance because of his skills in poetry and his experiences which is showing his cleverness by his efforts to get back his adopted daughter, Tina.

....no idea that Chubb's story would soon send me travelling to Singapore and from there to Sidney and Melbourne in a vain attempt to establish the true nature of this gigantic man who had emerged, so I assumed, from the darkest recesses of Chubb's disturbed imagination. (page 84)

Chubb assumes that he is the cleverest in making poems, so he attempts to convince Sarah to accept his poems and giving him awards because he is jealous against Weiss. Chubb also makes up story about a gigantic man which is really nothing in order to show his superiority in doing his works.

Chubb is an emotional person because he is easy to get angry. He is angry because of Sarah's words when she offers some foods and drinks to Chubb. He thinks Sarah tries to mock him because he is a poor man.

I'm wretch, dear girl, I know I am. I thought a little massage might make me better.

Breakfast with a masseur? I have a visitor myself, I said. (page 34)

Chubb's arrogance is shown by his thinking that Weiss' works are shallow and they are very different from his poems which have good quality as the real literature. Chubb attempts to favor his poems without looking that there are people who are better than he.

Chubb claimed that he did not travel to Melbourne with intention of attending Weiss' trial. He said he'd been promised a job at J. Walter Thompson as a copywriter....

Their book editor offered him a freelance assignment covering Weiss' trial. (page 53)

He also lacks of empathy toward Tina's needs and responds. He assumes that Tina is ignorant and stubborn and does not need to be cared, because he only accentuates his needs and job.

I was speechless, literally. How in the world could one deal with such an ignorant and stubborn little girl? (page 232)

Besides that, Chubb also feels that he can act as a doctor and can cure diseases. He does not realize that he never get medical education but he has an obsession to become a doctor to show that he is the cleverest.

No doctor, he said. It is the disease you invented for me. It has always been waiting. Cure it if you can.

By this stage I did not doubt I had invented his disease. (page 253)

Last, Chubb is a person who always takes advantages of others to achieve his own ends like; Sarah, Slater, and Noussette. Based on those Chubb's behavior, it can be stated that he has the symptoms of narcissistic personality or in other word, Christopher Chubb changes into a person with narcissistic personality disorder.

The Effects of Christopher Chubb's Narcissistic Personality

Chubb's narcissistic personality gives a big influence in Chubb's life and it is not a good influence but a bad one. Christopher Chubb's bad childhood and his disappointment in his life make Chubb lose his self-esteem. However, Chubb tries to mask his fragile self-esteem by changing him into a different person. Chubb is a person who suffers from personality disorder in his life, which is indicated to narcissistic personality. Chubb's narcissistic personality gives effects in Chubb's life. The effects of Chubb's narcissistic personality are disturbed interpersonal relationship, so people avoid and alienate him.

Chubb's interpersonal relationship is being disturbed by his lack of empathy, feeling of envy, exploitativeness, and taking advantages of others. First, Chubb's relationship with Tina, Mrs. Lim, and his neighbors is disturbed until they avoid him and alienate him. Chubb also disturbs the relationship between Slater and Sarah and the result is they avoid him.

His relationship with Tina and Mrs. Lim is disturbed because of Chubb's sense of exploitativeness, and lack of empathy. His sense of exploitativeness makes Chub think he shall find and secure his adopted daughter, Tina, from Bob McCorkle hand. Some evidences prove Tina has a good life and she has a happy life with McCorkle.

Of course there was nothing there, or worse than nothing. He was shown the vacant lodge, and there, tucked up inside the low rafter's. He found a collection of leaves and flowers all roughly glued to the brown paper pages of a hand- made scrapbook. Had his daughter made this with her abductor? It was painful to imagine. (p. 161)

Chubb actually knows his daughter loves McCorkle and lives happily with him, but Chubb's feeling of envy blinds him. Chubb persists to rescue Tina. "They have kidnapped my little girl, Tuan, and I came to rescue her." (p. 217). Chubb does not give attention for what Tina feels and thinks about him and McCorkle because he is a person who has lack of empathy toward others.

You are. said the *hantu*, and I will catch you,. Then you will go to prison for what you have done. This frightened the girl terribly and she had to sleep near to her bapa all night long.... (p. 204)

Tina thinks Chubb is a ghost, that is *hantu* in Malay who will catch her from her father (bapa in Malay), McCorkle. Chubb is assumed as a frightening even endangering creature because his characters that are cruel, unkind, and unsympathetic toward other people. It makes Tina scared, and after all efforts from Chubb mission, she hates him very much. Finally, Chubb tried to cure McCorkle's illness to get Tina's sympathy. "My daughter would see me save the bastard's life. She could not hate me then." (p. 251). Unfortunately, Chubb's fantasies of brilliance make him diagnose the wrong disease. Chubb makes a big mistake with McCorkle's illness, thus he treats the wrong disease. So, the relationship between Chubb, Tina and Mrs. Lim is disturbed because of Chubb's lack of empathy toward Tina, feeling of envy of McCorkle's life, and exploitativeness to secure Tina from McCorkle.

Tina and Mrs. Lim's dislike are also shown by their suspicious to Chubb. ".....Then you start to do bisnis with the old man. Maybe you thought you get it cheaper. *Cheh!* It is never his to sell." (p. 232).

Tina and Mrs. Lim think Chubb steal the poems of McCorkle in order to sell it to Sarah. So, Tina and Mrs. Lim always protect McCorkle's poems carefully, showing that they think Chubb will always try to steal it. It makes Chubb's interpersonal relationship with Tina, Mrs. Lim, and his neighbors disturbed. In addition, other people, like their neighbors, believe that Chubb is a bad guy, like a ghost.

The *hantu* is coming. The *hantu* is coming. You have seen them together, Mem, so you can imagine the prance, the rage. Soon all the morons in the street were in a state about the ghost. *Cheh!* Peering out like aunties from behind their blinds. (p.251).

Tina tells her neighbors about the story of Chubb's action based on her version and tells that Chubb is a ghost. McCorkle's death also becomes a support of Chubb's bad image toward Tina, Mrs. Lim, and their neighbors.

Leukemia was recorded on his death certificate but this had no meaning to the woman and the girl, who were soon telling neighbors that the *hantu* had sucked the blood from Mr. Bob." (p. 258)

It shows Tina and Mrs. Lim hate Chubb because he has killed McCorkle. Therefore, the neighbors, who also love McCorkle, believe in Tina and Mrs. Lim. They

hate Chubb too and believe that Chubb is a ghost, who has sucked the blood from Mr. Bob. The people, who believe Tina's word believe that McCorkle death is caused by Chubb's hands, think that Chubb is really a bad guy and they have a really bad image about Chubb's figure.

Chubb's narcissistic personality causes him is avoided by his surrounding in every chance when they meet. Every time he meets his neighbor, they have the neighbors already have a bad image of him, so no one wants to be his friend or even just talking with him.

Cheh. Wha you want? I told him I wished to look at fabrics.

He did not seem to hear Inc. No open, he said, scowling angrily. Closed today. Too busy now. (p. 118)

When Sarah companies Chubb to make a new suit for him, they get rude rejection from the first tailor. Although it is not as rude as the first tailor, they also get a bad welcome from the second tailor.

....But once he understood that I wished to have a suit made for his neighbor, who was hovering uncertainly at his door, I saw he was a frightful snob. He sighed and bowed his head. (p. 119)

His neighbors do not like Chubb very much. They show their bad respond when they see Chubb, they do not respect him and are not shamed of rejecting him rudely. At least, beside of his bad image, the neighbors avoid him is also caused because by his arrogance and lack of empathy.

Even Tina and Mrs. Lim live together with Chubb but they do not care of him. They let Chubb careless, dirty and skinny with suppurating ulcers on his sturdy peasant legs. Tina and Mrs. Lim try to ignore Chubb's presence in their life. They are alienating Chubb in their daily life because they hate him. Besides, the environment or the neighbors are also alienating him from the society. From the previous paragraph, it can be stated that people always treat Chubb like he never exist around them. They never give any respond to him, never talk to him, and do not give any attention to Chubb's existence. They think Chubb is not one of them. He shall not be there with them. The people actually hate Chubb's existence very much because his narcissistic personality has disturbed a lot of persons with his bad behaviors and thought. Furthermore, Chubb also gives a bad memory for others and he also has bad image. So, alienation is not only from Tina and Mrs. Lim but also from the neighbors who are always around him in every time. Chubb's narcissistic personality is not only disturbing his relationship with others but also avoiding and alienating him all time. In conclusion, every bad thing happens in Chubb's life because his narcissistic personality and lie still cannot control his behaviors, emotion and feeling until he is old and he dies in Tina's and Mrs. Lim's hands.

Poor Christipher is dead. The book is stolen.

You understand the women are lying?

No, I saw him. He's dead. (page 264)

Finally, Chubb's relationship with Slater and Sarah is disturbed and they also avoid him. Even Slater and Sarah do not know Chubb for a long time but they have a little bit extreme opinion about Chubb. Slater, who meets Chubb first, thinks Chubb as a 'sick' man who lives in envy and disappointment. "Then you will know that our scrofulous friend was exactly that sort of fellow. A very serious provincial academic poet, committed to a life; of envy and disappointment." (p. 18) Besides, Slater also thinks Chubb is a villain or criminal. "Have you heard of the McCorkle Hoax? No? Well, our Christopher Chubb was the villain." (p. 19). Slater blames Chubb for Weiss death by saying Chubb as the villain. It shows that Slater dislikes Chubb and he tells Sarah with a tendency to make Sarah avoid Chubb and not looking for him again. At least, Sarah also considers Chubb is a crazy old man.

Chubb paused here as if to appeal to me, and looking into those grey eyes I wondered what in nature would permit him to shift from murder to nursing without so much as a change in breath. It was only here, so late in the story, that I considered the possibility of him being truly psychotic. (p. 251)

This quotation shows Sarah's opinion about Chubb whom she thinks really crazy or "truly psychotic". After she knows Chubb is a crazy old man, she still meets Chubb, listens and writes his story because she wants to get McCorkle's poem, which Chubb promises to give her. "... but in truth I had no interest in his story at all. I wished to read that fragment again, as he well knew, and so I must endure his tale." (p. 29). Actually, Sarah never believe in Chubb's story about his adventure and even his explanations about his own personality. Not only because it is an unbelievable story but also because she knows that Chubb is a person who always take advantages from others. So, Sarah is not really interested to the story because the truth of the story is doubted.

He could have saved his money, Mem. I am not the jealous type. Certainly you were when – I hesitated, not knowing what to call the kidnapper, if Indeed there was a kidnapper- when 'McCorkle' stole your daughter. But he did embarrass me, and irritate me too. I was stuck with transcribing, this story when all I wanted was the rest of that damn poetry. Mr. Chubb, I said. You remember the first day you came to the hotel, you brought McCorkle's manuscript. (p. 163)

Sometimes, Sarah often keeps her opinion in her mind, because Chubb is an emotional person. If Chubb gets angry, he uses McCorkle's manuscript to threaten Sarah. So, she tries not to make Chubb angry. As Kohut says, the person with narcissistic personality has few and shallow personal relationship (Davidson & Neale. 1990, p. 258). The relationship between Chubb with Slater and Sarah is disturbed as well because of his lack of empathy, behavior to get advantages from others, feeling of envy, sense of self-centered and sense of self - importance. In addition not only Slater but also Sarah tries to avoid him. Slater, who has heard about Chubb and met him for long time before, knows about his life and his bad behavior. At the first time he sees Chubb in the store, Slater tries to pretend that he does not know Chubb and is not interest at him.

His hand still clamped around my arm, he propelled me forcibly back along the street. Do you know him? He looked at me with his big chin working as if he were

chewing something unpleasant. Know him? He said indignantly. Of course not. (p. 13)

Slater has bad memories about Chubb and he tries not to remember or tell it to Sarah. Besides that, Slater also convinces Sarah that Chubb is a person suffering from narcissistic personality. "And look what a narcissist he is. His suit wears out and the whole world is against him." (p. 110). Slater thinks that Chubb is not a good person and he wants Sarah to avoid Chubb. "He was also a very aggressive and opinionated little snot. This is not a generous man." (p. 110). Moreover, the quotation also shows clearly how Slater wants to avoid Chubb.

Sarah also avoids Chubb at the first time when he tries to meet her. Sarah avoids Chubb because of his bad reputation which makes Sarah has doubt on him. Chubb still insists Sarah to meet him even though Sarah does not want to meet him and already gives him a polite reason to avoid him.

I'm actually rather ill, I Said.

I have medicine.

Having no enthusiasm for any diagnosis he might make, I remained silent.

Please see me, he said. I can come to your hotel.

This, of course, is exactly what I had wished when I carried my magazine to his shop, but that was before I knew his history.

I'm sorry. I can't meet you. (p. 23)

Chubb efforts insist Sarah to meet him for few times but Sarah always rejects it. Besides, Sarah also tries to avoid Chubb when he shows his anger and arrogance. In the hour or so we had been talking Chubb had taken nothing stronger than tea. but now he showed a drunk's quick trigger. Don't get clever-*lah*, he hissed.

This sudden rage reminded me of Slater's warnings. I therefore signed and collected my purse. (p. 40)

Sarah will avoid Chubb any time when he shows his bad behavior. Later the neighbors, Slater and Sarah are also avoiding him because of his narcissistic personality.

Chubb's narcissistic personality also causes his quarrel against Weiss. Chubb dislike because Weiss does not love Chubb's poems which are assumed not so good and Chubb assumes that Weiss has insulted him. He feels irritable about Chubb's intelligence and he attacks Weiss brutally.

....On the one hand he would not concede that Chubb had written them, they were far too good; on the other he blamed him for publicly humiliating a friend....

He pushed his muddy boots against Chubb's head. Why did you do it, Christopher?....

I understand that you were jealous but why, when you finally has me in the bloody dock, would you keep twisting the knife? You are mentally unwell, Christopher. You are a sadist. (page 62)

After Chubb's death, Sarah leaves Kuala Lumpur but Chubb's fake story becomes a controversy. People give arguments toward Chubb's fake story so Sarah must work hard to find the truth of Chubb's story. Sarah regrets to meet Chubb because of Chubb's narcissistic personality, she gets protests from people and it can make a bad reputation in her career as an editor. Sarah does not state condolence upon Chubb's death because Chubb's attitudes make Sarah get many disadvantages in her career.

I now commenced to travel compulsively 'up and down gathering up limb' of that horrid puzzle. It was this quest that sent me journeying out to Australia at a time when I could scarcely afford the bus fare to Old Church Street, and at the end of all this ridiculous expense and anguish the only 'fact' I could be certain of was that McCorkle had a physical existence and it was separate from Chubb's. This I would accept and so I labored madly on, stubborn as a goat, writing pestering letters, borrowing money, imperiling *The Modern Review*, getting sucked deeper and deeper into the morass until, one dark winter's afternoon on Oxford Street, I suffered what is politely called a nervous breakdown. (page 265, 266)

After Chubb's death, Sarah leaves Kuala Lumpur and goes to Australia with full of regret against Chubb. Sarah considers that during her meeting, friendship, and cooperation with Chubb, Chubb makes Sarah disappointed because Chubb is not honest about himself and only imitates others who are clever than he. All Chubb's works are assumed as fake works by people.

Chubb's narcissistic personality not only troubles other people during his life, but also leaves bad memory after he has died about his fake story. Chubb's story is assumed not feasible to publish because it is thought only making-up story without realities. Therefore, no one state condolence upon Chubb's death because they have not felt sympathy anymore to Chubb.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, from the discussion above, it is clear that Chubb is a person who is diligent, full of ambition, enthusiasm, spirit, and optimism; but unfortunately, he does not realize the limits of his ability, he does not want to hear comments and suggestions from other people because he feels his opinions are truest. He also compels so that his works can be received by others although according to others, his works are not so good. He does not realize that who have rights to value his works are good or not are other people who are skilled and professional in their fields based on realities, not by himself. It shows that Chubb thinks himself as a center of all things and assumes that he is most important. These characteristics show that Chubb undergoes a personality disorder known as narcissistic personality.

Chubb's attitudes make him not only disliked by his friends and society. His interpersonal relationship with Tina, Mrs. Lim, and his neighbor is disturbed, so they avoid him and alienate him. Later, Chubb also disturbs the relationship of Slater and Sarah and make them avoid him. After Chubb's death, Sarah leaves Kuala Lumpur but Chubb's fake story becomes a controversy, so Sarah must work hard to find the truth of Chubb's story.

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