

PERSONA AND SHADOW OF KEVIN IN LIONEL SHRIVER'S NOVEL WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT KEVIN

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Abstract

This research discusses the topic of Kevin Katchadourian's archetype, as the main character in the novel We Need to Talk About Kevin written by Lionel Shriver. Kevin is described as a teenager with psychopath disorder who committed school massacre. The objective of this research is to analyze the persona and shadow archetypes of Kevin. John Murphy's character and characterization theory and Carl Jung's psychological approach of archetype theory are used. Descriptive qualitative and library research method are used to analyze and describing the quotations based on Jungian archetype theory of persona and shadow, also to get deeper understanding and more correlation between the analysis and the theories from books, journals, and websites. The results of the research are divided into two, the first is regarding to Kevin's persona and the second is his shadow. (1) Kevin has two personas, namely his persona as a loving child for his father and a caring brother for his little sister. (2) Kevin's shadow deals with his manipulative and violent side. By the end of the analysis, it is concluded that Kevin failed to strike a balance between his persona and shadow, choosing to unite with his shadow which is psychologically unhealthy according to Jung's theory.

Keywords: *persona, shadow, archetype, character, characterization*

INTRODUCTION

Every person must have a distinct personality that manifests itself in specific social behaviors, whether in the form of feelings, thoughts, or actions. Everything a person has accomplished and all future expectations are determined by their personality and those around them (Schultz & Schultz, 2017). According to Jung (1979), humans have innate emotional and mental behavior patterns known as archetypes, which manifest as symbolic imaginations, thoughts, and acts, and have a significant impact on developing emotions, ethics, and personality. Archetypes influence emotions, ethics, and mental behavior. The most notable archetypes are persona and shadow. The persona is the public face of a person's personality, whereas the shadow is the darker element of a person's personality that they try to hide from society.

As a result, archetypes have a significant influence on an individual's entire future. The archetypes have the ability to be both constructive and destructive forces. He claims that a person must be able to maintain a balance between persona and shadow in order to be psychologically healthy. A psychopathic personality disorder is an example of someone who is governed by his own shadow. A

person should be able to recognize his own shadow, which Jung saw as the human race's greatest threat because it originates in the unconscious mind. It is everyone's destiny to become aware of and deal with their shadow. (Jung, 1958)

Because archetypes are an element of psychology, which is also tied to human nature, they can have an impact on literary works. Literary works can serve as a medium for expressing the author's imagination, which may or may not be founded on fact (Wellek & Warren, 1980). The novel We Need to Talk About Kevin, written by Lionel Shriver and published in 2003, was inspired by the Columbine High School shootings in 1999, when a psychotic adolescent named Eric Harris and his friend Dylan Klebold shot and killed their classmates and teachers. The novel also chronicles the story of Kevin Katchadourian, a psychopathic adolescent who carried out a school massacre and murdered his family members. In the story, he has been using his persona archetype to his father and sister since childhood, and repressed his shadow until he chose to become one with it, which led him to commit murder and live in an unstable psychological state.

There are various previous studies that are related to this subject that were utilized in this

investigation. Using Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theories, Cholifah (2016) discovered that Kevin had antisocial personality disorder, which was caused by his environment as the most influential since his childhood, in her thesis titled "Antisocial Personality Disorder As Reflected in The Main Character in Linne Ramsay's *We Need To Talk About Kevin*". Meliala (2020), in her thesis titled "Psychopathic Behavior As The Result of Poor Bonding Between Mother and Son in Lionel Shriver's *We Need To Talk About Kevin*," used Sigmund Freud's psychosexual development theory to discover that Kevin had psychopathic behavior that began in childhood as a result of his poor bonding with his mother.

This study sets two statements of the problems: (1) how are Kevin's persona depicted in *We Need to Talk About Kevin*? and (2) how are Kevin's shadow depicted in *We Need to Talk About Kevin*? The followings are the objective of this study: (1) to analyze Kevin's persona in *We Need to Talk About Kevin* and (2) to analyze Kevin's shadow in *We Need to Talk About Kevin*.

Literary approach and psychological approach are utilized to answer to the problem statement. Character and characterization theory are employed in literary approaches. M.J. Murphy's character and characterization theory is the first hypothesis. A character is an individual shown in a narrative work who possesses features and morals that separate him or her from others (Abrams, 1999). Characterization, according to Bennett and Royle (2004), is a process by which an author constructs his character or how the character portrays the personality in a work of fiction. Kevin's character is examined using the theories of character and characterization, as well as other characters' perspectives, speech, past lives, conversations with other characters, and his mannerism depicted in the text.

For psychological approach, the Jungian archetype theory is utilized in this study. Persona and shadow are the archetypes used in this investigation. Persona refers to a person's mask that comprises values and positive actions in order to conform to society. Jung thought that each person's persona should present a specific role that society assigns to them. Although the persona can be beneficial, if we believe it represents our genuine nature, it can also be destructive since it prevents us from developing other

aspects of our personality. While shadow refers to the negative components of the unconscious mind that are responsible for undesirable ideas, feelings, and behaviors (Jung, 1947). The shadow must be tamed, but if it is fully suppressed, the psyche will become dull and lifeless. As a result, Jungian archetype theory is employed to examine Kevin's persona and shadow portrayed in the novel.

METHOD

In this study, qualitative research is conducted to gain an insight of the main character's persona and shadow archetype through the story of *We Need to Talk About Kevin*. Because the purpose of this study is to examine the novel's character, the descriptive-qualitative approach was chosen and the analysis is formed in the form of description. The method's goal is to determine the purpose of description as well as the consequences of the data obtained (Shields and Rangarajan, 2013). The library research method is also conducted in addition to the descriptive-qualitative method. This procedure is also used to back up the information gathered. A selection of materials on one or more topics is referred to as library research. A research library is a collection of primary and secondary literature that aids intellectual or scientific inquiry. (Young 1983).

The data for this study came primarily from Lionel Shriver's novel *We Need to Talk About Kevin*. The narration, speech, and utterances of the protagonist that lead to the statement of the problem are observed and explored throughout the novel. A secondary source of data is also utilized as supporting data for a fuller knowledge of the theories used to address the statement of the problems, in addition to the original source. In order to collect the data, some steps were conducted. The first step was to read it multiple times to have a thorough grasp of the novel. After that, identifying and marking the story's important dialogues that related to the problem statement. The next phase was to determine Kevin's personality or characterization, as well as his archetypes, which included persona and shadow.

Some steps were taken to examine the data collected in order to discover Kevin's persona and shadow archetype in the narrative. The first step was to use character and characterization theory to determine Kevin's persona and shadow through the

narrative and conversations in the story. The next step was to write a conclusion that summarized the study's findings.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The writer discovers two main findings after analyzing Lionel Shriver's 'We Need to Talk About Kevin'.

Persona

1. Loving Child

In front of Franklin, Kevin always managed to act like a good kid. Franklin's idealistic views dictate that in order to construct a perfect marriage with Eva, they must have a child. Franklin and Eva agreed that having children would be the single most important decision they would ever make together, despite Eva's belief that she did not want to have children because she is a wanderer and believes that living a husband and wife life is enough for her.

Kevin's behavior toward his parents changed as a result of this crossroads. In front of his mother, he is chilly and uninterested, but in front of his father, he becomes very excited. The pressures of his environment, in this case, his own father, shaped this mask. Kevin kept a close eye on the situation and was able to gain Franklin's trust at all times. Because Kevin's persona has formed since kindergarten, Franklin assumed that his son is a "happy, healthy boy" as in the following quotation:

"[...] We have a happy, healthy boy. And I'm beginning to think he's unusually bright. If he sometimes keeps to himself, that's because he's thoughtful, reflective. Otherwise, he plays with me, he hugs me good night, I read him stories. When it's just me and him, he tells me everything." (p. 221)

Franklin expresses his opinion of Kevin in the passage above, stating that the boy is intelligent and fits his ideal of having a son. Kevin creates his persona and becomes more devoted to his father in order to match Franklin's expectations and trust. They used to watch TV shows together and play together whenever they had the chance. Kevin will always respond innocently about the television program he watched with Franklin, which his father considered adorable. (Shriver, 2003: 258)

As a father, Franklin feels great doing all of the activities at home with Kevin. Another thing that makes Franklin believe in Kevin is how happily his son meets him. When Franklin returned home from work, Kevin always greeted his father with the joy and wonder of a typical child in the following text:

In contrast to—Franklin, I feel so lousy about this, as if I'm trying to take something away from you that you cherish—Kevin's behavior around you. When you walked in, his face changed. His eyebrows shot up, his head cocked, and he put on a closed-mouth smile high up on his chin, his lips meeting at his upper gum. Altogether, his features assumed the permanent expression of startled happiness that you see on aging starlets who have had too much plastic surgery. (p. 274)

Eva describes Kevin's reaction when his father returns home from work as if he had been taught. Kevin is well aware that Franklin adores him, which is why he must behave as if he is always happy. Kevin not only makes his movements but also makes his voice sound enthusiastic and full of wonder in the following paragraph:

Hi, Dad! He'd cry. How was work today, Dad? Did you take any pictures of some real cool stuff? Any more cows, Dad? Any more fields or big buildings or really loaded-people's houses? [...] He'd enthuse, Gosh, that's great! Another car ad! I'm gonna tell everybody at school that my dad takes pictures for Oldsmobile! (p. 275)

On the dialogue presented above, Kevin is quite interested in inquiring about Franklin's work as a photographer and excited to tell his friends about it, despite the fact that he does not have one. As a result, Franklin trusted and adored Kevin, a happy boy who seemed to think his father was awesome, just like kids in general. Kevin was still smiling and laughing as he welcomed Franklin, and he asked about his father, as the two of them do a lot of activities together as father and son. Kevin's persona portrays Franklin as a loving child, exactly as his father expects him to be.

2. Caring Brother

Having a sibling forces Kevin to maintain his image as a caring brother as well, especially in order to keep his father's trust on him. Kevin's sister, Celia Plaskett, was born during his teenage years. Unlike the decision to have Kevin, Eva chose to have Celia despite Franklin's objections and the fact that their son was more than enough. This is because the fact that Eva is lonely and wishes for a nice child, which Kevin could not be the one. Eva was looking forward to the birth of her daughter during her second pregnancy.

Celia is described as a calm, sweet little girl who is "plainly lovable." Despite the fact that Celia is not as smart as Kevin, Eva adores her since she fulfills all of her hopes for a child. Kevin immediately recognized that everyone but himself will immediately love Celia's presence. His unconscious mind rejected Celia since he did not want his parents' attention diverted to his sister. He could not express his refusal, though, because he needed Franklin's trust. Kevin's second persona is created as a result of his role as Celia's older brother and how he taking cares of his little sister. Kevin can use his persona as a good brother who likes to play with his sister, as shown in the following text:

Yet however fresh the memory of those bagworms, the recollection simply didn't feature two weeks later when Kevin offered her a "ride" on his back as he climbed the white oak, and she clasped his neck. No doubt she was surprised when Kevin urged her off to perch tremulously on an upper branch, after which he climbed calmly to the ground. (p. 273)

Kevin may appear mischievous in the text above for leaving Celia at such a risky height for her age, yet he nevertheless helps his sister down and they play together. Kevin is easy to like for Celia, who is still young, and regards him as a playful and caring brother. When Kevin is at home, he must constantly wear a mask, not only in front of Franklin, but also in front of Celia.

When he is with Celia, he must always seem natural and appear to be a normal big brother. Kevin always allowed Celia to be close to him, allowing her to enter his room and play with him, as shown in the following text:

When our two-year-old tiptoed into his bedroom, he let her pet his head with damp little pats. When she offered him her get-well drawings, he didn't dismiss them as dumb or take advantage of feeling bad to tell her, as was well within his rights, to leave him alone, instead exerting himself to say weakly, "That's a nice picture, Celie. Why don't you draw me another one?" (p. 280)

Kevin acts as a good brother and loves his younger sister like he should, as evidenced above. One day when Kevin and Celia were left alone, the little girl's eye was stricken by a drain cleaner and could no longer be cured. Celia had to undergo a surgery and had one of her eyes removed. Eva asked her daughter what really happened when she cleansed Celia's operation wound at night, whether Kevin hurt her intentionally or not. Celia disputed with her mother's accusation and claimed that Kevin was the one who transported her to the hospital after her eye was wounded, as shown in the following text:

"Kevin—" She pawed at the lid with the back of her wrist; it itched, but lest she dislodge the conformer she had learned to always rub toward her nose. "I got something in my eye. Kevin helped me wash it out." (p. 358)

According to Celia, Kevin did not do anything harmful to her and immediately transported her to the hospital for further treatment. Although the story does not clarify how the drain cleaner could injure Celia's eyes, Kevin is still thought to be doing his duties as a brother by babysitting Celia, and what happened was only an accident. Kevin always had the option of refusing to help Celia, however he had to act as the older brother who was responsible for her treatment. If Kevin stayed there and did nothing, Franklin and Celia would lose trust in him.

Finally, Kevin was able to gain the hearts of his two family members, Celia and Franklin, by effectively using his persona and convincing them to trust him until the end of their lives. However, in *Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious: Collected Works, Volume 9 (Part 1)*, Jung (1940) claimed that the persona that becomes identical with the individual using it is hazardous and will harm them. Kevin has been wearing both roles for

much too long, from toddler to adolescence, which has left him mentally exhausted. When he removes his mask for the first time, his mental condition becomes unbalanced, and he obeys his shadow.

Shadow

1. Manipulative

Shadow is a dark and wicked side of the story with animal characters that are camouflaged in the lives of the protagonists. Kevin's shadow has been present since he was a toddler. Kevin was already a master manipulator of his surroundings. The word "manipulative" implies to influence or manage shrewdly or deviously..." according to the American Heritage Dictionary (1993). For example, a parent may persuade their child to stay in school purely for the benefit of the child, or it may be in the parent's best interests if the youngster continues to tantrum or drops out of school and finds work. (Ackerman, 1995)

Kevin's manipulative side was evident as early as when he was four years old and went out to lunch with his parents. He caused a mess at the time by obstructing his mother's speech with loud noise. Franklin remained silent, as Eva became increasingly agitated, slapping Kevin's hand as indicated in the following text:

I slapped him. It wasn't very hard. He looked happy. [...] Now Kevin started to wail. His tears were a bit late, in my view. I wasn't moved. I left him to it. (p.151)

According to the passage above, Kevin first acted normal and even seemed pleased when he finally received Eva's "attention". When Franklin scolded Eva for the hitting, Kevin sobbed and made him look like a victim, while his mother was regarded as a rude person by both people around them and his father. Franklin has always assumed Kevin was an innocent child, so he has always let whatever his son did go because "boys will be boys".

Eva soon discovered that Kevin was far clever than the majority of children. Whatever Kevin did, Eva knew it was done on purpose to stress her out even more. Kevin does not appear to be interested in learning mathematics and reading, but he does have to look 'stupid' in front of his

parents because they believe youngsters his age should frequently ask "why" inquiries of high curiosity as shown in the text below:

He hated to admit he didn't know something already, and his blanket playing-dumb routine was cunningly crafted to cover any genuine gaps in his education.

In Kevin's mind, pretend-ignorance wasn't shameful, and I was never able to discriminate between his feigned stupidity and the real thing. (p. 226)

Kevin was evidently naive only when he was alone with his mother in the sentence above. Eva was worn down by her demanding duty as the mother of a naive child. Kevin used to throw food on the refrigerator door when he was a kid. Kevin defecated after his mother completed changing his diaper after more than six years in diapers, hoping to see his mother upset because she had to change the diaper again. Eva became enraged and slammed Kevin on the changing table, but she missed and the infant fell, breaking his arm, necessitating surgery. Eva continued to apologize to her child on the way back home, but received no response. She was terrified to think of what would happen next, because Franklin had grown accustomed to trusting Kevin's version of story over his wife's, and he had gone straight to Kevin to inquire about what had happened, but the child said that he feel from the changing table while his mother went to get more wipes, which is opposite from the truth. However, Franklin immediately believe it since Kevin telling it as if it happened like that in the following text:

He was good. He was very, very good; you may not appreciate how good. He was smooth—the story was ready. None of the details were inconsistent or gratuitous; he had spurned the extravagant fantasies with which most children his age would camouflage a spilled drink or broken mirror. He had learned what all skilled liar register if they're ever to make a career of it: Always appropriate as much of the truth as possible. (p. 235)

Based on Kevin's fake confession in the text, he was able to persuade Franklin to believe in him and not hold Eva responsible for what had occurred. According to Jung (Visions: Notes of the Seminar Given in 1930–1934), referenced in

Academy of Ideas (2018), those who rely too much on projection to shelter themselves from their shadow, and who never analyze, would always look for scapegoats or others to blame for their problems. Kevin made Eva believe that if she makes a mistake in the future, or if Kevin is alone with Franklin, he may just bring it up and disclose the truth, causing his father to blame Eva for the disaster.

Years later, when Celia, lost one of her eyes due to a drain cleaner accident, this manipulative conduct was demonstrated again. Franklin did not blame Kevin, who had been entrusted to watch his younger sister on that particular day, Kevin, however, knowing that Franklin will support him, acts as if he is heartbroken by his sister's eye, as described in the following passage:

Humoring you, he assumed his rueful, sideways slouch at the dining table. Having been unwillingly summoned to this convocation as well, felt like a kid myself, once more forced at age nine to formally apologize to Mr. Wintergreen for pilfering drops from the walnut tree in his front yard. (p. 346)

Kevin imitates how he shows remorse as a small boy in the text, leading Franklin to believe that his son is responsible. Franklin believes it is purely coincidental. As Kevin grows older, Eva, who spends the majority of her time with him, notices that he is becoming more skilled at constructing his character and manipulating Franklin, such that his father is unaware that he has been deceived. Franklin may be aware of Kevin's true nature, but chooses to ignore it in order to maintain the illusion of a perfect family. As a result, Eva can only write the following text in her letter to express the truth:

You'll just have to take my word for it—I know you won't—that when you weren't home, Kevin was sour, secretive, and sarcastic. Every day was a bad day. This laconic, supercilious, unforthcoming persona of his did seem real. (p. 274)

Kevin could only strike out at his father and cling to his mother because he was too exhausted to maintain his persona while he was severely sick at the age of ten. Kevin let his

mother dressed him, even apologizes when he vomits. The roles of Eva and Franklin are reversed, as shown in the paragraph above. Kevin, who was previously unconcerned about his mother, has suddenly grown attached. Kevin is bored of his character, Eva concludes, because he was not faking at all at the time. (Shriver, 2003: 279)

On the day of the slaughter, Kevin's manipulative side failed him once more. Eva had already noticed that Kevin did not appear to be his typical self at the time. He appeared tired as he did not greet his family like usual. Franklin was looking forward to inviting Kevin to play and telling him about his job, but his son shouted at him as follows:

"Shut up!" Kevin barked suddenly at your side."That's enough. Shut up!"

Warily, we all three peered at this unprompted impertinence.

"I don't care how your camera works," he continued levelly. "I don't want to be a location scout for a bunch of crappy products. I'm not interested. [...] And I've had it up to my eyeballs with heart-to-heart father-son talks about aspects of my life that are none of your business." (p. 425)

According to the paragraph above, Kevin let his shadow to take control of him. Kevin uses rage to relieve the load he has hidden in his subconscious mind. He appears to be wounded since he has to act like a loving kid his entire life, and he chooses to tell Franklin everything so that he understands he never liked his father and is weary of pretending like one. Kevin had had enough of his attitude and shouted and talked harshly to Franklin, something he had never done to his father. Kevin stated that he never enjoyed all of his father's pastimes.

2. Violent

Franklin had never disciplined Kevin. Franklin believes Kevin is a youngster who can learn on his own and takes his time. Without recognizing it, this ideal unintentionally develops Kevin's worst character, where it encourages the existence of evil and violence. Kevin's unconscious mind has been normalizing crime since a very young age, which is awful and puts

his mental development at danger, especially because he was born as a psychopath with no empathy. He began viewing movies featuring cruel scenes, and his parents did nothing to stop him. This is shown in the following paragraph:

Kevin had discovered the secret: not merely that it wasn't real, but that *it wasn't him*. *Over the years I observed Kevin watching decapitations, disembowelments, dismemberments, flayings, impalements, deoculations, and crucifixions, and I never saw him flinch. Because he'd mastered the trick.* (p. 170)

From the passage, it appears that Kevin has supported crime and criminals since he was a child. He is used to seeing sadistic and terrible images in films, therefore he has perfected the tactics that led him to the school massacre tragedy. Kevin overheard his parents argue the day before the murder, which was triggered by their ongoing conflicts over having Kevin since the beginning of their marriage to the unbalance of their love for the two children. Eva feels that their son is the source of her alienation from Franklin. He adored Kevin and was constantly on his side. Eva, on the other hand, adored Celia, her youngest daughter, who had the polar opposite disposition to Kevin. Franklin and Eva's relationship had become so strained as a result of their divided feelings for the children that they had considered seeking custody of their favorite kid.

Kevin discovers that he will have to live with Franklin for the rest of his life since his father obviously will have the custody of him. Living with Franklin necessitates Kevin maintaining his identity or mask for the benefit of his father. This is described in the following paragraph by Eva's observations after the slaughter and the realization that Kevin had hated his father all along:

[...] In retrospect, I can only assume that it was bad enough living with a woman who was cold, suspicious, resentful, accusatory, and aloof. Only one eventuality must have seemed worse, and that was living with you, Franklin. Getting stuck with Dad. Getting stuck with Dad the Dupe. (p. 410)

Kevin's shadow, which has been overtaken by evil and cruel things, leads him to believe that the only way to get away from Franklin is to kill. Kevin killed his sister and father the next day after overhearing his parents' discussions about divorce. They were the people of his family who loved him the most and knew him the least. For his individual physical class, Kevin brought his crossbow and arrow to school, stood on the balcony, and shot students, instructors, and even cafeteria workers one by one with his arrow. He then remained there and watched as the rest of them died without feeling guilty.

Even after being imprisoned, Kevin no longer hides his shadow and bluntly states that he never liked his father as much as in a conversation he had with a television journalist who wanted to document his murder:

"Mister Plastic?" Kevin snorted. "I should be so lucky we'd have a fight. No, it was all cheery chirpy, hot dogs and Cheez Whiz. A total fraud, you know? All like, *Let's go to the Natural History Museum, Kev, they have some really neat-o rocks!* He was into some Little League fantasy, stuck in the 1950s. I'd get this, *I luuuuuuv you, buddy!* stuff, and I'd just look at him like, *Who are you talking to, guy?* What does that mean, your dad 'loves' you and hasn't a [bleep]ing clue who you are? What's he love, then? Some kid in *Happy Days*. Not me." (p. 413)

Eva's earlier belief that Kevin killed Franklin so that her husband would not gain custody of him was confirmed by the paragraph above. Kevin did indeed put on the 'mask' of being a decent child in front of his father, as described in the first sub-chapter. He was sick of hiding behind his disguise. Instead, it appears that because Eva is the only person to whom he has exposed his "true" self, she is also the only person with whom he can afford to be himself, therefore he did not murder her.

The journalist then asked Kevin the actual cause for the murder, which everyone, including Eva, is curious about, and Kevin boldly and without hesitation responded with his argument that people's lives are boring. People need to witness or experience tragedy in order to believe that their lives are meaningful. His morals were

shattered since he was born with the personality of a psychopath, who has no remorse and performs harmful actions without hesitation.

The failure to identify, accept, and deal with shadows is typically the underlying cause of conflicts between persons and within their environment, according to Jung (1946) in the practice of psychotherapy: *Collected Works*, Volume 16. Individualizing and becoming richer and more colorful, growing comfortable with shadows is an important element of the therapeutic interaction. Kevin believes that committing a crime will add a new dimension to their lives, as stated in the following text:

“You need us! What would you do without me, film a documentary on paint drying? What are all those folks doing,” he waved an arm at the camera, “but watching me? Don’t you think they’d have changed the channel by now if all I’d done is get an A in Geometry? Bloodsuckers! I do their dirty work for them!” (p. 414)

According to Kevin’s response in the paragraph above, he feels that action would attract uninteresting individuals. Kevin believed his life was pointless since he had to wear his mask in order to fit in with his own family, but by doing this terrible crime, he was able to receive the recognition he deserved for his job, thereby giving his life purpose. His societal criticism is insightful because empathy may enable individuals to suffer sorrow because they can envision themselves in a catastrophic position that they would not want on anybody else, rather than because life has no value.

Kevin had no regrets about what he had done. Eva was quite frightened on the day of the murder, and she went to school right away since she feared Kevin was one of the victims, and her child was apparently the suspect himself. Eva can only watch as Kevin is caught by the cops. Eva notices that Kevin’s look on her is devoid of sorrow or shame, as expressed in the following text:

Kevin’s expression was placid. It still displayed remnants of resolution, but determination was already sliding to the quiet, self-satisfied complacency of a job well done. His eyes were strangely clear—unperturbed, almost peaceful—and I

recognized their pellucidity from that morning, though breakfast already seemed ten years past. [...] He was pleased with himself, I could see that. And that’s all I needed to know. (p. 446 – 447)

Kevin had killed many people, including those Eva loved the most, her husband and daughter, and she only saw satisfaction in him. Kevin appeared content with his actions, which were pure wickedness. When Eva finds the courage to question him why he did what he did in the following paragraph, he could no longer grasp his shadow and allow it dominate him:

His eyes kept shuttering away, making contact in sorties, then flickering back toward the gaily painted cinder-block wall. And at last gave up, staring a little to the side of my face.

“I used to think I knew,” he said glumly. “Now I’m not so sure.” (p. 464)

Kevin did not provide an explanation for why he became a killer in the passage above. He had no idea who he was since his life had no significance. He had planned to cease his fight to preserve his image from the start, and he had chosen to let the shadow he had been holding back go. Kevin has accepted all forms of violence since he was a youngster. His unconscious mind delighted in the agony and suffering of his victims as a result of being struck by the arrow he had shot. He finally chose to let his shadow to dominate him, leading to the murder because was tired of playing the role of a kind brother and loving son. Kevin is no longer the “healthy and happy boy” that his father had envisioned for him. He opted to unleash his shadow by murdering numerous innocent people, happy with his actions and feeling no remorse.

CONCLUSION

Kevin is a master at concealing his actual self. Since he was a toddler, he has utilized his character as a loving child to acquire his father's trust and love. Franklin adores Kevin and believes he is a happy and healthy boy since he was cheerful, eager, brilliant, and attached to his father. Kevin also portrayed himself as a caring older brother to Celia, his younger sister, despite his dislike for her. Even though Eva has disclosed Kevin’s horrible behavior when he is not

with them, the two members of his family adore him and take sides with him because of his faultless persona.

Kevin's shadow has been suppressed in his unconscious mind, and it contains manipulation and violent. As a psychopath, he is skilled at deceiving his family members, causing them to place their trust in him and believe he is a good guy. On the day of the massacre, Kevin let his shadow take possession of him. He has supported violence and sadistic acts since childhood, which is problematic because psychopaths lack empathy. After murdering the family who trusted in him and leaving Eva in anguish, he does not feel guilty at all.

Kevin eventually opted to let go of his shadow and accept it as an integral part of his life. According to Carl Jung's psychoanalysis, Kevin failed to balance his ego and shadow, imprisoning him and forcing him to live in an unhealthy mental state. The results of the analysis also reveal that a character's unconscious structure can impact conflicts that arise within the characters. Kevin, who had been wearing his mask and holding his shadow since boyhood until he was a teenager, was unable to manage it once it was released. His unconscious mind compelled him to break the law, which he did by committing murder.

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