

The abnormal psychology



Abnormality has become one of the most essential components in various movies such as "The Dark Knight." The researcher thinks "The Dark Knight" includes numerous of characters that would be diagnose with some type of psychological disorder. However, the researcher examines Batman to determine the type of psychological disorder uncovered in the movie "The Dark Knight." The reason why the researcher chose to examine Batman is because not often people think of Batman as having a psychological disorder, but evidence from the movie suggests that he does have some type of mental disorder. The purpose of this paper is to gain knowledge about how psychiatrist, clinicians, and disorders analyst diagnose and treat different types of psychological disorders. The researcher will first give a brief synopsis of "The Dark Knight." Next, the researcher will evaluate Batman in preparation in diagnosing him with a psychological disorder. Then, the researcher will diagnose Batman with a psychological disorder. Finally, the researcher will determine treatment options for Batman.

Synopsis

In the movie "The Dark Knight," Batman faces his arch nemesis, the Joker. Batman along with Commissioner James Gordon and District Attorney Harvey Dent unite to take on crime on the streets of Gotham City. In the beginning, the three appears to be effective, but they soon find themselves prey to one of the Jokers diabolical plans to bring forth havoc to Gotham City. The Joker and a mob of men, wearing clown masks, break into a bank. One by one, the clowns begin to kill each other to get a larger share of the money. After each clown was killed, only one clown was left standing. This clown reveled himself as The Joker. The Joker then places a grenade into the banker's mouth and boards the bus, leaving a string attached to the pin. As The Joker

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leaves, the pin pops out and gas surrounded the bank. The Joker joins a long line of school buses leaving the scene as the police arrive. Later Commissioner Gordon and Batman arrive at the bank the Joker held up to inspect the scene (Newgen, 2008).

Throughout the movie, The Joker went on several rampages and was able to take District Attorney Harvey Dent and his girlfriend, Officer Attorney Rachel Dawes, captive into two different locations. They both were tied up and strapped to explosives that were expected to detonate in a short amount of time. The Joker gives Batman the locations of the two, saying that he only has time to save one of them. Batman chose to go after Rachel, while Commissioner Gordon went after Harvey Dent. As Batman arrives at the address, he finds Harvey Dent instead. Prior to Batman saving Harvey Dent, a half of his face caught on fire. Meanwhile, Commissioner Gordon arrives at the other address. Before he could enter into the door, the building exploded killing Rachel (Newgen, 2008).

After the death of Rachel, Harvey Dent became ruthless and took on the name Two-Face. Two-Face and The Joker teamed up for a brief segment of the movie. Two-Face seeks to uncover the identity of the cop that kidnapped Rachel. He learns that Detective Reamierz was the cop that orchestrated Rachel's kidnapping. He then killed Detective Reamierz with a single shot to the head. At the same time, two large ferries were set for departure to get away from the chaos. One ferry inhabited with criminals; the other ferry packed with innocent citizens. Out of nowhere, The Joker's voice is heard from over the loudspeaker in both ferries. He informs them that each ferry is set with explosives. Each ferry has the detonator for the other ferry. The

Joker threatens both the criminals and the innocents citizens that one ferry must destroy the other ferry by midnight are both ferries would be destroyed. Neither passenger of the ferries chose to use the detonator to destroy the other ferry. Just as The Joker was about to set the detonator, Batman fires a dart, knocking the detonator out of his hand. Batman left to find Two-Face, while the SWAT team captures the Joker (Newgen, 2008).

Assessment

The researcher thinks Batman is one of the greatest and darkest comic book characters ever created. Batman's alter ego, Bruce Wayne, is a multibillionaire that is the President and CEO of Wayne Enterprise. As Batman, he dedicates his life protecting Gotham from criminals. Why did Bruce Wayne turn into Batman? One must analyze the origin of Bruce Wayne. Bruce Wayne is the son of Doctor Thomas Wayne and his wife Martha Wayne. According to Batman Origins comic book, Batman experienced two events in his childhood that traumatized him for life. His first traumatic experience was when he accidentally fell into a pit below Wayne Manor. The pit leads into a cave system full of bats. For years afterwards, he would have hallucinations of a large bat repeatedly. The other tragic event happen when Bruce and his parents were walking back home from a movie. Out of nowhere, a mugger shot both his parents. The mugger ran before the authorities arrived. The families' butler, Alfred Pennyworth, took in Bruce and became his legal Guardian. Since this moment, Bruce Wayne vowed to fight against crime. This is the reason why Bruce Wayne became Batman (Newgen, 2008).

The investigator evaluates Batman by using a technique called naturalistic observation. The naturalistic observation is a method clinicians use to observe clients in their everyday environments (Cramer, 2009). The researcher examines both Batman and his alter ego Bruce Wayne by observing his behavior and actions in the movie. Batman's interpersonal style appears to be hostile and guarded. In the movie, Batman rarely associated with other characters. The tone of Batman's voice leads the researcher to believe that he has a lot of anger built inside. As Bruce Wayne, he was seen to be sociable. He was seen escorting one of his female friends to a social gathering. An important element of the movie is Bruce Wayne's turmoil over his identity. He believes that being Batman was preventing him from having a normal life. Later in the movie, he accepts that Gotham needs Batman to protect the citizens from criminals. Batman and his alter ego Bruce Wayne are intelligent and skillful. In the movie, the researcher views both of them using advanced equipment to track down criminals. The researcher tends to believe that Batman and Bruce Wayne have different emotions. Bruce Wayne frequently smiles in the movie. However, Batman rarely or never seen smiling, this perhaps is an indicator that he is never happy.

Diagnosis

The researcher uses the DSM-IV criteria to determine the psychological disorder Batman possesses. The DSM-IV is the current version of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (APA, 2002). The researcher believes Batman is suffering with comorbidity or having more than one psychological disorder occurring at the same time. The researcher

diagnoses Batman with having posttraumatic stress and dissociative identity disorders.

The researcher believes Batman have a serious case of posttraumatic stress disorder because of his reaction from his parents death. Post-Traumatic Stress is an anxiety problem that develops in some people after extremely traumatic events, such as an accident (APA, 2002). A person with Post-Traumatic Stress may suffer with re-experiencing the traumatic event, avoidance, reduced responsiveness, increased arousal, anxiety, and guilt. Batman often have flashbacks when he passes the scene where his parents where murdered. Often his enemies would lure him to the spot of the traumatic event. When possible, he tries to avoid the scene. Batman also feels guilty because of the death of his parents. He revenges his parents' death by keeping Gotham safe from criminals (Newgen, 2008).

Finally, from observing Batman's actions in the movie, the researcher believes he has dissociative identity disorder. Dissociative Identity Disorder is having two or more separate identities that may not always be aware of each other's thoughts, feelings, and behavior. The symptoms for dissociative identity disorder are the presence of two or more distinct identities or personality states, control of the person's behavior recurrently taken by at least two of these identities or personality states, and an inability to recall important personal information (Cramer, 2009). As mentioned before, Batman and his alter ego Bruce Wayne have two different personalities. From watching the movie, the researcher observes Batman being bitter and impatient. However, Bruce Wayne was more impassive and tranquil.

Recalling Batman's history, he has experience moments of forgetting the locations of the Batcave (Newgen, 2008).

Treatment

A combination of cognitive and drug therapy would help with Batman's posttraumatic stress disorder. Clinicians use cognitive therapy to assist patients with identifying and changing their negative thinking of the event. According to a previous case study, cognitive therapy has three goals. The first goal is for patients to identify how the event affects their daily function. The next goal is to help the patient reduce experiencing the event. Normally, clinicians use drug therapy to reduce the occurrence of nightmares, panic attacks, and flashbacks. Along with the drug therapy, clinicians use techniques such as allowing patients to write a story to describe and elaborate on the event. The final goal is to assist patients with forgetting about certain images, in Batman case the gun used to murder his parents (Ehlers & Clark, 2008).

Similar to posttraumatic stress disorder, therapist uses psychotherapy to help patients with dissociative identity disorder. Clinicians usually try to help the clients recognize fully the nature of their disorder, recover the gaps in their memory, and integrate their sub-personalities into one functional personality (Hunter, 1997). Typically, therapists begin the treatment by bonding with the primary personality and then with each of the sub-personalities. To help Batman therapist would bond with Bruce Wayne because that is Batman's primary personality. Secondly, therapist would help Bruce recover missing pieces of their past. Once Bruce recalls the moments of his childhood that lead him to become Batman, the therapist would finally

help him merge the different sub-personalities into a single, integrated identity or a fusion. When the two identities merges together, further therapy is needed to maintain the complete personality and to teach social and coping skills that may help prevent later dissociations (Cramer, 2009).

Conclusion

After observing Batman behavior in the movie, the researcher discovers he may have posttraumatic stress disorder and dissociative identity disorder. He was diagnosed with posttraumatic stress disorder because he displayed the following symptoms; nightmares and flashbacks, avoidance, reduced responsiveness, and guilt from his parents murder. The reason why the researcher diagnoses Batman with dissociative identity disorder is that he displays two distinct identities or personality states and suffers from ordinary forgetfulness. The two disorders have similar treatment methods. They both aim towards changing his behavior or thinking. Clinicians' uses cognitive therapy to treat posttraumatic stress disorder and uses psychotherapy to treat dissociative identity disorder.

Overall, the researcher obtained a better understanding of how clinicians diagnose and treat patients. One limitation was that the movie " The Dark Knight" never fully captures Bruce Wayne's childhood experiences that lead up to him being Batman. However, the prequel to the movie " Batman Begins" elaborates more on the transitions. Another limitation was, since Batman is a fictional character, the researcher was only able to use observation from watching the movie. The finally limitation was that the researcher was not able to find if Batman was currently getting treatment for

his conditions. In future projects, the investigator will do further examination on Batman, to find information about his current treatment status.

References

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