

Reflection paper: girl, interrupted



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Reflection Paper: “ Girl, Interrupted” 1. Based on the movie and real life, do you think we need other people to help us understand and solve our problems? Why or why not? Absolutely. Without the presence of other people, there would be no social point of reference as to what would be considered “ normal”. In order for an abnormality to exist, be it physical or psychological, there must be a widely accepted concept of “ normalcy”. If a certain individual is said to be suffering a problem (in this case, mental or social), it implies that there is some sort of deviation or inhibition of a societal “ correctness”.

The only way to determine this correctness is by comparing the so-called problem with social norms, defined by the majority of the social group to which this individual belongs. Society is not constant. There is no universal set of social rules that exists independently in all people, so people must make generalizations of “ proper” functioning in other people they can observe. In other words, yes we do, but only if one would define “ solving problems” as adhering to a specific society’s understanding of normalcy. 2.

Out of all the characters, which one can you relate to? Susanna. Susanna is a pseudo-suicidal, sometime-delusional, indecisive, under-achieving, and self-deprecating young woman. I can say that I was all of these things not so long ago. I say pseudo-suicidal because I know she didn’t really want to die. If she had really wanted to, she would’ve poisoned herself with something more potent. She would have cut deeper. But it isn’t about wanting to die. It’s more about having a reminder to yourself that there will always be a way out if ever you really wanted to quit.

This would be considered “ crazy” to most people that don’t understand what it’s like to feel trapped and powerless in world they did not choose to be a part of. But I get it. There’s a certain relief, comfort, elation even, of having the power to decide to play by the rules of this life or just stop playing. It’s not a death wish. Just awareness of its nearness if ever one needed it. If your idea of death was peaceful and peace brings you comfort, doesn’t it make sense that you would want it near? “ When you don’t want to feel... death can seem like a dream”- Susanna

It was symbolically appropriate that Susanna was diagnosed with Borderline Personality Disorder. In addition to defining her clinical symptoms, it also concisely describes her location in the spectrum of “ sanity”—teetering between “ playing by the rules” of society (sanity) and the complete disregard of it (insanity), knowing that it is based only on social constructs. I struggle with this often. I constantly find myself furious at how society has installed institutions, belief systems, and “ truths” that I am to abide by in order to subsist in this world. For example: School.

Somehow, the entire world has gotten it into their mind that formalized education defines the worth of a man. Being thus, I am now forced to attend a school with useless, specific steps to graduate with a diploma. And for some reason, the world will now accept that I am more valuable than another man without this piece of paper. More often than not, the job that I will achieve through this degree will not use ANY of the information I learned during school. It makes no sense, yet a “ sane” person would go through this institution in order to be perceived as “ successful”.

It would be abnormal or “insane”, however, to go against this social understanding and say that college isn’t important. I feel this is where Susanna and I most align. We have the ability to achieve anything according to society’s expectations, but we also suffer the curse of being able to see that there is no value in subscribing to them, other than being able to fit into society functionally. “ Maybe everyone out there is a liar. And maybe the whole world is stupid, and ignorant. But I’d rather be in it. I’d rather be fucking in it, than down here with you. – Susanna 3. How did you feel about the movie? Elaborate. As I talked about earlier, I think this movie is a brilliant commentary of Conformity vs. Nonconformity. It gracefully summarizes the spectrum of the perception of reality and outlines the defense mechanisms we suffer to maintain these various realities. “ Georgina only lies to people that keep her here. Maybe she wants to live in Oz forever. ” Polly’s delusion represents a full suspension of reality; she doesn’t seem to realize what she’s done or want to grow up.

People lying to themselves to protect themselves. Georgina represents those afraid to face their insecurities; she lies to everyone about herself to retain her value. Lying to others to protect themselves. Daisy’s illness might represent people who live in luxury at the expense of integrity. Daisy was self-mutilating and self-hating because she was trying to cope with the guilt she felt for enjoying relations with her own father. Susanna represents all people suffering the pressures of normal life.

Doubt of self-worth, fear of insignificance, being ostracized. Lisa was deemed a sociopath because she had no moral compass; she was erratic, violent, rebellious, controlling, and did not learn her lessons. She represents those

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who have completely rejected the established moral system and social order. Her perception of her “illness” was that “it’s a gift—it allows you to see the truth.” I love this movie. It illustrates that insanity can be relative— that it might be a choice whether or not to abide by imposed social norms.

From an existential standpoint, it leaves you wondering if Lisa is really crazy, or just enlightened. “Was I ever crazy? Maybe. Or maybe life is... Crazy isn’t being broken or swallowing a dark secret. It’s you or me amplified. If you ever told a lie and enjoyed it. If you ever wished you could be a child forever. They were not perfect, but they were my friends and by the ’70s most of them were out living lives. Some I’ve seen, some never again, but there isn’t a day my heart doesn’t find them.”